

“Ummm, in my opinion English lessons have usually been pretty boring”:
language learning through video games: a qualitative study on the experiences
and opinions of two gamers

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Tiivistelmä

Kandidaatintutkielman tarkoituksena on kartoittaa, miten videopelit ovat vaikuttaneet kahden videopelejä pelaavan yliopisto-opiskelijan englannin kielen oppimiseen, ja tunnistaa, mitkä mekanismit peleissä ovat edesauttaneet heidän kielitaitonsa kehittymistä. Tutkielmassa pohditaan, voitaisiinko näitä hyötyjä sovittaa jollain tavalla myös koulumaailmaan, mutta myös miten osallistujat mieltävät videopelit kielenopetuksessa. Tutkielmassa luodaan ensin katsaus teoriataustaan, joka tarkastelee videopelien hyötyjä kielen oppimisessa sosiokulttuurillisen/ekologisen perspektiivin valossa. Lisäksi tutkielma sivuaa englannin kouluopetuksen kehitystä ja sitä, miten opetusta tulisi uuden opetussuunnitelman myötä kehittää suuntaan, jossa oppijalla on keskeisempi ja aktiivisempi rooli. Aihetta tarkastellaan myös erilaisten pedagogisten teorioiden kautta pohtimalla, miten konstruktivistinen näkemys voitaisiin tuoda esille videopeleihin pohjautuvassa englannin kielen opetuksessa.

Tutkimuksessa haastateltiin kahta nuorta aikuista, joista molemmat harrastivat videopelien pelaamista vapaa-aikanaan ja kokivat olevansa taitavia englanninkielen puhujia. Puolistrukturoidun kvalitatiivisen haastattelun ajatuksena oli tuoda esille heidän kokemuksiaan perinteiseen kouluopetukseen sekä englannin kielen informaaliin oppimiseen liittyen. Tämän lisäksi tutkielmassa käsitellään myös heidän näkemyksiään siitä, voisiko videopelit tuoda kouluopetukseen ja millä tavalla tämä tulisi toteuttaa.

Tutkimuksen keskeisiä havaintoja ovat ensinnäkin molempien haastateltujen suhteellinen tyytymättömyys perinteiseen kouluopetukseen, jota he ovat omassa opiskelussaan kokeneet. Videopelien vaikutuksen huomasi muun muassa siinä kuinka itsevarmoja haastateltavat olivat kielitaidostaan, mikä voi selittyä sillä, että he ovat monipuolisemmin ja useammin yhteydessä englannin kieleen. Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että pelaajat kokivat videopelien auttaneen heidän kielitaitonsa kehittymistä epäsuorasti ja että pelien kautta kieleen ollaan yhteydessä monella tavalla. Joitakin tärkeitä ominaisuuksia, jotka sitovat pelaajia peleihin, ovat muun muassa kilpailullisuus ja immersio. Haastateltavat näkivätkin pelaamisen yleisesti ottaen sosiaalisena aktiviteettina ja harrastuksena muiden joukossa. Haastateltavat suhtautuivat pelaamiseen positiivisesti, ja molemmat uskoivat niiden implementoinnin koulumaailmaan olevan mahdollista, sekä hyödyllistä ainakin jossain määrin.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to map out the effects video games have had on the English learning of two university students, who identify themselves as gamers. My aim was to identify which mechanics in video games have facilitated their language learning and consider whether these benefits could somehow be implemented into the school environment. First, I will establish a theoretical background that showcases the benefits that videogames can have on learning English as a foreign language from the perspective of sociocultural/ecological theory. In addition, the current thesis will touch upon the development of school teaching of English, and how it should be developed through the new core curriculum into a direction where the student has a more active role. The topic will also be considered from the perspective of classical pedagogical theories, and how the new constructivist approach of the core curriculum could be executed through video game based English teaching.

For my thesis, I interviewed two young adults, who both play video games as a hobby. The goal of these semi-structured qualitative interviews was to highlight their experiences regarding traditional English teaching, learning English through informal contexts as well as their opinions on whether games could be implemented into school teaching.

One of the key findings of this thesis was the general dissatisfaction that the participants had towards traditional school teaching of English. The effect that video games had had on the learning of the participants could most clearly be seen with their confidence as speakers. The results of the study also showed that the gamers felt that video games had helped the development of their proficiency indirectly through multifaceted interaction with the language. The most important aspects that the participants found appealing in games were competitiveness and the feeling of immersion. Games were generally seen as social activities and as a hobby among others. The participants had a positive outlook on gaming and both participants believed, to some extent, that implementing them into the school environment was possible and useful.

1. Introduction

The role of English language in Finland has gone through a significant change during the past few decades with its popularity showing no signs of slowing down. Survey data collected in 2007 shows that approximately 80% of young people consider English personally important to them (Nevalainen et al, 2011, p. 65), and what is more, people consider knowing English in 20 years generally more important than knowing their official second language, Swedish (p. 147-150). English is encountered to an increasing extent outside the classroom in movies, video games, advertisement, social media, and the internet in general. The aforementioned continuous contact with the language has resulted in a lot of informal acquisition. This, in turn, has raised awareness for adapting the learning benefits available within these informal contexts into the school environment. Of these informal learning environments, my thesis will focus specifically on video games.

The usual conception is that only children or young men play video games, but various surveys reveal that gaming is becoming a popular pastime all around the world. A 2010 Gamevision Europe survey across 8 major European nations revealed that approximately 25,4 % of Europeans over the age of sixteen had played videogames in the past six months and could thus be addressed as “gamers”. In addition to changes in the mean age of gamers, the survey also indicated that the proportional gap between males and females is slowly narrowing and gaming is becoming a pastime suitable for everyone. (Gamevision, 2010) The development has also been similar in America where a 2017 ESA survey showed that nearly 65% of American households were home to at least one gamer. (Entertainment Software Association, 2017.)

This increased attention has sparked the interests of various researchers who see the educational potential of video games and wish to transfer them to educational contexts. In the current study, I will attempt to discover the effect that video games have had on the English learning of two Finnish university students, as well as analyse their views and opinions regarding the potential of bringing them into educational environments.

Using technology in teaching is still in its infancy, but the new national curriculum attempts to change this by bringing information and communication technologies more concretely into the teaching with its focus on constructivism and phenomenon-based learning. Therefore, as a teacher student I find studying these new and innovative ways of teaching important, so that digital tools can be

implemented in the right way and not just for the sake of including technology in the curriculum. Some studies have researched the implementation, but studies that look into the topic from the perspective of the students are quite rare, at least in Finland. By finding more about the opinions and views on the matter from people that play video games could provide useful insight into using games in teaching and whether there is even a need for this type of approach.

2. Theoretical background

I will begin my thesis by formulating a theoretical framework starting with a brief overview on what the national curriculum says about learning in general as well what the role of technology is in it. Next, I will introduce a sociocultural/ecological perspective on language learning and showcase how video games can facilitate learning English as a second language from this perspective. Then I move on to general theories on pedagogy to show how the learning aspects of video games have been concretely transferred into learning games. The last part of the theoretical background will go over a selection of studies that showcase the effect that utilizing video games in language teaching contexts have had on the learners in terms of anxiety, motivation, and vocabulary learning. This selection also includes a couple of studies that have looked into perceptions that both learners and educators have on the topic. The purpose of the background is to, first and foremost, establish the connection between playing video games and learning English, but also to demonstrate that transferring these benefits into school education is worth trying.

2.1 The National Core Curriculum and technology

The Finnish National Agency for Education published the newest version of the National Core Curriculum for basic education and upper-secondary school in 2014, and it became effective in 2016 when it officially was implemented into schools around the country. The core curriculum is a set of general regulations and guidelines for local educational institutions to carry out the teaching. The purpose of the core curriculum is not to make strict rules, but rather provide a general framework on which different local schools can build their own version. (NCC, 2016, p. 10) Since practically any lesson in any school in Finland is designed with the core curriculum serving as the basis, I believe that it is important to first consider what it says regarding learning in general, as well as the role of technology and the use of games in teaching.

The national core curriculum takes a very constructivist approach and builds its conception of learning on the idea that the students are considered as “active actors” who have a responsibility for their own learning (NCC, 2016, pp. 26, 373). Learning is seen as a very flexible experience that is different for each individual. In addition, the curriculum promotes and encourages experimentation with the teaching methods, with the ideal goal being that of giving the pupils room for active learning

and creativity work in order to meet the demand of various types of learners. (NCC, 2016, pp. 43-44.)

Although this type of teaching might prove difficult to execute in practise, trying out different methods could introduce pupils to new types of approaches that they have not thought of from an educational standpoint. The curriculum suggests play, songs and gamification as some of the ways to offer such circumstances (NCC, 2016, p. 373). Although the curriculum does not mention video games in particular, the gamification aspect could be carried out by the means of digital games. In language teaching, their affordances far exceed those of traditional learning games, while also providing a platform that some pupils might find more familiar and interesting.

A central idea presented in the newest core curriculum is the idea of multiliteracy, which they define in section T4 as the ability to “interpret, produce, and make value judgements across a variety of different texts” (NCC, 2016, p. 35). The teaching should provide opportunities to practise each of these in both traditional environments as well as digital ones, that take advantage of the use of technology and media in different ways (p. 37). The curriculum considers the ability to use different kinds of information and communication technology, or ICT, as an important civic skill and part of multiliteracy.

Phenomenon-based learning is listed as one way to support the teaching of multiliteracy skills. This section also stresses the importance of providing students with working approaches that allow them to be active participant to increase learning motivation through the joy of cooperation. (NCC, 2016, pp. 36-38) ICT is supposed to be used in a way that promotes interaction with others as well as taking advantage of multiple senses and channels in the work (p. 44). Although, once again, the use of video games is not mentioned explicitly, they can certainly provide stimulation for multiple senses with video, audio, as well as physical interaction. (pp. 37-44) In addition, games can be cooperative or at least be used in a manner that promotes cooperation.

The curriculum also states that the competence in English acquired through informal means must be taken into account in the planning of instruction and with the selection of contents (National Core Curriculum, 2016, p. 369). For some people, this informal learning has taken place as a result of playing video games, which could be a familiar and enjoyable way for them to learn and use the language. Much like with the pedagogical principle of task-based learning, the curriculum says that

learning environments are supposed to provide language use that feels appropriate, natural, and most importantly meaningful to the students (NCC, 2016, p. 373).

2.2 Sociocultural and ecological view on language and learning

Sociocultural theory bases its foundation on the philosophy of the 19th century developmental psychologist Leo Vygotsky. His views on mediated human activity inspired the sociocultural belief that language is primarily a symbolic tool used to mediate our mental activity and thoughts to others. According to Vygotsky, people use tools to interact with the physical world around us, just like we use symbolic tools, such as language, to mediate our mental activity and interact with one another. (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2013, p. 221) Whereas language is a tool used for mediation, the sociocultural belief is that learning is a process that is socially mediated (p.222). Some interpretations on how this learning takes place have approached the issue from the perspective of concepts such as regulation and scaffolding, which from the perspective of this thesis are also significant.

When we first begin to learn a new skill, we are reliant on more skilled individuals to regulate our activity, which is accomplished through the use of language. The more skilled individuals direct the learner's activity to key learning features after which through collaborative talk and interaction, they begin to appropriate these aspects into their own thought processes. Sociocultural view of learning is thus first seen as social or "inter-mental" after which it becomes individual or "intra-mental" (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2013, p. 249). The process where the learner is gradually guided successively through harder and harder levels of a problem is known as scaffolding, which can help the learner reach higher level of understanding and skill acquisition than they could on their own. (p.222-223). A related concept of Vygotsky is known as zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is used to describe the difference between what a learner can do autonomously and the potential for learning when they are aided (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2013, p. 223).

Leo van Lier created his own paradigm of research by building on the findings and views of sociocultural theory and developed his own approach into how a language is learnt. This ecologist approach to linguistics questions some of the basic principles of scientific thinking that have derived from the study of physics and offers a new way to view language learning. The ecological perspective abandons reductionism as the way of researching language learning and chooses instead to focus on emergence. In other words, language learning is a set of complex interrelated phenomena, which

should not be studied separately, but instead as a whole. (van Lier, 2000, p.245-246) Ecological linguistics study language not as a set of linguistic structures and rules, but as relations of thought, action and power. In addition to verbal utterances, language is comprised also of other forms of nonoral meaning making such as gestures, facial expressions drawings, artefacts etc. (van Lier, 2000, p.251.)

Much like in sociocultural theory, interaction plays a key role in ecological linguistics as well. However, the view on what sorts of interaction is held in value in terms of learning is what separates the two. Whereas researchers such as Long (1981) value negotiation for meaning with non-native speaker and native speaker pairs as the most effective way to learn, van Lier sees the possibility that interaction between two learners could in some way be just as, if not more, effective (van Lier, 2000, p.248-250).

Ecological view on cognition states that learning is not only a set of processes that happen isolated inside the head, but that the context, environment and social activity must also be taken into consideration (van Lier, 2000, p. 246). Learning is seen as developing new ways of dealing with our surroundings and the situations we are put in, which is in stark contrast with the traditional view that the environment merely offers input from which the brain builds knowledge. Rather, the environment is seen as providing a “semiotic budget”, which refers to all the possibilities for meaningful action that the situation affords. Presumably, an active and engaged learner in a semiotically rich environment will perceive affordances, which facilitate learning. (van Lier, 2000, p. 252.)

The sociocultural/ecological view sees video games as being able to provide environments with rich semiotic-budgets due to their multimodal nature. In addition to various lexical and syntactic language material present in games, they can provide a lot of extralinguistic ways to interpret these texts, such as pictures, video and audio. These aspects are stressed especially in co-operative and massively multiplayer games, where you get to explore the game world with others and interact with them and the environment. Thorne, Fischer and Lu (2012) make the case that games can provide opportunities for meaningful use of language and opportunities for communicative engagement, which they say are “influential developmental forces” (Thorne, Fischer & Lu, 2012, p. 297).

In addition to the affordances of the game and collaboration within gameplay, gaming is a largely communal activity. Gamers often visit and interact with other in various game-external websites to learn more about the game (Thorne, Fischer & Lu, 2012, p. 282). Gamers often take advantage of

various social media as well to interact with one another. Communities in sites such as *Reddit* and *Discord* gather like-minded people from all over the world to discuss their interests and experiences with games, with English being the main language of communication.

2.3 Implementing pedagogical approaches into educational games

In order to get the most out of the affordances that video games can provide language teaching, I think it might be useful to also introduce some key theories in pedagogy. These theories explain how the concept of learning has changed and evolved through the decades and how they can provide insight on developing school teaching in the right direction. The advocates of using digital media for learning purposes have often criticized the “industrial model” of education and claim that during the last century, the learning environment and the content being taught has for the most part remained unaltered, at least in terms of the mode of delivery (Thomas, 2012, p. 14). In other words, our view on how people learn has changed drastically, whereas the methods and the content of the teaching have not kept up with this development.

There is a clear detachment between how schools conduct teaching with textbooks and sitting quietly and obediently while the teacher lays down the information, as opposed to what children usually do in their spare time, that is, using a variety of digital equipment to do basically anything. This has led to issues with boredom and disengagement in classrooms and even dropouts in the worst scenarios (Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p. 50). Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten suggest introducing new and innovative methods relating to the use of new social media to combat these issues and to capitalize on the excess energy and skills that the pupils have learned outside school (p. 50). As I have demonstrated with the previous section of this thesis, there is a rich theoretical background supporting video games as a medium for language learning. In contrast, this section focuses on concrete attempts to bring the advantages found in commercial games into the language classroom with various educational language games. As in the source article by Filsecker and Bündgens-Kosten (2012), I will first summarize the main tenets of the pedagogical theories, after which showcase how they have been implement in teaching games.

The first perspective introduced is behaviourism, the use of which was quite popular in the early days of computer assisted language learning in 1960-1970’s (Heift & Chapelle, 2012, p. 555). Behaviouristic principles were used back then to create simplistic vocabulary learning games that

relied on intensive repetition and practise through text games. This was done because the basic principle behind behaviourism is that sensations coming from our environment have the ability to affect how we build neurological constructions (Slife & Williams, 1995, as cited by Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p. 51). Associating external stimuli with your personal responses to said stimuli, and strengthening these connections is how people learn according to the behaviouristic perspective. This conditioning happens when the information is presented at regular intervals and when there is a satisfying reward to the desired response. Behaviourists see language as a set of commonly accepted rules and habits, which, like any other concept, can also be learned. This is done by providing circumstances that offer the learner “logical presentation of content, the requirement of overt responses, and the presentation to the learners of feedback”. (Slife & Williams, 1995, as cited by Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012p. 52.)

As an example, they use *Mingoville*, a web game designed to teach young children basic English with the game design built around the idea of behaviourism. *Mingoville* includes various mini-games that teach different aspects of the language tasks ranging from spelling and word recognition tasks to reading and listening comprehensions. The article focuses on one specific mini game that deals with vocabulary learning through controlling a boat and matching pairs of pictures and words by driving over with the boat. The game meets the requirements of behaviourism by having a fast pace, which provides contiguousness between the text-picture stimuli, the learners having to give continuous overt response by controlling the boat and then receiving the feedback of getting or losing points depending on whether the answer was right. (Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p. 53) This is a concrete demonstration on how classical learning principles can be accommodated into modern technology. The basic principles have remained largely the same since the 1960’s, but nowadays this learning can be done in a more graphically pleasing way. Behaviouristic games are mainly designed for beginners wanting to learn vocabulary, which is an effective way but does not have anything to offer to advanced learners.

The second perspective introduced by the article is constructivism, which views the mind as a set of cognitive processes that are in a constant state of flux, struggling to make sense of the new information constantly fed to us by our interaction with the environment. Compared to behaviourisms focus on the learning, constructivism makes the learner an active participant and places them in the centre, which is also one of the central ideas of the new National Core Curriculum that was discussed earlier. Knowledge itself is not transferred or discovered but is thought of as a construction built on our prior experiences with influence from our immediate surroundings. This knowledge construction happens

when we are faced with objects or new information that creates a conflict with our prior experiences, which leads to questioning. (Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p. 54) In constructivism, social aspects of learning, instead of direct transfer of information, serve the purpose of invoking negotiation that would, in an ideal situation, lead to reconsideration of understanding. From this perspective, video games serve the role of providing an environment that triggers the conflict between the new information and our prior knowledge, while also being centered around an engaging and authentic problem in order to promote self-directed learning. (p. 55). Games can also provide a variety of opportunities for social interaction, both with real people (Piirainen-Marsh, Tainio, 2009) as well as NPCs (non-playable characters) which promotes reflection important to constructivism.

A game that encompasses these conditions best, according to Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, is an educational game called *Tactical Iraqi* that was designed for the U.S military to teach the Arabic language and culture. The game is set in a 3-dimensional environment of an Iraqi village and has the player speak into a mic and interact with local NPCs who talk back, and even provide feedback on the language use. To promote self-directed learning, the game provides an authentic environment and relevant learning problems, since it aims to simulate real military work that soldiers engage with in Iraq. The environment also has a lot of external stimuli with its linguistic input in order to trigger puzzlement in the player, which based on constructivist theory, leads to consideration and fitting these new ideas together with prior knowledge, and thus, learning. (Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p. 54-58). The writers of the article consider the pedagogical aspects that the game provides more comprehensive and easier to transfer into real life situations than the behaviourist oriented one, but are also somewhat uncertain about its place in other educational environments because developing these types of games is more difficult and expensive (Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p. 58).

The final approach is mostly concerned with contexts designed particularly for learning purposes and the role that social community and collaboration have in these contexts when it comes to learning. Once a newcomer joins a community, they engage in meaningful activities under the guidance of more experienced people in the community, and gain proficiency through participation. (Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p.58-61) As stated before, gaming is often seen as a communal activity with various communities both inside and outside of the game and thus provide various opportunities for participation. Most gamers tend to play with their friends or sometimes even with complete strangers in massively multiplayer online roleplaying games (MMORPGs), such as *World of Warcraft*. Games such as this often allow the players to adopt a new identity within the game through the avatar that works as an extension of their real-life self (p. 60). Players often assume the role of a character that

is a competent speaker of the English language and discuss with both NPCs and other players and construct knowledge with them in the foreign language. (Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p.61-63.)

The example of integrating this situated approach into learning comes in the form of *Quest Atlantis*, which is a learning MMORPGs designed for 9-12-year-olds, where they get to create a character and assume the role of an investigator and collaboratively complete quests in a 3D-world. It was used in a language learning study by Zheng, Young, Wagner, and Brewer (2009), in which they paired two students from two classes, one from United States and one from China, to complete a quest that had the players explain the background and meaning of English and Chinese proverbs to citizens of the fictional city of “New Atlantis”. The students were paired in a way that one group consisted of one native speaker of American English and a speaker of Mandarin, who spoke English as a foreign language. The task was designed in such a way that the players could not solve the quest on their own and had to negotiate with their pair through in-game chat and text. In these contexts, the native speakers took the role of a mentor that guided the foreign language student with difficulties in understanding the cultural and linguistic cues. (Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten, 2012, p. 61-63) This study largely mirrored the propositions of the sociocultural/ecological theories introduced previously in this thesis. Communication with the native speakers provided the grounds for beginners to practice and get valuable feedback of their language use from the more experienced native speaker. The experiment also gave insight into the collaborative opportunities that games can provide.

In summary, through these different implementations we can see the modifiable nature of video games and how they can be designed with a specific learning purpose in mind, which makes them an excellent tool in teaching. They can be used to provide the simple and traditional behavioristic drill-and-practice type vocabulary games like *Mingoville* for beginners, as well as creating realistic environments depicted in *Tactical Iraqi* that simulate real life situations for more advanced learners. As can be seen from the situated perspective, collaboration and interaction can also be included within the game context. The setting of the in-game mission also required the native participant and the second language learners to negotiate for meaning, which according to van Lier and his ecological view, can provide a lot of opportunities for learning.

2.4 Studies on the language learning benefits of video games

In the previous section, I introduced some of the most essential pedagogical theories and how their ideas on learning have been transferred into language teaching games. The fact that these theories are possible to implement does not say anything about their effectiveness however, nor why they should even be used in the first place. Therefore, I see it necessary to give a brief overview on some studies that have empirically proven that video games facilitate language learning. I will look at both studies done with games designed specifically for learning as well as commercial video games whose main purpose is entertainment.

First study was conducted in 2012 by two Swedish researchers Sylvén and Sundqvist. The study in question focused on the time spent on what they called “extramural English activities” and its correlation with English proficiency as well as whether there were any gender differences in between these two factors (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012, p. 1). Proficiency was tested with a questionnaire and a language diary, and three proficiency tests in areas such as vocabulary recognition and production. A strong correlation was indeed detected between the time spent playing video games in a week, with the frequent gamers outperforming moderate gamers and them in turn outperforming non-gamers. However, the researchers state that it is indeed very difficult to make any claims regarding causality by asking questions such “do frequent gamers reach high scores because they already have a certain level of proficiency which, in turn, makes it possible for them to play these games?” (p. 14) Whatever the case, there is a connection between video games and English skills. Based on these results, Sylvén and Sundqvist conclude that the fact that since English as a foreign language learning does not take place only in the classroom nowadays, presents many opportunities for teachers to build on the knowledge that the student has acquired extramurally. They propose informing students of the affordances that video games provide as one way for language teachers to individualize teaching and “empower” people who like gaming as well as those who do not. (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012, p. 16.)

Subsequent 2018 study by Yang, Lin and Chen took a more cognitive approach and looked at anxiety and how its hindering effects on learning can be reduced with the use of digital games. Based on fourth graders’ English textbook, the researchers designed a digital game platform that a sample of 43 elementary school student, aged 11 to 12, used for three weeks to practise basic English tasks such as telling the time and the use of numbers. The student took a certified classroom anxiety scale questionnaire and a paper-based proficiency test prior to participating in the study and redid them after three weeks of practising with the digital platform. The researchers found that students with

higher classroom anxiety performed worse aspects of language learning such as language production but equally well with listening comprehensions in the paper-based test. Another key finding was that the game allowed high-anxiety students to relax, which had a positive effect on their overall learning. There was no difference in performance with the exercises of the game. In other words, the game provided them an anxiety free context in which they could practise and performed better than they would have in a traditional classroom where their anxiety levels would have been higher. (Yang, Lin & Chen, 2018, pp. 324-332) These findings show that there is at least some potential with using video games to reduce the anxiety and insecurity that some students might feel with regards to using the second language.

In addition to the benefits presented in these studies, a famous pioneer on the field of video game-based learning, James Gee has written several books on the topic. Gee (2003) details 36 principles found in some games that coincide with cognitive views on learning. Of these principles, one that is especially relevant regarding this thesis and language learning in general, is his views on situated meanings. According to Gee, we cannot really understand a word or a concept based just on the general dictionary definition, since the same word can have multiple meanings in different situations. The fact that there is a difference with the word "work" when talking about manual labor or work in academics is used as one example of a situated meaning. Gee states that a word can be produced only when the learner understands the specific situated meaning that the current context requires. These meanings can only be learned through embodied experiences, which can be action, interaction, or dialogue in a certain situation. (Gee, 2003, p.24) Gee argues that video games are especially good tools to provide experiences in which meanings are situated, because of their multimodal way of presenting the content (p.108). By experiencing what a word means, the learner can get a better all-around understanding of the meaning of a word than they would get with traditional methods of learning. Other good learning principles that Gee discusses are their ability to actively engage players and the social and cultural practices related to gaming.

3 Research materials and methods

To gather my material, I conducted four semi-structured interviews with the topic of video games and their use as a tool in learning a foreign language. The participants were chosen based on purposive sampling and I chose four Finnish people who have studied English as a foreign language. The participants consisted of two males, both of whom were avid gamers themselves and two females who did not have much experience with games in general. This was done in order to get views and opinions on the topic from both sides of the fence to get a better all-around view on the opinions on the question of the role of video games in language learning and teaching. However, as the study went on it became clear that the material provided by the non-gamer participants was not of much relevance and could not fit the scope of the thesis, which is why they were left out the analysis entirely. Since the participants' studies have taken place mainly before the implementation of the new core curriculum, they have already had the time to form a comprehensive general image on how the language is traditionally taught. Contrasting this conception with their experiences with informal learning can provide insight in what they found useful in traditional school teaching, and what they found meaningful with informal means of learning. This sheds light on what aspects could be beneficial with using video games in ways detailed in the new core curriculum.

The interview template consisted of 20 or so questions, as well as a few parts where I explained some theory. The interview sessions lasted approximately 30 minutes on average. Although the participants are all quite fluent speakers of English, I decided to use Finnish as the language of discussion during the interviews in order to make the flow of the discussion more natural. I also felt that the participants could best bring their thoughts into words with their native language. The goal of the interview was to inquire the views of the participants regarding video games as a phenomenon as well as whether they see any educational benefit within them. In addition, experiences with traditional English lessons were also discussed from the perspective of whether the participants found their methods completely meaningful and useful with regards to their development as English speakers.

There are a few ethical concerns that need to be addressed before moving into the analysis itself. I tried to keep the questions as open-ended as possible so that the interviewees could express their own views and possible concerns on whatever the current topic of discussion was. The beginning of the interview dealt mainly broad general topics such as gaming and the participants' views on their own language proficiency with the potential for the discussion to scatter into multiple different directions.

This turned out to be the case as with both participants the discussion took a unique perspective, while also sharing some similarities with their views.

My biggest concern with this interview was especially with the two non-gamer participants and whether they could have some issues discussing and sharing opinions about a topic that they were not generally that acquainted with. To ensure that I get some sort of answer to every question I prepared to briefly introduce the topic of discussion based on how much the participants knew about it. For example, most of the participants had no experience regarding behaviouristic learning games, which was an important theme of discussion, so I gave them a brief example of such a game based on my theoretical background. The participants were also introduced to key themes of the national curriculum, an example of constructivist learning game, study of Sylven & Sundqvist (2009) as well as Yang, Lin and Chen's (2018) study on the game-based teaching platform. However, the latter study, as well as the interviews of the non-gamer participants, turned out to not be relevant for my thesis, which is why they were left out of the analysis entirely.

The latter part of the interview was heavily dependent on theory which I presented all participants and asked them to express their feelings, as well as concerns, and compare the studies and theories I presented with their own personal experiences. This provided me with material that could be analysed extensively and also be directly connected with my theoretical background. However, with this type of an approach, there is always the risk of affecting the interviewees' opinions indirectly, but I felt that it was necessary for me to conduct this interview in this way. For example, introducing the theory too extensively might sway their opinion into a certain direction or change their opinions altogether since they have not had the time to study the subject from multiple points of view. However, the theory was not used to a huge extent and its only purpose was to get the participants thinking about the topic in hand from the perspective of video games. I also made it my goal to ensure the participants before conducting the interview to always state what they really think and to stress that there are no wrong answers here.

For the actual analysis of the transcription I took a loose approach based on discourse analysis (DA). As defined by Gee and Handford (2012), DA is a study of language in use that aims to uncover the meanings that we convey through language (p.1-6). The idea is to approach language above the sentence level and interpret coherence that sentences strung together attempt to create in a spoken or written text. With my analysis, I attempt to interpret the utterances made by the participants in the specific context of the interview and interpret the larger meaning behind said utterances. The form of

discourse analysis I aim to apply to my material, is mainly concerned with the explanations and descriptions that the participants provide with their use of language. These explanations will be interpreted from the perspective of my theoretical background in order to uncover how they coincide with the theoretical background and my research questions.

4 Views and opinions on English teaching and language learning through games

This first section of the analysis will mainly deal with introducing the participants and their thoughts of themselves in terms of their foreign language proficiency. In addition, some themes relating to traditional school teaching were discussed in order to see whether the participants found its teaching methods meaningful and useful in terms of their language learning. Figuring out the shortcoming that the students found with the traditional methods could provide insight into whether some of these issues could be addressed with the implementation of game-based teaching.

4.1 Introduction of the participants and views on traditional school teaching

The first participant, Aaro is a 23-year-old university student currently studying English philology as his major to become an English teacher. Naturally, as a student of English philology he possesses above average proficiency in English and according to him he has always succeeded well with his academic studies with the language. Aaro states that he approximately spends at least a couple of hours every day playing games and even more whenever he has the chance. As he also lists gaming as one of his hobbies during the interview and spends a considerable amount of time engaged with said hobby, he could thus be addressed as a “gamer”.

While discussing the gamer participants’ general views on the traditional English lessons, Aaro reported that the lessons relied heavily on the learning materials and the textbooks with little to no variation with the teaching. The usual English lessons seems to be constructed around the book chapters, be it plain reading of the chapter or listening to the recording, after which the student practise by doing textbook exercises based on said chapters (transcription A1)

Transcription A1 (01:04-01:39)

A: Well, I guess, it they (English lessons) have been pretty heavily focused on the teaching materials. We have read the chapters and done exercises related to these chapters so there has been very little variation in a way.

I: Has it been the same from the start of comprehensive school to the end of upper secondary school?

A: Yes. Pretty muc-, well in upper secondary school they maybe took, like these, smart devices and that kind of things into consideration, but not to a huge extent.

Aaro says that at least during his time in comprehensive and upper secondary school, the teaching was not individualized at all and that it was pretty much the same for everyone. Although there were some smart devices used in the teaching, according to Aaro they did not provide variation and they were not utilized to their full extent. However, Aaro felt that school teaching had been somewhat beneficial for him in terms of learning vocabulary and grammar, but he still considered the informal methods of language learning to have had a more substantial role with his proficiency altogether. Regarding his English proficiency, he pointed out on multiple occasions during the interview that informal learning, especially video games, have had a major influence on his learning ever since he was a child. This influence will be further discussed in section 5.3.

The second participant, Eero, is 21 years old and has also graduated from upper secondary school and is currently studying his first year of university majoring in business. Eero is our second gamer participant, since he also considers it as one of his hobbies and reports to playing approximately 10-15 hours every week, and even more when he does not have anything better to do. He states in his interview that his relationship with English has not always been as straightforward as Aaro's. As can be seen in transcription E1, he mentions that he has always been an average or a little below average student, when it comes to school grades but still considers his proficiency as being better than what his school success leads onto believe. He says that he can fluently discuss and communicate in English and even understands the language considerably better than he can produce, but that this proficiency is not reflected accordingly in his grades.

Transcription E1 (00:50-1:10)

E: I do think that I'm better at English than my school success shows. I can communicate pretty well in English, although my grades have usually been somewhere between 7 to 8. From my matriculation exam I got two points short of an M.

This could be interpreted to reflect that Eero feels that the school's measurement of the students' skill level does not properly assess the actual competence and focuses too much on trivial things listed in the textbooks and the curriculum. As discussed earlier with the sociocultural perspective, language is a tool for mediation and should be studied as relations of thought, action and power (van Lier, 2000, p. 251). Thus, the focus should not be on knowing precise grammar, but on comprehension and getting the message across to the other person, which is what Eero felt he could do. The aspects of

language that the school's measurements hold in high value might be somewhat outdated in nature, which is why Eero might feel that his proficiency is not correctly represented.

Eero seemed to generally agree with Aaro's description when it came to the traditional school teaching. He even goes as far as to describe the lessons as feeling generally boring and "robotic" with the same pattern being applied during every lesson. In transcription **E2**, Eero proposes that there should be more materials featuring language encountered outside school, such as newspaper articles in English, which the students could interpret and translate. According to Eero, benefits of this type of learning could better be transferred into real life situations. This statement again establishes his opinion that the school is out of touch with its grading as well as the way teaching is traditionally conducted. It seems that Eero's dissatisfaction with the school lessons lies in the fact that he felt they could not offer opportunities to practise the language through your own interest, which could make the instruction more motivating. This mirrors the directions set by the new core curriculum according to which proficiency gained in informal contexts should also be taken into account.

Transcription E2 (01:39-02:11)

E: Ummm, in my opinion English lessons have usually been pretty boring.

I: Well, what in these lessons made them feel boring?

E: Wait, let me think, well we have pretty much went read the textbook chapters: I think we could have, for example, read newspaper articles in English and stuff like that, although we have done that sometimes, although rarely, last time in 9th grade I think

4.2 General conceptions on video games and learning English through games

With this section, I will consider the participants' general outlook on video games, in order to discover what aspects of video games make them interesting and captivating for so many people. In my opinion, these are the aspects that should be taken into account with the game design of educational games as well as the implementation into the classroom. In Addition, this section will focus also on specific instances of learning. By analysing the gamers' experiences, we can attempt to pinpoint what mechanics played a role in their language learning. Perhaps from the experiences that the participants describe, we can detail the aspects that helped their language develop, but which they could not think of explicitly.

For Aaro, the hobby represents a form of escapism that helps him take his mind off of the banal problems of everyday life. One of the aspects that inspires Aaro to play games, that he also mentioned on several occasions in the interview, is immersion, which, according to him, is facilitated by a well-executed storytelling. This theme later emerged again when Aaro was describing his favourite game genres and discussing roleplaying games. Aaro tells that especially in roleplaying games he gets the strongest feeling of immersion and truly gets inside the world of the game. According to Aaro, immersion is especially important, because in order to progress, you have to understand certain things taking place in the game world. Aaro later gives a concrete example of this with his experience in the game *Football Manager*, when asked whether he remembers a specific word that he has learned through video games (Transcription A2)

Transcription A2 (14:06-14:46)

A: Well, I think the one that I mentioned earlier about *Football manager*, the word “versatility”. For some reason it has stuck with me, and it, it, I remember it being a really difficult word to understand back when I was little, and what I did was, I created my own character in the game, and naturally I had to find out what each of these, like, stats meant so that I knew what to level up the most. And from there I still remember the word “versatility”. I think that is a good example.

I: It is, undoubtedly. Considering that you remember it so well tha-

A: Yeah it’s interesting how the word has, in a way, just stuck with me haha. I remember, that, like, the user interface of the game and where the stat was located on the screen and stuff like that.

In order for Aaro to create a viable character in the game and progress, he had to learn what different stats that could be attributed to the game character meant. An interesting observation here is how well he could recollect the experience of learning the word “versatility” and its specific location on the game screen. This example demonstrates how good games are at creating embodied experiences as described by James Gee (2003), where instead of the word being explained purely verbally without a context, the player gets to see what a certain word means in action (p. 68). For example, Aaro was able to remember the word “versatility” because he had seen what effect changing this stat in the game, had to his player character. This example also highlights how these experiences, when presented in a multimodal manner such as video games, can be remembered accurately many years later.

Aaro saw video games, generally, as very social experiences, based on his experiences with communicating with others in multiplayer games and although he did not participate in discussions

in internet forums, he recognizes them nonetheless as being part of the social experience of gaming. Another aspect that Aaro brought up, with regards to learning English through games, was the fact that with games you get to produce language yourself. As an example, he brings up a multiplayer shooter that he plays, where strategy and team play is the key to succeeding. He mentions that the players can be from anywhere around the world, which is why he uses English in these games to communicate with other players. In transcription **A3**, we can see how Aaro has used English to communicate in the game.

Transcription A3 (08:22-09:38)

A: Well, me personally, have mostly used it for communication. Surely, in like team games, for example this one online shooter that I play, well it', the whole thing is based on strategy and the teamplay, so communication is really important. And often in these games, well, people play from all around the world and English is what is of course primarily used for communication. And, namely like, that, that you sort of explain the things, not maybe in such a grammatically correct way, but so that the other guy understands the things (what you are saying)

As Aaro explains, the point of these interactions is not the precise grammaticality of the utterances, but that the meaning gets transferred to the teammates. This example mirrors the view of ecological linguistics about how language should first and foremost be thought from the perspective of meaning and getting this meaning across through any possible channels (van Lier, 2000, p.251-252) The speaker in a situation like this has to phrase his thoughts in a way which is comprehensible to a less competent speaker, which forces them to think of the language in a different way. As Long and van Lier concluded, negotiation for meaning, and the process behind it, is an important aspect in developing as a speaker and providing affordances for language development. And as we can see from Aaro's experience, video game based communication can be a great way to practise your proficiency.

Eero also saw video games as generally a social activity, with the opportunity to often speak with other players and play together with friends. When asked whether he thinks that video games encourage to use spoken English, Eero says that it is not imperative, but if you are willing to discuss, it might give you an advantage. Eero thinks that the motivation for winning might lower the potential threshold to speak. Relating to these discussions inside the game, Eero brought up an interesting point regarding how the people that you are discussing with can have an impact on the nature of the conversation (Transcription **E3**).

Transcription E3 (13:37-14:12)

E: Well, yeah, i mean multiplayer games are if you are talking to other people. If you are talking to your friends it is often, like, talking meaningless bullshit, but in Finnish though. With teammates it's sort of more official.

I: You share a common goal, you want to win right?

E: Yeah. And then if you talk to the opponents, well there can be a lot of abusive terms and stuff like that, pretty often.

When talking with friends, the nature of the conversation can be very informal and as Eero puts it, “talking meaningless bullshit” mostly in Finnish, whereas in discussion with less familiar teammates the language tends to be quite formal in his opinion. These interactions can sometimes be quite unmannerly with Eero saying that discussion with opponents usually involves the use of pejorative phrases. Although Aaro saw discussion in video games as a good way to practise spoken English, Eero's example seems to also indicate that this is not always the case. It seems that the learning value of video game discussions is highly dependent on who you are conversating with and for what reason. The most optimal, based on these examples, seems to be discussion related to reaching a common goal, such as winning the game, with unfamiliar teammates.

Besides communicating in online games, Eero also had experience with playing collaboratively in the same room, also known as “couch co-op” with friends. Eero mentions that while playing *Fifa*, he has joked around with his friends and repeated the announcer's voice lines in a humorous way if they sounded “dumb”. This type of imitation based interaction is also presented in Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio (2009), which shows how players reproduce utterances heard inside video games and reshape them to fit their current activities. The study concludes imitation and reshaping heard utterances as one of the ways in which video games create affordances for language learning. According to the study, this type of interaction and the skill to adapt foreign language utterances into a conversation demonstrate competence and deeper understanding of the immediately available linguistic resources (pp. 168-180). In addition to this, Aaro had also often played co-operative games with his friends and especially his brother in couch co-op. He recalls that whenever he did not know the meaning of a certain word, he would often resort to his brother's explanation of the meaning. As with Zheng, Young, Wagner, and Brewer's (2009) experiment with *Quest Atlantis*, it seems that Aaro's brother worked as a guide of sorts, helping the less experienced speaker to understand the content within the game.

An interesting point of discussion, relating to how video games have affected Eero's learning in school, came up when Eero mentioned that he did not start playing video games until the 7th grade of comprehensive school. Eero states that before this time, he felt that he needed to concentrate more on homework and studying to do well in school. After beginning to play video games as a hobby he described that he felt as if he subconsciously acquired the language and did not really have to study English on his spare time (Transcription E4).

Transcription E4 (16:40-17:24)

E: I think that it was the beginning of the 7th grade when I started playing video games, and then, the work I put into English courses also decreased compared to the beginning of the comprehensive school, when it (English) was pretty hard for me. Still, my grades remained pretty much the same or even went up by one.

I: So you felt that you had to focus less on school work because you encountered English elsewhere as well?

E: Yeah. For example, in upper secondary school I barely studied, maybe for word examinations, sometimes, and for the big-big tests I might have read a couple chapters, but sometimes not even that

I: And you still felt that you did good with English even though you did not, like, put effort into it?

E: Yes.

Although his English proficiency did not see any major change, the effort that he put into conscious studying saw a decrease. As Eero's connection with the language became more frequent as a result of starting play video games, he began getting more and more input in the language, which he himself described as difficult to understand sometimes. This means that he needed to put effort into making sense of this input to enjoy the game more, which unintentionally helped him gain English proficiency. Even though this is merely anecdotal evidence, that has not been quantitatively tested enough as of now, I find it interesting how Eero himself had noticed the change within his school work. As explanation for this, he proposes that playing video games has helped to expand his vocabulary as well as learn grammar by hearing correct language use within games, and they have also provided opportunities for practising his proficiency through communication. He describes learning that he has encountered with video games as feeling "more natural" than in school.

The second aspect that Aaro finds intriguing in video games is their competitive nature, which is why he mostly enjoys playing first-person shooters and the sports game series *NHL* and *Fifa*. He believes

to have developed a competitive instinct as a result of playing these games and is generally drawn to games where there exists an opportunity to be “better than the other guy”. When discussing what aspects make video games enticing to Eero, his explanation (Transcription E5) coincided with the reasons brought up by Aaro.

Transcription E5 (07:51-08:40)

E: Ummm, I don't know, well I guess they are pretty addicting in a way. Nowadays I play mostly games, where there is some common goal, where we like play co-operatively. It's kinda similar to some team sport, so I guess it's the same kind of interest with video games. Sometimes I have played games that have a good story, and that is like a big movie, but one where you get to participate. Also, It is an easy way to kill time and it's easy to just bring out the computer and start playing.

Eero generally finds video games very addictive in nature, which is exemplified by the fact that he reports to spending a considerable amount of time engaged with them. He, as well, brought up the co-operative and competitive nature of games by drawing a comparison to traditional competitive sports and describes his interest as being similar to that of a sports fan. In addition to these types of games, Eero describes, similarly to Aaro, as enjoying immersive games, which according to him, feel like interactive movies.

To summarize, games have various captivating qualities to them. They require a lot of focus and attention, which might be one of the key aspects that fosters learning through video games. Immersion is important in promoting this focus and attention, which can be achieved, for example, with an interesting story. Immersion can also make the player involved in the game world in a way that motivates them to try to make sense of the game world. The second key fact that can be gathered from these transcripts is that games are social and provide a lot of opportunities for meaningful conversation involving the second language. Competitiveness was also another important factor element in making video games enjoyable and addicting. The innate drive to outsmart the competition, that is characteristic for human nature, can be used through games as a factor for creating motivation and engagement. Since these same themes of immersion and competitiveness emerged multiple times during the interview, and due to the fact that both gaming participants described them in a similar manner, they might be aspects worth considering also in the design of educational games.

4.3 Thoughts on video games in school teaching and ideas on implementation

Based on our conversation, I asked Aaro whether he thought there was a need for this type of approach or if he saw it merely as a waste of time. Aaro's outlook on video games as teaching tools was generally positive, but he also states that it is important to remember that video games themselves should not be the main goal, but rather the learning that can better be achieved by them. He again mentions that he considers the value of learning from informal contexts to have been more significant than what he has learned from school. Based on this, Aaro states that attempting to bring the benefits of the informal activities of learning into the school teaching would definitely be something worth trying.

Transcription A4 (27:15-27:57)

A: Well, that is, it is a pretty good question. Pretty good question, that, if you could like design it, the game itself, the right way for the school world, then that would be better. That way you could, in a way, control the content and decide what to bring up. Then again, maybe these like triple-A games could be more immersive, but yeah. Perhaps the students could be like, I don't know, be encouraged to play some specific games that are related to the topic, on their spare time.

With regards to ideas on actual implementation, Aaro saw value in utilizing aspects from both commercial games and educational games when designing games for teaching (Transcription A4). The advantage of educational games is that you can control the content of the game to match the topics currently taught in class. However commercial games would, in his opinion, be better in providing sense of immersion which he identified as one of the factors important for his learning. Eero also saw benefits to both education and commercial games in terms of classroom teaching. With the use of commercial games, he thought that they could encourage more people to try video games out on their spare time. However, he also saw educational games as the more viable option, although he did not specify why this was.

Eero also presented an idea on concrete implementation by stating that games could bring variety to the teaching by using a certain portion of the class to play these games. He suggests 15-20 minutes as a suitable time to spend on playing games, which would be refreshing and could help the students concentrate more on the traditional teaching as well. According to Eero, these games could either be commercial or educational depending on the course as long as they coincide with the topic currently being taught in the class. Eero also agreed with the idea presented by Aaro, about using games as

homework on which you write a report on, in a similar fashion to what teachers sometimes do with literature.

Transcription E6 (31:01-31:27)

E: I don't believe that they are a waste of time. I mean, English is pretty important and if it could be taught better, it's always a good thing. And nowadays young people play video games a lot so it could be pretty easy, at least for the boys.

As we can see in transcription **E6**, Eero is quite positively oriented towards the use of games in teaching and does not see it as a waste of time. Eero sees that as the modern youth spends a lot of time playing video games, the transition of bringing games to the English class could be done quite seamlessly. As was discussed earlier in this thesis, Filsecker & Bündgens-Kosten (2012) also see that issues with boredom and disengagement are caused by the discrepancy between the teaching methods and what young people actually do in their spare time (p. 50). More modern approaches to teaching could be attempted as a potential fix. Eero however also brings some supposed gender related differences in the transcription **E6**, by stating that that bringing video games into school education would be easier "at least for the boys".

5 Conclusion

As a conclusion, the participants saw video games as having indirectly helped them gain English proficiency. First of all, the English content in the games and the varied interaction with the language had helped them subconsciously pick up vocabulary, and in the case of Aaro, motivated them to learn the language to better play these games. The multimodal presentation of games also provided opportunities to contextual learning. Communication and other game related social interactions were seen by both participants as a key factor in developing their fluency as speakers. The continuous connection to the language through games had also created opportunities for them to practise the use of the language, which in turn had had a positive effect on their self-confidence with the language use in other contexts.

Another aspect that emerged in the interviews was the general dissatisfaction with how traditional English teaching had been conducted, with mutual yearning for more variation with the teaching methods. Both participants saw educational games as having great potential in bringing this variation, although they were not sure how they could be implemented within the school's curriculum. Games were seen as being able to act as rewards or as tools for motivation. The mutual opinion of both participants was that games designed specifically for educational purposes was a better approach than commercial games, because with them the teaching can be more focused on certain topics. The constructivist approach was seen by both participants as being better than the traditional behaviouristic games. In addition, the participants thought the aspects that make commercial games fun, should also be taken into consideration in educational games. From these aspects immersion and the competitive nature were namely the ones most appreciated by the gamer participants. With the implementation, teaching should always remain as the main focus around which educational games are built.

As this thesis is mainly built on individual experiences and instances of learning, no concrete claims can be made with its findings. However, considering the theoretical background and the studies conducted on the topic, there seems to be a strong connection with video games and learning of English. Future research could benefit from a larger sample of participants to find a more accurate general consensus towards the use of games in teaching. In addition, future research could also be conducted on the views and opinions from the teacher's perspective. After all, new and innovative teaching methods are always only as good as the teacher.

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Appendices

Template for the interview

1. Millaiseksi olet mieltänyt koulun perinteiset englannin tunnit? Oletko kokenut ne täysin hyödyllisiksi ja mielekkäiksi? Oliko jotain mitä olisit kaivannut peruskouluaiikoina tai lukiossa englannin tunneille?

What was your view on the traditional English lessons in school as a whole? Did you find them entirely useful and meaningful or was there something that you feel they lacked?

2. Mitä mieltä olet uuden OPS:in keskeisistä teemoista ja uudistuksista?

How do you feel about the reform of the new NCC and its core themes?

3. Löytyykö sinulta omakohtaisia kokemuksia kielen oppimisesta informaalein keinoin tai koulun ulkopuolella (esim. musiikki, tv, videopelit, kirjat, internet yms.)

Do you have personal experience about learning a language through informal means or outside of the school context? (For example, music, tv, video games, books, the internet etc.)

3.1 Jos on videopelien kautta:

3.1 If they have experience learning through video games:

Miksi tykkäät pelata videopelejä?

Why do you like playing video games?

Kuinka paljon suunnilleen pelaat videopelejä viikossa?

How much do you approximately play in a week?

Onko sinulla tiettytyyppistä lempipeliä tai lempigenreä?

Do you have a favourite game or a favourite genre of games?

Millä tavalla olet yhteydessä Englanninkieleen videopelien kautta?

In what ways are you in contact with English when playing video games?

Millä tavalla opit videopelien kautta englantia? Onko oppiminen tapahtunut pelin sisäisesti vai onko siihen liittynyt jotain pelin ulkopuolisia aktiviteetteja (esim. peliin liittyvän tiedon etsiminen, videoiden katsominen, keskustelu muiden kanssa peliin liittyen)?

In what ways have you learned English through video games? Has the learning occurred mainly with the game itself or another video game related context (For example, researching information about the game, watching videos about the game, discussing others about the game)?

Onko mitään yksittäisiä sanoja, joita muistaa oppineensa videopelien kautta? Entä muistatko oppineesi jonkin kielioppiasian pelien kautta?

Do you remember any specific word(s) that you remember having learned from a video game? What about something related to grammar?

Koetko että videopelit ovat sosiaalisia kokemuksia? Millaisia sosiaalisia kokemuksia sinulla on videopelien liittyen?

Do you think that video games are social in nature? What kind of social experiences have you had with video games?

Koetko että videopelien pelaaminen kannustaa käyttämään puhuttua englantia? Millaisissa peleissä olet joutunut puhumaan englanniksi?

Do you think that video games encourage you to use spoken English? In what kinds of games have you had to use English?

3.2 Jos on kokemusta jollain muulla tavalla oppimisesta:

3.2 If they have experience learning through other contexts besides video games:

Koetko, että olet oppinut englantia näistä konteksteista? Jos koet millä tavalla?

Do you feel that you have learning English through these contexts? If you do, in what ways have you learned?

Onko mitään yksittäisiä sanoja, joita muistaa oppineensa näiden keinojen kautta? Entä muistatko oppineesi jonkin kielioppiasian?

Do you remember any specific word(s) that you remember having learned from these contexts? What about something related to grammar?

Mikä on yleinen näkemyksesi videopeleistä?

What is your general conception on video games?

Koetko että videopelit ovat sosiaalisia kokemuksia? Millaisia sosiaalisia kokemuksia sinulla on videopeleihin liittyen?

Do you think that video games are social in nature? What kind of social experiences have you had with video games?

4. Mistä luulet Sylven&Sundqvistissa (2009) ilmi käyneiden tulosten johtuvan? Koetko näin käyneen sinun kohdallasi?
What do you think is the cause for the results found in Sylven&Sundqvist (2009)? Do you feel that this applies to you?
5. Mistä luulet Yang, Lin and Chen (2018) ilmi käyneiden tulosten johtuvan? Voisitko nähdä tällaista käytettävän Suomessa?
What do you think is the cause for the results found in Yang, Lin and Chen (2018)? Can you see this type of approach used in Finland as well?
6. Onko sinun englannin tunneillasi koskaan käytetty minkäänlaista videopeliä tai pelillistettyä keinoa opetukseen?
Have video games or any gamified methods of teaching been used in your English lessons?
7. Mitä pidit tällaisesta opetustavasta?
What did you think about this type approach to teaching?
8. Mitä mieltä olisit Tactical Iraqin kaltaisesta pelistä englannin opetuksessa?
How would you feel about a game similar to Tactical Iraq in English teaching?
9. Tämän keskustelun herättämien ajatusten pohjalta, olisiko sinun mielestäsi mahdollista käyttää videopelejä jollain tavalla apuna koulun englanninopetuksessa?
Based on your thoughts after this discussion, do you feel that video games could be used in some way to aid school teaching of English?
10. Miten tämä tulisi mielestäsi toteuttaa? Käytetäänkö hyväksi kaupallisia pelejä vai opetuspelejä? Tulisiko käyttää behavioristisia pelejä vai konstruktivistisia pelejä?
Do you have any ideas on possible implementation? Should commercial or education games be used? What about the approach, should behavioristic or constructivist game design be used?

11. Miten niitä tulisi käyttää tunneilla? Käytetäänkö niitä esimerkiksi tuntien aikana vai koulun ulkopuolella?

How should video games be utilized in school teaching? Should they, for example, be used during the lessons themselves or outside of school?

12. Onko mielestäsi tällaiselle lähestymistavalle paikkaa tai tarvetta koulumaailmassa vai onko täyttää ajanhukkaa yrittää tuoda videopelien kielioppihyötyjä koulumaailmaan?

Do you think there is a place or a need for this type of approach in the school context or is bringing video games into school teaching a waste of time?

Original Finnish transcriptions from the interview

Transcription A1 (01:04-01:39)

A: No tuota niin, aika, aika vahvastihan materiaalipainotteistahana ne on ollu, että siellä on käsitelty kappaleita, ja sitten niistä on tehtyä tehtäviä ja hyvin vähän on ollu, niinkö poikkeavuutta niillä tunneilla tavallaan.

I: Niin että ollu niinkö samanlaista peruskoulusta niinkö lukion loppuun?

A: Joo. Ai-aika, no lukiossa ehkä sitten enemmän kö tuli niinkö näitä, tyyliin älylaitteita ja tämmösiä ni ehkä niitä vähän otettiin huomioon, mutta ei silleen hirveän poikkeavasti.

Transcription A2 (14:06-14:46)

A: No justiin tuo, tuo minkä äsken mainittin tuosta *Football Managerista*, tuo ”versatility”, se on jotenkin jäänyt mieleen, että se, se, oli hirviän vaikia sana ymmärtää silloin pienenä ku meikä teki vielä silleen että mää niinkö loin oman ukon sinne, sitten piti luonnollisestikkäin selevittää mitä nämä kaikki, niinkö, statsit meinaa että mihin minä satsaan eniten. Ni sieltä sitten just tämä ”versatility” eli monipuolisuus jäi päähän. Se on varmaa hyvä esimerkki.

I: Nonii se on kyllä kieltämättä. Ku nuin tarkasti muistat vielä että-

A: Se on kyllä jännä miten se on jää-hahah jääny niinkö. Muistan vielä sen niinkö tavallaan sen user-interfacen siinä pelissäki, että missä kohtaa se oli se statsi ja tämmöstä.

Transcription A3 (08:22-09:38)

A: No, ite käyttäny, no justiin ehkä eniten kommunikointiin. Varmastikkäin, että tavallaan niinkö tiimipeleissä, esimerkiksi tossa yhdessä nettiräiskintäpelissä mitä pelaan, ni siinä, siinä, hyvin vahvasti strategiaan, strategiaan niinkö pohjautuu se koko homma ja siihen tiimipelaamiseen, että siinä on hyvin tärkeä kommunikoia. Ja usein sitten näissä peleissä varsinki niin, tuota niin, porukka pelaa joka puolelta maailmaa ja, ja, englantia pääsääntöisesti tietenki käytetään sitten siihen kommunikointiin. Ja, nimenomaan justiin se, että niinkö, sitä tavallaan selittää ne asiat, ei välttämättä niin kieliopillisesti oikein, mutta sillai että se toinen tyyppi tavallaan ymmärtää ne asiat.

Transcription A4 (27:15-27:57)

A: No tuota tuota, se, se on aika hyvä kysymys. Aika hyvä kysymys, että, jos, jos sen vaan saa suunniteltua sillain niinkö oikealla tavalla sinne, sinne koulumaailmaan ite sen pelin ni ehkäse, se ois parempi sitten. Siinä kuitenkin voi sitten tavallaan hallita sitä sisältöä ja mitä siinä tuodaan esille. Ehkä toisaalta sitten nuo, niinkö nämä triple-A pelit, niin niissä sitten sitä immersiota tulee ehkä paremmin, mutta nii. Ehkä niitä oppilaita vois sitten jotenki, en minä tiä, rohkassa pelaamaan jotain tiettyjä pelejä aiheeseen liittyen, vaikka, vaikka siellä vapaa-ajalla.

Transcription E1 (00:50-1:10)

E: Mä oon sitä mieltä, että mä osaan englantia paremmin ku mitä mulla koulussa on menny. Mä pystyn kommunkoida-kommunikoidaan englanniksi aika hyvin, mutta koulumenestys on ollu 7-8 välillä yleensä. Kirjoituksista tuli kahta pistettä vaille M.

Transcription E2 (01:39-02:11)

E: Mmm, minusta englannin tunnit on aika tylsiä yleensä ja...

I: No mitä sielä sitten on käyty ku ne on ollu tylsiä?

E: Ootas ootas, no niitä kirjan kappaleita ollaan käyty, että ois enemmän voinu olla esimerkiksi jotaki uutisia englanniksi ja semmosta vaikka sitä on kyllä ollukkin, joskus, harvoin kylläkin, yläasteella muistaakseni.

Transcription E3 (13:37-14:12)

E: Siis, joo, siis multiplayer pelit on, jos sää puhut ihmisille. Jos sää puhut sun kavereille ni sit se on vaan semmosta, paskanjauhantaa suomeksi kylläkin. Joukkukavereitten kanssa se on semmosta virallisempaa.

I: Yhteinen tavote, haluatte voittaa ni?

E: Nii. Ja sitte jos vastustajille puhut jotakin ni se voi olla just sitä haukku-haukkumissanastoa sitte tai jotain tämmöstä, aika usein

Transcription E4 (16:40-17:24)

E: Aika lailla siinä yläasteen alussa aloin pelaamaan ni mulla varmaan väheni myös se, että paljon mä oon tehny duunia niissä enkun kurseissa verrattuna ala-asteeseen, se oli aika vaikeaa mulle. Minun numero on kuitenkin pysyny samana tai noussu ehkä yhellä

I: Niin koet, että tarvi vähemmän kiinnittää huomiota kouluasioihin ku sitä englantia tuli muualtaki?

E: Nii. Esim, lukiossa en juuri kyllä, sanakokeisiin ehkä luin, välillä, isoisiin-isoihin kokeisiin saatoin lukea jotain kappaleita, mutta en aina ees sitä.

I: Ja koit silti, että pärjäsit englannissa vaikket tavallaan niinkö panostanu siihen?

E: Joo.

Transcription E5 (07:51-08:40)

E: ööö, emminätiä, noo ne on aika koukuttavia sillä lailla, nykyään enemmänki semmosia missä, suurin osa mitä pelaan ni siinä on joku semmonen tavote. Yhteistyössä pelataan ja koitetaan, se on vähän niinkö joku joukkuelaji urheilussa, ni varmaan samanlaista kiinnostusta. Joskus pelannu semmosia missä on hyvä tarina, ni se on vähän niinkö semmonen iso elokuva, tai semmonen missä osallistutaan. Sitte, helppo tapa tappaa aikaa ja heleppo kaivaa se tietokone esille ja näinpäin pois.

Transcription E6 (31:01-31:27)

E: Emminä usko, että se on ajanhukkaa. Koska onhan englanninkieli aika tärkeä, että jos sitä pystytään opettaamaan paremmin ni onhan se hyvä homma. Ja nykyään tosi paljon nuoret pelaa ni se ois aika hele-heleppo varmaan ainaki poikien osalta ottaa siihen, siihen mukaan.