

Micro-Paper 55: Gamers as L2 Users



Carlos Andrés Gaviria

BA Candidate in English-Spanish Education
Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Sede Central Medellín | LSLP Student-Researcher
carlos.gaviriac@upb.edu.co

Defining the Term

The decision of learning a language usually comes with specific interests, decided by speakers and learners of a tongue. The question then, is whether language learning drives people to an activity or the other way around. In the case of gamers, learning a second language becomes a necessity to participate in the act of [gaming](#). From this view, we can say that gaming spaces (mostly online) become environments where people connect with each other in search of common passions and objectives through second languages.

It is important to take into consideration that [second languages](#) are used as a tool to participate in different issues beyond playing or winning, all related to the game itself. When looking at gamers as second language users, one must consider the idea of languages (especially English) as a requirement to develop connections and common objectives among digital communities. In fact, using a second language as a source of [communication](#) allows gamers to immerse completely into virtual/digital spaces and to fully understand video games.

Therefore, understanding gamers and their attempts to use different languages within videogames provides wider perspectives to reconsider language learning in digital spaces, especially in gaming environments where using a different tongue is the key to socialize and make connections.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, we have analyzed the use of second languages in gamers ([Language-as-Victory](#)) as a way to obtain victory as well as a satisfying [aesthetic](#)

experience. In this sense, our research looks at second language use as a fundamental part of interaction within gaming communities.

Considering environments where the gamers' mother tongue is not used, or is spoken together with another one, goes to prove the need to further study the use of second languages in the configuration of social groups in online communities. This way, a second language turns into a tool for effective interaction and understanding, as well as a bridge to connect gamers from around the world.

Expanding Second Language Research

As the gamer community is wide and diverse, it is important to know that one of the most important aspects to consider is language. Language serves as a facilitator to communicate within a virtual community where interaction is needed between participants who speak different tongues.

The use of a second language, when interacting in a digital environment, has more benefits than just winning, such as the access to new vocabulary and the practice of the language in a different context. Additionally, we need to rethink how "informal learning" provides students with knowledge about a language outside of schools as well as the approach to second languages learning and teaching in formal school settings and even teacher preparation.

References

- Chen, D. (2014). Gamer perception of language learning and L2 interaction in MMORPGs. (Master's thesis)
Peterson, M. (2011). Digital gaming and second language development. *Digital Culture and Education*. 3(1), 4-7.