RUBEN DUVOLD

Gaming and its effect on students' confidence in oral English

SUPERVISOR

Lenka Garshol

Abstract

Playing games has predominantly gone from just entertainment and an outlet for children to have fun, to seeing the learning opportunities for which the games can be used. This thesis used a mixed-methods approach to find out how gaming helps with developing oral skills and confidence to talk in English, where three teachers and four students were interviewed, as well as a survey with 69 respondents was conducted. The data from the interviews and the survey were discussed up against relevant background theory. The conclusion was that gaming has many advantages that can be exploited in learning under specific guidelines. Confidence rises with oral skills, which many students use during their gaming sessions. As a result, their oral skills are also enhanced through the students' communication with other players in English. Some students still preferred gaming at home because it felt unnatural to talk to their classmates in a different language than what they were used to. Nevertheless, teachers will have to adapt the positive learning opportunities that gaming can provide, into a classroom setting with teacher supervision.

With the right motivation, these students can show their English skills differently than they would be able to in the classroom if they were allowed to enter the comfortable gaming world where they are used to speaking to others in English daily. Many students may be silent for a lot of the class but then show how good their oral English is at certain times during a lesson. When asked what they do in their free time, gaming seemed like the lead cause of this effect, and it is, therefore, important for the development of the language, not only for them but also for others.

Acknowledgement

First, I want to thank my advisor, Lenka Garshol, for giving me support and the deadlines I needed to finish this thesis, even though the process has been difficult at times because of personal matters on my behalf. I'm glad I got her to work with during this last year.

I would also like to thank the very helpful teachers and students that I interviewed. They helped me make the data gathering a lot easier to get through. Same can be said about the survey process where I had many helpful students and former practice teachers help me get the results I needed.

Thanks to my friends, especially Lasko Sherko Tagarani who helped me get out of my apartment and get some air when I had been sitting inside studying on my thesis for too long and needed a break. The support from everyone during this last year has been very helpful and significant for me to be able to finish this thesis on time.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

The English curriculum within Norwegian high schools was changed in 2020 (LK20), with a new view on the importance of communication in the classroom. Communication is a core element in the English curriculum. The core element mentions that the students should be able to create meaning through the language and use it in formal and informal settings, using different media types and sources (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). With the curriculum in mind, games are an excellent example of media and technology with a widespread audience among high school students. A substantial number of students play games either by themselves or together with others at home. Several studies have also shown that they often play English-speaking games and communicate in English with others in this process (Grimshaw & Cardoso, 2018; Pitura & Terlecka-Pacut, 2018; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). This thesis will explore how to use games as learning tools and how they can help students with their English communication skills. Habits from students at home, compared to their experiences at school, will determine what games can provide students with concerning oral skills, communication, and confidence in the English-speaking classroom.

There could be many reasons why some students prefer to refrain from speaking English in class. They can, for example, feel like others are judging them or be uncomfortable in a setting where they quickly make mistakes. Communication through gaming can operate as a distraction to the anxiety a student might feel about oral English. When the student's mind is occupied with trying to finish different tasks in a game, it will not focus on the mistakes in language but rather try to get the point across to others. Gamers might pick up words or sentences unsuitable for a classroom, but they will also learn to communicate fluently. The skills gathered from gaming could be restricted to that situation, or they could consciously and subconsciously be transferred into the classroom and gradually lower the student's anxiety about speaking.

This thesis will focus on the oral communication skills that games can provide, how they can be used in the classroom, and what students and teachers feel about students' confidence in communicating through games. Initial thoughts are that many young people today spend their free time playing games. Several platforms have emerged in the last ten years which allow them to speak to people from other countries and get to know other cultures through these games. The

skills they gain from speaking in a different language can be implemented into the school as a way of learning. Moreover, it can also enhance their confidence in oral English because they are used to correcting themselves and making mistakes while talking to each other in English in their free time. Consequently, their anxiety about speaking the language also drops. Generally, vocational study students are underrepresented in research and will be the leading interest group of this thesis. Interviews with teachers and students who attend a school with a gaming room and a survey provided to several schools in the south of Norway will further contribute to the data. Communication, education and confidence are the themes that will be discussed and researched in this study, and these three research questions will help discover what gaming can provide students.

1. *How can gaming communication help students enhance their oral skills in class?*
2. *How can gaming be used as a learning tool in class for educational purposes?*
3. *How do students interpret their confidence in oral English, and does gaming help improve it?*

In the upcoming chapter, some of the most important research papers and background theories that bear resemblance to the study of this thesis will be highlighted. Most of them will cover gaming and its use in school, its advantages and disadvantages, and how other researchers have explored and discussed gaming as a learning tool.

Chapter three will consist of the methods chosen for this thesis, and the choice of a mixed-method approach will be explained. Interviews with teachers and students and a survey involving students from several different high schools were conducted to bring much valuable information to light. The chapter is split into four sections: Survey, interviews, reliability and ethics using this method of approach will be considered and explained.

Chapter four shows the results of the five different interviews where the participants answered predetermined questions (Appendix 2 and 3) but were allowed to contribute with their own relevant thoughts and insights. The four categories highlighted in this result section are English skillsets, confidence, natural communication in English, and boundaries. The survey is then divided into three parts: Gaming at home, gaming at school, and English skills.

Chapter five discusses the results thoroughly and compares them with relevant theoretical frameworks. The data from interviews and surveys have been meticulously analyzed in light of these theories. The discussion section is structured into five parts: communication and cooperation, vocational studies, reading and writing, and confidence and toxicity, each addressing crucial findings of the research.

The conclusion in chapter six will then gather all thoughts and assess what it means for gaming communication's impact on English oral skills, how it can be implemented in the classroom, how gaming has an impact on students' confidence, and lastly, future research that can be done with similar studies.

2.0 Theoretical background

Gaming and learning through games have been explored and researched in many studies. The concept of game-based learning is well-covered in Scandinavia and the world, and many different skills have been explored and researched surrounding the topic. Although this paper will focus on the oral skills that students get from gaming and the confidence this enhancement in oral skills give them in a classroom situation, many different skills underlie the development of English which gaming helps acquire. Many students use English communication when playing games at home, and this gaming experience can be a central reason why they are comfortable with using the same communication skills at school.

Students can learn and amplify their English skills by playing games. The first part of this chapter will focus on how gaming can be used to learn different topics and skills in an English class. After that, theories exploring what type of communication gamers can have with each other and how that can help develop their English will be discussed. Theories about how gaming enhances confidence among students will quickly follow. Finally, the three skills of reading, writing, and oral will be considered, and how gaming has affected these skills will be examined using different studies.

2.1 Gaming and learning

Games can be described as much more than just computer games. All games that help increase communication, like board games and urban games, could enhance student learning. According to

Pitura and Terlecka-Pacut, communication in a language different from the mother tongue is essential to learning. "Being able to communicate in foreign languages is viewed as one of eight key competencies for lifelong learning" (Pitura & Terlecka-Pacut, 2018, p. 734). Taking the key component of communication into account, the study from 2018 shows that combining urban gaming and language learning contributes to many students' curricular aims and interests outside of school. Wacholik and Leja described urban games as field games where playing games can be an alternative to sightseeing, and physical games can provide themes and information using public space as a game board (Warcholik & Leja, 2012). This concept can be further adapted to the classroom and provide active learning where the students are at the center of the activities. They can consciously and subconsciously learn new words and pronunciation through a game done in the classroom with their classmates.

The new words that students learn in the classroom must normally be provided by the teacher or a text, which also includes multimodule texts, video, and sound. Providing these words can be a challenging task for most teachers because the words need to match a skill level where the pupils feel comfortable but still learn something. Games have, on the other hand, features that make it easier to implement learning on all levels simultaneously because different players can engage with different parts of the game. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development explains how someone with more knowledge than the person themselves (or a text) can help the learner understand a little bit more than they do (Vygotsky, 1978). The idea that there is a space between what learners do by themselves and what they cannot do is exploited by many games, where the game serves as a teacher to help the learners move forward. Gee further suggests that games constantly raise their difficulty level to fit the person playing. Through communication and cooperation with others, people learn a lot by productively using the English language (Gee, 2007). Games adapt to the player, and if the player does well in a game, the game will allow them to change the difficulty and make them play against more challenging opponents or make the player do more complex tasks than if they are at a lower level. In this way, the games can avoid the scenario where learning stops, fun stops, and eventually playing stops because the pleasure of playing is continuous. Games serve as a tool for teachers to fit everyone's difficulty level. Every student can have their own game loaded up that is suited strictly for them and fits a level where they learn best. Consequently, a game can keep a wider variety of people entertained for longer through learning than a classic classroom situation can provide (Gee, 2007, p. 61).

Some games are better designed to give students the exact information and learning that they need, but they do not always have the appealing factor that other games can have. Ryan and Deci describe how designed learning games can provide a reasonable basis for the pupils' development in the course and teach them relevant topics that directly correspond with the curriculum (Ryan & Deci, 2017). However, these games will always be less exciting and engaging for pupils than commercially popular games they are used to playing at home. Making everything look like a game will not help with the gamification of the classroom because interest and motivation will quickly be lost if the game is not intrinsically interesting to the pupils. Therefore, it is more important to apply the positive uses that games and gaming have to several different activities in class rather than make the activities in class gamified with educational games the pupils show no interest in (Ryan & Deci, 2017, pp. 529-530).

It can often be better to use commercially designed video games instead of those designed for learning to engage a classroom. Hanghøj et al. (2018) examined how commercial video games like Torchlight II and Minecraft can help with the inclusion for students at risk. The study defines at-risk students as students that teachers perceive as having low academic performance because they lack participation in the subject. This study is based on students' social inclusion and learning motivation. The authors claim that games that can be used and bought by anybody, not just for educational purposes, can reframe the students' experiences of the subject and enhance their motivation and participation. They conclude that cooperation in gaming can help with social participation in a subject, and this inclusion further connects with the student's learning of the subject's curriculum. (Hanghøj et al., 2018).

The study results showed that the students' social participation increased significantly when engaging in these games with other students in the classroom, with less pressure from teachers. An increase in motivation was also a factor in the results, but not as significant as the findings that showed how much more the students who are typically struggling to engage in tasks and activities were able to be social and learn from the games they were told to play, without being put any pressure on. Subject-specific goals and assignments are essential if the teacher wants to reframe the students' gaming experience to fit the course curriculum (Hanghøj et al., 2018). These results could be especially relevant for vocational study students because they can often feel less motivated in academic subjects like English, compared to general study students.

Games that are not designed for learning purposes in the classroom will not have the same explicit learning capabilities. Therefore, implicit learning becomes essential for a game to be beneficial to use in class. Implicit learning is considered to be a vital part of how to learn a new language. Gaming is one of the examples that incorporates a massive amount of implicit learning. Implicit learning can be defined as knowledge that takes place largely independently of conscious attempts to learn (Reber, 1993). VanPatten and Smith (VanPatten & Smith, 2022) accumulated data from a broad spectrum of L2 research and discovered that explicit teaching and learning no longer seem to be the driving forces of acquisition. Though explicit learning has been the traditional way of learning a new language, implicit learning has more support and is the most favorable among the two methods of acquisition (VanPatten & Smith, 2022). Intent is what separates explicit and implicit knowledge and gaming. Not thinking about words, the other people or the game itself uses, falls under this category of implicit learning.

2.2 Communication and cooperation

Brown emphasizes one skill that some video games help develop along with progression in the games, namely cooperation (Brown, 2008). The need to work together and use individual skills to reach common goals has become more present in games developed after the popularization of online gaming. As a single character in the game, the player will not be able to progress because their character does not possess the skills to do so alone and will, therefore, have to lean on others to get further. Consequently, communication and cooperation have become a significant part of multiplayer video games. It is embedded into the game that more than one player is required to progress and enjoy it (Brown, 2008, pp. 152-153).

Learning through communication, whether by gaming or just in regular class, is grounded in the sociocultural learning theory developed by Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978). This idea implies practices where interactions shed light on learning and the development of students. It does not necessarily have to be learning in the classroom but also home learning, where performance gets practiced through communication and interaction. The main point of Vygotsky is that the cognitive part of a human benefits from interaction with others. This includes both physical interaction and, in today's society, interaction over the internet to perform different tasks (Manger, 2013, pp. 178-187). The sociocultural learning theory contributes to understanding why

people learn more easily from speaking to each other and how social inclusion can help oral skills become more authentic. The theory suggests that second-language conversations in a social setting, no matter the topic discussed, will help with proper fluency.

Social development in students is essential for their progress and motivation. Ryan and Deci elevate the importance of personal well-being and identify the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy to achieve growth and integration among students (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The study argues that not only does social interaction enhance intrinsic motivation, but the motivation also engages social development. Positive performance or feedback from a fellow student or a teacher will increase motivation and confidence, again increasing the student's willingness to communicate and cooperate. A student's social context and social group are valuable for the three factors of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Support for these social environments should be garnered to integrate some people who might feel uncomfortable in situations where they feel disassociated from others. If students prefer to talk in social environments they are used to, they can show different side of themselves, which helps build their communication skills (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Gaming is a contextual example that can create this social environment.

2.3 Confidence

Confidence is essential for class participation. A student who is confident when it comes to speaking English will be more likely to share their thoughts and use the language, allowing it to develop. Several studies show that gaming can help students gain confidence. Connected to the communication and cooperation a student must use to progress in a game, the confidence also rises when the students use the language more often and feel secure in their oral English. Numerous games can use oral English and allow cooperation to reach a common goal, inspiring students to talk more often and enhance confidence.

Not only computer games can have this effect on students. A study using the mobile game "Spaceteam ESL" for L2 learning by Grimshaw and Cardoso (2018) determined how the game could help both confidence and other L2 learning traits (Grimshaw & Cardoso, 2018). The study shows that games where the players are working in teams and developing social skills can reduce communication anxiety. In addition to increasing the verbal performance of students, teamwork through games can encourage people to participate in conversation and consequently boost their

willingness to communicate. The study believes a positive mood also carried on from the gaming sessions into the classroom. Computer-mediated communication (CMC), described by the research paper as communication through a network on the computer, will, according to the study, decrease a person's nervousness and increase their self-confidence. CMC can be used either through chat rooms or social media channels. Grimshaw and Cardoso also mention that mobile games can be used in the same way to increase self-confidence in students (Grimshaw & Cardoso, 2018, pp. 161-163). The study shows that a game can help the student's confidence when learning a second language and can boost positivity in the classroom.

Another way of utilizing games as a confidence booster is to use roleplay in gaming. Results from three different studies show that gamers who engage in both single-player games and role-play games online experience different levels of satisfaction based on their own experience and competence, according to Ryan and Deci (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In those three studies people who felt like they had achieved something, and experienced autonomy also felt positive short-term effects from the games, like higher self-esteem and a positive moo<d. This change proves that psychological wellbeing can be improved when playing a game for a short period. (Ryan & Deci, 2017, pp. 512-513)

Achieving goals in games is one way to increase self-esteem, but some students can still find it difficult to talk to others and do not think their thoughts will be appreciated. Insufficient willingness to communicate (WTC) in an L2 language is a phenomenon that can have many explanations. Studies argue that several variables affect a student's WTC, for example, "the degree of acquaintance between communicators, the number of people present, the formality of the situation, the degree of evaluation of the speaker, the topic of discussion…" (Macintyre et al., 1998, p. 546). Personalities and social context play a part in whether the students want to speak English. They can be confident in the language and have high self-esteem, but the context could disrupt their WTC in English. Affiliation is a prominent part of why some students feel more comfortable talking in their L1 to their closest friends. If they have always spoken in an L1 to the other person, that is how they are affiliated, the language switch can seem unnatural, and the students would want to switch back to what they are used to (Macintyre et al., 1998).

2.4 Reading, writing and oral English

Reading is one of the basic skills in the English curriculum for high school students. A study from Sylvén & Sundqvist (2012) proves a connection between gaming at home and improved reading and listening comprehension in English classes in school, as well as the recognition and production of vocabulary in English (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). The amount of time spent on games correlates with how well fifth graders in Sweden perceive English and can use it in a classroom setting. It proves that exposure to English helps pupils' comprehension, and gamers who are exposed to more English than, for example, someone watching an English movie will produce and recognize the English language even better.

A study done on L2 learners from grades four to six in Sweden (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012) aimed to figure out how out-of-classroom gaming could help students achieve better vocabulary and receptive proficiency in school. The hypothesis is that games with relevant English vocabulary and input create a base for scaffolding players into becoming better at perceiving English words and supporting their proficiency. In this article, the study tested L2 learners from the fifth grade in Sweden. The sample comprised 39 boys and 47 girls from six classes and four schools. They had five different English teachers altogether. They first filled out a questionnaire about themselves and how much of their daily time they spend on different activities, where they also evaluated their self-confidence in English. Three classes then did a test where the vocabulary consisted of everyday lexical items. Their task consisted of both recognition tests and production tests at different levels. Some national tests from several classes were also picked out within this study (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012).

The study showed that 82% of the learners asked believed that they had learned most of their English from school and not at home, but that very few of the subjects felt anxious about talking English to a teacher or peers in a classroom situation. The participants split into three groups based on their responses (non-gamers, moderate gamers and frequent gamers). In the recognition and production test, there was a significant difference between the three groups, where the frequent gamers got a much higher score than the other two groups in all categories. In contrast, the non-gamer group did the worst. The same was true for the national tests that they picked out. The frequent gamer group did the best in reading and listening comprehension (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012).

Learning a significant number of words in English through activities and gaming can contribute to the reading capabilities of some students and make them even better than in their first language. Lisbeth M Brevik explores the idea that some Norwegian adolescents can be good readers of English (L2) while struggling when put in front of a text written in their first language (L1) (Brevik, 2019). Data gathered from 21 pupils aged 16-17 identified three main groups of so-called "outliers" that got their English reading skills from somewhere else and scored better on a reading test in their L2 language than in their L1. Those three groups were gamers, surfers, and social media users. Log responses from the gamer group showed that the extramural English use comes from games in 20% of the instances and that there are also other reasons for their enhanced capabilities in reading English, but that the central part of their use of the L2 language came from the social interactions they had on gaming platforms where communication was essential to their progress.

Both written input and oral input have an effect on pupils' perception of the English language and how they choose to produce it. Research done by Signe Hannibal Jensen in Denmark sets out to determine if gaming as an activity correlates with vocabulary outcomes and if having a game in English will affect vocabulary learning (Jensen, 2017). This study compares Danish eight- and 10-year-olds in extramural English (various English forms outside of the classroom) and language vocabulary learned from gaming. The study considers gender, and it tested five different groups concerning language on the games: Only English oral input, only written English input, both written and oral English input, Danish oral input and written English input, and games with oral English input and Danish written input (Jensen, 2017).

One hundred and seven participants (61 girls and 46 boys) participated in the study. Forty-nine were early starters (eight-year-olds), and 58 were late starters (10-year-olds). Both groups had English for one year at the conduction-time of the study, but the early starters began learning from the age of seven, and the late starters from the age of nine. One of the methods used was a test where the children heard a word and had to match it with a picture. Data collection was also gathered through a diary, which revealed how much time the children spent doing different activities at home, where they specified what kind of input the different games had (Jensen, 2017).

The results uncovered that both games with oral and written English input were the most popular among the early and late starters. English oral input and English text only followed after that, but the amount of Danish input in games was excluded because it was so low. Gaming in both spoken and written English is highly related to vocabulary scores for children, and motivation to learn the words might be a cause of this. The boys from the early starters also had more effect from playing games regarding vocabulary. One of the reasons is that there is a ceiling for how many words people can learn from a game, and when they know them, they will improve less. With an age group of the study between eight and 10 years old, the results show that even younger children than "high school gamers" learn a lot of English from playing games, and from a very young age, the skills in English start to develop out of school when English spoken and written games are used in a child's daily life (Jensen, 2017).

The oral input that children receive through these games is also produced actively by the pupils themselves. Research from Brevik reveals with interviews that some pupils use English to talk to each other through their games. These conversations also allow them to gain information through their social interaction. Being a member of a gaming society incorporates social inclusion into the use of their L2 language (Brevik, 2019, p. 601). According to the research, the people in the "gaming group" of the study participated in an oral chat with other gamers in 15% of the instances. This result proves the participants gain information and instruction through reading instructions and game content. It can also imply that social interaction improves social skills and oral pronunciation in a conversation with others.

2.5 Motivation

Games have been argued to motivate gamers in both a setting where the gamers play from home, and in a school setting. To further emphasize both of these environments, gaming from home will first be explored, before moving onto how they could be implemented into school.

2.5.1 Gaming at home

Peder Stenberg did a Swedish study based on the online game World of Warcraft, where he spent 250 hours inside the world to learn what type of activity it is and how playing can help break away from several real-world struggles (Stenberg, 2011). He found that gamers played games not just to pass the time or for fun but also to feel like completing their tasks is meaningful and to

help each other forward. This sense of relatedness between the players in the game helps them move forward; it makes them a part of a hierarchy, makes them feel useful, and creates a form of togetherness. One of the things that Stenberg points out is that the game can be considered work. Most gamers do not get paid for working hard, but they still do it because they enjoy it. Games can provide a solid basis for learning if this enjoyment transfers easily into enjoyment for class learning.

Ryan and Deci explore how virtual environments and video games encompass worlds that draw people in in a way that motivates those participating (Ryan & Deci, 2017). As gamers keep exploring these worlds, they learn more about them, and with the correct input, this can motivate themes and subjects the participant usually would not seek out or find any interest in. The psychological satisfaction many get from playing video games differs from the initial thought that people play them because it is "fun". Ryan and Deci emphasize that, to have fun, there has to be a feeling of amusement and enjoyment at all times. At the same time, observation of the people playing a game showed they were much more serious, concentrated, and spent time planning and preparing (Ryan & Deci, 2017, pp. 511-512). Therefore, "fun" cannot describe the psychological reason for why games create motivation. However, the excitement people get through games is still an underlying factor in the motivational process the games provide.

Similarly, a study from 2018 by Hanghøj, Lieberoth, and Misfeldt included a Perceived Locus of Causality scale (PLOC), which, through quantitative methods, showed how "fun" did not turn out to be a factor in the students' answers and reasons for participating in the subject, but rather the motivation provided through the engagement of the game and the social conversations that were had when trying to get through the game together with their fellow students (Hanghøj et al., 2018).

2.5.2 Implementation into school

Focusing more on bringing games into a school setting, some games have already perfected the idea of having the game be a teacher. James Paul Gee recognizes that people spend most of their lives learning new things, whether in school or by doing things they find interesting elsewhere (Gee, 2007). Games benefit from this attraction to learning that humans have. People need to learn games quickly for them to sell well; the company making the games will only have success

if they do so. Gamers spend many hours learning how the games work and then trying to perfect the games more and more as they play them. Most people do not want easy games to play because they do not give them the same feeling of achievement. Therefore, many games have already implemented learning principles that, in some cases, are even better reflected than some of the principles used in schools. Game designers can be imagined to be practical theoreticians of learning. They need to understand what makes people interested in learning and how the game's experiences will help make people more intelligent and thoughtful (Gee, 2007, p. 29). If these thoughts and practices were used in schools, not only would communication be implemented into a learning environment, but also the principles that the games provide. It can create a situation where pupils at different academic levels all feel like they have achieved something (Gee, 2007, pp. 45-46).

The concept of intrinsic motivation, which Ryan and Deci define as people getting motivated by the task itself, provides more of an understanding of why people get motivated by games. In other words, the enjoyment comes from performing the task rather than the prizes they get for doing a good job (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Amongst things like volition and effectiveness, gamers also experience a social connection through games, which creates a satisfaction that partly explains the intrinsic motivation they receive and why they are repeatedly drawn into games (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 512).

Learning from enjoyment and intrinsic motivation is a concept that Csikszentmihalyi explores in much of his work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). He talks about how the results could be improved if educators knew how to implement intrinsic learning into the subject. Csikszentmihalyi explains that few students recognize that learning can be enjoyable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 116). People will only think logically whenever they feel like it and not follow logical steps like a computer. Therefore, many studies done on children and students and how they learn will be different in a lab or an experiment than in an actual school environment, according to Csikszentmihalyi (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 128). The autonomy of enjoyment through "playing" can help learning by merging action and awareness. A game will further give enjoyment to the player by constantly engaging them with the challenges they face throughout the game. The concept could be the same for challenges that have to do with oral English and the satisfaction of conveying a message to the other person. If a person does not know how to say a word or a sentence, they can get anxious or

annoyed. However, if they can deliver the same message differently, they have overcome that. Sometimes, the person will even think about that word they forgot and learn from it the next time they need to use it. The intrinsic motivation that Csikszentmihalyi describes makes students not think about learning as a bad thing but rather enjoy themselves while still finding opportunities to learn (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The quality of motivation from a teacher or a learning tool is essential for students. In many cases, being attentive to students' interests and capacities is more important than their academic achievements. Ryan and Deci (2017) argue that the aims of education should be broader than just the student's grades and underline how important intrinsic motivation is for students. Autonomy-supportive teaching strategies prove to have higher quality engagement and performance from students. In other words, the teaching strategies must be catered to the student's interests instead of controlling what their interests should be. If these strategies can be implemented in school, students will feel an autonomous motivation through the tasks they perform rather than the results they achieve (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 351).

Providing motivation that leads to commitment, good results, and effort can be a challenge for teachers. A study conducted in 2000 by Ryan and Deci (2000), underscores the significant influence of the social context on student motivation. A student who experiences well-being and has their basic psychological needs met will be intrinsically motivated to commit to a task and show effort in class. Conversely, if a student faces excessive control, inappropriate challenges, or a poor connection with the teacher or the task, they are likely to lose both initiative and motivation to complete the task at hand (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 76). The study indicates that the three factors of autonomy, competence, and relatedness have great significance for a teacher who wants to motivate their students to show high commitment and effort in class (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

2.6 Toxicity

Gaming as a platform to enhance oral skills in a different language at home or school is heavily studied. However, it is also essential to mention the toxicity many studies have proven happens while gaming in a home environment and how this, if not focused on, can also affect the school environment.

2.6.1 Home gaming

A study from 2016 shows a connection between conduct problems, peer conflicts, and reduced prosocial abilities through gaming. The study also mentions reduced sleeping time as a negative factor. These issues can be a setback to the benefits of gaming regularly (Pujol et al., 2016). With these adverse effects in mind, providing guidelines to properly monitor and guide the students within the games they play, if they were to play games at school, is essential. Consequently, playing games for extended periods can negatively affect social abilities if the gamers do not use the social aspects of the games. Some gameplay situations can still contribute to learning but will only help students use the English language if they have to talk during the game to progress.

The gaming culture has good qualities for the classroom but can also bring out many toxic traits that should be avoided. Jessica Reyman and Erika M Sparby discuss several of the toxic traits that can develop through gaming and the aggression that can be dangerous if not contained in the right way (Reyman & Sparby, 2020). They argue, for example, that many women distance themselves from playing games because they "do not belong" in the gaming world. They also discuss the aggression that games can build up, which can be released by the gamers if built too much. According to a study from July 2017, the Pew Research Center reported that 41 percent of adults had experienced harassment through video games (Reyman & Sparby, 2020, p. 1). A child playing a video game will often possess a competitive instinct. Releasing the anger they feel after playing the game can create toxic environments and bad behavior in certain gamers. Studies show what can happen when gaming is used as a free-time activity at home, but it also needs to be a factor when trying to use it as a tool in the classroom.

2.6.2 School gaming

When trying to reduce toxicity and increase student learning, teachers must choose a suitable game and set up classroom guidelines. Harry J. Brown suggests that most games combine an interactive narrative and a historical one (Brown, 2008). The interactive part of the game can either be with NPC's (non-playable characters) and the environment in which the game takes place, or it can be with other real-life players in an online platform. Historical supplements are present in many games, some equal to real-life events and some altered to fit the game's narrative. A game that is not historically accurate can provide students with wrong information, which is why it is essential to keep collaboration between teachers and the portrayal of the game and have

teachers as a guide for counterfactual inquiries, where contrast could be explored and analyzed in class. Video games are not meant to serve as a teacher but as an additional pedagogical method that can provide a discussion between students and the teacher (Brown, 2008, pp. 134-135).

An understanding between teachers and students is essential for both parties to understand guidelines and when jokes go too far and evolve into toxicity. For many years, a culture where offensive jokes and "fun" on behalf of others' flaws and mistakes have been a part of young people's peer culture in everyday school life. Many do not take it seriously, but it can quickly evolve into toxicity and harassment without supervision. Although teasing and mocking might be a positive to create strong mentalities, Johansson and Odenbring argue that there is a thin line between what some people call fun and what others call harassment (Johansson & Odenbring, 2021). Many youths do not want to show vulnerability and try not to take offence to jokes. However, sometimes "fun" can turn into violence because the provider of the joke has a different perception of the comment than the recipient. This culture among youths can make it particularly challenging for teachers to intervene and restrict certain behaviors (Johansson & Odenbring, 2021, p. 70). Gaming can amplify comments like these, and students who do not perceive specific insults as "fun" may reap adverse effects from them and experience harassment.

3.0 Methodology

This thesis aims to explore youth's gaming communication in Norwegian schools and whether interaction through games can make them feel comfortable talking in class. Moreover, the use of gaming as a tool in class can further the comfort of speaking English and speaking confidence when faced with situations where the usage of English is a must. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were discussed and evaluated as a good source of data collection at the beginning of the project. It quickly became apparent that a qualitative approach was needed to discover what makes the students comfortable and how their confidence in English could be affected while using English in a gaming situation. Some characteristics from qualitative studies used as a foundation when selecting this approach were developing a deeper understanding of games as a learning tool and capturing the participants' experiences on the subject (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 40). However, a quantitative approach would help establish a larger pattern between the use of gaming and the basic skills of English that students at high schools in Norway believe they master best. Describing and analyzing trends that others can be unaware of is an essential

characteristic of quantitative research and is used to select this approach (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 37).

Consequently, this study chose a mixed approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative method consists of several interviews with both teachers at the high school level and students who attend high school with gaming experience. The quantitative method is a survey sent out to multiple high school classes in the south of Norway, where they answered questions based on their gaming knowledge and their own perception of their English skills. The advantage of this approach is that it is easier to compare many different students than with a qualitative approach, because so many different classes receive a survey. In contrast, the qualitative approach of several interviews with teachers and students provides more insight into why the surveys turn out the way they do. Mixing multiple methods gives more opportunities to use one method's strengths to compensate for others' weaknesses (Axinn & Pearce, 2006, p. 53). The combined use of these two approaches gives a more precise overview that makes answering the aim of the research a lot easier and more obtainable.

3.1 The quantitative approach – survey online

The quantitative data in this project aims to investigate the gaming habits of high school students and how these habit impacts to their English skills, focusing on oral communication and confidence within the English language. The survey was conducted using the tool "SurveyXact" and was sent to many different classes in Agder. The classes and participants were recruited through teachers from my own network who sent a link to the survey to their students during class. The survey targeted a specific group of students between the ages of 15 and 19. The sample chosen was therefore within this age group, and taken from several different schools, which makes it closer to a good representation of the population between 15 and 19 in the southern region of Norway (Krogtoft & Sjøvoll, 2019, p. 97).

The survey contained 16 questions, and four only applied to people who answered that they had played games where they communicated with others in English. After sending out eighty surveys, 70 students responded to some or all of the questions. One student answered only parts of the survey and lowered the number of students for some questions to 69. Fifty-four students answered that they had played games where they communicated with people in English and

answered the four extra questions. The full survey text is attached as Appendix 1. Some of the questions in the survey gave an overview of the demographic background of the people that answered. An example is the question of what type of study the students are attending (general studies or vocational studies). These types of questions help separate answers from each other later.

The following questions were based on how much time the students spend playing games in their daily lives, how much they communicate in English when playing games and what games they are playing. These questions are there to see how big the gaming community is amongst the students who have been participating and to give an overview of the usage of English communication. The second part of the survey focuses on their perception of their English skills. For example, how much confidence do they have when they speak English in the classroom, and do they feel more comfortable using oral or written communication? Lastly, there are two questions about whether they use games in class and if they would like to use games more in a classroom environment.

3.2 The qualitative approach – interviews

The qualitative approach was selected to explain the students' views on their gaming habits, how they see a connection between this and their English skills, and teachers' thoughts on how gaming can help or disrupt a student's progression in English. The teachers and the students went to the same school which has a gaming room. Some of the teachers who were interviewed had gaming room sessions with a few of the students who were interviewed, and they, therefore, shared some of the same experiences. Although all the interviewed students had experience with gaming sessions in school, not all were with the same teachers, which can result in different experiences.

The interviews conducted in this study can be considered qualitative and semi-structured. The participants answered several questions that had been prepared beforehand but were allowed to diverge from them to add valuable information. At the same time, the participants had to answer unwritten questions if the information in their answers was particularly relevant to the study. This method was used because it can provide additional information that would be impossible to know when the questions were written but still be applicable to the study. If the same questions had been asked to every participant, with no form for further insight, it would have been a survey

interview (Krogtoft & Sjøvoll, 2019, p. 100). This method would make it easy to compare the different answers, but it would be difficult to understand their thoughts on the subject. Therefore, a qualitative semi-structured interview was chosen together with a separate quantitative survey, where reasons and thoughts were the main focus of the interviews.

In the interviews, four high school students (three boys and one girl) and three teachers were asked questions about their experiences with gaming in the classroom and at home. The teachers were all employed at a school with a gaming room that teachers could use for teaching purposes in class. These three teachers were questioned on their experiences with using the gaming room and how they saw an impact on their students regarding their English skills, comfort, and motivation in class. The students were all from the same school as the teachers and attended their first year at the high school. They were from different vocational studies specializations, and none had general studies as their background. Consequently, they all had opportunities to try out the gaming room at school themselves. The students chosen for these interviews were chosen after asking in the classes if anyone had experience communicating in English through games. Some of those who raised their hand and were willing would be taken out for the interviews.

All teachers were asked the same questions, with the possibility of adding additional information to their answers within those questions. All the interviews with students also contained the same questions, and they were allowed to add information wherever it was suitable. The interviews were all between 10 and 20 minutes. If the interviews were any shorter than that, they would need more information to give answers to the research questions properly. They are at most 20 minutes because time was taken out of their busy day to conduct these interviews, and especially for the students, they could feel fatigued if the interviews lasted too long when they were initially taken from their class. As another explanation, the questions that needed answering were concrete enough not to need a more extended conversation. The time of the interviews also proved to be sufficient for answering the research questions and, therefore, did not require more time (Axinn & Pearce, 2006, pp. 41-42).

The teachers were contacted through emails and were all selected to be part of the study because they had used the gaming room with their students before and had experience with gaming for educational purposes. Because all the teachers are from the same school, the selection is not as

diverse as it could have been with a more significant project. However, the selection was limited to schools with access to a gaming room as a good source for gathering information from teachers with experience in the field. The teachers had different background experiences. While one teacher had worked as a teacher for 30 years, the other two were newer teachers with only 1-2 years of experience as a fully employed teacher.

The teachers from the initial teacher interviews were the ones helping to pick out students to interview in that section of the project. Two participating students were from one vocational study class that had tried the communication game "It Takes Two" in their English class. These students were picked out from the class because they expressed that they had experience with gaming at home and in class after being specifically asked that question in the classroom. The two other participating students were from different vocational study classes and had experience in the gaming room and their free time at home.

Interviews with teachers were done individually, while the interviews with students were done in two groups, with two people in each group. With emails, it was easier to schedule a meeting with the different teachers and then do the interviews individually, with the times that fit into their weekly schedule. The students were chosen through the different teachers and during their classes. That meant a group interview where two people from the class got picked would be more beneficial for time and information to add to each other's statements. As a result, some students did not answer in complete sentences because they just agreed or disagreed with the person they were sitting next to. The interviews still provided much information since they were picked out because of their interest in and experiences in online gaming.

3.3 Reliability and validity

Reliability in research refers to whether the study scores are stable enough on repeated administrations, with no measurement errors or issues with consistency. The validity of a study is dependent on the evidence provided to show if the research that has been put together matches the purpose that the test is supposed to (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021, p. 684). This study uses different approaches to create a high sense of reliability and validity that could see both the results and the reasons why the results turn out the way they do.

Surveys and interviews will have to be extensive to stand by themselves in a study that aims to explore students' opinions on their learning of oral English connected to gaming and communication through games. The survey will give an overview of students' ideas of how they learn, what helps them and how much the games they play affect their learning. However, this survey does not explain why the students answer the way they do. The interviews are, therefore, necessary when the survey is not extensive enough to connect the results with the thoughts behind the answers given in the survey.

The interviews got similar answers and provided a good insight into teachers' thoughts, but they might need to be more generalizable to give a clear view of the situation. They provide information on some students' and some teachers' thoughts, but with only four students and three teachers, the age group needs to be represented more to say that the qualitative approach can stand by itself. The low number of interviews makes the qualitative approach more individual and less reliable than a widespread collection of opinions. Therefore, the surveys are significant for a bigger picture that can represent a more significant sample with more widespread opinions on the questions being asked but is not enough to make the research definite and fully replicable.

3.4 Ethics

Before the interviews, all subjects were given a written consent form, which defined what the study was about, what they agreed to do, and how their answers would be used. They were also informed through oral conversation why it was vital that they signed the consent form and that the recording of their voice would only be used to write the thesis but deleted afterwards. Information was given both in writing and orally that their answers would be anonymous and that anything that could lead back to them in their answers would be removed or changed to something else to fit the narrative given. The data collection was approved by the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt).

The survey was conducted via SurveyXact and the form did not ask for any personal information that would identify the participants. It started by explaining what the questions would be about and making the participants aware of their anonymity and how their answers would help the study progress and the research.

4.0 Results

4.1 Interviews

The four student interviews were conducted in pairs: Student 1 and Student 2 were interviewed together, and Student 3 and Student 4 were also grouped together. They had all used gaming to learn in class, but in different ways, and they were all students at the same school. Teachers A, B, and C had different work experiences, but they all used gaming for educational purposes with their students. They were employed at the same high school, which has a gaming room, but were interviewed individually on different occasions and had different students. Except for one, the seven interviews were all held in Norwegian and translated into English during transcription. The interview of Teacher A was held in English from the start. Complete interview guides are attached as Appendix 2 (student interviews) and 3 (teacher interviews).

4.1.1 English skillsets

When the students were asked about their oral skills, their answers showed many similarities. Student 1 and student 2 agreed that their oral English was usually better than written. While student 1 said that they used written English very often and thought it was all right, they concluded that the answer depended on the situation. They still put their English oral skills higher than written ones, explaining that oral English was being used more. Whenever they wrote to someone while playing games at home, it was usually through the Discord app, where they were part of different international groups and usually had conversations in English.

Student 2 agreed with some of this but emphasized that speaking in English was easier with people who did not speak English as a first language. According to them, this was because when others did not use English as a first language daily, it put less pressure on them to speak perfectly. They also said they sometimes wrote something in English through the games they were playing, but that was rare.

Student 3 explained that they used English frequently when playing a game and felt like their phrasing of sentences and words could have been better in written English, and oral English was simpler. The students also pointed out that they wrote very quickly, so if they made a mistake while writing, they either ignored it or did not see it in the same way as if they were to talk and

hear themselves make a mistake. They also said that writing in Norwegian was rare for them, and writing something in Norwegian to someone else through a game has not happened in a few years. For student 3, it was difficult to choose between written and oral English because they felt their written English was even better than their writing in Norwegian. They also described their oral English as even better than Norwegian in some cases because they could articulate themselves differently and had a more manageable flow in a gaming situation.

Student 4's experience highlighted the students' language preferences during gaming. They reported using English as much as 80 percent of the time, particularly when playing with international friends. The infrequent use of Norwegian during gaming sessions significantly contrasts their use of Norwegian in school. They also noted that scheduling a meeting with Norwegian friends would allow them to write in Norwegian; otherwise, English was the default language in writing when they played games. This preference for English in gaming situations reflects the students' language acquisition process.

While all four students felt that their oral English was excellent, there were some disagreements about their skills in written English. According to some of the teachers, the written English of the students who play games regularly, limited their skills in the subject. Teacher A said that they felt students were afraid to take risks in writing and sometimes struggled with it. Teacher A articulated that students learn much vocabulary through reading and talking in English online but do not know how to write (the words) correctly. The teacher further explained that the students who spent much time playing games were more confident readers. They did not necessarily read much, but if they were told to read in class, they had no problem doing so.

Teacher C also confirmed this and mentioned that gamers' grammar and text structures were sometimes nonexistent. The teachers could see a positive difference in oral English and reading for students who play games regularly but struggle more in their written text. In teacher C's opinion, this, in addition to their struggle to concentrate when a theme or subject was being discussed that they were not interested in, were the most prominent disadvantages for gamers.

4.1.2 Confidence

Several of the students felt very comfortable speaking in English when they were playing at home, but when they were playing games at school, it was a very different situation for them.

Student 3 explained this by saying that they speak Norwegian to their classmates all day and that changing that felt unnatural. Student 3 felt uncomfortable when some students switched languages back and forth even though they were not supposed to and spoke a third language, neither English or Norwegian, when they got angry or frustrated at the game.

Student 4 agreed with this statement and said it became unnatural when they first started speaking in English after talking in Norwegian with that person the rest of the day. They still added that they felt very comfortable speaking English while playing. It is not the fear of speaking bad English that makes the students switch languages, but the people they are speaking with, whom they are used to communicating with, in their first language.

Teachers A, B, and C agreed that the gaming room helped increase the confidence of many students in oral communication in the English language. Teacher B continued by saying that a few of their students were reluctant to raise their hands and talk in the classroom but would still talk together when they started gaming with others. Student 3 confirmed this thought by mentioning that they often said no if they were asked to speak in the classroom and that if the student did not have to speak, they preferred not to. They also specified that they knew they would have to speak some English to get an oral grade in the subject, but it was "very annoying" to do it in class and raise their hand for it.

Teacher A also conveyed the same experience with one of their students, who did not say much in the classroom. However, the teacher could see that when they got into the gaming room, that person was taking more risks and was interested in learning how to play the game and progress, and therefore started asking questions about it. The three teachers observed a difference between the classroom and the gaming room in confidence for some students, and the lesson engaged more people involved in oral English as a result of doing something the students found interesting.

4.1.2 Natural communication in English

Students 1 and 2 were somewhat in agreement when it came to how naturally they were able to talk in English with each other. In this situation, natural or authentic English can be described as the combination of flow and general oral skills in English. Both students had played the game "It Takes Two" in class. Student 1 said that talking in English with the others in class during a game

was fine. They also confessed that they sometimes mix Norwegian, English and a third language they know. This occurrence also seemed normal for some of the other students, who complained that this switch between different languages might have disrupted communication and made the situation more chaotic.

Student 2, on the other hand, felt that speaking English while playing in school made them more focused on thinking about what they wanted to convey, with a very short time to do it. When they were not allowed to switch to Norwegian, it was sometimes difficult for them to get the information across, which could lead to confusion, according to student 2. Although student 2 felt that they became more focused on the correct English words, all students agreed that the conversations became authentic, even when they were struggling to convey the correct meaning.

The switches and chaotic nature of playing a communication game like "It Takes Two" were not observed by teacher B, who had also used this game in their class. The teacher said they experienced that they could walk around and listen to the students' vocabulary, and that it was a good way to assess their oral skills and improve them. Teacher C also agreed that they had used the game before and that it had proven to be good for loosening up students to make them feel less afraid to speak English. Teacher C also mentioned that the teachers need to know how to use the gaming room and set proper guidelines, emphasizing the role of these guidelines in maintaining order and making students feel secure. The teachers and students had some disagreement when it came to the classes where communication games were played. The students could experience the language switches and competitiveness very chaotic at times, while the teachers felt like they saw it as a good thing and an improvement of the students' English skills and that the students were less afraid to make mistakes.

Authenticity was also commented on by teachers who saw and listened to the students when they were playing in class. Teacher C stated that conversations between students in the classroom can easily be staged, while conversations in the gaming room are often authentic. They supplied this by saying that the setting was very natural for them. When the game was in English, it was effortless to refer to what they read on the screen, and the students were also more concerned about progressing in the game and having fun rather than doing an assignment and finding the right words when talking to each other.

Teacher A also agreed with this, saying that students in the classroom sometimes have too much time to think about what they will say, while many of the words come automatically to them when they are playing. They might not find the perfect word in every situation, but they can naturally convey their message. All teachers felt that the natural setting of the gaming room made the conversations between students more authentic than with a conversational task in the classroom.

4.1.3 Boundaries

The three teachers pointed out that it was essential to set boundaries for the students and to establish specific guidelines for them to follow in order for all students to learn effectively. Teacher B said they had used the game "It Takes Two" in class, where strict guidelines were set up to make sure the students did what they were supposed to and used English as the only way to communicate for progression in the game. The teacher felt that the students had managed to do this and that the guidelines had helped them immensely to enhance their competence. Some students, however, expressed that it was difficult for a teacher to pay attention to everyone in the gaming room and that English was not always used to play the games, which could hinder their development and create confusion.

Student 4 had, for example, felt that sometimes, in-class education could be less troublesome. They felt that classroom gaming ended up causing a lot of screaming and bad language usage, and they described the situation as chaotic. According to them, the teacher could not pay attention to the whole class and what they said. The student meant that the teacher has an easier time listening to conversations in the classroom than in the gaming room and that even though the teacher thought everyone was following the guidelines they were supposed to, some people took advantage of the noise and the teachers' inability to understand or hear what was being said. In many cases, the students felt that even though guidelines were put up, they were hard to follow with just one teacher in the classroom and many students who were all used to speaking to each other in Norwegian rather than English.

No teachers reported any incidents where they had experienced toxic behavior. However, teacher A had heard curse words being used and had heard some differences in what words the students were using in a classroom and in front of the computer screen. They were still adamant that if

they heard any curse words, they would let the students know and tell them to use different words.

Teacher C emphasized that they had seen many teachers try to play random games with their students in class, but that this rarely worked because there was no intent behind what they were going to learn. Proper guidelines for what the students were supposed to do and what they were supposed to learn would have been preferred. The teacher used examples like trying to analyze a story, where a game can be used to the same extent, instead of using a book or movie to analyze. Many students who are tired of school and have a lot of schoolwork would then be drawn into a story that they might like to look into and analyze differently than if they were forced to read a book. According to teacher C, playing a game in class can be like tricking the students into doing a literary analysis without them thinking that is what they are doing. They also pointed out that they sometimes had to gently kick the back of a student's chair because some students did not speak English when they were supposed to. Nevertheless, they never heard much more than laughing and whispering from the students when playing, and no toxic behavior.

4.2 Survey

The survey was distributed to 80 different students. Sixty-nine of the respondents finished the whole survey. It was conducted at several high schools in Agder, where some of the classes surveyed had gaming rooms, and some did not. The students were asked about their age at the beginning of the survey, but because of some obviously false answers, this is not included in the results. Therefore, the students will all be considered between the ages of 15 and 19. The results are based on the students' gaming experience from home, their gaming experience from school, and how they view their abilities in English. The survey was distributed in Norwegian (all survey questions are attached in Appendix 1).

The students who participated in the study were divided between vocational studies and general studies. 79 percent of the respondents were vocational study students, and 21 percent took general studies. The numbers add up to 70 respondents, but one of them did not finish the whole survey and has, therefore, only contributed with answers to some of the questions.

4.2.1 Experience with gaming at home

All respondents were first asked about their home gaming experiences and how much time they spent gaming at home (see figure 1 below). This question is comprehensive, and although the intent was to show how much time they spent on any game, some may have interpreted it as only computer and console games, which would most likely bring the hours down. Others could also have included their time spent on board- and/or especially phone games, bringing the hours up. The results still show that most high school students in this survey spend less than three hours on games daily. However, the highest percentage lies between one and three hours, which means that the average high school student in this survey does spend some time playing games during the day. This question also shows a big difference between vocational study students and general study students. 80 percent of the participants from general studies answered that they played games less than one hour a day.

Figure 1

*How many hours a day do you spend playing games, on average?*
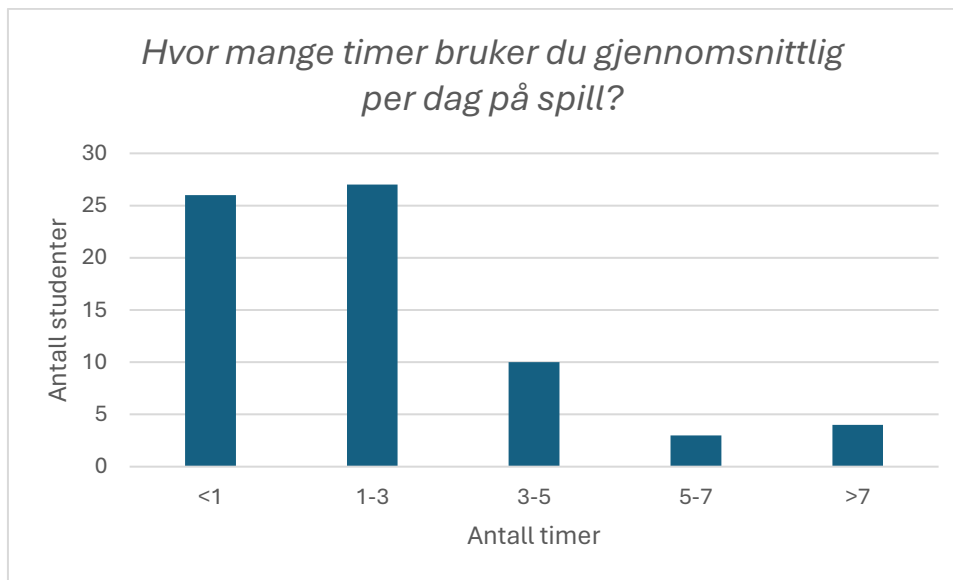
One of the first questions of the survey was whether the students played computer games and communicated with others orally in English. That question was there for two reasons: one was to see how many of them use English while playing games, and the other was to divide the students into two groups, where the people who answered yes to this question got additional questions to

answer later. The results show that within this particular survey, 54 of the respondents (out of 70) have used English as an oral communication tool when playing games. This result could mean in class for some respondents but also in their free time at home. In other words, three out of four respondents have used oral English as a communication tool while playing games at least once in their lives.

The people who answered yes to the previous question were then asked about their frequency in how often they communicate in oral English and therefore have 54 respondents (figure 2). The aim with this question was to find out how many of the people who said they had used oral communication in games, use it on a regular basis.

Figure 2

How often do you communicate in oral English when you play games?
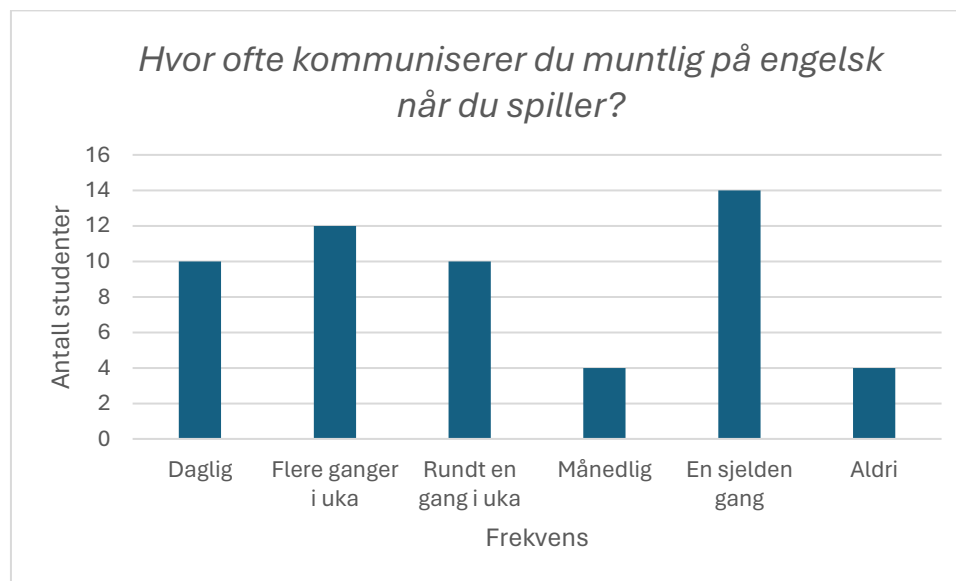
Four of the respondents who answered "never" (aldri) to the question in figure 2, could have misinterpreted the last question, they could for example have played games where they were able to communicate orally in English, but have chosen not to do it. Quite a few participants (26 percent) answered that they have communicated orally through games only on rare occasions. However, in the three categories that imply frequent oral communication are added together, it shows that 32 out of 70 respondents altogether in the survey, use English communication through

gaming every week. To reiterate, almost half the participants in this survey speak to other people in English and use a gaming platform weekly.

This question can also be used to separate students who play English speaking games often from students who play games once in a while. In this study, people who play often would be the top three answers: once a week or more than that. This question is used to differentiate between students who use oral English in games and those who do not to see if the oral English practice affects the results.

4.2.2 Experience with gaming at school

As explained earlier, some of the students in the survey have a gaming room available and the ability to use it in class. Other high school teachers could also give out some tasks that have to do with gaming at home or gaming tasks that they can do on their laptops in class to learn specific topics or to practice their English. The question about how often teachers use gaming as a tool in the classroom shows that teachers rarely use their opportunity for this way of teaching. Only 13 out of 70 students said that their English teacher uses gaming as a learning strategy weekly. Nineteen high school students said that their teacher has never done it. These results could either mean that the teachers need to learn how to utilize the tool of gaming for teaching purposes or that they do not find it necessary enough for progress in the subject.

Half of the high school students interviewed in this survey say that, in one way or another, they have actively used gaming as an intentional strategy to learn English. It again needs to be mentioned that some of the students attend a school where teachers and students can use a gaming room in class. However, the answers to this question divide students into two groups: some acknowledge that they have used it for learning, while others have just played games for entertainment.

Many students answered that they had not used gaming in the classroom to learn English, while others said that they had used it as a tool on some occasions. The consensus among students is that 86 percent want to either try it or use it more when asked about gaming as a part of the English class. It is unclear if these results prove anything regarding the actual learning they

perceive through gaming, but it can indicate their interest and motivation to use it as a tool. The teachers can use their motivation and facilitate their learning with this in mind.

4.2.3 English skills

All students who contributed were asked if they felt more comfortable using oral or written communication in English at school. The number of students who prefer oral English to written English is higher, with a percentage of 67 to 33, but the results are not as clear as with the interview participants. One-third of the students who responded to this survey still prefer to use written English in school. However, the percentage of students who prefer oral English rises if the number of gaming hours increases among the students. According to this survey, for students who play games once a week or more, only 5 of 32 students prefer written English to oral English in school, a percentage of 16. The percentage of people who game often and prefer oral English in school is significantly higher than those who do not spend much time with games, with a percentage of 84.

The 54 students who answered that they had used English communication in games, were later displayed a question asking if they felt fluent in oral English when they used it as a communication tool in games (figure 3).

Figure 3

Do you feel fluent in oral English when you use it as a communication tool in games?

Føler du deg stødig i muntlig engelsk når du bruker det som kommunikasjon i spill?
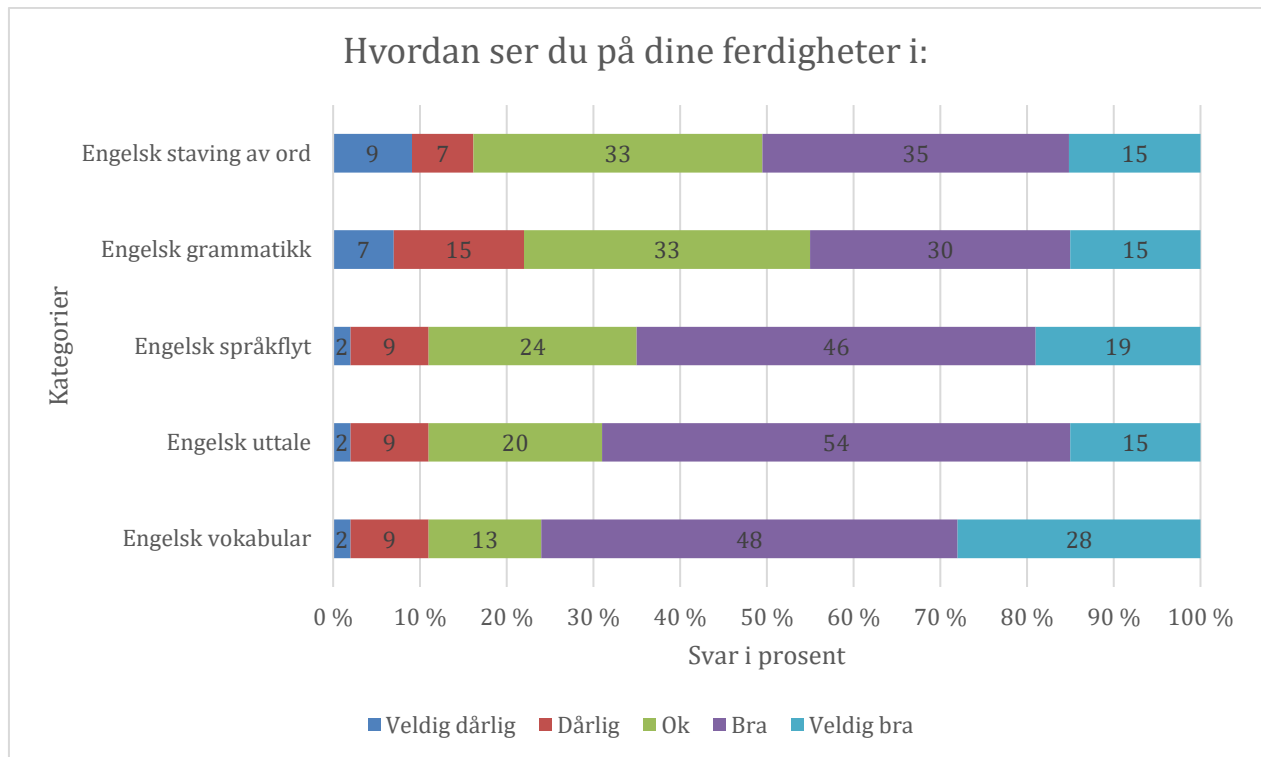
11%

89 %

Ja

Nei

The answers to this question showed that 89 percent of the respondents said that they feel fluent and comfortable talking to others in English while gaming. Only 6 people did not have this assumption about their English skills. This question could also say something about the student's general confidence in English. Students who feel fluent in a second language will most likely be more comfortable using it in class.

Five of the questions only asked the students who answered that they had previously spoken to others in English while playing games were about how they looked at their skills in five categories: spelling, grammar, flow, pronunciation, and vocabulary. They had five different options to choose from, ranging from "very bad" (veldig dårlig) to "very good" (veldig bra).

Figure 4

How do you look at your own skills in English: Spelling, grammar, flow, pronunciation, and vocabulary?

Hvordan ser du på dine ferdigheter i:

Kategorier	Veldig dårlig	Dårlig	Ok	Bra	Veldig bra
Engelsk staving av ord	9	7	33	35	15
Engelsk grammatikk	7	15	33	30	15
Engelsk språkflyt	2	9	24	46	19
Engelsk uttale	2	9	20	54	15
Engelsk vokabular	2	9	13	48	28

Svar i prosent

■ Veldig dårlig ■ Dårlig ■ Ok ■ Bra ■ Veldig bra

There is a distinct resemblance between the students' answers to the last three questions about vocabulary, pronunciation, and flow. Very few see their vocabulary- pronunciation- and fluency-skills as bad. In vocabulary, 76 percent of the students consider their skills good or really good. However, grammar and spelling are more difficult for some of these students. 50 percent of the students or fewer say they view their skills as good or really good in these two categories. None of these categories prove a significant difference in their playing time, and it seems like a consensus is that grammar and spelling are the most complicated English skills to master between these five categories.

When it comes to spelling, 35 percent generally consider their spelling to be good, 15 percent consider it to be very good. However, 48 percent of those who play more than 3 hours daily say they have good spelling, and 18 percent say it is very good. Very few (24 percent compared to 40 percent) consider their skills to be ok or bad. These results mean that the students who play games more than 3 hours a day think their English spelling skills are "good" or "very good" (65 percent), with 12 percent still thinking their skills are "really bad".

All the students who contributed to the survey were asked questions about confidence. This survey shows that students' general confidence in speaking English in the classroom is very high. Almost 60 percent of the students consider their confidence to be good or really good, while only 14 percent out of the 70 say they have bad confidence when talking in class. Confidence in the classroom also covers oral presentations and group work and does not necessarily have to mean gaming in the classroom.

Narrowing down the question to only those who play games once a week or more shows an even more significant growth of people who are confident in the classroom. 38 percent of these regular gamers say their confidence in the classroom is "really good." The percentage of people who said their confidence was "bad" or "really bad" was 14 generally. However, among the regular gamers, the percentage was 12 for bad or really bad confidence combined. where 69 percent said that their confidence was either good or really good. Comparing the people who said they felt comfortable speaking oral English through games and those who felt comfortable speaking oral English in the classroom shows that 85% of the respondents say that their confidence in the classroom is ok or better. In contrast, the percentage of confidence through gaming was 89 percent.

5.0 Discussion

Communication, oral skills, and confidence are some of the areas that this study will discuss. All interviewed students had tried to play games in the classroom and had some experience with online communication. They answered questions highlighting how they felt when speaking in the classroom and if the games they played at home could help them achieve better results and make them comfortable with their second language. The interviewed students were all from vocational studies, which must be a factor when discussing the effects gaming can have on oral skills. This needs to be considered because it can often be difficult to motivate students to study English when their primary focus is on their vocation, rather than the academic classroom. Other English skills like writing and reading will be discussed as they complement the skills and the confidence that students might feel in oral English and need to be put up against each other to get a clear view of what gaming can provide to the classroom. The teacher's view of gaming and their students' learning within their English classes can also differ from the student's perception and

will be discussed against each other. Confidence can also be affected by toxicity from others when communicating in English. This confidence needs to be a vital part of how a class can be as applicable and enjoyable as possible, where confidence is provided and not removed.

5.1 Communication and cooperation

All the students interviewed had tried different games in class, and two of them also conveyed that they had tried the game "It Takes Two" as a classroom communication tool. It Takes Two is a game that makes people talk to each other to progress. Brown emphasized the importance of these communication exercises to progress students' oral English skills (Brown, 2008). The game combines cooperation and individual skills to reach a common goal, and it was received well by the one teacher who used it, but some mixed feedback was received from the students who tested it. One of the main problems the students noticed was that speaking English to people they had spoken Norwegian to for the rest of the day was difficult. If people got too excited or angry with the game, they could even use language nobody else understood. One student described it as chaotic at times but said they had no problem speaking English with others typically. At the same time, the teachers were favorable to the process and said that they heard the students use proper language in the gaming room and had a different view of the class. According to the students, the teacher did not see or hear everything happening in the gaming room. It was difficult for them to stick to their initial task of speaking English the whole time when there was that much chaos, and the teacher could not listen to everyone. The teachers still agreed that the students must have specific guidelines to get the right results. Each student possesses individual skills that help them progress. This individuality seemed to have a positive effect, at least from the teacher's point of view. Brown's perception seems to be correct, as long as the students stick to the guidelines they are supposed to and the teachers take advantage of every teachable moment (Brown, 2008).

Students can learn from the tutorial setup of different games or from a student or a teacher who possesses a higher understanding of the game. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development teaches us that students learn in a specific zone if they receive help from other sources (Vygotsky, 1978). Getting input from the game, their co-students and their teacher contribute to a high learning experience. Learning how to play a game, where it gets more difficult throughout the game, is just one way to enhance this competence level. Usually, in a communication game, the two players' competence is also different, which means one must teach the other how to play. This

Page **40** of **54**

communication also helps the less experienced players with the controls and features of the game, as Gee suggests, as a productive learning mechanism for students (Gee, 2007). It also helps the students who are more experienced in the game to use the English language actively to convey their message. Thirty-three percent of all students in the survey still prefer written English to oral. However, for the students who play games weekly and have talked to each other through communication games in English, the percentage of people who prefer written English plummets down to 16 percent. These percentages mean that the student's confidence in speaking oral English could come from the communication they have to provide to each other during a game. The habit of using oral English often could be a motivation to do the same thing in class and use the language regularly to confidently convey a message using the correct words.

Learning in school should not all be focused on fun experiences, but games can provide many advantages to boosting learning through intrinsic motivation. As Csikszentmihalyi argues, few students see learning as enjoyable when they only experience extrinsic motivation. However, when the students can do something enjoyable, they will engage themselves differently (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Students might not feel the same enjoyment while gaming as they do when sitting at home, knowing that they are only playing a game to do assignments and learn from the game afterward. The interviews revealed how the students did not see the gaming experience at school as equal to when playing a game at home. Several students found that speaking in English when forced to do it, even though the other person speaks perfect Norwegian, made the conversations less authentic. Some students also pointed out that they had to think about their language and what they should say more often. In contrast, others found that they mixed different languages because it was challenging to give messages when they had to think quickly. These findings say something about the students themselves as well. All the students interviewed had played games at home before and were used to it. The fact that they saw differences between that and gaming at school proves that it was something they had thought through while gaming. They might still have learned something from talking to each other in class, too, but not in the same way. The teachers helped confirm this message, as they felt the students were a lot more natural in their speech in the gaming room. They might have been even more natural when talking to others at home, but the teachers never see that part. These teachers compared the students to how they had seen them in class, and all found positives in how they communicated and how intrinsic motivation seemed to help them in their oral skills. Performing

the task and the enjoyment, although less than they felt at home, was still present and gave satisfaction to several of the students, which can explain Ryan and Deci's assumptions that the social connection they feel from progressing in a game together will help language development (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Communication can implicitly help gain more knowledge about a second language. Half of the students in the survey admit to thinking about gaming as a learning strategy. Many students who contributed to the survey have a gaming room at school. It could be discussed if this indicates a division between learning consciously and subconsciously, which indicates that half of the students who participated have not tried consciously learning English through gaming. The research gathered by VanPatten and Smith (2022) implies that this implicit knowledge the students are being provided with during their communication and listening provides more of an understanding of English than traditionally thought. The use of gaming language can also indicate the implicit learning that students get from communicating with each other through games. A gamer does not necessarily learn new gaming words explicitly or think about what they mean, but when they hear them enough times, they start using those words themselves. Therefore, the use of a helpful vocabulary in games can be discussed to impact students' learning positively (VanPatten & Smith, 2022).

5.2 Vocational studies

Students from vocational studies could experience a significant benefit from gaming experiences in and out of the classroom because of the motivation it can provide through cooperation and progress. Most students from vocational studies answered in the survey that they played games for more than one hour every day. In general studies, 80 percent answered that they play games for less than one hour daily. These results indicate that the gaming advantages will have a better effect on vocational study students. A study from 2018 (Hanghøj et al., 2018) proved that students with low academic performance could benefit from communication-based games because of the need for participation, which creates a motivation to do something rather than observe what is happening. In an interview with one of the students in this study, student three mentioned that answering questions or speaking orally in class was annoying, even though they did not mind it. They did not feel like speaking in front of everyone, but they had to speak to progress in a gaming situation. Although that person felt comfortable speaking English in both

Page **42** of **54**

places, they only chose to use it when playing a game. Ryan and Deci described some of the effects of playing games as a positive experience of autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This wellbeing that some gamers feel from playing a game where they progress and have fun together at the same time as they are speaking English and learning how to use the language correctly can increase their motivation substantially and give the students higher self-esteem.

Vocational study students can often struggle with concentration, which was brought up by teacher C. This lack of concentration was one of the reasons they struggled to do some of the tasks in the classroom, in teacher C's opinion. Motivation through the task itself is a way of preventing a concentration drop. The students who struggle to concentrate, primarily students who have not participated and have a lower academic performance in the subject, will often be more motivated through a prize or something similar. However, Ryan and Deci (2017) point out that enjoyment can also come from performing the task itself rather than just the prizes. The gaming experience provides this enjoyment through a social connection that helps the students concentrate on the task at hand more than they would if they were zoning out in a classroom without contribution.

Motivating students who do not feel like they belong in the classroom is a task every teacher needs to be attentive to. A demotivated student will struggle to complete tasks, decide not to ask questions, and ignore the teacher if tasks are given with excessive control. Interviewed teachers reiterated several times that there needed to be a clear plan for the gaming room and that the students needed guidelines. At the same time, Ryan and Deci argue that for students to get entirely motivated, they have to feel motivation through autonomy, competence, and relatedness and that excessive control from the teacher will demotivate students to complete the task (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A teacher needs to prevent the classroom from becoming chaotic by setting up guidelines and learning tasks and letting the students control some of their ways of learning by meeting their interests. Using gaming as a platform to achieve motivation and a controlled classroom environment is an example of an excellent learning method.

5.3 Reading and writing

Most students who participated in this study agreed that oral communication was more comfortable than written. This trend started through the interviews, where students said that their

written and oral English were primarily good, but they used oral English more and felt more confident. The idea of good oral communication was supported by several teachers who contrarily said that some students who are gamers perform worse than others in written English. Furthermore, within the survey, 76 percent of active gamers with a playing time higher than three hours daily prefer oral English to written. Brown's theory (2008) about using games as a form of communication tool to work together would, in most cases, exclude written communication and focus on meaning and progression through social interaction, which many of the gamers in this study seem to have experience with. One of the eight components of lifelong learning researched by Pitura and Terlecka-Pacut (2018) is: "being able to communicate in a foreign language." The component goes hand in hand with multilingual competence, which has been assigned as a key component of learning by the European Union (2018). The research from Pitura and Terlecka-Pacut has contributed to students' perceived educational gains through a gamified learning experience in a Polish secondary school, developing their abilities to perform in oral English (Pitura & Terlecka-Pacut, 2018). On the contrary, some students still struggle with written tasks that provide a different type of communication from what they might be used to.

Gamers get their input from many different sources while playing. They can read instructions in a game, talk to each other about what to do, or even write messages to each other in the games. Only some people who play games use all these inputs, but those who do have a massive advantage. Some students interviewed said they would get these inputs and felt comfortable with them because of it, but the consensus was that writing was a skill that sometimes was weakened by playing many games. Jensen's study from Denmark showed results on young learners aged eight- to 10 years old, where writing was improved significantly through the games they played (Jensen, 2017). The results from the interviews in this study might prove to have the opposite effect. Several teachers mentioned that they had seen a decline in writing skills among the people they knew played games often in their free time. A reason for this could be that the younger children that Jensen was researching were learning common words from the screen they were looking at and chose to convey them to others the way they are written. However, high school students already know these common words and the words they convey to others through the game; they have no idea how the words are spelled but have just heard them from other gamers and asked them what they mean. If this is the case, their writing skills do not further improve from games, which means they have to learn writing in different ways. Teachers also believe

gamers' general concentration is lower than others, which could negatively affect their writing when they cannot learn it from gaming. The survey does not reveal a big difference in how well the students consider their spelling of words but says that 65 percent of gamers who play more than three hours daily consider their spelling as good or really good. In comparison, just 50 percent of all the respondents have this belief in their abilities. It is difficult to establish whether this trend is based on the students' confidence in their abilities or their actual skills, but the pattern does not agree with the teachers' opinions.

The reading skills that are developed through playing games have been studied many times before and are supported also by the interviews held by this study. Sylvén and Sundquist conducted research on grade four to six in Sweden, where listening and reading comprehension was found to be significantly better among the group categorized as "frequent gamers" (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). One of the teachers in the interviews also chose to highlight reading as one of the skills they have seen improvements in with the students who play games often. They emphasized this by noting that the students felt that they were confident readers and if they were called upon to read in class, it was an easy task for them, even if they did not enjoy reading long texts. Many gamers have been exposed to a lot of English through the games they have been playing, and they have also used it to communicate with each other. In a classroom setting, it could be argued that these skills are combined to foster a confident reader. However, this is not someone who necessarily knows how to spell or write the different words, but they have seen and heard them so much that they are able to pronounce them and read them with a good flow.

5.4 Confidence

The standard of confidence in the classroom is generally very high concerning oral English skills. Most students said that they were comfortable with speaking English in the classroom. This is also amplified by the results from the survey, which show that 86 percent of students are confident in English oral communication. The percentage of people who play often and feel confident with oral communication in class is at a similar level. However, comparing students' oral confidence when talking through games and in the classroom shows that the number of people who feel comfortable in front of a game is higher than in the class. It can be discussed that this has something to do with "hiding behind a computer screen" where you cannot see other people, which would make them more confident, or that the oral skills do not transfer into a

classroom setting as well as they could. Grimshaw and Cardoso's study, which shows how confidence in a second language can be gained through games in the classroom (Grimshaw & Cardoso, 2018), does not seem to apply that well in a regular classroom setting and other oral assignments if this survey is to be taken into account. One of the reasons for this discrepancy could be that they feel a lot more comfortable talking to a computer screen and doing something they believe to be enjoyable than when they suddenly must drop all of this and focus on talking in front of people in class. The students can still be well-spoken in their second language, which they prove while gaming. However, this can sometimes disrupt their ability to speak freely and confidently in other situations.

Interviewed teachers felt that many students who usually did not raise their hands in the classroom would speak when they came into the gaming room and wanted help. This statement somewhat confirms Grimshaw and Cardoso's study, saying that some students talk more and feel more comfortable when they are gaming (Grimshaw & Cardoso, 2018). At the same time, the teachers here mention that these people do not like raising their hands in the classroom. It can, therefore, be argued on a deeper level that the students who play games need that comfortable space to talk and ask questions and that a classroom setting makes these people less confident. Student 3's answer that they said no if their teacher asked them to speak in class, even though they knew how to speak English very well, confirms this assumption even more. Social environments that base their motivation on students' autonomy, relatedness and competence help the students show their social skills and communication in an environment they feel comfortable in and give a sense of belonging in the context in which they usually thrive (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Their confidence to try speaking before everyone was weaker in class than when gaming with others. The social connection that Ryan and Deci discuss can be argued to have an impact on why these students feel like talking to others when playing games (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Students do not feel the same connection when reading or answering questions in class as in a social setting with clear guidelines through a game.

The fear of speaking bad English in class was mentioned by student 2 in the interviews. They felt as though they were afraid to say something wrong when they played through a game and wanted to communicate with others to get their meaning across. However, students 1, 3 and 4 confessed that speaking English to the other students in their class was unnatural because they all spoke

Norwegian the rest of the day. The reason was not that their confidence in English was terrible, but it was mainly the unnatural setting they were put in, together with their classmates, that made them want to switch languages. The affiliation to the students' natural communication with their friends is one of several factors that can disrupt students' willingness to communicate (Macintyre et al., 1998). When students have been speaking to their friends in Norwegian for a long time, that is how they are affiliated with each other, and the switch of language will seem unnatural for many of them. However, the students' confidence in the language might still be high, as the survey answers prove. This scenario could be avoided by having the students talk to people they do not know, such as people from other schools in a foreign country who are also trying to learn English in the same way and have similar skills in the English language.

5.5 Toxicity

The toxic side effects of the gaming community also need to be mentioned because it can affect the students' experiences in the classroom, at home, and even their confidence when speaking the language. Effects like harassment and aggressive behavior have been argued to ruin gaming experiences and confidence, which can also contribute to negative consequences in the classroom (Reyman & Sparby, 2020). Several students reported that after playing the games in class, they did not use the same language as they would at home and tried to be more professional in speaking. However, many also said that playing in the gaming room could become very chaotic, and they were almost about to give up because their classmates became so angry and started yelling curse words in all the languages they knew. These reactions were not directed towards anyone or with ill intent, according to these students. At the same time, none of the teachers who were interviewed and had students play games in their classes reported this behavior. They were mostly under the impression that the students were enjoying themselves.

One teacher mentioned that they heard some curse words and that they would not tolerate too much of that but that the atmosphere was good. Reyman and Sparby report that trolls can harass and threaten if things do not go the way they want them to but are not being taken seriously in today's society (Reyman & Sparby, 2020, p. 7). Trolls are often pictured as those who do not show their face on the internet but are just there to write something mean about others, funnily or maliciously. However, that persona can be transferred into many online situations. "Trolling" can be described as a broad range of strategies users employ to disrupt normative online

communication (Phillips, 2015). A student being told that their English is wrong or that they are bad people just because the person they are talking to is competitive and angry with them in the game can affect how that student will behave. The students who reported some toxic behavior reassured and explained that they knew each other very well and that the words from others did not make them any less confident. However, it is worth noticing that students can easily get carried away by games, which the teachers need to keep an eye on.

According to the three teachers, the guidelines provided usually focused on the time spent in the gaming room, what they were supposed to focus on, how they were supposed to behave, and what they would do after the gaming session(s). Two of the teachers said that the present guidelines helped the students understand the tasks they were supposed to do and stayed within the time they were supposed to. Pujol's assumption that some students get adverse effects through gaming and that it can create peer conflict and conduct problems in the classroom did not affect this study (Pujol et al., 2016). As Pujol also mentions, this situation can be avoided with good monitoring. Some students felt it was getting chaotic whenever the teacher unintentionally ignored what they were doing or saying. Some of the students took advantage of this to create problems that were not there from the beginning. The situation did not create a big problem for the students or create significant conflicts between them. The reason for this behavior could be because of the peer culture that Johansson and Odenbring (2021) mentions. None of the students crossed any lines regarding harassment or violence, but not all the comments were appreciated; they were just perceived as reactions to the competitive nature of doing the game well. Teachers not intervening can also be due to Johansson and Odenbring's idea that it is challenging for the teachers to see a line between "fun" and harassment (Johansson & Odenbring, 2021, p. 70).

6.0 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the possibilities that gaming can provide students with concerning English oral skills, how the learning methods from games can be adapted to the classroom, and gamers' confidence in English. Due to the gaming room at their school, many of the students and teachers involved in this research had already tested how to use gaming in the classroom. This opportunity allowed for deeper consideration of the subject and well-thought-out answers from subjects with experience in the field. The answers showed a difference between gaming at home

and in a classroom, but many students felt like their oral skills were enhanced due to gaming. Communication with others while gaming was a significant factor in these students' confidence in their oral skills. However, considering how they used communication, there was also a significant difference in how they felt about gaming at home and school. The conclusion is split into three sections answering each of the research questions for this thesis, which are:

1. *How can gaming communication help students enhance their oral skills in class?*
2. *How can gaming be used as a learning tool in class for educational purposes?*
3. *How do students interpret their confidence in oral English, and does gaming help improve it?*

6.1 Gaming communication's impact on English oral skills

Gaming communication has a compelling impact on students' oral skills. It is difficult to measure how good gamers oral skills would have been if they had not participated in any gaming communication, but the results show that 84 percent of students prefer oral English to written. This is a significant increase from the result of all participants in the survey, where 67 percent said they preferred oral English. Results from interviews also indicate that the students who play games at home, and speak to others regularly in English, prefer to talk and not write English also in class. The idea of enjoyment through cooperation seem to have an impact on how oral skills can be used and strengthened by games (Brown, 2008). Motivation and social context are contributors to why oral skills among gamers increase as much as the results show. Gamers will in some cases struggle to stay focused and motivated when they participate in an activity they dislike. A social context where many students feel at home, in a situation where they can be themselves and still keep speaking English, enhances their skills implicitly through the communication they are forced to provide to their gaming partners to progress (VanPatten & Smith, 2022). Both teachers and students praised the authenticity of the students' communication while gaming. The students did not have much time to think and ponder which words to use or what to say; they just had to convey their message to others, which had a significant impact on how they communicated in English. Teachers described the interactions as more authentic than they would have been in a classroom. In other words, these results show that regular gaming communication in English will increase oral skills. These skills can be transferred to the classroom, but many still prefer the comfort of gaming to show their oral skills.

6.2 Implementation into the classroom

Using technology tools to increase learning is a part of the national curriculum of Norway (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020) and the use of gaming as one of these tools is proven to affect students' motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Nevertheless, many teachers struggle to fit technological advancements like games into a learning environment. Those who have managed to use it with their class have discovered a significant difference in some students who might not participate as much in the typical classroom. Teachers who have used a gaming room in some of their classes say that they can notice how willingness to read and to talk enhances with the people they know who use games at home, and they can see this progression also when they bring their students to the gaming room. Students say they want more gaming in school but feel their gaming habits at home have taught them most of the English skills they possess. This research proves that it is not just the games themselves that serve as the teacher, but rather the social interactions that the students have with each other and cooperation where they constantly receive feedback, which allows them to learn how to articulate themselves understandably during the gaming sessions (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978).

Gaming, particularly in the context of vocational study, can serve as a valuable tool for engaging students who struggle to maintain focus and participate in in-class conversations (Hanghøj et al., 2018). Students who are reluctant to speak in a traditional classroom setting often exhibit a different, more participatory side in a gaming environment. While gaming may not enhance all English skills, it can serve as a substitute to increase motivation and encourage participation among vocational study students.

Exploring how to develop the classroom into an environment that fits the students is challenging. However, using a gaming room and playing in class can make students show a different side of themselves. In the English subject, social interaction through an activity like a computer game is easy to implement into the classroom as a tool for educational purposes throughout the school year while still following the curriculum as it is set up after its renewal in 2020.

6.3 Gaming and confidence in English

Confidence in the classroom is essential for using oral English and participating in class. Students claim that their general confidence in speaking English is high, and the percentage among regular

gamers is even higher. Communicating over the internet with other people is, for some games, essential to progress, and when students are forced to talk to people from around the world in English, they gain both knowledge about the game and the language they are using. The implicit learning these students receive helps grow their confidence in the classroom, especially when conversing in English, without feeling like they will say something wrong (VanPatten & Smith, 2022). Cooperation games not only help with the progression of the games and the players' oral English skills but also enhance their social skills and confidence when talking to others. Meeting someone in a game can seem a much safer space for someone to open themselves up and speak their mind with the confidence they sometimes struggle to show in the classroom. If these situations could be developed and implemented in a classroom setting, many would show a positively different side of themselves socially and academically.

Games increase confidence in speaking English in a positive environment but decrease general confidence and increase toxicity in an unsafe space. A consequence of the motivation students get from games is that some individuals can get invested in games. Instead of communicating what others should do in the game, they insult, change language and sometimes harass others. This study proved that very invested gamers in the gaming room at school created a chaotic environment, changed language, and yelled at each other. Gaming at home can damage a person's self-esteem if they suddenly experience situations that make them scared to play games with others again. Especially many women have had experiences with harassment in gaming, which can have a significant impact on confidence and language (Pujol et al., 2016; Reyman & Sparby, 2020). If gaming sessions are implemented in school, supervision and clear guidelines by one or more teachers are paramount. This study shows that teachers do not always catch what is being said through headphones in a loud gaming room. However, having a good relationship among the students is essential to separate between fun and insults/harassment that lead to uncomfortable situations. If a gaming session is held in a safe space, where the teachers understand this difference and pay attention to the students' conversations, gaming can boost confidence in the class.

Communication within a gaming environment seriously impacts students' oral skills and confidence in English. Implementing the motivation that games can provide into the classroom can result in a significant increase in conversation and cooperation from some students, who

usually seem reserved about speaking up when they are told to. The study has shown that students who play games at home engage themselves in class when called upon to speak English or increase their competence by speaking English in more reserved environments like in the gaming room. At the same time, gaming rooms in schools have had a positive effect when it comes to authentic communication between several students and show considerable possibilities in English. However, supervision might be even more critical in gaming rooms than in a standard classroom. The competitive instincts some people get through games can harm some students' experience if not handled right. In other words, a positive environment within a gaming room can improve oral skills and confidence in even better ways than regular classroom communication if done following proper guidelines.

6.4 Future research

This study explored what gaming provides students in English communication. It was conducted through interviews with students and teachers who all had the opportunity to use a gaming room at their school. This use of a gaming room allowed them to explain how they used communication in their classes. However, for the study's reliability and validity, more interviews should be conducted with teachers and students from other schools who might not have this option available to them yet.

This study is based on teachers' and students' impressions of their own experiences and does not give a clear answer to how oral skills are improved. Future studies should be conducted to discover how conversations in games can help develop the English language in communication regarding different situations where the games are not the focal point, and messages must be conveyed through different mediums or face-to-face interactions. This also incapsulates research where students' oral skills are properly tested to see if they are better among those people who play games, instead of just asking their own opinion, like this study has done.

Communication in English serves as the main focus of this thesis. However, gaming has many learning possibilities that still need exploration, which could help teachers decide the best games and outcomes for students. The use of games to directly learn vocational subjects without being afraid to make mistakes, explore historical landmarks and situations, and even the possibility of

using communication in gaming as an exam form to master different tasks while explaining situations are just some of the areas that still need more research in future studies.
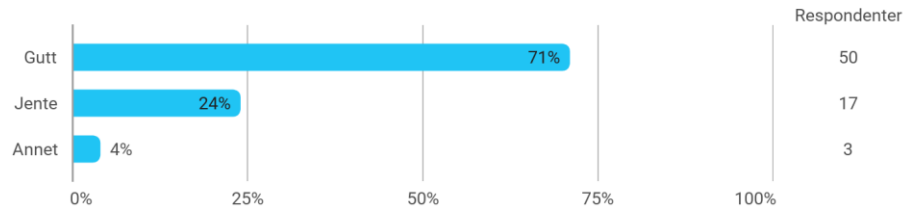
References

Axinn, W. G., & Pearce, L. D. (2006). *Mixed method data collection strategies*. Cambridge University Press.

Brevik, L. M. (2019). Gamers, Surfers, Social Media Users: Unpacking the role of interest in English. *Computer Assist Learning*, *35*, 595–606. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12362

Brown, H. J. (2008). *Videogames and education*. M.E. Sharpe.

Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. C. (2021). *Educational research : planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (Sixth ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Literacy and Intrinsic Motivation. *Daedalus*, *119*(2), 115-140.

European Union. (2018). *Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning*. Official Journal of the European Union Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)

Gee, J. P. (2007). *Good video games + good learning : collected essays on video games, learning, and literacy*. P. Lang.

Grimshaw, J., & Cardoso, W. (2018). Activate space rats! Fluency development in a mobile game-assisted environment. *Language Learning & Technology*, *22*(3), 153-175. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10125/44662

Hanghøj, T., Lieberoth, A., & Misfeldt, M. (2018). Can cooperative video games encourage social and motivational inclusion of at-risk students?: British Journal of Educational Technology. *British journal of educational technology*, *49*, 775-799. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12642

Jensen, S. H. (2017). Gaming as an English Language Learning Resource among Young Children in Denmark. *CALICO Journal*, *34*(1), 1-19. https://www.jstor.org/stable/90014675

Johansson, T., & Odenbring, Y. (2021). Rumbling and Tumbling in School: Jokes, Masculinity and Homosocial Relations. In Y. Odenbring & T. Johansson (Eds.), *Violence, Victimisation and Young People: Education and Safe Learning Environments* (pp. 59-73). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75319-1_5

Krogtoft, M., & Sjøvoll, J. (2019). *Masteroppgaven i lærerutdanninga : temavalg, forskningsplan, metoder* (1st ed.). Cappelen Damm akademisk.

Macintyre, P. D., Clement, R., Dornyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern language journal (Boulder, Colo.)*, *82*(4), 545-562. https://doi.org/10.2307/330224

Manger, T. (2013). *Livet i skolen : grunnbok i pedagogikk og elevkunnskap : 1 : Undervisning og læring* (2nd ed.). Fagbokforlaget.
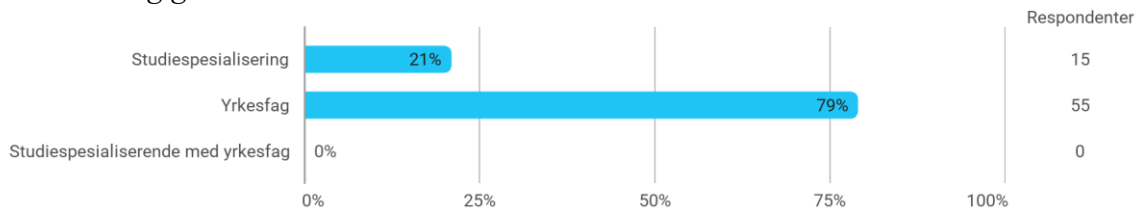
Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (2020). *Core elements: English (ENG01-04)*. Udir.no Retrieved from https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04/om-faget/kjerneelementer?lang=eng&curriculum-resources=true&context=KV6

Phillips, W. (2015). *This is why we can't have nice things : mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture*. The MIT Press.

Pitura, J., & Terlecka-Pacut, E. (2018). Action research on the application of technology assisted urban gaming in language education in a Polish upper-secondary school. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *31*(7), 734-763. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1447490

Pujol, J., Fenoll, R., Forns, J., Harrison, B. J., Martínez-Vilavella, G., Macià, D., Alvarez-Pedrerol, M., Blanco-Hinojo, L., González-Ortiz, S., Deus, J., & Sunyer, J. (2016). Video gaming in school children: How much is enough? *Annals of Neurology*, *80*(3), 424-433. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/ana.24745

Reber, A. S. (1993). Implicit Learning and Tacit Knowledge: An Essay on the Cognitive Unconscious. *Oxford: Oxford University Press*.

Reyman, J., & Sparby, E. M. (2020). *Digital Ethics: Rhetoric and Responsibility in Online Aggression* (1st ed.). Milton: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429266140

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being. *Am Psychol*, *55*(1), 68-78. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-Determination Theory : Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*. The Guilford Press.

Stenberg, P. (2011). *Den allvarsamma leken: Om World of Warcraft och läckaget* Umeå University]. Faculty of Humanities.

Sylvén, L. K., & Sundqvist, P. (2012). Gaming as extramural English L2 learning and L2 proficiency among young learners. *ReCALL*, *24*(3), 302-321. https://doi.org/10.1017/S095834401200016X

VanPatten, B., & Smith, M. (2022). *Explicit and implicit learning in second language acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4

Warcholik, W., & Leja, K. (2012). Gry miejskie jako innowacyjne produkty turystyczne. *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis Studia Geographica*, *3*, 87-97.

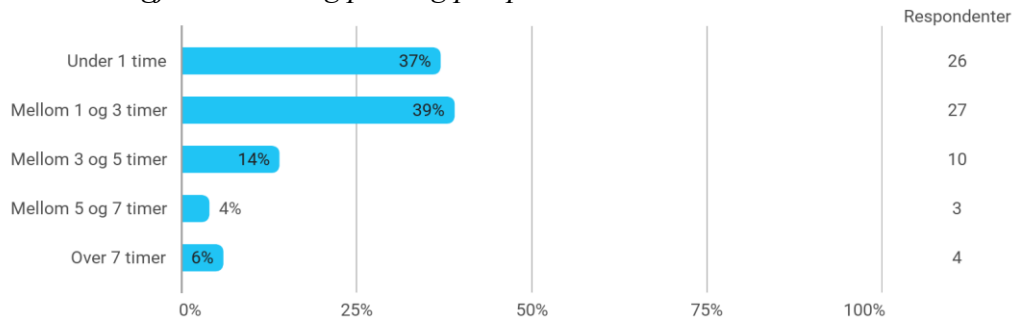# Appendix 1 – Survey (Without filters)
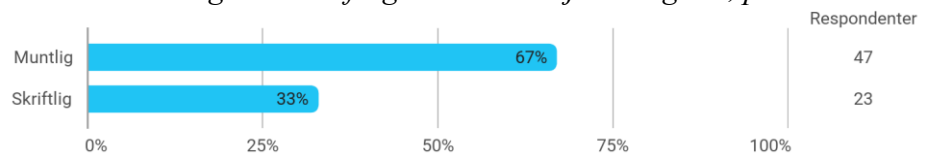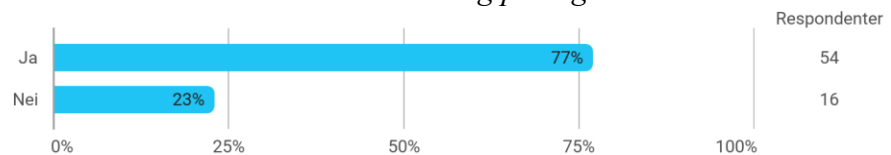
Hvilket kjønn er du?

		Respondenter
Gutt	71%	50
Jente	24%	17
Annet	4%	3

Hvilken studieretning går du?

		Respondenter
Studiespesialisering	21%	15
Yrkesfag	79%	55
Studiespesialiserende med yrkesfag	0%	0

Hvor mange timer bruker du gjennomsnittlig per dag på spill?

		Respondenter
Under 1 time	37%	26
Mellom 1 og 3 timer	39%	27
Mellom 3 og 5 timer	14%	10
Mellom 5 og 7 timer	4%	3
Over 7 timer	6%	4

Føler du deg mer komfortabel med muntlig eller skriftlig kommunikasjon i engelsk, på skolen?

		Respondenter
Muntlig	67%	47
Skriftlig	33%	23

Har du spilt dataspill hvor du har kommunisert med andre muntlig på engelsk?

		Respondenter
Ja	77%	54
Nei	23%	16

Hvor ofte kommuniserer du muntlig på engelsk når du spiller?

	Respondenter
Daglig — 19%	10
Flere ganger i uka — 22%	12
Rundt en gang i uka — 19%	10
Månedlig — 7%	4
En sjelden gang — 26%	14
Aldri — 7%	4
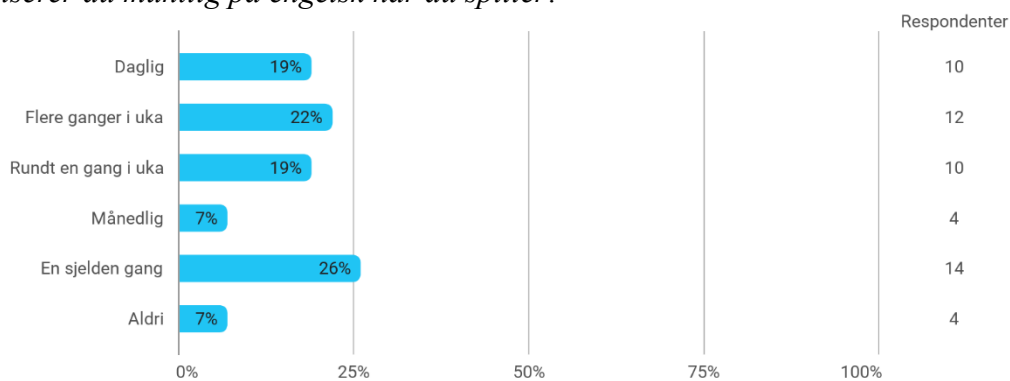
Føler du deg stødig i muntlig engelsk når du bruker det som kommunikasjonsverktøy i spill?

	Respondenter
Ja — 89%	48
Nei — 11%	6
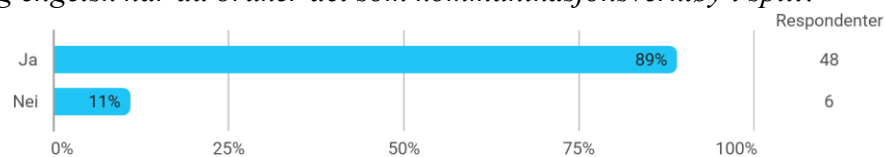
Hvordan ser du på dine egne ferdigheter i: - Engelsk vokabular

	Respondenter
Veldig dårlig — 2%	1
Dårlig — 9%	5
Ok — 13%	7
Bra — 48%	26
Veldig bra — 28%	15
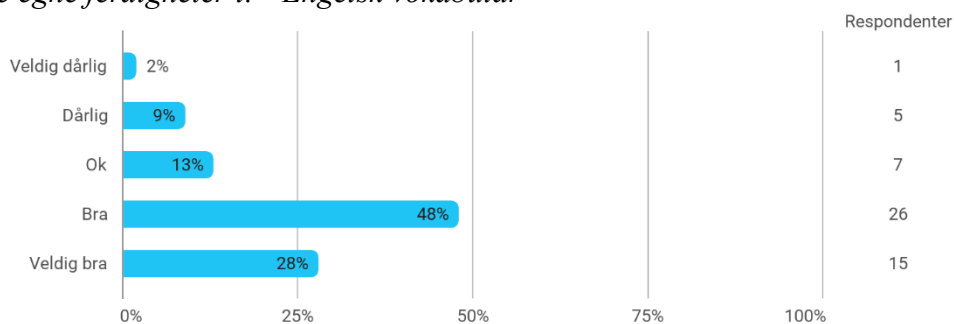
Hvordan ser du på dine egne ferdigheter i: - Engelsk uttale

	Respondenter
Veldig dårlig — 2%	1
Dårlig — 9%	5
Ok — 20%	11
Bra — 54%	29
Veldig bra — 15%	8
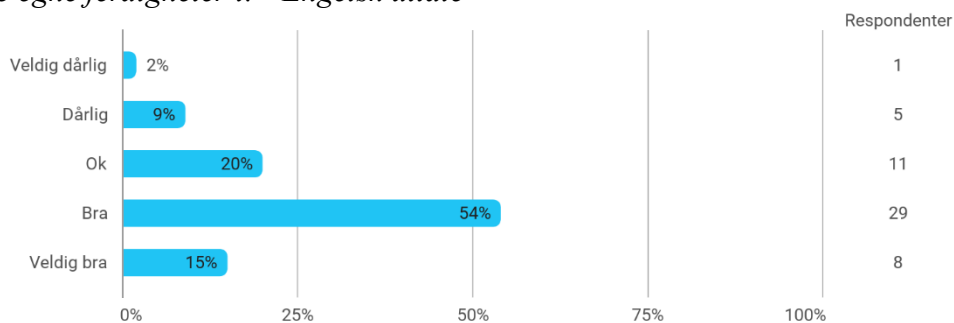
Hvordan ser du på dine egne ferdigheter i: - Engelsk språkflyt

	Respondenter
Veldig dårlig	2%	1
Dårlig	9%	5
Ok	24%	13
Bra	46%	25
Veldig bra	19%	10

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
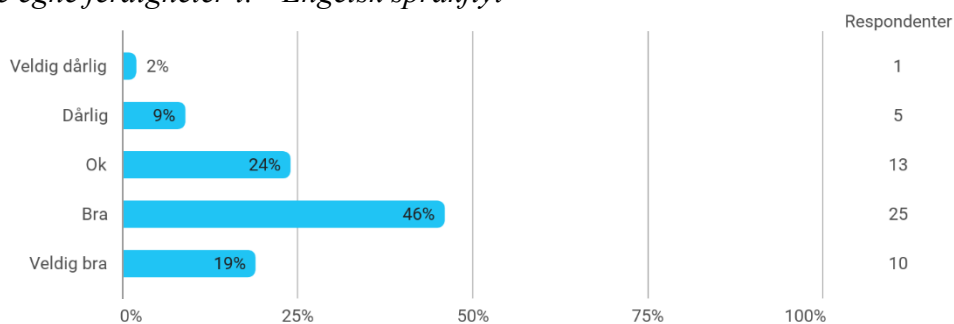
Hvordan ser du på dine egne ferdigheter i: - Engelsk grammatikk

	Respondenter
Veldig dårlig	7%	4
Dårlig	15%	8
Ok	33%	18
Bra	30%	16
Veldig bra	15%	8

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
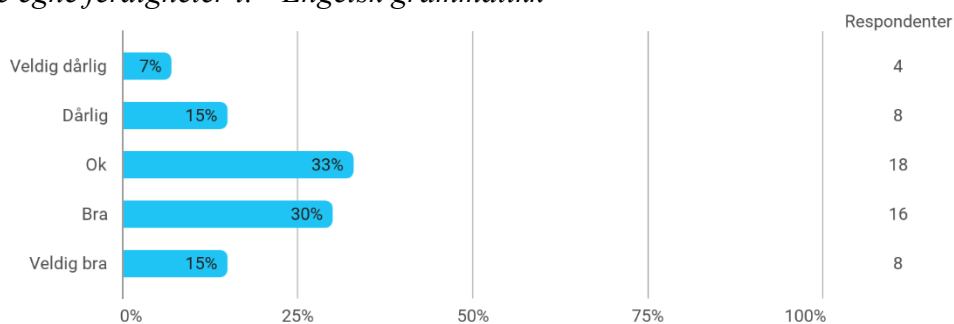
Hvordan ser du på dine egne ferdigheter i: - Engelsk staving av ord

	Respondenter
Veldig dårlig	9%	5
Dårlig	7%	4
Ok	33%	18
Bra	35%	19
Veldig bra	15%	8

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
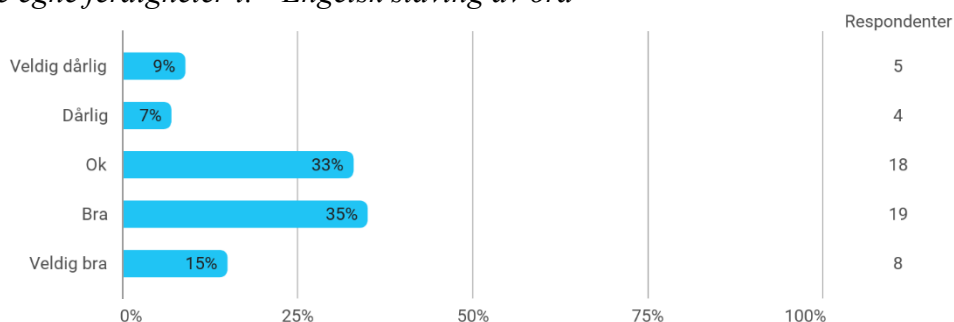
Hvor mye selvtillit har du i å snakke engelsk i klasserommet?

	Respondenter
Veldig dårlig	3%	2
Dårlig	11%	8
Ok	27%	19
Bra	33%	23
Veldig bra	26%	18

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
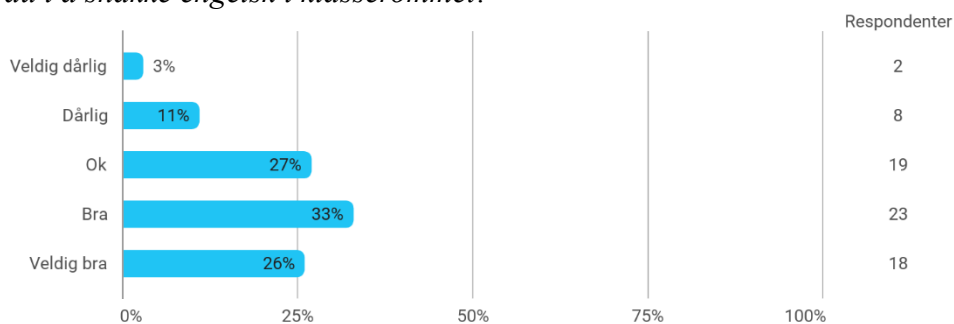
Har du brukt spill som bevisst strategi for å lære engelsk?

	Respondenter
Ja	49%	34
Nei	51%	35

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
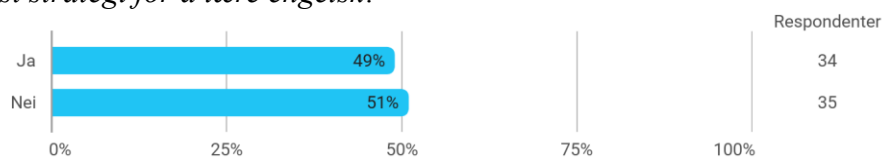
Hvor ofte legger din engelsklærer opp til å bruke spill som læringsstrategi?

	Prosent	Respondenter
Daglig	3%	2
Flere ganger i uka	4%	3
Rundt en gang i uka	12%	8
Månedlig	26%	18
En sjelden gang	28%	19
Aldri	28%	19
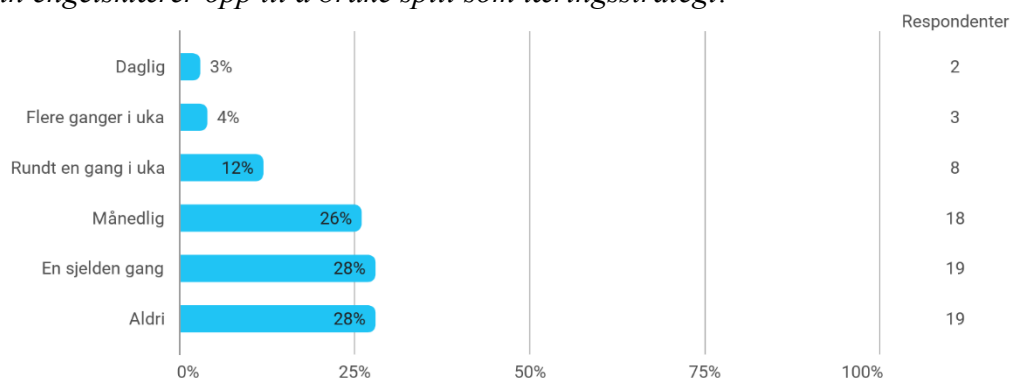
Ønsker du mer bruk av dataspill i engelsktimene?

	Prosent	Respondenter
Ja	86%	59
Nei	14%	10
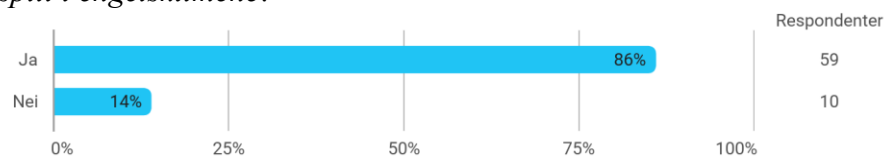
Appendix 2 – Interview Questions (Students)

Hvilket trinn tilhører du?

Har du byttet skole under den videregående skolegangen din?

Hva studerer du/Hvilken spesialisering er du på?

Hva er favorittfaget ditt?

I løpet av tiden du har gått på VGS, hvor ganger har dataspill blitt brukt i skolesammenheng?

Spiller du noe på fritiden?

Hvor mange timer spiller du i uka når du er hjemme?

På hvilke måter kommuniserer du med andre når du spiller på fritiden, og hvor ofte må du kommunisere på engelsk i slike situasjoner?

Vil du selv si du er bedre når det kommer til skriftlig eller muntlig engelsk?

Hvorfor det?

Av denne tiden, hvor mye kommuniserer du muntlig på engelsk?

Hvor mye kommuniserer du skriftlig med engelsk

Hvor ofte hører du at engelsk blir snakket til deg, i spillene du spiller?

Føler du at gaming sammen med vennene dine online, eller med andre folk på nettet, er det

Appendix 3 – Interview Questions (Teachers)

Hvor lenge har du jobbet som lærer?

Hvor lenge har du jobbet ved denne skolen?

Hvilke fag underviser du i til vanlig?

Har du tatt noen videreutdanning eller kurs etter avsluttet lærerutdanning? (Hvis ja, hva slags?) Hvordan kan man oppnå gode muntlige ferdigheter i engelsk?

Hva er dine egne erfaringer med dataspill, utenfor klasserommet?

Hva er dine erfaringer med å bruke dataspill i klasserommet?

I hvilke fag kan det lønne seg å bruke dataspill som aktivitet?

På hvilken måte kan spill hjelpe elever med deres kommunikasjon i engelsk?

Merker du noen forskjell på de elevene som du vet spiller spill hjemme til vanlig, og de som ikke gjør det?

Hva er eventuelt de forskjellene?

Er det noen spesifikke engelskferdigheter de elevene som spiller utmerker seg i?

Er det noen spesifikke engelskferdigheter de elevene som spiller er litt svakere i?

Hvordan vil du sammenligne kommunikasjonen i en engelsktime med gruppearbeid, og kommunikasjonen under en aktivitet hvor dataspill blir brukt i undervisningssammenheng.

Tror du at den gamingen som gjøres på skolen er det samme som elevene dine gjør hjemme?

Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

Merker du noe spesielt når det kommer til elevenes usikkerhet i å ville prøve seg muntlig i engelsk?

Føler du det er lettere for elevene å snakke engelsk gjennom et spill, enn det er i en klasseromsituasjon?

Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

Hva gjør elevene hvis det dukker opp ord de ikke kan oversette til engelsk når de prater til folk i spillsituasjonene?