The impact of gaming on the acquisition of politeness strategies

A study investigating the acquisition of politeness strategies among Norwegian gamers

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Abstract

Previous studies have found a positive correlation between gaming and various aspects of language learning; however, little research has been carried out on the correlation between gaming and pragmatic competence, and the use of politeness strategies among gamers. The present study investigates the impact of gaming on the acquisition of politeness strategies among Norwegian gamers: whether frequency of gaming impacts the choice of politeness strategies when performing requests in out-of-game contexts, and whether there are differences between male and female gamers. It also investigates gamers' use of swearing and other bad language expressions (BLEs) and their attitudes towards such usage in gaming, and whether gamers apply bad language to requests outside gaming. Data was elicited from Norwegian tenth graders through a discourse completion task and a questionnaire. The findings show no clear effect of gaming on the politeness strategies used, but they indicate that there might be a positive gaming effect on request strategies used by the boys, the frequent gamers having slightly more variations depending on the situation. There seems to be a gender difference in the use of alerters and supportive moves between boys and girls in general, rather than between male and female gamers. The use of swearing and other BLEs is common among gamers in the gaming context, and they are for the most part indifferent to such usage. The gamers did not apply bad language to requests outside gaming. Even though the present study has not found a clear effect of gaming on the choice of politeness strategies, it has identified some promising tendencies with respect to gaming frequency and request strategies. Further research is needed to establish a gaming effect on the choice of politeness strategies. As in previous studies, there turned out to be few female gamers and few male non-gamers in the population studied. In order to reliably study gender differences in the effects of gaming, it might thus be necessary to actively seek out female gamers and male non-gamers.

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1. Introduction

My interest in video games goes way back to early childhood when I was first drawn into and immersed in a virtual world, tasked with solving problems and overcoming various challenges to progress. This interest has followed me into adulthood and inspired the present study. Even though video games are often portrayed in a negative light and stereotypically labelled as hostile environments and a waste of time, they are nevertheless a popular pastime activity for many people – children, teenagers and adults alike – and an arena where players engage with English in a variety of ways, providing opportunities for rich English input and output.

Second language acquisition (SLA) and gaming has been increasingly studied in the last two decades, and several studies have found a positive correlation between gaming and various aspects of language learning – but mainly for boys. The new English curriculum for Norwegian schools (LK20) acknowledges the positive effect gaming can have on English proficiency. An area where further research is needed is on the correlation between gaming and pragmatic competence, and the use of politeness strategies among gamers. Further research is also needed on the correlation between gender, gaming and language learning. While there have been some studies investigating politeness in gaming, Norwegian gamers' use of politeness strategies in contexts outside gaming remains uncharted territory. The present study is an attempt to help fill in these gaps by investigating whether frequency of gaming impacts the choice of politeness strategies when performing requests in out-of-game contexts, and whether there are differences between male and female gamers. Since previous studies on politeness in the gaming context have found that gamers may use bad language expressions as positive politeness, this study will also investigate gamers' bad language use and attitudes towards this in gaming, and whether they apply bad language to requests outside gaming.

This thesis consists of altogether six chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapters 2 and 3 present and discuss the theoretical background which my thesis is built on, and review previous studies on SLA and gaming, including studies on politeness and gaming. Chapter 4 describes the research questions, the participants and the process of data collection, the methods used and how the data was analysed. The findings related to my research questions are presented and discussed in chapter 5 in light of the theoretical background and previous findings. Chapter 6 finally concludes this thesis by summarising the findings, commenting on shortcomings and making suggestions for future research.

2. Gaming and language learning

Language learning does not just take place in the classroom, especially in societies where there is exposure to the target language in different ways. One of the ways in which people in Norway and many other countries may be exposed to English is through gaming, which has become an increasingly popular pastime activity, particularly for children, teenagers and young adults. This chapter will first discuss the status of English in Norway (section 2.1) to shine light on the language learning context and why English may now be considered more of a second language than a foreign language. It will then define second language acquisition (SLA) and introduce some theories/hypothesis about SLA that are particularly relevant to learning from extracurricular activities (2.2). Section 2.3 explains what gaming is and elaborates on its potential to promote language learning, and finally section 2.4 reviews previous studies on SLA and gaming.

2.1. The status of English in Norway

Second language (L2) and *foreign language* (FL) are terms used to describe the language(s) a speaker learns after acquiring his/her first language (L1). The distinction between a second and foreign language mainly lies in the learning context (Ortega, 2009, p. 6). A second language is acquired in a context or environment where the target language is dominant, and where the language learning is not restricted to within the four walls of the classroom. It offers a high degree of immersion and exposure to the target language, and the opportunity to use it to communicate in everyday situations outside of the classroom. Learning a foreign language does not offer the same opportunities for input and output as the target language is not dominant and is mostly taught and used in the classroom.

English has traditionally been considered a foreign language in Norway, as well as in other Scandinavian countries, because it has primarily been taught in classrooms and been acknowledged "as an international language for cultural, commercial, educational, etc. purposes" (Simensen, 2010, p. 473). However, the status of English is arguably shifting from that of a foreign language towards a second language as a result of the increasing influence, exposure and use of English in Norwegian society (pp. 475-476). Today, "English is *the* global language of communication" and it is used as a *lingua franca* by speakers with different first languages (Rindal, 2014, p. 8). English is no longer primarily learnt and encountered in the classroom like a typical foreign language. Instead, Norwegians encounter English on a daily

basis through music, entertainment, the internet, social media, gaming, travelling, etc. – providing vast opportunities for English input and output.

The use of English outside the classroom is called *extramural English*, a term introduced by Sundqvist (2009) in the context of second language acquisition (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, p. 5). The term emphasises that the contact or involvement with the language is voluntarily initiated by the learners, rather than "by teachers or other people working in educational institutions" (p. 6).

Rindal (2014) writes that in "[t]he past couple of decades young Norwegians have experienced massive exposure to English through audio and audiovisual media" (p. 8). Norwegians, and particularly young Norwegians, access and use media like never before. The internet is only a few clicks away and is an important source of exposure since English is the dominant language online. In fact, the Norwegian Media Barometer reported that 9 out of 10 Norwegians use the internet on an average day (Statistics Norway, 2021, p. 57), and the number is even higher among young Norwegians aged 9-15 and 16-24, where the percentages are 94% and 99% respectively (p. 59). Other noteworthy sources of exposure to English include the use of social media, streaming of music, film and videos, and digital games. Digital games have become an increasingly popular extramural activity, and as many as 85% of young Norwegians aged 9-15 and 54% of those aged 16-24 play digital games on a daily basis (p. 84). Additionally, children, teenagers and young adults are, without exception, the most active players across all platforms (p. 81).

The special status of English in Norway is reflected in the school curriculum. While popular foreign languages such as Spanish, German and French are grouped together under the same curriculum, English has – similarly to the Norwegian subject – a different curriculum with its own competence aims. *Communication, language learning* and *working with English texts* are highlighted as core elements in the English curriculum (NDET, 2022a). Students need to be able to create meaning through English and have the ability to use the language in different settings, making use of a variety of strategies for communication. In addition, students are expected to develop "language awareness and knowledge of English as a system, and the ability to use language learning strategies" (NDET, 2022a). Students' language learning is facilitated as they encounter a variety of texts (spoken, written, multimodal, etc.) and "by reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, [they] shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society" (NDET, 2022a).

English is taught as an obligatory school subject from the 1st to the 11th grade, adding up to a total of 728 hours of teaching (NDET, 2022a). Students can furthermore pick English as an elective subject for two additional years in upper secondary school if they wish. In comparison to English, foreign languages are not introduced and taught until the 8th grade and are optional in lower secondary school as students are offered alternative subjects. Students who pick foreign languages in lower secondary school have a total of 222 hours of teaching from the 8th to the 10th grade (NDET, 2022b). Additionally, foreign language teaching is only obligatory in the general studies programme in upper secondary school. Students in upper secondary school have either two (225 hours) or three years (365 hours) of foreign language teaching depending on whether or not they learned a foreign language in lower secondary school. Therefore, some students have a total of five years of learning a foreign language, while others never have any foreign language teaching (NDET, 2022b).

The curriculum for English highlights its status as a global language of communication and describes English as an important subject for students' ability to communicate with people regardless of language and cultural background. The subject furthermore contributes to the development of students' intercultural competence, "enabling them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns," while it also aids the development of their own personal identity (NDET, 2022a).

2.2. Second language acquisition

Second language acquisition (or SLA for short) is a growing research field that emerged in the late 1960s and concerns itself with investigating "the human capacity to learn languages other than the first, during late childhood, adolescence or adulthood, and once the first language or languages have been acquired" (Ortega, 2009, pp. 1-2). The field investigates language learning in both classroom/instructed setting (foreign language acquisition) and naturalistic settings (second language acquisition). It takes interest in the acquisition of all aspects of linguistic competence, including vocabulary, syntax, phonology and pragmatics. SLA is distinct from monolingual and bilingual language acquisition, the latter referring to "the process of learning two or more languages relatively simultaneously during early childhood" (p. 4). SLA and bilingualism are two distinct fields, although it can be difficult to distinguish between them in the early years due to overlapping. That being said, SLA tends to favour "the study of late-starting acquires, whereas bilingualism favours the study of people who had a very early start

with their language" (p. 4). SLA is therefore characterised by late and variable timing of language learning, as well as variation in levels of attainment for learners.

Since the emergence of the field in the 1960s, there have been many attempts to explain how SLA takes place. Some notable and relevant contributions include the hypotheses of input (Krashen, 1985), interaction (Long, 1996) and output (Swain, 1985). I would argue that these works are particularly relevant for my thesis due to the nature of video games themselves. All video games are multimodal in nature and provide players exposure to input through various modalities which they in turn have to actively engage and interact with. Some types of games, which I will return to later in this chapter, also provide opportunities to produce output, and allow players to interact and collaborate with each other. In other words, "social interaction is an integral part of the game itself" (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012, p. 126).

Krashen proposed his Comprehensible Input Hypothesis in the late 1970s which emphasised that comprehensible input is "the single most important source of L2 learning" (Ortega, 2009, p. 59). According to Krashen, learners have to be exposed to comprehensible input that is also slightly above their current level, which he termed *i+1*. Input can be explained as the language that learners are exposed to while listening and reading, for instance oral messages and written text. "When learners process these messages for meaning (…), grammar learning will naturally occur" (p. 59). However, input alone was found to be insufficient as findings suggested minimal grammatical development despite great immersion and opportunities for input (p. 60).

Long's Interaction Hypothesis was proposed in the early 1980s and built on Krashen's notion of the importance of comprehensible input for language learning. The focus shifted from a strong input orientation towards interaction and negotiation of meaning. Long proposed that "the best kind of comprehensible input learners can hope to obtain is input that has been interactionally modified" (p. 61). Negotiation of meaning thus takes place when comprehension problems arise between interlocutors "as they strive to make meaning more comprehensible for each other" (p. 61). The interlocutors perform various *moves* to negotiate meaning. First and foremost, *clarification requests* are used by the interlocutor to indicate non-comprehension and to request explanation (e.g. *what do you mean? excuse me?*). Secondly, the interlocutor can use *confirmation checks* to make sure their own understanding is correct, for instance by rephrasing what has been said (e.g. *did you mean that…*). Thirdly, the interlocutor can use *comprehension checks* to make sure their conversation partner has understood (e.g. *should I repeat? what do you think?*). When interlocutors negotiate meaning this way, "they are generating tailor-made

comprehensible input, or learner-contingent *i+1*, at the right level that the particular interlocutor needs to understand the message" (p. 61).

Swain's Pushed Output Hypothesis was formulated in the mid-1980s and claims that output plays a role in SLA. The term 'output' refers to the meaning learners create when they speak and write in their target language. The output hypothesis was based on research in French immersion schools in an English-speaking province in Canada. Despite the French immersion students having been subjected to comprehensible input in French for six or seven years, Swain (1985) found that "the written and spoken French of these students included numerous grammatical and syntactic deviations from native-speaker usage" (Swain, 2001, p. 99). These findings supported the idea that input and interaction, "while important, were not sufficient to guarantee grammatical acquisition" (Ortega, 2009, p. 62). According to Swain (1985), learners have to be pushed to produce accurate and appropriate language, and output moreover allows them "to process language more deeply – with more mental effort – than does input" (Swain, 2001, p. 99). This is because output requires learners to not only make use of their receptive skills, but also their productive or active skills. Output can provide opportunities for the learners to notice 'gaps' in their interlanguage and test hypotheses about how the target language works (p. 100).

Output furthermore plays an essential role in collaborative dialogue which can be described as "dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building" (p. 102). Learners who engage in such dialogue have the opportunity to use language, in addition to receive feedback from each other and reflect on their own language use as they "regulate each other's activity, and their own" (p. 111). Moreover, Swain argues that "[t]ogether their jointly constructed performance outstrips their individual competencies" (p. 111).

2.3. Gaming as an opportunity for learning

The term *gaming* refers to the popular activity of playing video games, and those who spend a lot of time gaming often call themselves and identify as *gamers.* Video games are an interactive form of entertainment that can be played on various gaming platforms such as PC, PlayStation, Xbox, and more recently on mobile phones. Video games have often been portrayed in a negative light and stereotypically labelled as "meaningless play" or "a waste of time" because "many people who don't play video games, especially older people" believe there is little to nothing to learn from them (Gee, 2007, pp. 20-21). However, video games are now specifically

mentioned in the new English curriculum for Norwegian schools (LK20), which actually acknowledges that gaming can have a positive impact on language learning (NDET, 2022c).

Video games are not a homogenous category, as they come in a large variety of forms and genres similarly to that of books and movies. For instance, one can distinguish between single-player (SP) and multiplayer (MP) games depending on whether the game can be played alone or with others. There is moreover a distinction made between offline and online games, where the latter requires internet connection and allows the player to interact with other players from all around the world. That being said, many games these days contain both a single-player and multiplayer mode, as well as the choice to play the game offline and/or online.

I cannot write about video games and language learning without mentioning Gee (2007, 2013) and his books on gaming, learning and literacy. Gee (2007) argues that video games – especially good games – can promote active and critical learning and thinking based on two important factors: the way the games are designed, and the players and nonplayers surrounding the learner (pp. 38-39). According to Gee (2013), video games are "problem-solving spaces" at heart (p. 142). The players get immersed in a virtual world where they have to solve problems or overcome challenges in order to progress – they are required to actively *do* something, either alone or working together with other players. These problems and challenges are often quite difficult, but provide the players "ample [opportunities] to operate within, but at the outer edge of, [their] resources, so that at those points things are felt as challenging but not 'undoable'" (Gee, 2007, p. 223). Good game design therefore pushes the players' abilities to the outer limit without exceeding this limit. In addition, "[l]earning is a cycle of probing the world; reflecting in and on this action and, on this basis, forming a hypothesis; reprobing the world to test this hypothesis; and then accepting or rethinking the hypothesis" (p. 223). Although Gee mainly writes about how video games enable learning on a general basis, his learning principles are arguably also relevant and can be applied in the case of L2 acquisition.

English is the "default language of interaction and communication" among players, and particularly among players with different language backgrounds (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012a, p. 303). The majority of video games are also made in English to target a wider audience. Gaming can thus provide great opportunities for English input and output, and furthermore have a positive impact on L2 acquisition depending on what type of game it is (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012b, p. 126). Single-player games, such as adventure games, can provide opportunities for input through narrative, in-game dialogue and text, which often requires the player to listen and read attentively to understand the game context. According to Baltra (1990), "these games have

been described as a type of interactive fiction [because] they can promote development of communicative fluency, both in the student's native language and in a second or foreign language" (p. 446). Single-player games normally do not provide much opportunity for output as they are played alone and mostly offline. By contrast, online multiplayer games, for instance the popular massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), "seem to offer a broader range of features that enhance L2 acquisition, such as opportunities to produce output, both written and oral, and to interact and collaborate with other players" (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012b, p. 126). Online multiplayer games thus create social spaces for language learning where players work together to solve problems and overcome challenges.

2.4. Research on SLA and gaming

Second language acquisition (SLA) and gaming is a small research field that has experienced a growth and increase in popularity in the last two decades. According to Cornillie et al. (2012), who conducted a database search, there has been an increase in the number of publications on digital games and language learning between 2001 and 2010 (p. 252). However, it is important to note that most of these publications are not empirical in nature and furthermore do not report on commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) games, which are games that are created for the sole purpose of entertainment rather than learning. This is emphasized by Sundqvist (2019) who claims that "despite an increased number of studies on the relation between digital gameplay and language learning, empirical large-scale studies are scarce, as are studies that focus on gaming outside institutional settings, in the digital wilds" (p. 87). In light of this, the present study aims to provide much-needed insight into the correlation between gaming outside institutional settings and L2 acquisition. I will now move on to present some general findings based on relevant studies on SLA and gaming.

The majority of studies on SLA and gaming suggest that there is a positive correlation between gaming and various aspects of language learning. Several studies report that time spent playing video games may have a positive impact on the acquisition of L2 vocabulary (Hannibal Jensen, 2017; Rankin, Gold & Gooch, 2006; Sundqvist, 2009, 2019; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015). In addition to vocabulary, Sylvén & Sundqvist (2012a) investigated the effect of gaming on reading and listening comprehension among young Swedish learners between the ages of 11 and 12. They placed the learners into three distinct groups based on time spent playing video games (*non-gamers, moderate gamers and frequent gamers*) and found that the test scores

improved with each of these groups. The frequency of gaming, and interestingly also the types of games played, correlates positively with the learners' L2 vocabulary, and reading and listening comprehension (p. 302). In a more recent study, Sundqvist (2019) found that both time spent gaming and types of games correlated positively with L2 vocabulary learning, although analysis revealed that the former was more important than the latter. With regard to types of games, the groups of learners who played multiplayer (MP) or massively multiplayer-online (MMO) games scored higher than the single-player (SP) and non-gamer groups in terms of both productive and receptive vocabulary (p. 104). These findings may have implications for the present study as there could be a similar correlation between these factors and the participants' pragmatic competence and what politeness strategies they use. I will therefore need to account for both frequency of gaming and what games the participants play.

Further, there have been studies that found a positive correlation between gaming and other aspects of language learning, including reading skills (Brevik, 2016, 2019), translation skills (Kuppens, 2010), and L2 interaction and willingness to communicate (Reinders & Watanna, 2011, 2015). Thorne (2008), who investigated intercultural communication between two gamers playing the massively multiplayer online game *World of Warcraft*, found that the gamers were able to perform successful repair sequences through collaborative dialogue. What is more, Piirainen-Marsh & Tainio (2009) found that learners frequently made use of repetition in collaborative play during role-playing game sessions. Not only did repetition and imitation serve "as a resource for participation" – it also promoted noticing among the learners and enabled them to adopt words and phrases "into their own repertoire" (p. 165).

Although most studies on gaming and language learning suggest a positive correlation, there are a few studies that reveal contradicting findings or possible limitations. Andersen (2019) investigated SLA, more specifically vocabulary and grammar acquisition, by two adult learners of Spanish who played the MMORPG *World of Warcraft* over a period of several months. In his mixed methods case study, he found that language learning in MMORPG contexts may take place but "is not guaranteed and (…) depends on a number of factors" (p. 93). For one, "it is vital that the learners have a basic understanding of the specific linguistic features targeted for learning in order to benefit from gameplay" (p. 93). Another important factor seems to be the initial proficiency levels of the learners, as "low proficiency learners can experience cognitive overload", which in turn may prevent language learning from taking place (p. 93). It is important to note that Andersen's (2019) findings are based on a case study with few

participants and thus should not be generalised. However, the identified factors emphasise the importance of accounting for the participants' English proficiency in the present study.

Nguyen (2017) investigated the impact of gaming and gaming culture on L2 vocabulary and grammar among Norwegian tenth graders in a partial replication of Sylvén & Sundqvist's (2012a) study. Interestingly and contradicting to previously mentioned studies, she found a negative correlation between time spent gaming and vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. There could be several reasons for this, one being the small sample used in the study, while there were also "many possibly confounding variables which could not be controlled, such as language aptitude and learning style" (Nguyen, 2017, p. 34). The study also did not consider what types of games the participants played. Another factor worth mentioning, which does not necessarily explain the negative correlation found, is the uneven gender distribution in the groups (*non-gamers, moderate gamers* and *frequent gamers*): "[t]he non-gamer group consisted almost exclusively of girls (…), while the frequent gamer group had a majority of boys (p. 29). I will address and discuss the aspect of gaming and gender later in this chapter.

While Nguyen (2017) found a negative correlation between time spent gaming and vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, the picture changed when time spent on beyond-game activities was considered. She found that "moderate participation in such activities – coupled with frequent gaming – correlates positively with vocabulary levels. Notably, this correlation does not seem to apply to grammatical knowledge" (Nguyen, 2017, p. 28). Beyond-game activities is an important part of gaming culture. It takes place when players, either before or after playing games, engage and interact with online gaming communities. This will often require them to communicate in English with both native and non-native speakers of English. Some popular beyond-game activities include watching videos of games and of other people playing games on platforms such as YouTube and Twitch, browsing and reading game-specific wikis, posting and responding to other players' posts about games in online chats and forums, etc. In addition to Nguyen (2017), previous studies have also reported that participating in online gaming communities creates opportunities for and can facilitate language learning (Chik, 2014; Ryu, 2013). Although unpacking the role of beyond-game activities is not the main focal point of the present study, it will nevertheless be relevant to consider whether or not the participants spend time on beyond-game activities.

An area where more research is needed is the connection between gender, gaming and language learning. Some studies have shown a correlation between gaming and language learning only for boys. A correlation has not been shown for girls, since female gamers have yet to be

explored much in depth. Additionally, there is a need for more studies on gender and game preference, as this seem to be different between boys and girls. Some studies have revealed a pattern where boys and girls prefer to play different types of games; namely that boys prefer to play online multiplayer role-playing games, while girls prefer to play offline single-player games, and that this game preference, rather than gender itself, seems to have implications for language learning (Sundqvist, 2009, 2019; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012a).

The studies that have explored gender found that boys spend significantly more time gaming in comparison to girls (Hannibal Jensen, 2017; Kuppens, 2010; Sundqvist, 2009, Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012a). Nguyen (2017) found that beyond-game culture "seems to be a primarily male-dominated arena" (p. 20). This is arguably not a surprise as gaming has traditionally been viewed as an activity for boys. It can further explain why the majority of the gamers participating in these studies are male and why the positive correlation between gaming and language learning is related to boys. In order to reliably study the correlation between gaming, language learning and gender, a larger sample of female gamers is required. In the last two years, the gap in the number of boys and girls who play video games has increased. According to The Norwegian Media Authority (2022), the percentages of boys and girls aged 9-18 who play video games are 92% and 59% respectively, which is a 17% decrease for girls compared to 2020 (p. 3). It is important to note that the gap between boys and girls increase with age and that the biggest difference is found in the 15-16 age group, where 90% of boys and 47% of girls play (p. 7).

Lastly, but perhaps most relevant to my thesis, little research has been carried out on the correlation between gaming and pragmatic competence, and the use of politeness strategies among gamers. While there have been some studies that explored interaction and politeness in in-game contexts (Ensslin & Finnegan, 2019; Kiourti, 2019; Kramer, 2013; Peterson, 2012; Swoboda, 2015), I have been unable to find any studies that investigate the use of politeness strategies among gamers in out-of-game contexts, i.e. whether gamers acquire politeness strategies that they apply in other contexts. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap. I will return to the studies on politeness in in-game contexts in the next chapter after a discussion of pragmatics and politeness theory.

3. Pragmatics and politeness theory

Before I review the studies that have investigated politeness in in-game contexts, it is necessary to introduce and discuss the relevant pragmatic theories. As such, this chapter will first define pragmatics and pragmatic competence, and look more closely at speech act theory (section 3.1). It will then introduce and discuss politeness theory (3.2). Section 3.3 finally reviews previous studies on politeness and gaming and comments on their implications for the present study.

3.1. Pragmatics and pragmatic competence

Defining pragmatics is no simple task due to the "diversity of possible definitions and lack of clear boundaries" to other linguistic branches (Levinson, 1983, p. 5). Levinson (1983) provided a general, although unsatisfactory (as he himself points out), definition of pragmatics: "just as, traditionally, syntax is taken to be the study of the combinatorial properties of words and their parts, and semantics to be the study of meaning, so pragmatics is *the study of language usage* [emphasis added]" (p. 5). A more recent definition is provided by Kroeger (2019), who writes that "pragmatics is concerned with those aspects of meaning [in human language] that depend on or derive from the way in which the words and sentences are used" (p. 4). In other words, pragmatics concerns itself with how people create and understand meaning through the use of language in social contexts. This requires the speaker and the hearer to have developed a degree of *pragmatic competence.*

Pragmatic competence may be defined "as the ability to use language appropriately in a social context" (Taguchi, 2009, p. 1), and it plays a vital role for *communicative competence.* Communicative competence was first defined by Hymes (1972) and "involves knowing not only the vocabulary, phonology, grammar, and other aspects of linguistic structure (…) but also when to speak (or not), what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation" (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 100). It also involves the speaker and the hearer to have knowledge of the social and cultural context that they find themselves in (p. 100). This means that pragmatic competence, and in turn communicative competence, are crucial for people to communicate effectively regardless of whether they use English, Norwegian or any other language(s).

People do not just use language to *say* something, they use language to *do* something. Speech acts may be defined as "acts done in the process of speaking" (Sadock, 2004, p. 53). People

perform speech acts all the time, for instance when they greet, thank or compliment others, or when they apologise or make requests – the speech act of requests is particularly relevant for the present study and will be discussed more in depth later in this chapter. Speech act theory is central to pragmatics and some influential and noteworthy contributions to this field include the works of Austin, Searle, and Grice.

Speech act theory was introduced by Austin (1962), who first suggested a distinction between *constatives*, i.e. descriptive utterances that say something about the world and can be true or false (e.g. *the couple got married*), and *performatives,* i.e. utterances that are not descriptive and instead are performing an act by being uttered. To illustrate, a performative speech act is uttered when the priest says *I now pronounce you husband and wife* during a wedding ceremony, which results in a change in the world as the couple officially gets status as married. While constatives are true or false, performatives are felicitous (i.e. successful) or infelicitous (i.e. unsuccessful) depending on whether certain felicity conditions are met when the performative is uttered (Austin, 1962, pp. 14-15). It is important to note, however, that Austin (1962) argued that the distinction between constatives and performatives was not defensible, as he pointed out that "to *say* something is to *do* something; or in which *by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something" (p. 12). This means that "every normal utterance has both a descriptive and an effective aspect" (Sadock, 2004, p. 54).

Austin (1962) instead proposed a distinction between three types of acts which are performed when people use language, namely *locutionary acts, illocutionary acts,* and *perlocutionary acts.* Firstly, he described locutionary acts as "uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense" (p. 108). Secondly, illocutionary acts are "performance of an act in saying something" such as informing or requesting (p. 99). Thirdly, perlocutionary acts are performed as a result of speaking, i.e. "what we bring about or achieve by saying something" (p. 108). Austin (1962, p. 101) gives the following example to distinguish between the three acts:

> Act (A) or Locution
> He said to me 'Shoot her!' meaning by 'shoot' shoot and referring by 'her' to *her.*[1]
>
> Act (B) or Illocution
> He urged (or advised, ordered, etc.) me to shoot her.

[1] This is the way Austin (1962) used italics and single quotation marks. Today, the proper usage would be: He said to me 'Shoot her!' meaning by *shoot* 'shoot' and referring by *her* to 'her'.

Act (C. a) or Perlocution
He persuaded me to shoot her.

Act (C. b)
He got me to (or made me, etc.) shoot her.

When people use language, they can choose to perform speech acts directly or indirectly. Searle (1979) defined indirect speech acts as "cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another" (p. 31). Thus, the speaker intends to communicate more than what is literally being said, which means that the speaker needs to "rely on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer" (pp. 31-32).

The works of Grice has been influential within the field of pragmatics, as he attempted to account for how people communicate more than what they say, i.e. indirect speech acts. Grice distinguished between what the speaker said and what the speaker intended to communicate beyond what is said. "Things that are communicated beyond what is said (…) Grice called *implicatures* [emphasis added]" (Sadock, 2004, pp. 58-59). Grice (1975) furthermore proposed the *cooperative principle* which includes guidelines that speakers ideally should follow when they communicate. These four guidelines, or *maxims of conversation* as he called them, are the *maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relevance,* and *the maxim of manner* (pp. 45-46). The purpose of these maxims is to "specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information" (Levinson, 1983, p. 102).

I mentioned earlier that people have the choice to perform speech acts directly or indirectly, but the reasons why they would choose indirect forms over direct forms have yet to be brought to light and discussed. The choice to perform speech acts indirectly is affected by politeness and the social surroundings of the speaker, which I will now present and discuss in depth.

3.2. Politeness theory

First and foremost, it may be useful to define *politeness.* Politeness is "behaviour that is socially correct and shows understanding for other people's feelings" (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Politeness theory within linguistics was proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and has been very influential in the field of politeness research. A central aspect of politeness theory is

the notion of *face*, derived from Goffman (1967). Face is related to a person's "public self-image" and is "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). There are two aspects of face, namely *negative face* and *positive face.* Negative face is defined as "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others," while positive face is defined as "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (p. 62). In other words, negative face is related to a person's autonomy and his/her desire not to be imposed upon. Positive face has to do with a person's desire to be liked and accepted by other people, which also includes the desire that his/her goals are viewed in a positive light by others.

The phrase 'losing face' ('å tape ansikt' in Norwegian) is commonly used about losing respect, being embarrassed, humiliated or portrayed in a way that does not reflect a person's own self-image. When people interact with each other, they do not only have to be mindful of their own face, but also the face of others to avoid face loss, which in turn may result in social breakdown (pp. 61-62). Acts that potentially threaten the face wants of the speaker (S) and/or hearer (H) are called *face threatening acts* (or FTAs for short). A distinction is made "between acts that threaten negative face and those that threaten positive face" (p. 65). Some examples of potential FTAs include expressions of gratitude, apologies and requests.

The speaker can use different strategies in order to minimise the threat of FTAs, but there are several wants that he/she needs to take into consideration: "(a) the want to communicate the content of the FTA x, (b) the want to be efficient or urgent, and (c) the want to maintain H's face to any degree. Unless (b) is greater than (c), S will want to minimise the threat of his FTA" (p. 68). Brown & Levinson (1987) proposes several possible strategies, including not going through with the FTA if the threat to face is far greater and outweighs both (a) and (b). If the speaker decides to do the FTA, he/she can do it *off record* or *on record.* Off record involves doing the FTA indirectly, i.e. that the speaker communicates more than what is literally being said. On record is a direct way of doing the FTA and it can be done *bald* on record, *without redressive action* or on record with *redressive action.* "Doing an act baldly, without redress, involves doing it in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible" (p. 69). Meanwhile, doing it on record with redressive action "[attempts] to counteract the potential face damage of the FTA by doing it in such a way, or with such modification or additions, that indicate clearly that no such face threat is intended or desired, and that S in general recognizes H's face wants and himself wants them to be achieved" (pp. 69-70). The redressive action may

be oriented towards the positive face of the hearer, i.e. positive politeness, or it may be oriented towards his/her negative face, i.e. negative politeness (p. 70).

There are three sociological variables that impact the speaker's "assessment of the seriousness of an FTA" (p. 74), which in turn impact what strategies he/she may use. These variables are the social distance, the relative social power, and the degree of imposition (which will be described as low/high). In cases where the speaker and hearer know each other well, there is no or very little social distance. In comparison, there is social distance in cases where they barely or do not know each other at all. The relative social power is equal or asymmetric depending on the social status of the speaker and hearer. Furthermore, degree of imposition has to do with how much is asked of the hearer in terms of time and effort, i.e. cost. The speaker normally prefers direct strategies when there is no or very little social distance, equal power and low degree of imposition. However, indirect strategies are preferred when there is social distance, asymmetric power and high degree of imposition (pp. 74-76).

Brown & Levinson (1987) list requests as a FTA because they potentially threaten the face of the speaker and hearer depending on the request itself and the social context. Requests threaten the negative face of the hearer because the very nature of requests involves the speaker asking the hearer to do or refrain from doing something. This goes against the hearer's negative face wants, i.e. his/her autonomy and desire to not be imposed upon by others. Requests can also threaten the positive face wants of the speaker because the hearer can deny doing what is asked of him/her and may also view the speaker in a negative light for making the request, i.e. the speaker's goals for making the request may not be desirable to the hearer.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989, p. 18) categorise nine types of requests that the speaker may use. These request types are arranged according to level of directness as shown below, where (1) *mood derivable* is the most direct type and (9) *mild hints* are most indirect. Furthermore, there are three main levels of directness: *direct strategies* (1-5), *conventionally indirect strategies* (6-7) and *non-conventionally indirect strategies* (8-9).

1. *mood derivable:* utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force ('Leave me alone'; Clean up that mess'),
2. *performatives:* utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named ('I am asking you to clean up the mess').
3. *hedged performatives*: utterances in which the naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions ('I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled').

4. *obligation statements*: utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act ('You'll have to move that car').
5. *want statements*: utterances which state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act ('I really wish you'd stop bothering me').
6. *suggestory formulae:* utterances which contain a suggestion to do x ('How about cleaning up?').
7. *query preparatory:* utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g., ability, willingness) as conventionalized in any specific language ('Could you clear up the kitchen, please?'; 'Would you mind moving your car?').
8. *strong hints:* utterances containing partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act ('You have left the kitchen in a right mess').
9. *mild hints:* utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests by context ('I am a nun' in response to a persistent hassler).

In addition to types of requests, there are other politeness strategies that the speaker may use, for instance *alerters* and *supportive moves.* Alerters normally precede the request and "serve as attention-getters" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 17). Attention-getters are terms of address (e.g. first name, surname, titles), greetings (e.g. *hello, hey, yo*), and expressions that aim not only to get attention, but simultaneously minimise the imposition on the hearer (e.g. *excuse me, pardon, sorry*), i.e. negative politeness oriented towards the hearer's negative face. Supportive moves can precede and/or follow the request, and examples include availability checks, attempts to get a precommitment, promises, threats, and grounders, i.e. reasons or justification for the request (p. 17).

3.3. Research on politeness and gaming

While research on politeness and gaming has been limited thus far, there have been a significant number of studies on pragmatics and politeness in SLA. A key finding from these studies is that pragmatic transfer takes place, i.e. that learners apply knowledge of their own culture and L1 strategies when communicating in the L2 (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Johansen, 2008). The learners' L2 proficiency also has implications for the use of politeness strategies, for instance supportive moves are much more frequently used by higher than lower proficiency learners (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Rose, 2000). The present study will not consider L1 transfer, but focus specifically on the effect of gaming on the choice of politeness strategies. The participants' English performance will therefore neither be compared to their performance in Norwegian, nor to the performance by native English speakers. However, the

learners' L2 proficiency will be gauged through self-report as L2 proficiency may influence the impact of gaming on the acquisition of politeness strategies (Andersen, 2019).

As previously mentioned, little research has been conducted on the correlation between gaming and pragmatic competence, and the use of politeness strategies among gamers. The research has been limited to in-game contexts, i.e. how gamers interact with each other when they are gaming. This section will review the research on such in-game interaction.

The in-game contexts present the gamers with communicative challenges. Gamers often find themselves in high stress situations where they "need and desire to be efficient and fast in order to save ingame lives or achieve something, but also to display their knowledge of the in-group code and their involvement with the community" (Swoboda, 2015, p. 163). Thus, in-game contexts propose a challenge for gamers as they must balance the need for communicating FTAs, the need to do so efficiently and urgently, and the need to maintain the face of other gamers to prevent them from quitting or leaving. The lack of paralinguistic cues when communicating in online multiplayer games present another challenge (Kramer, 2013; Peterson, 2012; Swoboda, 2015). Gamers are normally unable to see each other when playing online games and the lack of face-to-face communication means that they cannot rely on facial expressions or body language. Instead, they may speak to each other by using microphones or type in the text chat.

Peterson (2012) investigated how four intermediate EFL learners interacted with each other through text-based communication in a massively multiplayer online game (MMORPG). His findings show that the learners "made appropriate use of politeness involving greetings, informal language, small talk, humour and leave-takings" (p. 361). However, he argued that it might have been the lack of paralinguistic cues that resulted in the learners making "extensive use of politeness" (p. 368). It is important to note that Peterson's (2012) study did not investigate gaming in the 'digital wilds' and the learners claimed not to have any prior experience playing MMORPGs (p. 367). Thus, the findings of the study may not reflect how gamers communicate and use politeness in naturalistic settings.

Two studies that investigated gamers' text-based communication in naturalistic settings are Kramer (2013) and Swoboda (2015). Kramer (2013) found that "gamers go to certain lengths to use careful redressing strategies which are common in real-life outside the game as well" (p. 52). Specifically, some gamers use positive politeness to "position themselves on common ground and as part of the in-group, others take a position which leaves the interlocutor his or

her freedom," i.e. negative politeness (p. 52). The study elicited data through a questionnaire and the gamers' answers revealed that the majority of them regard in-game contexts as impolite and offensive. However, all but ten gamers "claim to be polite to other gamers ingame, as some of them say they are by default polite to others" (p. 49). A possible explanation for this discrepancy may be that gamers portray themselves as more polite than they really are (p. 49). However, the findings do reveal that in-game politeness is important to them. Interestingly, the gamers' motivation for being polite to others is because it helps them achieve their goals, i.e. progression and achievement in the game (pp. 49-50). This is also emphasised by Swoboda (2015), who found that "complying to conventions, in-group meanings and general co-operative behavior leads to successful playing" (p. 164).

The use of swear words and other bad language expressions (BLEs) is generally regarded as impolite in many social contexts despite being commonly used in speaking. Studies that investigated gamers' spoken communication found that the use of swearing and other BLEs are part of gamers' in-group code that promote fun and social bonding, i.e. positive politeness. It can also prevent face loss and ease stress when gamers find themselves in high stress situations (Ensslin & Finnegan, 2019; Kiourti, 2019).

What I take away from these studies is that gamers appear to be aware of the social in-game context that they find themselves in. They use politeness strategies not only for the purpose of in-game progression and achievement, but also to claim in-group membership. Since politeness strategies seem to be an important aspect of the gaming context, it may be expected that gamers get extra practice in the use of politeness strategies in English compared to non-gamers. The question is whether they carry these over to non-gaming contexts, and whether we can see any difference between gamers and non-gamers in the choice of strategies. While findings suggest that gamers regard the in-game context as impolite and hostile, they also show that swearing and other BLEs can be part of the in-group code and function as a type of positive politeness – which may come across as contradicting. It will therefore be interesting to see how the gamers in the present study perceive the use of swearing and other BLEs in in-game contexts, and also whether or not they extend such usage to out-of-game contexts.

4. Research questions and method

This chapter will first describe the research questions in more detail (section 4.1). It will then describe the participants and the process of data collection (4.2), discuss the choice and design of data collection methods (4.3), and lastly describe how the data was analysed (4.4).

4.1. Research questions

As shown in section 2.4, studies have found a positive correlation between gaming and various aspects of language learning. We have also seen that gamers are found to use various politeness strategies in in-game contexts. This thesis therefore aims to find out whether gamers also acquire and practice politeness strategies in games to such an extent that they show a different politeness behaviour than non-gamers in situations outside gaming. My first research question is thus:

RQ1: Does the frequency of gaming impact the choice of politeness strategies when performing requests in out-of-game contexts?

As discussed in section 2.4, more research is needed in order to study the correlation between gaming, language learning and gender. Previous studies have found that boys spend more time playing video games than girls, and that girls and boys have different game preferences which seem to have implications for language learning. This thesis therefore also aims to find out whether male and female gamers show a different politeness behaviour in situations outside gaming that cannot be explained by game preference. My second research question is thus:

RQ2: Are there any differences in politeness strategies between male and female gamers that cannot be tied to game preference (involving single and multiplayer games)?

As shown in section 3.3, studies have found that gamers may use swearing and bad language expressions (BLE) as positive politeness to claim in-group membership. This thesis aims to find out whether gamers use and experience that other gamers use swearing and BLEs in in-game contexts, and their attitudes towards this. It also aims to find out whether gamers apply swearing and BLEs in situations outside gaming. My third and fourth research questions are thus:

RQ3: Do gamers use and experience that other gamers use swearing and BLEs in in-game contexts, and what are their attitudes to this?

RQ4: Do gamers apply swearing and BLEs when performing requests in out-of-game contexts?

4.2. Participants and the process of data collection

The participants in the present study were Norwegian tenth graders (15-16 years old) from a school located in the western part of Norway. I contacted the tenth-grade teachers at the school about participation, and they consented to let three out of four classes participate. Since the study was anonymous and no sensitive data would be collected, the students were old enough to give consent themselves. A week prior to data collection, I visited the classes one at a time to give them oral information about the study, and they were given ample opportunity to ask questions. A combined information and consent form (see Appendix A) was then handed out, and the students were given time to read through the written information and decide if they wanted to participate. It was emphasised that participation was completely anonymous and voluntary, and that they could drop out at any time prior to data collection. Due to the study being anonymous, it would not be possible for them to drop out after data collection. A total of 66 students were present and able to give consent: 60 of them said yes, while 6 said no.

None of the students chose to drop out prior to data collection, but 8 out of the 60 students who initially consented to participate were not present on the day in question. A discourse completion task (DCT) and questionnaire were handed out to the participating students, and they were given 45 minutes (one school lesson) to complete them. Altogether 8 responses had to be discarded due to being incomplete. There were 2 participants who answered 'other' to the question about gender identity. I decided not to include a third gender category in my analysis as the low number of participants would make it impossible to compare said category to the boys' and girls' categories. Additionally, one of the aims of the present study is to compare boys and girls specifically. The present study thus consists of data from a total of 42 participants: 21 boys and 21 girls.

4.3. Questionnaire and discourse completion task (DCT)

The questionnaire for the present study (see Appendix C) was based on a questionnaire that Sundqvist (2009) designed for her doctoral dissertation. In addition, some questions and formulations were from the questionnaire used in the MULTIWRITE project (The Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, 2022). I was given access to some of the questions and formulations by Hildegunn Dirdal, the project leader of MULTIWRITE. I made the decision to base my own questionnaire on pre-existing questionnaires as I was unable to conduct a pilot study to test my instruments, and I wanted to ensure that most of the questions

had been tested beforehand. However, since these questionnaires did not include questions about gamers' use of swearing and BLEs, nor ask about what games they played, I formulated three questions of my own for the purpose of my research questions. My questionnaire was furthermore made in Norwegian for the reason that it is preferable to distribute questionnaires in the native language of the participants as "lower proficiency in the L2 may constrain the answers" (Mackey & Gass, 2013, p. 96).

The questionnaire itself was divided into two parts. The first part asked about gender, language background, English proficiency, and travelling experience and stays in English speaking countries. The second part of the questionnaire asked about time spent on various extramural activities and gaming habits. Participants who spent time on gaming were asked to list the names of the three games they played the most. Further, they were asked about their own and other gamers' use of swear words and BLEs while gaming, and their attitudes towards this (positive, indifferent or negative). The questionnaire was thus both used to elicit information directly relevant to the research questions (gender, frequency of gaming, type of games, swearing and BLEs, and the attitude to such usage in gaming), and information about other factors that may influence language learning and thus pragmatic competence, and which I needed to be able to control for in my analysis. Since the questionnaire was combined with the DCT, there were concerns that the questions in the questionnaire could potentially influence the participants' responses to the DCT. In order to prevent this, the questionnaire followed the DCT.

A discourse completion task (DCT) consists of "scripted dialogues that represent socially differentiated situations. Each dialogue is preceded by a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, and the social distance between the participants and their status relative to each other, followed by an incomplete dialogue" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, pp. 13-14). The DCT for the present study (see Appendix B) was designed based on the examples of test items from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and consisted of eight situations altogether. When designing the situations, I decided to keep the relative social power equal for all of them to mirror everyday situations that the participants may find themselves in. It was also important to design situations where it would feel natural for the participants to speak English rather than Norwegian. Situations 1 and 5 include social distance and low imposition, situations 2 and 6 include social distance and high imposition, situations 3 and 7 include no social distance and low imposition, while situations 4 and 8 include no social distance and high imposition. I made two versions of the combined DCT and questionnaire, where the only difference was the order in which the

situations appeared in. Half of the participants were given the first version, while the other half was given the second version. This was done to counter the effect of participants potentially spending less time on the situations appearing last due to test fatigue and boredom, which could affect the results (Mackey & Gass, 2013, p. 118).

A possible limitation of using a DCT as instrument is that it may not represent real-world language use (Roever, 2011, p. 473). The participants write what they *think* they would say in a given situation, and not necessarily what they would actually *say*. However, this is a limitation presented by most data collection methods. The only way one could collect data representing real-world language use would be through observation of learners in naturalistic settings, which in turn would make it difficult to ensure that the data collected is comparable. This would be outside the scope of the present study. Therefore, a DCT was chosen as an instrument because it makes it easy to manipulate sociological variables. It is also one of the most commonly used methods for doing pragmatic-based research, and very useful when investigating speech acts such as requests (Mackey & Gass, 2013, p. 89).

4.4. Data analysis

The data from the questionnaire and DCT were carefully typed into spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel for the purpose of data analysis. In order to investigate RQ1, RQ2 and RQ4, the responses from the DCT were first coded according to the nine types of requests categorised by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989): *mood derivable, performatives, hedged performatives, obligation statements, want statements, suggestory formulae, query preparatory, strong hints* and *mild hints.* The responses were then coded according to whether they included alerters (terms of address, greetings, expressions to get attention and minimise imposition), pre-supportive and post-supportive moves (availability checks, precommitments, grounders, promises and threats), as well as swearing and other bad language expressions (BLEs).

As the first research question asks about the correlation between politeness strategies and frequency of gaming, I placed the students into groups according to how often they reported to engage in gaming: every day, weekly, monthly or never. The balance between the genders turned out to be very different in the four frequency groups (see section 5.1). Since previous studies have shown gender differences, I thus had to keep girls and boys separate when investigating the effect of gaming frequency.

Scatter plots were created in Excel to show how frequency of gaming affects the number of alerters and supportive moves used. Each participant was given a value between 1-4 based on how often they engaged in gaming: (1) never, (2), monthly, (3) weekly, or (4) every day. Scatter plots were also created to show how self-reported English proficiency affects the number of alerters and supportive moves, as previous studies have reported that L2 proficiency has implications for the use of politeness strategies, and supportive moves specifically (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Rose, 2000). Since the participants were asked about both their oral and written skills in the questionnaire, separate values were given for the skills: (1) not very good, (2) average, (3) good, or (4) very good. As such, a participant who reported to be 'average' at writing but 'good' at speaking English, was given the values 2 and 3, which were then added together and divided by two, giving the combined value of 2.5. The Pearson's correlation coefficient (*r*) was furthermore calculated to determine the significance of the correlations (Mackey & Gass, 2013, p. 286).

In order to investigate RQ3, the answers to the questionnaire were coded as 'swearing' and/or 'BLEs', or 'none' depending on whether the students themselves used or experienced other gamers use swear words and BLEs in gaming. Furthermore, their attitudes to both own and other gamers' usage were coded as either 'positive', 'indifferent' or 'negative'.

5. Findings and discussion

This chapter is dedicated to presenting and discussing the findings of the present study. I will first describe the sample and some key variables (section 5.1). I will then present and discuss the findings related to my first and second research question (5.2), third research question (5.3 and 5.4), and my fourth research question (5.5).

5.1. Sample and key variables

The sample for the present study is homogenous with respect to language background, travelling experience and stays in English speaking countries. That being said, there is more variation among the participants in regard to self-reported English proficiency, which will be considered and discussed in section 5.2. There is also gender differences in regard to where they report to have learnt most of their English skills; the majority of the boys report to have learnt everything or most outside of school (16/21 = 76%), while the majority of the girls report to have learnt everything or most at school and through schoolwork (13/21 = 62%).

There are significant gender differences with respect to how often the boys and girls report to engage in gaming (see table 5.1 below). As many as 14 of the boys report to engage in gaming every day, while 6 of them engage weekly and only one boy engages monthly. There are no boys in the 'never' category. As for the girls, only one of them reports to engage in gaming every day, 3 engage weekly, 2 engage monthly, while as many as 15 of the girls report that they never or almost never engage in gaming. As mentioned in section 4.4, this difference in the frequency groups is the reason for analysing the data from boys and girls separately.

Table 5.1. Gender and frequency of gaming.

Gender	Every day	Weekly	Monthly	Never	Total
Boys	14	6	1	0	21
Girls	1	3	2	15	21

5.2. Frequency of gaming and politeness strategies

This section is devoted to my first and second research questions: 1) whether gaming frequency impacts the choice of politeness strategies when performing requests in out-of-game contexts, and 2) whether there are any differences in politeness strategies between male and female

gamers that cannot be tied to game preference. I will first give a brief description of and present the combined results for the situations with the same variables (sections 5.2.1–5.2.4), which includes choice of request strategy, use of alerters and supportive moves (the full descriptions of the situations can be found in the DCT in Appendix B). As the participants in the present study did not use availability checks or threats as either pre-supportive or post-supportive moves, nor made use of swearing and other BLEs, I have omitted these categories from the tables presented in the sections. Section 5.2.5 will present the use of alerters and supportive moves across all situations, and whether there is a correlation between average number of alerters and supportive moves and frequency of gaming/self-reported English proficiency. The results will finally be discussed in section 5.2.6.

5.2.1. Situations 1 and 5 (social distance, low imposition)

The speaker does not know the hearer (i.e. the flatmate and the older man), and the situations are marked low for imposition because the requests (i.e. asking for the Wi-Fi password and directions to Oxford Street) do not require a lot from the hearer in terms of time and effort.

The majority of the boys who play every day used the conventionally indirect strategy *query preparatory* when performing the requests (24/28 = 86%), while four of them used the direct strategy *mood derivable* (4/28 = 14%). Query preparatory was also the preferred choice for the majority of the boys who play weekly (8/12 = 67%), followed by mood derivable (4/12 = 33%). The boy who plays monthly only made use of mood derivable (2/2 = 100%). As for alerters and supportive moves (see table 5.2 below), the boys who play every day used 0.54 alerters and moves on average, while the number was 0.67 for the boys who play weekly. The boy who plays monthly did not use alerters or supportive moves.

Table 5.2. Boys' use of alerters and supportive moves in situations 1 and 5 combined.

Frequency of gaming	Alerters			Pre-supportive moves		Post-supportive moves		Average number of moves per request
	Address	Greetings	Excuse me, pardon, sorry	Precommitments	Grounders	Grounders	Promises	
Every day		11/28 (39%)	2/28 (7%)			2/28 (7%)		15/28 (0.54)
Weekly	1/12 (8%)	3/12 (25%)	4/12 (33%)					8/12 (0.67)
Monthly								0/2 (0.00)

The girl who plays every day (2/2 = 100%) and the girls who play weekly (6/6 = 100%) only used query preparatory when performing the requests. Query preparatory was also the preferred choice for the majority of the girls who play monthly (3/4 = 75%), followed by mood derivable (1/4 = 25%). Similarly, most of the girls who did not play games used query preparatory (24/30 = 80%), while the remaining of them used mood derivable (6/30 = 20%). As for alerters and supportive moves (see table 5.3 below), the girls who play monthly had the highest average number (1.25), followed by the girl who plays every day (1.00), those who play weekly (0.83), and lastly the girls who do not play video games (0.73).

Table 5.3. Girls' use of alerters and supportive moves in situations 1 and 5 combined.

Frequency of gaming	Alerters			Pre-supportive moves		Post-supportive moves		Average number of moves per request
	Address	Greetings	Excuse me, pardon, sorry	Precommitments	Grounders	Grounders	Promises	
Every day		1/2 (50%)				1/2 (50%)		2/2 (1.00)
Weekly		4/6 (67%)	1/6 (17%)					5/6 (0.83)
Monthly	1/4 (25%)	2/4 (50%)	1/4 (25%)			1/4 (25%)		5/4 (1.25)
Never		10/30 (33%)	10/30 (33%)		2/30 (7%)			22/30 (0.73)

The girls used more alerters and supportive moves on average than the boys. The following examples have been included to show how the responses from the DCT were analysed in terms of request strategy, alerters and supportive moves. Since query preparatory and mood derivable were the only request strategies used by the participants in situations 1 and 5, two examples of each strategy, one from each situation, have been included.

5-1 Boy, weekly: *Hey man, do you mind giving me the internet password?* (greeting ('hey') + address ('man') + query preparatory (reference to a preparatory condition, i.e. the willingness of the hearer to give the speaker the password, as indicated by 'do you mind')).

5-2 Girl, never: *What is the password for the Wi-Fi?* (mood derivable (direct question, as indicated by 'what'), no alerters or supportive moves).

5-3 Girl, weekly: *Hey, do you know the way to Oxford Street? I can't find my way.* (greeting ('hey') + query preparatory (reference to a preparatory condition, i.e. the ability of the hearer to give directions, as indicated by 'do you know') + grounder (reason or justification for the request, post-supportive move)).

5-4 Boy, monthly: *Where can I find Oxford Street?* (mood derivable (direct question, as indicated by 'where'), no alerters or supportive moves).

I have classified direct questions as mood derivable, as shown in examples **5-2** and **5-4.** Even though English does not have a particular verb form for questions (like there is an imperative form for commands), the sentence type tells the hearer that it is a request.

5.2.2. Situations 2 and 6 (social distance, high imposition)

The speaker does not know the hearer (i.e. the flatmate and the woman in the queue), and the situations are marked high for imposition because the requests (i.e. asking for a city tour of Edinburgh and asking a stranger for £10) require a lot from the hearer in terms of cost.

The majority of the boys who play every day used query preparatory (26/28 = 93%), while two made use of the non-conventionally indirect strategy *mild hints* (2/28 = 7%). Query preparatory was the preferred choice for all of the boys who play weekly (12/12 = 100%) and the boy who plays monthly (2/2 = 100%). With respect to average supportive moves (see table 5.4 below), the boys who play every day had the highest average score (1.18), followed by the boys who play weekly (1.08), and lastly the boy who plays monthly (1.00).

Table 5.4. Boys' use of alerters and supportive moves in situations 2 and 6 combined.

Frequency of gaming	Alerters			Pre-supportive moves		Post-supportive moves		Average number of moves per request
	Address	Greetings	Excuse me, pardon, sorry	Precommitments	Grounders	Grounders	Promises	
Every day		9/28 (32%)	4/28 (14%)		6/28 (21%)	4/28 (14%)	10/28 (36%)	33/28 (1.18)
Weekly		1/12 (8%)	4/12 (33%)		4/12 (33%)	2/12 (17%)	2/12 (17%)	13/12 (1.08)
Monthly					1/2 (50%)		1/2 (50%)	2/2 (1.00)

There are no differences between the girls with respect to the request strategy used in these situations, as all of them made use of query preparatory (42/42 = 100%). With regard to alerters and supportive moves (see table 5.5 below), the girl who plays every day had the highest average score (2.00), followed by the girls who play weekly (1.67), those who play monthly (1.50), and lastly the girls who do not play video games (1.40).

Table 5.5. Girls' use of alerters and supportive moves in situations 2 and 6 combined.

Frequency of gaming	Alerters			Pre-supportive moves		Post-supportive moves		Average number of moves per request
	Address	Greetings	Excuse me, pardon, sorry	Precommitments	Grounders	Grounders	Promises	
Every day		1/2 (50%)			1/2 (50%)	1/2 (50%)	1/2 (50%)	4/2 (2.00)
Weekly		1/6 (17%)	2/6 (33%)		3/6 (50%)	1/6 (17%)	3/6 (50%)	10/6 (1.67)
Monthly		2/4 (50%)	2/4 (50%)		1/4 (25%)		1/4 (25%)	6/4 (1.50)
Never		4/30 (13%)	16/30 (53%)		10/30 (33%)	2/30 (7%)	10/30 (33%)	42/30 (1.40)

The participants generally used more alerters and supportive moves in situation 6 compared to situation 2. Furthermore, the girls used more alerters and supportive moves than the boys. Since mild hints were used by two boys for the first time in situation 2, one example of this request strategy has been included below, along with other examples from the situations.

5-5 Boy, every day: *Can I join you?* (mild hint (the utterance makes no reference to the request proper or any of its elements, i.e. being new to Edinburgh and asking for a city tour, but is interpreted as a request by context)).

5-6 Boy, every day: *I don't know my way around here. Could you please show me around?* (grounder (reason or justification for performing the request, pre-supportive move) + query preparatory (reference to a preparatory condition, i.e. the ability of the hearer to show the speaker around Edinburgh, as indicated by 'could you')).

5-7 Girl, weekly: *Hey, I've never been here before. Do you mind showing me around?* (greeting ('hey') + grounder (reason or justification for the request, pre-supportive move) + query preparatory (reference to a preparatory condition, i.e. the willingness of the hearer to show the speaker around the city, as indicated by 'do you mind')).

5-8 Boy, weekly: *I'm sorry, could I borrow £10? I forgot my wallet. I will repay you as soon as possible* (expression to get attention and minimise imposition ('I'm sorry') + query preparatory (reference to a preparatory condition, i.e. the ability of the speaker to borrow money from the hearer, as indicated by 'could I borrow') + grounder (reason or justification for performing the request, post-supportive move) + promise to repay (post-supportive move)).

5-9 Girl, never: *I am so sorry to bother you, but I forgot my wallet and was wondering if I could borrow £10? If I get your contact information, I will definitely pay you back* (expression to get attention and minimise imposition ('I am so sorry to bother you') + grounder (reason or justification for the request, pre-supportive move) + query preparatory (reference to a preparatory condition, i.e. the ability of the speaker to borrow money from the hearer, as indicated by 'if I could borrow') + promise to repay (post-supportive move)).

5.2.3. Situations 3 and 7 (no social distance, low imposition)

The speaker knows the hearer in both cases, and the situations are marked low for imposition because the requests (i.e. asking to borrow notes from a friend and asking a friend to wait) do not require a lot of time and effort from the hearer.

Query preparatory was used by the majority of the boys who play every day (25/28 = 89%), followed by mood derivable (3/28 = 11%). The boys who play weekly used query preparatory (11/12 = 92%), with one exception who used the conventionally indirect strategy *suggestory formulae* (1/12 = 8%). The boy who plays monthly only used query preparatory (2/2 = 100%) when performing the requests. With respect to alerters and supportive moves (see table 5.6 below), the boys who play every day used 0.82 alerters and moves on average, while the number was 0.67 for the boys who play weekly. The boy who plays monthly did not make use of alerters or supportive moves in these situations.

Table 5.6. Boys' use of alerters and supportive moves in situations 3 and 7 combined.

Frequency of gaming	Alerters			Pre-supportive moves		Post-supportive moves		Average number of moves per request
	Address	Greetings	Excuse me, pardon, sorry	Precommitments	Grounders	Grounders	Promises	
Every day	7/28 (25%)	7/28 (25%)			3/28 (11%)	6/28 (21%)		23/28 (0.82)
Weekly	4/12 (33%)	2/12 (17%)				2/12 (17%)		8/12 (0.67)
Monthly								0/2 (0.00)

Query preparatory was the only request strategy used by the girl who plays every day, and the girls who play weekly and monthly (12/12 = 100%). The majority of the girls who do not play games also used query preparatory (26/30 = 87%), with a few exceptions who used mood derivable (4/30 = 13%). As for alerters and supportive moves (see table 5.7 below), the girl who plays every day used 2.00 alerters and moves on average, while the numbers were 1.33 for the girls who play weekly and 1.50 for those who play monthly. Lastly, the girls who do not play games used 1.57 alerters and moves on average.

Table 5.7. Girls' use of alerters and supportive moves in situations 3 and 7 combined.

Frequency of gaming	Alerters			Pre-supportive moves		Post-supportive moves		Average number of moves per request
	Address	Greetings	Excuse me, pardon, sorry	Precommitments	Grounders	Grounders	Promises	
Every day		2/2 (100%)				1/2 (50%)	1/2 (50%)	4/2 (2.00)
Weekly	4/6 (67%)	3/6 (50%)			1/6 (17%)			8/6 (1.33)
Monthly	2/4 (50%)	2/4 (50%)			1/4 (25%)	1/4 (25%)		6/4 (1.50)
Never	15/30 (50%)	16/30 (53%)	1/30 (3%)		10/30 (33%)	4/30 (13%)	1/30 (3%)	47/30 (1.57)

The girls used more alerters and supportive moves on average compared to the boys. Since suggestory formulae was used for the first time by one of the boys in situation 7, the analysis of his response has been included below.

5-10 Boy, weekly: *Should we walk together home and have a chat?* (suggestory formulae (the speaker suggests to the hearer that they walk home together, as indicated by 'should we')).

5.2.4. Situations 4 and 8 (no social distance, high imposition)

The speaker knows the hearer, and the situations are marked high for imposition because the requests (i.e. asking to borrow a friend's new motorcycle and asking a neighbour to watch his/her younger sister) require a lot from the hearer in terms of cost.

The majority of the boys who play every day used query preparatory when performing the requests (24/28 = 86%). A few used the non-conventionally indirect strategy *strong hint* (3/28 = 11%), while one used the direct strategy *obligation statement* (1/28 = 3%). Query preparatory was also the preferred choice for the boys who play weekly (11/12 = 92%), except for one boy who used the direct strategy *want statement* (1/12 = 8%). The boy who plays monthly only used query preparatory (2/2 = 100%). With regard to alerters and supportive moves (see table 5.8 below), the boys who play weekly had the highest average score (2.08), followed by the boys who play every day (1.57), and the boy who plays monthly (1.00).

Table 5.8. Boys' use of alerters and supportive moves in situations 4 and 8 combined.

Frequency of gaming	Alerters			Pre-supportive moves		Post-supportive moves		Average number of moves per request
	Address	Greetings	Excuse me, pardon, sorry	Precommitments	Grounders	Grounders	Promises	
Every day	6/28 (21%)	3/28 (11%)			3/28 (11%)	10/28 (36%)	22/28 (79%)	44/28 (1.57)
Weekly	5/12 (42%)	3/12 (25%)			1/12 (8%)	6/12 (50%)	11/12 (92%)	26/12 (2.16)
Monthly						1/2 (50%)	1/2 (50%)	2/2 (1.00)

Query preparatory was the only request strategy used by the girl who plays every day, and the girls who play weekly and monthly (12/12 = 100%). The majority of the girls who do not play games used query preparatory (29/30 = 97%), while one girl made use of want statement (1/30 = 3%). As for alerters and supportive moves (see table 5.9 below), the girls who play monthly had the highest average score (2.25), followed by the girl who plays every day (2.00), the girls who play weekly (1.50), and those who do not play games (1.47).

Table 5.9. Girls' use of alerters and supportive moves in situations 4 and 8 combined.

Frequency of gaming	Alerters			Pre-supportive moves		Post-supportive moves		Average number of moves per request
	Address	Greetings	Excuse me, pardon, sorry	Precommitments	Grounders	Grounders	Promises	
Every day	1/2 (50%)	1/2 (50%)				1/2 (50%)	1/2 (50%)	4/2 (2.00)
Weekly	2/6 (33%)	2/6 (33%)			1/6 (17%)	2/6 (33%)	2/6 (33%)	9/6 (1.50)
Monthly	1/4 (25%)	2/4 (50%)		1/4 (25%)	2/4 (50%)	1/4 (25%)	2/4 (50%)	9/4 (2.25)
Never	4/30 (13%)	7/30 (23%)	4/30 (13%)	1/30 (3%)	14/30 (47%)	9/30 (30%)	6/30 (20%)	45/30 (1.50)

Want statements and strong hints were used for the first time in situation 4, whereas obligation statement was used for the first time in situation 8. As such, three examples have been included below, one of each request strategy, to illustrate how they were analysed.

5-11 Boy, every day: *You need to take care of my sister, an emergency has occurred at Magnus' house and he needs me* (obligation statement (the speaker states the obligation of the hearer to take care of his/her younger sister, as indicated by the phrase 'you need to') + grounder (reason or justification for the request, post-supportive move)).

5-12 Boy, every day: *Don't be scared, I won't drive that fast* (strong hint (the utterance include partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act, as indicated by the phrase 'I won't drive that fast', referring to the motorcycle)).

5-13 Boy, weekly: *I would love to try your motorcycle, Ben. I will be extremely careful* (want statement (the utterance states the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act, i.e. let him/her drive the motorcycle, as indicated by the phrase 'I would love to') + address ('Ben') + promise (post-supportive move)).

Example **5-13** proved to be slightly challenging to classify as it did not fit perfectly with any of the nine request strategies. I classified it as want statement since the request does express the want of the speaker. That being said, the utterance does not explicitly state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act, like it would if the request was phrased 'I would love for you to lend me your motorcycle', similar to the example given by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989).

5.2.5. Alerters and supportive moves across all situations

As shown in table 5.10 below, the girls had a higher average number of alerters and supportive moves compared to the boys across all eight situations. At first glance, it may look like there is a positive correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and frequency of gaming for the girls. However, further statistical analysis is needed in order to report correlation and significance.

Table 5.10. Average number of alerters and supportive moves for both genders across all situations.

Frequency of gaming	Average number of alerters and supportive moves	
	Boys	Girls
Every day	115/112 (1,03)	14/8 (1,75)
Weekly	55/48 (1,15)	32/24 (1,33)
Monthly	4/8 (0,50)	26/16 (1,63)
Never	0/0 (0,00)	156/120 (1,30)

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show the correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and frequency of gaming for the boys and girls, respectively. There was a very weak correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and frequency of gaming. This correlation was even weaker for boys than for girls. In none of the cases were the correlations significant (boys: $r(19) = .08$, $p > .01$; girls: $r(19) = .13$, $p > .01$).

Figure 5.1. Correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and frequency of gaming for the boys.

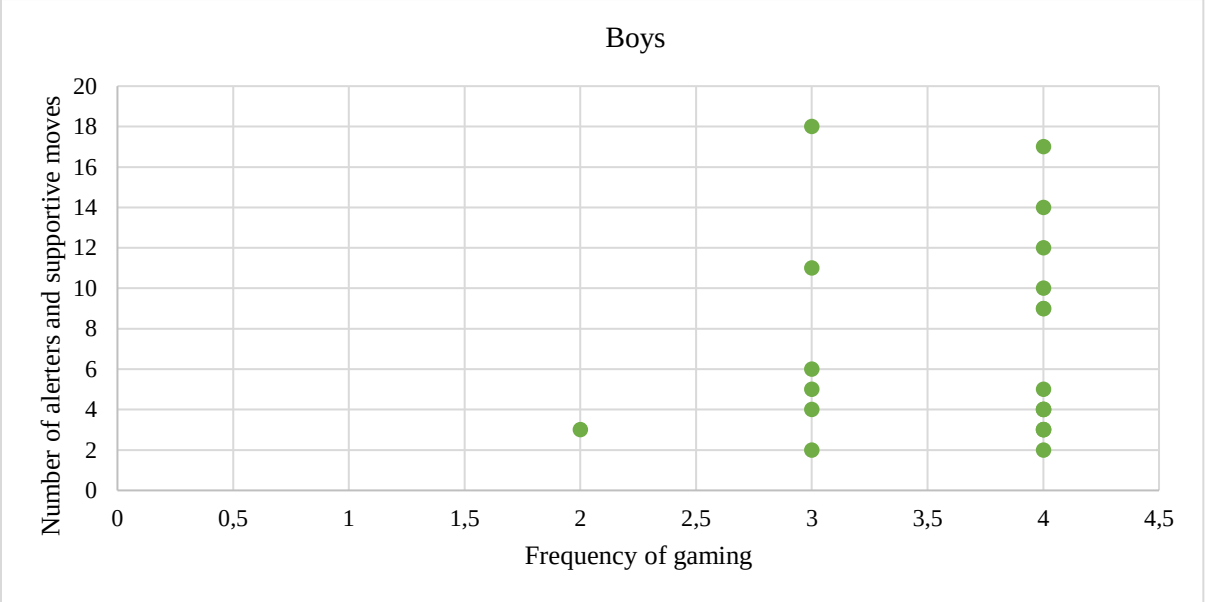
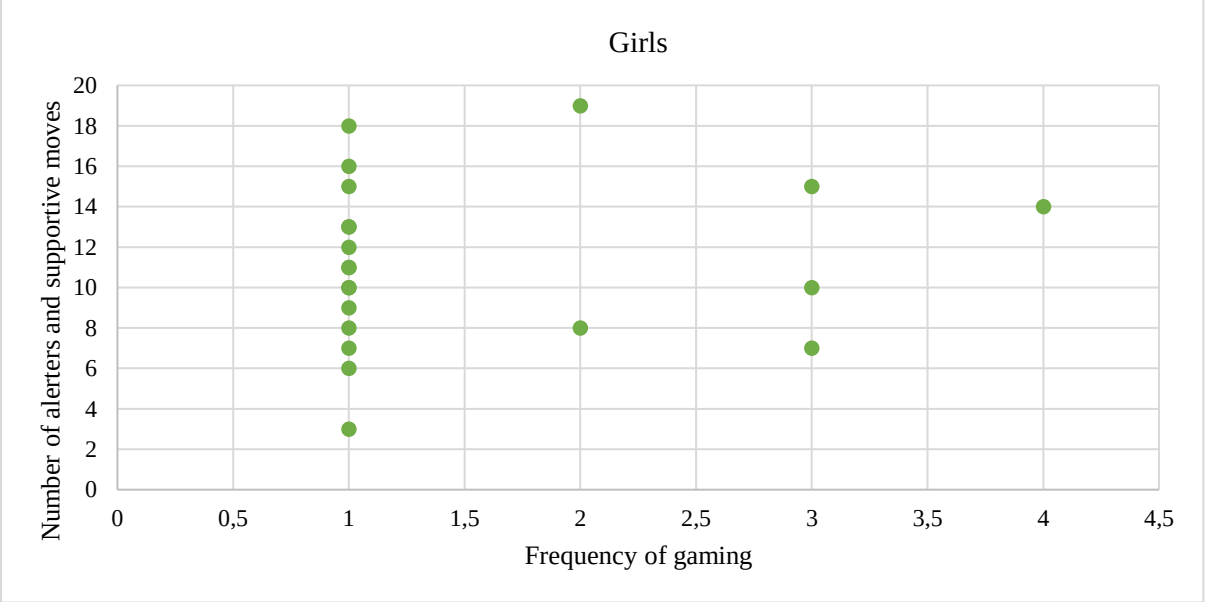


Figure 5.2. Correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and frequency of gaming for the girls.



Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show the correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and self-reported English proficiency for the boys and girls, respectively. There was a very weak positive correlation for the girls, while there was very weak negative correlation for the boys. In none of the cases were the correlations significant (boys: $r(19) = -.06$, $p > .01$; girls: $r(19) = .12$, $p > .01$).

Figure 5.3. Correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and self-reported English proficiency for boys.

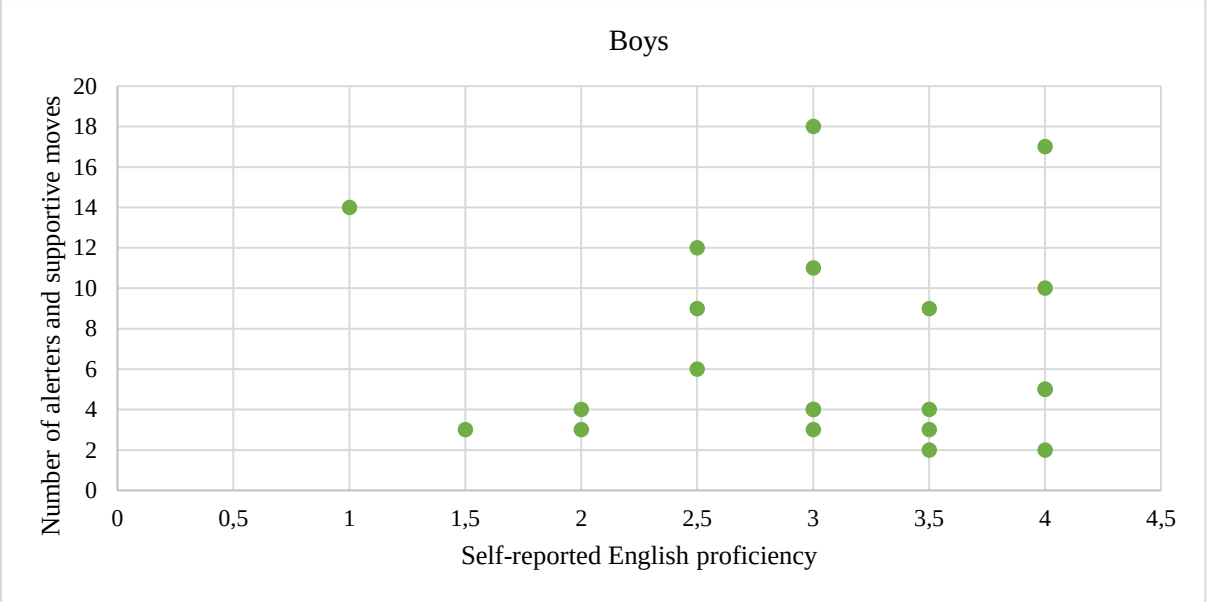
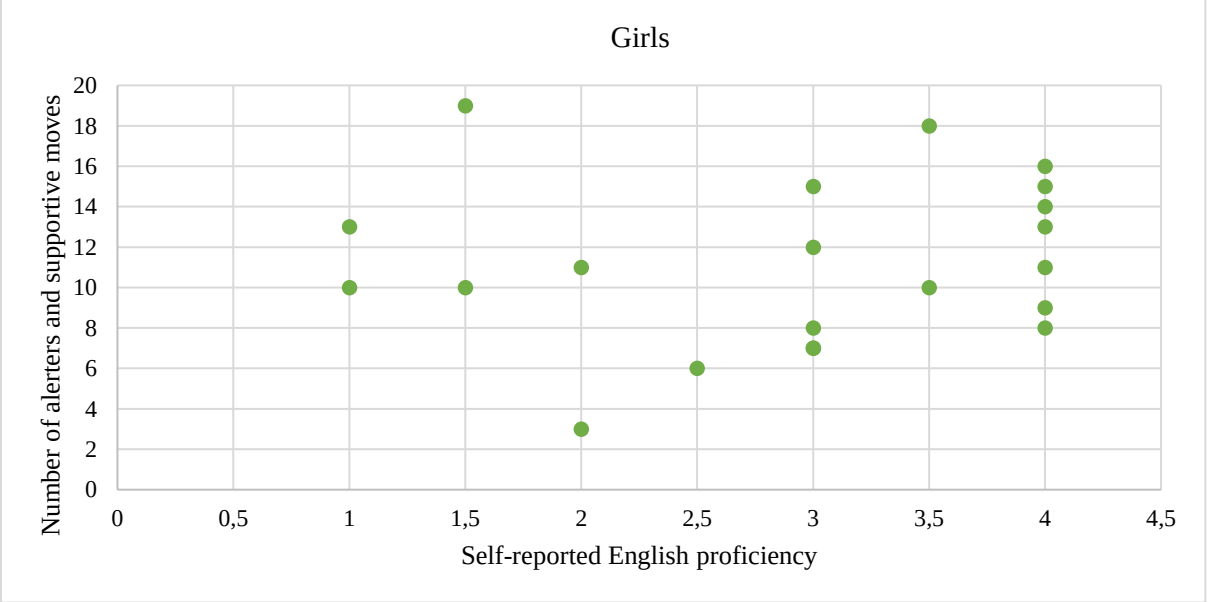


Figure 5.4. Correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and self-reported English proficiency for girls.



5.2.6. Discussion

I will start with some general observations before moving on to discuss my first and second research questions. The conventional indirect *query preparatory* was by far the most used request strategy by both genders across all situations. At first, I thought this perhaps could be a result of the design of the combined DCT and questionnaire. The eight situations immediately followed each other, without any questions in-between, and thus the participants could have gotten into a pattern of using the same request formulations, resulting in the overuse of one request strategy. However, if this was the only reason, one might expect differences between individuals, as some might have gotten into a pattern of using a different strategy. This was not the case here. As such, another more likely reason may be that query preparatory is actually the preferred request strategy in these situations, especially considering that modal verbs such as 'can', 'could' and 'would' are commonly used when performing requests.

Weight of imposition appears to have an effect on the participants' choice of request strategies (see table 5.11 below for a summary of request strategies). For instance, the most direct strategy *mood derivable* was used in the situations marked low for imposition, but never in those marked high for imposition. The participants almost exclusively made use of query preparatory in the situations with high imposition. This difference is most clear in the situations where there is also social distance. It is furthermore in the situations marked high for imposition that we find the use of the most indirect request strategies *mild hints* and *strong hints*, while there are only three uses altogether of direct strategies in these situations. Weight of imposition also has an effect on the number of alerters and supportive moves used, both in situations with and without social distance. These findings may support the notion that the speaker prefers to use indirect strategies and more supportive moves in situations where there is social distance, asymmetric power and high degree of imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987). They may also indicate that the participants are generally aware of the social context that they find themselves in, and are able to use language appropriately depending on these sociological variables, thus displaying pragmatic knowledge (Taguchi, 2009).

Table 5.11. Summary of request strategies for both genders across all situations.

	Situations 1 and 5 (social distance, low imposition)		Situations 2 and 6 (social distance, high imposition)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Every day	QP: 24/28 = 86% MD: 4/28 = 14%	QP: 2/2 = 100%	QP: 26/28 = 93% MH: 2/28 = 7%	QP: 2/2 = 100%
Weekly	QP: 8/12 = 67% MD: 4/12 = 33%	QP: 6/6 = 100%	QP: 12/12 = 100%	QP: 6/6 = 100%
Monthly	MD: 2/2 = 100%	QP: 3/4 = 75% MD: 1/4 = 25%	QP: 2/2 = 100%	QP: 4/4 = 100%
Never		QP: 24/30 = 80% MD: 6/30 = 20%		QP: 30/30 = 100%
	Situations 3 and 7 (no social distance, low imposition)		Situations 4 and 8 (no social distance, high imposition)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Every day	QP: 25/28 = 89% MD: 3/28 = 11%	QP: 2/2 = 100%	QP: 24/28 = 86% SH: 3/28 = 11% OS: 1/28 = 3%	QP: 2/2 = 100%
Weekly	QP: 11/12 = 92% SF: 1/12 = 8%	QP: 6/6 = 100%	QP: 11/12 = 92% WS: 1/12 = 8%	QP: 6/6 = 100%
Monthly	QP: 2/2 = 100%	QP: 4/4 = 100%	QP: 2/2 = 100%	QP: 4/4 = 100%
Never		QP: 26/30 = 87% MD: 4/30 = 13%		QP: 29/30 = 97% WS: 1/30 = 3%

Note. 'QP' is the abbreviation for query preparatory, 'MD' for mood derivable, 'MH' for mild hint, 'SH' for strong hint, 'WS' for want statement, and 'OS' for obligation statement.

I will now move on to discuss my first research question and the impact of gaming frequency on the choice of politeness strategies. The participants who engage in gaming more frequently appear to use the indirect strategy query preparatory to a greater extent in situations 1 and 5 (social distance, low imposition) regardless of gender, while the direct strategy mood derivable was used more often by the lower frequency groups. This tendency may also be seen for the boys in situations 2 and 6 (social distance, high imposition), where two of the boys who engage in gaming every day were the only participants who made use of the even more indirect strategy *mild hint.* While there does not appear to be a clear pattern in situations 3 and 7 (no social distance, low imposition) and situations 4 and 8 (no social distance, high imposition), there may

be a slight tendency where some of the boys engaging in gaming more frequently appear to prefer direct strategies. I could not identify a similar gaming effect for the girls, which is in line with what previous studies have reported (see section 2.4).

I initially expected that gamers get extra practice in the use of politeness strategies in English compared to non-gamers since politeness seems to be an important aspect of the gaming context as they interact and negotiate with other players. This would mean that they perhaps should be better at choosing appropriate strategies for a given situation. My findings may indicate that the boys engaging frequently in gaming are more sensitive to the sociological variables as they use more appropriate strategies depending on the situations; indirect strategies in the situations with social distance, and more direct strategies in the situations with no social distance. It is important to emphasise that the number of participants is too low to conclude with any certainty that frequent gamers display a different politeness behaviour outside gaming than those engaging less frequently. That being said, there might be something here that points to it possibly being the case, at least for boys, and it may therefore be interesting to investigate this further in a study with a larger sample.

The correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and gaming frequency was not significant for the boys nor the girls. One reason for this could be that the frequent gamers do not acquire and practice the use of such moves in games to such an extent that they show a different politeness behaviour compared to the less frequent gamers and non-gamers in contexts outside gaming. Another reason could be that the most frequent gamers are aware of the differences between in-game and out-of-game contexts, and do not necessarily transfer their in-game behaviour to other situations. A third, and perhaps more likely reason, is the uneven distribution of participants in the different frequency groups (see section 5.1). The total lack of boys who never engage in gaming and the one boy in the 'monthly' group makes it challenging to investigate the correlation between gaming frequency and the choice of politeness strategies. In regard to the girls, I encountered the opposite problem; there are few girls who engage in gaming, especially in the 'every day' group, while the majority of them report to be non-gamers. This furthermore makes it difficult to make sound comparisons between the boys and between the girls in the different frequency groups. For this reason, the present study is also unable to truly investigate female gamers, as it encounters the same issues as previous studies that have attempted to investigate this matter.

The high number of boys and low number of girls who engage in gaming in the present study is arguably not that surprising since it is consistent with what previous studies have reported on

gender and frequency of gaming. As mentioned in section 2.4, the 15-16 age group is also where we find the largest gap between boys and girls who play video games. Whilst all of the boys in the present study engage in gaming, only 29% of the girls do so when combining all three groups (every day, weekly and monthly). The percentage of girls who engage in gaming is significantly lower than the 47% reported by the Norwegian Media Authority (2022) for this age group. The sample for my study may therefore be considered a limitation as it is unlikely to be representative.

The correlation between the number of alerters and supportive moves and self-reported English proficiency was also not significant for the boys nor the girls. This was particularly surprising considering that previous studies report that supportive moves are more frequently used by higher than lower proficiency learners (see section 3.3). One possible reason for this could be that the present study collected data of English proficiency through self-report, which may not necessarily mirror the participants' actual English proficiency. However, one can expect that the students have a generally good idea of their oral and written English skills, especially since they regularly get graded and receive feedback from their teachers.

I will now turn to discuss my second research question and whether there are any differences in politeness strategies between male and female gamers that cannot be tied to game preference, involving single and multiplayer games. First and foremost, there are no clear differences between boys and girls in the present study with respect to what types of games they play the most. The majority of games listed by the participants are either online multiplayer or hybrid games, the latter containing both a single-player and multiplayer mode, and the choice to play offline and/or online. This contradicts previous studies who identified a pattern where boys prefer to play online multiplayer games, and girls prefer to play offline single-player games (Sundqvist, 2009, 2019; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012a). In light of this, it is arguably unlikely that game preference is tied to any differences in choice of politeness strategies between the boys and girls in my study.

Many games these days are hybrid in nature as they contain both a single-player and multiplayer mode, and also offer players the choice to play the game offline and/or online. This proved to be a challenge as only asking the participants to list the games they play the most turned out to be insufficient to identify which mode they prefer to play, and whether they prefer to play offline or online games. If not for the questions regarding use of swearing and BLEs in my questionnaire, which were phrased 'om du gamer saman eller mot andre' (if you play with or against others), it would be impossible to identify which mode(s) the participants played. To

illustrate, one boy listed Grand Theft Auto 5, Minecraft and Rocket League as the three games he played the most, which all happen to be hybrid games. Because the boy reported to use and experience other gamers use swearing while playing with or against others, he must be engaging in the online multiplayer mode in at least one of these games. If I were to carry out a similar study in the future, it would be more beneficial to include a question asking specifically whether the gamers prefer to play offline single-player or online multiplayer games for the sake of avoiding shortcomings.

Comparing the male and female gamers in the present study proved to be quite challenging due to the uneven gender distribution in the frequency groups. While there were no clear differences between the boys and girls in regard to preferred request strategy, the girls who engage in gaming used more alerters and supportive moves on average compared to the boys (see table 5.10). Upon further investigation, the correlations between number of alerters and supportive moves used, and frequency of gaming/self-reported English proficiency were not significant for the boys nor the girls. Even the girls that never engaged in gaming used alerters and supportive moves more frequently than the boys. This means that the number of alerters and supportive moves is a difference not just between the male and female gamers, but between the boys and the girls in general. While this appears to be gender-related, it is beyond the scope of the present study as to what exactly causes this difference.

5.3. Gamers' use of swearing and other BLEs in gaming

Among the 21 boys and 6 girls who spent time on gaming in the present study, two of the girls did not respond to the questions about own and other gamers' use of swearing and BLEs. Interestingly, both of the girls listed *Fortnite* – a multiplayer online game only – as one of the three games they played the most. Although the game must be played with or against other players, it is possible that the girls actively avoided communicating with anyone, which may explain why they did not respond to the questions. This section will thus present and discuss the results based on the responses from altogether 25 gamers: 21 boys and 4 girls.

As shown in table 5.12 below, swearing is commonly used among gamers. Almost all of the gamers report that they use swear words, while the majority of them also experience that other gamers use them. This applies to both genders, although one must take the girls' percentages with a grain of salt as they are few in number. Swearing is more frequently used compared to

other bad language expressions (BLEs). About half of the boys report that they themselves use and experience gamers using other BLEs. The percentages are much lower for the girls.

Table 5.12. Own and other gamers' use of swearing and other BLEs in gaming.

	Own use		Other gamers' use	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Swearing	18/21 (86%)	4/4 (100%)	15/21 (71%)	3/4 (75%)
Other BLEs	11/21 (52%)	1/4 (25%)	11/21 (52%)	1/4 (25%)
None	0/21 (0%)	0/4 (0%)	2/21 (10%)	1/4 (25%)

The results generally support what Ensslin & Finnegan (2019) and Kiourti (2019) previously found, namely that gamers often use swearing and other BLEs in in-game contexts. A direct comparison of the results from these studies and my own is difficult because they differ not only in scope, but also in methods and the type of data collected. That being said, the balance between swear words and other BLEs seems to be slightly different in my study and the one by Ensslin & Finnegan (2019), where 46% of all BLEs occurring in the corpus were categorised as swearing. The other categories of BLEs were religious terms of abuse (49%), animal terms of abuse (2%), sexist terms of abuse (2%) and intellect-terms of abuse (1%). The gamers in their study were native or near-native speakers of British English (p. 144). As such, it is worth mentioning that the common types of BLEs may differ in various languages and cultures.

Other categories than swearing constituted 54% of all BLEs occurring in the corpus analysis, whereas swearing was more commonly experienced than other BLEs in my study. This could be a result of the design of the questions in my questionnaire. While 'banning' (swearing) is specific and a term which the students are familiar with, 'ufine ord' (BLEs) may be too vague and open for different interpretations due to subjectivity, resulting in fewer students reporting to use and experience such usage. If I were to carry out a similar study in the future, I would include examples of what other BLEs may look like, or replace 'BLEs' altogether with more specific categories similar to those used by Ensslin & Finnegan (2019).

5.4. Gamers' attitudes towards swearing and other BLEs in gaming

The 25 gamers who responded to the questions all reported using either swearing, other BLEs or both in gaming. However, two of the boys and one girl reported not having experienced other gamers use either, which leaves 19 boys and 3 girls to investigate according to their attitudes towards other gamers' use of swearing and BLEs. As shown in table 5.13 below, the gamers are for the most part indifferent towards their own and other gamers' use of swearing and BLEs in gaming. The majority of the boys report that they are indifferent towards both their own and other gamers' use, while some are positive and only one boy is negative to their own use. All of the girls are indifferent towards other gamers' use, but more divided with regard to their own. This appears to be a pattern regardless of gender – they are less positive and more critical towards their own use of swearing and BLEs than towards other gamer's use.

Table 5.13. Attitudes towards own and other gamers' use of swearing and BLEs in gaming.

	Own use		Other gamers' use	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Positive	4/21 (19%)	1/4 (25%)	5/19 (26%)	0/3 (0%)
Indifferent	16/21 (76%)	2/4 (50%)	14/19 (74%)	3/3 (100%)
Negative	1/21 (5%)	1/4 (25%)	0/19 (0%)	0/3 (0%)

The lack of negative attitudes to other gamers' use of swearing and BLEs is interesting when compared to Kramer's (2013) findings, namely that the majority of gamers regard the in-game contexts as impolite and offensive, while claiming to be polite to others (p. 49). My findings suggest that it may not be the gamers' use of swearing and BLEs that contributes to this impolite and hostile environment, but rather some other factors which are beyond the scope of the present study. Furthermore, the gamers are more critical towards their own use than other gamers' use of swearing and BLEs, and thus may differ from those in Kramer's (2013) study, who she believed portrayed themselves as more polite than they really were. This may suggest that the gamers in the present study are self-aware of their language use in in-game contexts.

As mentioned in section 3.3, previous studies have found that swearing and BLEs may be used as positive politeness in gaming (Ensslin & Finnegan, 2019; Kiourti, 2019). The great extent of BLE use in my study and the gamers' lack of negative attitudes to it may also be an effect of

BLEs being utilised for politeness rather than impoliteness, but whether this is really the case would require an investigation of the gamers' motivation for using swearing and other BLEs in games, the particular expressions used, and the actual situations in which they use them.

5.5. Gamers' use of swearing and other BLEs in the DCT requests

As shown in section 5.3, the gamers in the present study use swearing and other BLEs to a great extent in in-game contexts. The question is then whether they also apply such usage when performing requests in out-of-game contexts. To answer my fourth research question, the data analysis revealed that none of the gamers in the present study made use of swearing or other BLEs in the DCT requests. I will now discuss some possible explanations for this.

One possible explanation may be that the gamers are aware of the social context they find themselves in and able to distinguish between appropriate language use in gaming and outside gaming, i.e. they have developed pragmatic competence. As mentioned in section 3.2, the in-game context is distinct from most out-of-game contexts as gamers often find themselves in high stress situations where efficiency and urgency are key to achievement (Kramer, 2013; Swoboda, 2015). The formal test situation in the present study arguably did not promote the use of swear words and other BLEs, especially taken into account that data collection was carried out in the classroom and the DCT may look similar to tests given by their teachers.

Another possible explanation for my findings may be that the gamers do not swear or use other BLEs when performing requests in gaming either, but instead use it in other situations or speech acts. Previous studies have found that gamers' motivation for using swear words and other BLEs may be linked to experiencing strong levels of immersion and emotions during gameplay (Ensslin & Finnegan, 2019, p. 147), and that such usage appears to take place when gamers violate the rules of in-game communication, to minimise tension and bond with teammates, and as a linguistic strategy for quick feedback (Kiourti, 2019). It may thus be fruitful to investigate speech acts such as expressives, as perhaps gamers are more likely to apply swearing and other BLEs when performing such speech acts outside gaming. I would like to point out that in order to see if the use of swear words and BLEs is carried over from gaming, we must know which speech acts they are used in in-game and investigate similar speech acts outside gaming, making sure we include both gamers and non-gamers.

6. Conclusion

The present study set out to investigate the impact of gaming on the acquisition of politeness strategies among Norwegian gamers, and whether frequency of gaming impacts the choice of politeness strategies when performing requests in out-of-game contexts. It has furthermore investigated differences between male and female gamers, gamers' use of swearing and other bad language expressions (BLEs) and their attitudes towards such usage in gaming, in addition to whether they apply bad language use in requests outside gaming. While SLA and gaming as a research field has experienced a growth and increase in popularity in recent years, there have been few studies on the correlation between gaming and pragmatic competence, especially in contexts outside gaming. This study has been an attempt to help fill in this gap by investigating four research questions, which will be summarized and answered below.

6.1. Summary of the findings

The analysis of the responses to the discourse completion task revealed that there might be a gaming effect on the request strategies used by the boys – the frequent gamers having slightly more variations depending on the situation. A similar effect could not be identified for the girls. There was no effect of gaming on the use of alerters and supportive moves for the boys nor the girls. The fact that my findings show no clear effect of gaming on the politeness strategies used when performing requests outside gaming is somewhat surprising since many previous studies have found a positive correlation between gaming and various aspects of language learning. At the same time, the lack of a gaming effect for the girls may not be surprising as it is in line with previous findings.

With respect to game preference, there were no differences between the male and female gamers, as their most played games were generally either online multiplayer or hybrid games (games which contain both an online multiplayer and offline single-player mode). There appears to be a gender difference that cannot be tied to game preference in the use of alerters and supportive moves between boys and girls in general, rather than between male and female gamers. What exactly causes this gender difference lies beyond the scope of this study. My findings in regard to game preference contradicts previous studies which found that girls have a different game preference than boys and mostly play offline single-player games. This may indicate that perhaps girls' game preference is changing, which could have implications for future research on gaming and language learning.

The answers to the questionnaire revealed that swear words and other bad language expressions (BLEs) are commonly used by gamers in the gaming context – swearing being more frequently used than other BLEs. The gamers are for the most part indifferent to the use of swearing and other BLEs in gaming, and they appear to be more critical towards their own use as compared to other gamers' use. None of the gamers in my study applied the use of bad language when performing requests in out-of-game contexts.

6.2. Shortcomings

There were some shortcomings in my study that need to be addressed. First and foremost, the sample size is too small and the gender distribution in the gaming frequency groups too uneven to conclude with any certainty that frequency of gaming impacts the politeness behaviour displayed when performing requests in contexts outside gaming, or whether there are any gender differences that cannot be tied to game preference. The high number of boys and low number of girls who engage in gaming have previously been and continue to be a challenge in research on gender, gaming and language learning, as selecting a random sample is unlikely to provide a sufficient number of girls who engage in gaming and boys who do not.

While this study accounted for several key variables such as language background, English proficiency, travelling experience and stays in English speaking countries, it was nevertheless unable to account for all the confounding variables which may have affected the participants' performance on the DCT, including learning aptitude, and reading and writing disabilities. Even though spelling errors were ignored in my analysis as they were not the main focus, reading and writing disabilities, like dyslexia, could have implications for the ability to interpret the situations and produce fitting responses. In addition to account for participants with reading and writing disabilities, it would also have been beneficial to read the description of the situations aloud to ensure that all participants understand them.

The limited research on gaming and pragmatic competence in contexts outside gaming meant that there was a lack of pre-existing knowledge and methods to base my study on. I thus had to navigate and figure out how to approach the research subject to some extent on my own. This has given me experience, and insight as to what I could have done differently to improve upon my methods. There were some shortcomings related to the investigation of gamers' use of swear words and other BLEs, and their attitudes to such usage in gaming. My questionnaire could have included more specific categories of bad language expressions that are more familiar to

the participants than the vague category ‘ufine ord’ (BLEs). My study also did not account for the gamers’ motivation for bad language use in gaming or why they did not apply such usage when performing requests outside gaming. This means that it is not possible to conclude whether gamers utilise BLE use as politeness rather than impoliteness in gaming, or elaborate on the reasons behind them not applying this to requests in out-of-game contexts. With respect to game preference, it would have been more beneficial to include a question asking specifically whether the gamers prefer to play offline single-player games or online multiplayer games, as many games these days are hybrid in nature and contain both modes.

6.3. Suggestions for future research

The present study has barely touched the surface on the impact of gaming on the acquisition of politeness strategies, and further research is much needed to investigate the correlation between gaming and pragmatic competence, especially in contexts outside gaming. This study points to there possibly being a gaming effect on the request strategies used by the boys; however, studies investigating a larger sample must be carried out to establish whether this is the case, and whether a similar trend can be found for the girls.

More research is needed on gender, gaming and language learning. Female gamers in particular remain understudied despite my own and previous efforts. I initially believed that the number of girls who engage in gaming had increased when planning my study. However, the very recent report by the Norwegian Media Authority (2022) reveals that the number has in fact decreased in recent years. This has implications for future research on this topic since selecting a random sample is unlikely to provide a sufficient number of female gamers. Male non-gamers also seem to be scarce due to the high number of boys who engage in gaming. This study has proven to be one of many studies which have come short in investigating a correlation between gaming and various aspects of language learning for girls. Future studies may benefit from actively seeking out female gamers and male non-gamers.

With respect to bad language use among gamers, it could be more fruitful to investigate speech acts other than requests. It may be useful to first investigate the gamers’ motivation for using bad language in gaming, the particular expressions used, and what speech acts they use them in, since this could provide information about what situations and speech acts one can expect gamers to apply bad language to outside gaming.

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Appendices

Appendix A: **Information and consent form**

Vil du delta i ein studie om korleis gaming påverkar engelsk kommunikasjon?

Dette er eit spørsmål til deg om å delta i ein **anonym** studie kor formålet er å undersøke om gaming har ein effekt på læring av kommunikasjonsstrategiar på engelsk. I dette skrivet vil du få informasjon om måla for studien og kva deltaking vil innebere for deg. Studien skjer med samtykke frå [namn], kontaktlærarane i klassen.

Formål

Studien blir gjennomført i forbindelse med at eg skriv masteroppgåve i engelsk lingvistikk ved Universitetet i Oslo. Formålet med studien er å undersøke om gaming har ein effekt på læring av korleis ein kommuniserer i ulike situasjonar på engelsk, og om det finst skilnadar mellom dei som gamer og dei som ikkje gamer. Det er difor ønskeleg at både dei som gamer og ikkje gamer deltek i studien.

Kva inneber det for deg å delta?

Dersom du vel å delta i prosjektet, inneber det at du svarar på eit spørjeskjema på norsk, kombinert med at du gjer ei oppgåve på engelsk. Det vil ta ca. 45 minutt og det blir satt av ein skuletime til gjennomføring. Spørjeskjemaet inneheld spørsmål om din språkbakgrunn og ditt engelsknivå, kjønn, dine spelevanar og om du brukar tid på aktivitetar knytt til gaming. I oppgåva får du presentert og skildra ulike situasjonar og du skal skriftleg svare på kva du ville sagt i desse situasjonane. Dette er ikkje ein test der det er riktige og gale svar, men eg vil vite kva DU ville ha sagt. Det er viktig å understreke igjen at alt er **anonymt.**

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet og du kan velje å trekke tilbake samtykket fram til du svarar på spørjeskjemaet og gjer oppgåva. Det vil ikkje ha nokre negative konsekvensar for deg dersom du ikkje vil delta.

Med vennleg helsing

Amalie Marie Karsch

Samtykkeerklæring

Eg har motteke og forstått informasjon om Amalie Marie Karsch sin studie om forholdet mellom gaming og kommunikasjon på engelsk, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål.

☐ Eg samtykker til å delta i studien

☐ Eg samtykker ikkje til å delta i studien

Signert av deltakar, dato

Appendix B: **Discourse completion task (DCT)**

Oppgåve på engelsk

I denne oppgåva får du presentert og skildra ulike situasjonar og du skal skrive kva DU ville sagt i desse situasjonane på engelsk. Her er det ingen riktige og gale svar. Spør gjerne om du lurer på noko kring oppgåva og situasjonane.

Situation 1: Studying abroad (part 1)

You are studying abroad in Edinburgh, Scotland. You just moved into a student flat that you share with another student from Spain. She has lived there for a few months. You are trying to connect to the Wi-Fi, but you don't know the password. You decide to ask your flatmate for the password. What do you say?

You: _____

_____

Flatmate: Hang on, I think I wrote it down somewhere.

Situation 2: Studying abroad (part 2)

You have never visited Edinburgh before, and you don't know the city or anybody living here yet. Your flatmate knows her way around the city and where to find the best places to meet new people, but you just met her. You decide to ask her to give you a tour around the city anyway. What do you say?

You: _____

_____

Flatmate: Maybe later this week when I have time.

Situation 3: In English class

You have been studying abroad in Edinburgh for a few months. You missed the English class yesterday because you were sick, and you want to borrow your friend Anna's notes. Anna is from Germany and you met her during your first week in Edinburgh. You and Anna have borrowed notes from each other many times before. What do you say?

You: _____

_____

Anna: Of course, but let me have them back by Friday.

Situation 4: At a friend's house

You are hanging out with your Scottish friend Ben at his house. Ben has just showed you the motorcycle he got for his birthday a few days ago. It's brand new and expensive. You don't own a motorcycle and would love to borrow Ben's motorcycle for a test drive, but you know that he's very scared that something may happen to it. What do you say?

You: _____

_____

Ben: Hmm, alright. But only if you promise to be very careful.

Situation 5: Visiting London

You are visiting London for the first time by yourself. You are trying to find your way to Oxford Street, but you are not sure if you are walking in the right direction. You want to ask someone for directions and approach an older man who is waiting at the bus stop in front of you. What do you say?

You: _____

_____

Man: Sure, just keep going in that direction and then turn left on the next street.

Situation 6: At the grocery store

You are at the grocery store in London and you reach for your wallet to pay. You suddenly realise that you forgot your wallet at the hotel. The grocery store closes in 15 minutes, and you don't have time to go to the hotel and come back before it closes. You are desperate and decide to ask the woman behind you if you can borrow £10 and pay her back. What do you say?

You: _____

_____

Woman: Alright, I'll help you out if you promise to pay me back.

Situation 7: At the library

You have been studying at the Edinburgh library all day. It's getting dark outside and you don't want to walk home alone in the dark. You spot your German friend Anna on her way out of the library. She lives not far from your flat. You decide to ask Anna to wait for you so you can walk home together. What do you say?

You: _____

_____

Anna: Of course, I'll wait while you pack your things.

Situation 8: Home alone

You are home alone with your younger sister when your friend Magnus suddenly calls you. It's an emergency and Magnus needs you right away. You can tell by his voice that something is wrong. You can't leave your younger sister home alone and decide to ask your neighbour Olivia to look after her. You have known Olivia since you were a child. She is from Australia and you have always talked English to her. What do you say?

You: _____

_____

Olivia: Don't worry, I'll look after her for a few hours.

Appendix C: **Questionnaire**

Spørjeskjema på norsk

Spørjeskjemaet er anonymt og består av to delar. I første del får du spørsmål om kjønn, språkbakgrunn og engelsknivå. I andre del får du spørsmål om fritida og spelevanane dine. Det er veldig viktig for undersøkinga mi at du svarar ærleg på spørsmåla. Spør gjerne om hjelp dersom det er noko du lurer på undervegs.

Kjønn, språkbakgrunn og engelsknivå

1. Kjønn: ☐ gut ☐ jente ☐ anna kjønnsidentitet

2. Kva språk var det/dei første du høyrde rundt deg som liten?
   (Til dømes: Om foreldra dine snakka norsk med deg då du var liten, skriv du «norsk» her.)

   _____

3. Kva språk føler du at du kan aller best?
   (For dei fleste er dette det same språket som i forrige spørsmål. Eit unntak kan til dømes vere om du høyrde japansk heime som liten, men har brukt norsk i barnehagen, på skulen og i kvardagen elles og føler at du no kan det betre.)

   _____

4. a) Har du budd i eit/fleire engelskspråkleg(e) land? ☐ ja ☐ nei

   b) Om ja, kva for land? _____

   c) Om ja, kor lenge til saman når du legg saman alle periodane? (Sett eit kryss)

   ☐ mindre enn 3 månadar ☐ 3-12 månadar ☐ meir enn 12 månadar

5. a) Har du besøkt eit/fleire engelskspråkleg(e) land? ☐ ja ☐ nei

   b) Om ja, kva for land? _____

   c) Om ja, kor lenge til saman når du legg saman alle periodane? (Sett eit kryss)

   ☐ mindre enn 3 månadar ☐ 3-12 månadar ☐ meir enn 12 månadar

6. a) Snakkar du jamleg med nokon på engelsk? ☐ ja ☐ nei

   b) Om ja, med kven? _____

   c) Om ja, kor ofte? (Sett eit kryss)

   ☐ Dagleg ☐ Ein eller fleire gongar i veka
   ☐ Ein eller fleire gongar i månaden ☐ Ein eller fleire gongar i året

7. a) Kor god er du til å snakke engelsk? (Sett eit kryss)

   ☐ Veldig god ☐ God ☐ Midt på treet ☐ Ikkje så veldig god

   b) Kor god er du til å skrive engelsk? (Sett eit kryss)

   ☐ Veldig god ☐ God ☐ Midt på treet ☐ Ikkje så veldig god

8. Kor trur du at du har lært det meste av det du kan av engelsk?
   (Sett eit kryss)

   ☐ Eg har lært alt eller nesten alt på skulen og gjennom skulearbeid
   ☐ Eg har lært det meste på skulen og gjennom skulearbeid
   ☐ Eg har lært det meste på fritida
   ☐ Eg har lært alt eller nesten alt på fritida

Fritid og spelevanar

1. Kor ofte held du på med dei engelskspråklege aktivitetane nedanfor på fritida? Kryss for det som stemmer best for deg. (Sett eit kryss per aktivitet)

	Aktivitetar	Dagleg	Ein eller fleire gongar i veka	Ein eller fleire gongar i månaden	Aldri eller nesten aldri
1	Lese skjønnlitteratur på engelsk (romanar, noveller, teikneseriar, osv. enten digitalt eller på papir)				
2	Lese saktekstar på engelsk (nyheiter, artiklar, bloggar osv. enten digitalt eller på papir)				
3	Sjå filmar, seriar, YouTube, sportssendingar osv. med engelsk tale og norsk teksting				
4	Sjå filmar, seriar, YouTube, sportssendingar, osv. med berre engelsk tale				
5	Høyre på engelsk musikk				
6	Gaming på engelsk (Playstation, Xbox, PC, mobil, osv.)				
7	Aktivitetar knytt til gaming der du brukar engelsk (online chats, forum, game wikis, sjå på videoar om spel og andre som spelar på YouTube eller Twitch, osv.)				
8	Andre aktivitetar på engelsk, spesifiser:				

2. Om du gamer, kva heiter dei tre spela du spelar mest?

_____

_____

3. a) Om du gamer saman med eller mot andre, opplever du at andre bannar og/eller brukar ord som mange kan oppfatte som ufine?

☐ bannar ☐ ufine ord ☐ ingen av delane

b) Om ja, korleis opplever du det?

☐ positivt ☐ negativt ☐ verken eller

4. a) Om du gamer saman med eller mot andre, bannar du og/eller brukar ord som mange kan oppfatte som ufine?

☐ bannar ☐ ufine ord ☐ ingen av delane

b) Om ja, korleis trur du andre opplever det?

☐ positivt ☐ negativt ☐ verken eller

Tusen hjarteleg takk for at du tok deg tid til å gjennomføre undersøkinga mi. Eg set utruleg stor pris på det!