

Exploring Gamer English Usage: Insights from a Narrative Inquiry

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Abstract: Games are increasingly recognized as effective tools for supporting language learning, particularly in the development of speaking and pronunciation skills. While previous studies have highlighted the potential of digital games for language learning, fewer have examined informal online gaming experiences from learner narrative perspectives, especially in relation to speaking and pronunciation development. This study explores how a recent high school graduate improved his English proficiency through online gaming, aiming to understand how informal and extramural activities contribute to language development outside the classroom. Using a narrative inquiry approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, transcribed, and thematically analyzed to capture the participant personal experiences. The findings reveal that online gaming provided meaningful exposure to English and motivated the participant to communicate more actively with teammates. Through interactions on platforms such as Discord and PlayStation Party, the participant practiced pronunciation, expanded vocabulary, and received immediate feedback from other players. The collaborative and immersive nature of gaming created a low-anxiety environment that increased confidence and willingness to speak. These results demonstrate that language learning can occur beyond formal education and that extramural activities offer rich opportunities for authentic language use.

Keywords: narrative study, extramural, communication, online games

INTRODUCTION

Communication is commonly defined as the process of creating and exchanging meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages, involving both the transmission of information and the interpretation of messages to achieve shared understanding (Adler et al., 2018). They further describe communication as the creation of meaning through symbolic interaction, emphasizing the role of language and social context in shaping meaning. In language learning, communication therefore encompasses the exchange of ideas, opinions, and

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information for specific purposes, functioning as a social process in which meaning is actively shared and constructed (Iksan et al., 2012). However, effective communication in a second language (L2) is often constrained by various linguistic and psychological barriers, including limited vocabulary, grammatical uncertainty, pronunciation difficulties, and anxiety about making mistakes. Jamshidnejad (2020) argues that knowledge of semantic and syntactic rules alone does not guarantee communicative competence, as L2 learners often struggle to apply this knowledge in spontaneous spoken interactions, resulting in hesitation and a fear of negative evaluation. Similarly, Tien (2018) highlights concerns related to accuracy, vocabulary limitations, and clarity of meaning as significant factors that hinder learners' ability and willingness to communicate effectively in an L2.

One factor that supports the development of communication skills is extramural English, which refers to English-related activities conducted outside formal educational settings (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). These activities include exposure to English through media, music, online content, and, most prominently, digital games. Research suggests that extramural activities provide learners with frequent and meaningful exposure to authentic English use. Huang (2017) found that learners often spend more time engaging with English outside the classroom than during formal instruction, allowing for sustained and self-directed language practice. Among various extramural activities, digital games offer distinct advantages because they combine continuous exposure, interaction, and communicative demands. Bogdanova (2019) reported that young learners in Sweden who frequently played digital games in English demonstrated improved English knowledge, particularly in vocabulary development, due to repeated encounters with language in meaningful contexts. Unlike passive forms of exposure, games require players to actively process language, follow instructions, and communicate with others, making digital gaming a central and highly relevant form of extramural English for the present study.

Games have a significant impact on English mastery and are widely regarded as a common form of extramural activity that many people engage in during their leisure time. According to Munawarah et al. (2024), games facilitate real-time language practice, encouraging learners to participate and apply their language skills in meaningful contexts actively. Linse et al. (2005) define vocabulary as the collection of words an individual knows, serving as the fundamental foundation for mastering the four key language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Research has shown a positive correlation between gaming and vocabulary development. For example, Zeidan (2019) found that gamers achieved higher mean scores on vocabulary tests compared to non-gamers, while the difference for non-gamers was only marginal. Furthermore, the storylines within games themselves contribute to vocabulary growth. Erya and Taloko (2024) discovered that high engagement with narrative-based video games positively supports vocabulary mastery. The immersive nature of these games provides rich contextual learning opportunities, making them a valuable supplementary tool for language development.

Digital games represent one of the most interactive forms of extramural English exposure because they require players to use language actively and collaboratively in real time. Through gameplay, learners engage in meaningful communicative tasks such as coordinating actions, giving instructions, and responding to teammates, which encourages

immediate and purposeful language use (Munawarah et al., 2024). This interaction is not limited to in-game communication; players also participate in interest-based gaming communities where they exchange strategies, share experiences, and maintain social relationships using English. As emphasized by Scholz (2016), communication within these communities supports language development because learners are motivated to interact with others who share similar interests and goals. Taken together, real-time gameplay interaction and community-based engagement illustrate how digital games provide authentic, sustained, and socially meaningful contexts for language use. Building on this general interactivity, certain types of digital games offer even richer opportunities for spoken communication.

Among different types of digital games, online multiplayer games emphasize collaboration and interaction, requiring players to communicate to achieve shared goals. Within this category, games with voice chat functions further enhance real-time communication by allowing players to coordinate strategies, share information, and respond spontaneously during gameplay. These interactions promote meaningful language use, as players must negotiate meaning under time pressure while focusing on successful collaboration rather than linguistic accuracy. As a result, such environments often reduce fear of judgment and encourage learners to speak more freely. Reinders and Wattana (2015) argue that digital games can lower affective barriers and increase learners' willingness to communicate by creating low-anxiety, goal-oriented contexts. However, engagement in these gaming environments is not equally distributed among learners. Iliadou (2017) reports gender related participation patterns, with gaming communities being predominantly male, suggesting that although online multiplayer games can effectively support communicative confidence and motivation, access to these benefits may vary depending on learner participation characteristics.

In addition, researchers have found similar evidence that informal learning activities can improve English language skills. According to Emeral and Farid (2024), engaging in informal learning activities at an early age can help students acquire languages more quickly and effectively. Similarly, Svensson (2018) highlights that informal environments provide opportunities for learners to share experiences, exchange tips, and discuss common interests, all of which support language development. Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012) also emphasize that it is beneficial to encourage L2 learners to explore games and play them in a foreign language as an additional means of developing their proficiency. Supported by gaming communities and shared interests, interactive gaming thus functions as a socially mediated and linguistically rich environment, positioning informal gaming activities as a valuable and effective complement to formal English language instruction.

Given these perspectives, this study examines how Indonesian gamers experience the use of English in online gaming environments. Gamers constitute an important group to investigate because many digital games are designed primarily in English, providing frequent exposure to the language and opportunities for incidental learning beyond formal instruction. Building on this context, the study investigates how gamers use English while engaging in online gaming, including their initial encounters with games, their interactions with players from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, their participation in online gaming platforms, and their use of English in both spoken and text-based communication.

Furthermore, the study explores how sustained participation in online gaming contributes to the development of English communication skills by examining how gamers navigate communication challenges and how these experiences influence their motivation to improve English within global gaming communities.

METHOD

This Research explores how online gaming contributes to the development of English communication skills through the lived experience of one participant. Using a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry technique, this research follows the view that narrative inquiry focuses on understanding individuals' experiences through their personal stories (Lodico et al., 2020), and it serves as a strategy for inviting participants to share their life journeys (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In this study, the researcher selected one unique individual, a recent high school graduate from Palangka Raya who is an autodidactic English learner. He has shown a strong interest in learning English since high school by interacting with foreigners and translating game content to assist Discord members. For these reasons, the participant was selected for his evident motivation and engagement in English learning. The participant's uniqueness became the main selection criterion because his engagement with English through online gaming began in middle school and continued consistently over several years. This long-term, self-directed, and informal exposure to English provided rich, in-depth experiences suitable for narrative inquiry. His sustained use of English in authentic gaming interactions allowed the researcher to capture detailed narratives of how online gaming supported the gradual development of his English communication skills.

Focuses on examining, in depth, the personal journey of a single online gamer in developing and using English through gaming activities. The scope covers the participant's experiences from the moment he first started playing online games, how he gradually became exposed to English, and how communication practices evolved as he interacted with other players during gameplay. The study also includes the participant's progression from being a regular player to eventually taking new roles within the gaming community, such as moderating and assisting other members. These experiences are explored to understand how each stage of his gaming journey contributed to his use and improvement of English, particularly during gameplay interaction and voice chats with players from different countries. To retain depth and detail, the study is limited to one participant and relies solely on data obtained through in-depth interviews. The findings aim to provide a rich and comprehensive understanding of the participant lived experiences rather than generalizing to a wider population.

The researcher used a semi-structured interview method for data collection. The interviews were recorded in audio format and transcribed verbatim to facilitate subsequent data analysis (Creswell & Guetterman, 2024). Semi-structured interviews are considered highly effective in qualitative research because they provide flexibility for participants to share their stories while enabling researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences. Accordingly, these interviews focused on exploring participants' experiences in detail, allowing them to narrate their perspectives freely while still addressing the research objectives. The semi-structured interview consisted of several thematic topics designed to

explore the participant's experiences of using English in online gaming environments. The questions served as a guiding framework rather than fixed categories, and the themes reported in the Results section emerged inductively from the data.

Table 1. Interview Questions, Indicators and Purposes Related to Gamer English Usage

Interview Questions (Items)	Indicators	Purpose
Can you tell me how you first became interested in playing online games?	Initial motivation and entry into online gaming	To explore how the participant's engagement with online gaming began
When playing games, do you feel more comfortable using voice chat or text chat?	Preferred mode of communication	To identify the participant's preferred communication channel during gameplay
How often do you communicate using voice chat? Besides GTA, are there other games you play that also use voice chat?	Frequency of voice chat use and range of games	To examine how frequently and in which gaming contexts voice communication is used
So, do you mostly use voice chat when playing GTA?	Game-specific communication practices	To clarify the primary game context in which voice chat is used
At that time, which platform did you use to communicate via voice chat?	Voice communication platforms	To identify the platforms that supported spoken interaction
Can you describe your first experience speaking with other players?	Initial experience of spoken interaction	To explore early oral communication experiences in English
Did you begin actively trying to communicate and learn through voice chat when you were in junior high school?	Onset of active English use	To identify when active English communication began
When other players tried to explain something and you did not understand, how did you try to understand them? And how did you respond when they did not understand you?	Communication difficulties and coping strategies	To explore how the participant managed communication breakdowns
Have any of your gaming friends helped you learn English, for example by correcting you in text or voice chat?	Peer support and feedback	To examine the role of peers in supporting English learning
While playing games, did you ever try to adjust your way of speaking, such as your accent or pronunciation?	Adaptation of speaking style	To explore efforts to improve intelligibility
Even though your teammates were not entirely from the United States?	Awareness of accent exposure	To clarify influences on accent adaptation
In your opinion, if you had not played games from junior high school until now, would your English-speaking ability be as fluent as it is today?	Perceived impact of gaming on speaking development	To explore the participant's perception of gaming's influence on English proficiency



Do you think games play an important role in developing speaking skills and vocabulary?	Perceived language learning outcomes	To examine perceived gains in speaking and vocabulary
Besides playing games, after your team became busy, are there other activities in which you use English?	Continued English use beyond gaming	To explore additional contexts of English use
Finally, what are your responsibilities as a staff member in a gaming community?	Roles and responsibilities in gaming communities	To understand how responsibility-based roles support ongoing language use

The researcher employed in vivo coding as the strategy for analyzing the interview transcripts. In vivo coding uses words or short phrases from the participant's own language as codes in the data record (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This approach involves using the participant's own words or phrases as initial codes to preserve the authenticity and meaning of their experiences. After transcribing the interviews verbatim, the researcher carefully read the data several times to identify significant expressions and key statements directly taken from the participant narratives. Each meaningful phrase was highlighted and assigned as an in vivo code. These codes captured how the participant described their learning experiences, motivations, and interactions in their own language. The researcher then organized the codes into a list to observe recurring patterns and connections across the data. This coding process allowed the researcher to stay close to the participant's voice and avoid imposing external interpretations at the early stage of analysis.

RESULTS

The participant began playing online games during junior high school primarily out of curiosity, without any initial intention to learn or use English. At this stage, gaming came first, and exposure to English emerged later as a consequence of gameplay. Initially, the participant used English only to follow teammates during voice chat interactions, imitating expressions without fully understanding them. The presence of voice chat, which facilitates real-time communication for coordinating strategies and sharing information during gameplay, gradually increased the participant need to use English more actively. As voice communication became essential for effective participation, the participant was encouraged to speak English more frequently. Over time, his involvement expanded from random matchmaking to joining international teams and communities. This progression increased his motivation to learn, adapt, and continuously refine his English skills in order to communicate more effectively with players from different countries. In this case, gaming preceded English learning, and the need to communicate during gameplay became the primary trigger for English use and development.

Reason and Interest of the Participant

The first question about interest in using a game while playing a game asked participant about their interest in playing online games. He stated that initially, he had no interest in playing online games, but he eventually came to enjoy them. The participant started his

informal English learning journey by stumbling into the world of online games. This is when he got exposed to English, which is usually the default language in video games.

Excerpt 1: *“The reason I was interested was that I did not have any interest at first, but I just tried it out, and eventually....”*

This statement indicates that motivation emerged naturally through engagement rather than intention. His transition from disinterest to enjoyment suggests that authentic contexts, such as gaming, can encourage learners to interact with English subconsciously. This supports the idea that meaningful exposure often drives motivation more effectively than formal instruction.

The participant also stated that he felt more comfortable using voice chat compared to text chat or quick chat. Beyond the gameplay itself, he found that communication through voice chat was faster and more efficient, which motivated him to improve his English skills so that he could participate and coordinate more effectively.

Excerpt 2: *“Voice chat is more convenient because the game I play is competitive, Voice chat is simpler you can communicate directly.”*

This preference highlights how the need for efficiency pushes learners to use English in real time, increasing both pressure and opportunity to practice. Participant choice of voice chat indicates that communicative demands within competitive games serve as a driving force for improving spoken proficiency. It also demonstrates that autonomy and situational demands can encourage learners to participate more actively.

Participant’s Experience Using English

Another part of this study examined the participant’s initial attempts at using English in conversations while gaming. The interview began with questions about his initial experiences with both gaming and using voice chat features. The participant explained that he first started with *Rainbow Six Siege*, where communication was limited to in-game coordination and did not lead to building friendships. In contrast, his experience with *GTA V Online* allowed him to form friendships, which later expanded to other platforms such as WhatsApp and Discord.

Excerpt 3: *“Rainbow Six Siege was the first online game, but the first time I met people outside the game was in GTA V....”*

Excerpt 4: *“In GTA V, it was frequent; during the COVID period, communication in English was common.”*

Competitive games tend to require players to use voice chat because they emphasize teamwork, as seen in games like *GTA V*. This communicative demand encouraged the participant to express meaning more clearly to coordinate with others. As a result, he adapted to the linguistic norms of the gaming community, demonstrating how real-time interaction can drive informal language development.

The participant continued using these platforms to find and communicate with others. He made friends randomly and began interacting not only during gameplay but also outside of it. The participant also mentioned the platforms he commonly used for communication.

Excerpt 5: "I used the PlayStation Party, where I started communicating with outsiders, but eventually moved to Discord and WhatsApp."

The formation of an online gaming community exposed the participant to a multilingual and multicultural environment where English served as the primary medium of communication. Interacting with players from various countries required him to adapt linguistically and socially, which created ongoing opportunities for authentic language use beyond the gameplay itself. This suggests that the community functioned not only as a space for sharing game-related content but also as an informal learning environment that reinforced the participant's reliance on English for meaningful interaction.

The participant stated that, at the beginning of the game, he felt nervous and afraid to communicate directly due to difficulties with speaking and the fear of making mistakes.

Excerpt 6: "I was nervous because I was afraid of making mistakes. Basically, I could not speak smoothly."

The participant started playing during the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, the participant was still in middle school.

Excerpt 7: "...back when I was in elementary school, I tried it too, it was not very good. The active use of English started during the COVID-19 pandemic when I was in Middle school."

The participant's initial anxiety, rooted in fear of making mistakes and difficulty expressing meaning, highlights the emotional barriers commonly faced by language learners in real-time communication. However, the supportive nature of the gaming community gradually reduced this anxiety and created a sense of psychological safety. The absence of harsh criticism and the presence of collaborative interaction enabled the participant to take more risks in speaking. This suggests that positive social dynamics within online gaming communities can function as an affective scaffold, fostering confidence and encouraging learners to engage more actively in English communication.

Strategies for Overcoming English Communication Difficulties

At the beginning of his gaming experience, the participant encountered several difficulties in using English. One of the main difficulties was understanding fast-paced conversations, mainly when slang or unfamiliar vocabulary was used. He also struggled to express his own ideas clearly, which often made him hesitant to respond. To overcome these difficulties, the participant developed several strategies. For example, he frequently asked his friends to repeat what they said when he could not understand. He also relied on Google Translate to check unfamiliar words or to help him construct sentences. Over time, these strategies made

him feel more confident in conversations and gradually improved his ability to communicate effectively during online gaming sessions.

Excerpt 8: *“Yes, I will ask them to repeat, for example, ‘can you repeat, please?’ I will ask like that. I use Google Translate if I do not know the English word for it...”*

The participant’s approach to overcoming communication difficulties demonstrates a gradual process of meaning-making supported by self-initiated strategies. By repeatedly asking others to clarify or repeat information and by using tools such as Google Translate, he actively constructed understanding despite limited proficiency. These strategies reflect an emerging learner autonomy, in which the participant adapted to linguistic difficulties rather than avoiding them. This suggests that real-time communicative pressure in online gaming environments can foster strategic language use, enabling learners to develop both comprehension and expressive skills gradually through persistent engagement.

In addition to facing various difficulties, the participant’s online gaming peers also played an important role in supporting the development of his English proficiency. As fellow gamers, they actively helped by explaining unfamiliar expressions and correcting the participant’s English use during gameplay.

Excerpt 9: *“In middle school, I could not distinguish ‘can’ and ‘cannot,’ but with frequent corrections, I became more comfortable... using the past tense was difficult at first, but eventually I managed.”*

Participant faced difficulties, including nervousness and a fear of making mistakes when speaking. The participant began practicing English in middle school, initially with limited proficiency, and often relied on tools like Google Translate. Despite these difficulties, the participant’s determination and curiosity encouraged him to continue practicing, gradually becoming more comfortable and accustomed to using English in gaming contexts.

Motivation and adaptation

Over time, the participant made conscious efforts to improve his accent. He realized that not everyone could understand his speech, which motivated him to adjust and refine it. Gradually, he learned by observing the way his friend spoke in English, using these observations to ensure that his own accent was understandable to listeners. Although not native speakers, the participant’s teammates use an American accent, which influenced the participant to learn and adapt his own accent. This exposure to different accents was evident during the researcher’s conversations with the participant.

Excerpt 10: *“I try to improve my accent because people sometimes do not understand. I often use an American accent because the person I am talking to also uses an American accent.”*

Most of the participant teammates come from countries where English is not the native language, such as India and the United Arab Emirates. However, in these countries, English functions as a second language, which explains why his teammates can use an American accent effectively.

Excerpt 11: *“...there are many from India and the United Arab Emirates, basically.”*

During middle school, the participant reported rarely using English in classroom communication, as teachers primarily assigned writing exercises. Consequently, conversing with online friends while gaming became an alternative means to practice speaking and pronunciation. This informal practice not only helped him improve his oral skills but also supported his English development throughout middle and high school.

Excerpt 12: *“During middle school I rarely used English, I mostly wrote in books for assignments or typed. So using Discord definitely made it smoother and helped my pronunciation become smoother.”*

The participant stated that they prefer communicating online. Despite having frequent online conversations, they expressed that engaging in face-to-face communication remains challenging.

Excerpt 13: *“Yes, Games sharpen your English and give you a feel for real conversation... although talking online and speaking face to face are totally different, speaking in person is much harder.”*

The participant’s experience shows a clear gap between classroom learning and real communicative practice. Although school activities focused mainly on writing, his spoken English developed through online gaming communities, where meaningful interaction motivated him to speak and improve his pronunciation. However, his continued difficulty with face-to-face communication suggests that online practice alone is not enough, highlighting the need for learning environments, both formal and informal, to provide more authentic opportunities for spoken interaction.

Language Development and Continuous Learning

Currently, the participant is no longer playing with his original team due to their respective busyness. He now serves as a staff member in a game community, where his role involves translating content from English to Indonesian. In this position, the participant continues to develop his English speaking and writing skills. As a moderator, he assists in managing the server, guiding members, and providing information to new Indonesian players, helping them become more familiar with the game and its updates. This ongoing engagement demonstrates how the participant maintains and enhances his language skills through continuous, practical use.

Excerpt 14: *“Yes, it is not much longer, but it is still related to games because I am one of the staff in the game, so I have to hone my English skills there. Sometimes I can also speak English.”*

Excerpt 15: *“...I help the community and enforce the rules, as well as translate from English to Indonesian.”*

The participant’s current role as a staff member in a gaming community illustrates how meaningful, responsibility-based tasks can extend language learning beyond play. By translating content, guiding new members, and enforcing rules, he engages in authentic

communication that requires both accuracy and clarity of expression. This ongoing involvement suggests that informal digital environments can provide sustained opportunities for linguistic growth, especially when the learner is motivated by real duties rather than assignments. His progression from player to moderator reflects increased confidence and demonstrates how practical engagement can naturally strengthen both reading, writing, and speaking skills.

DISCUSSION

This narrative inquiry illustrates how the participant's English development emerged gradually through lived experiences in online gaming rather than through deliberate or formal learning intentions. Initially, the participant did not aim to learn English through games; however, as described in the Results, his motivation developed organically as he became involved in multiplayer interactions where English was necessary to communicate with teammates. His transition from passive participation to more active engagement reflects how authentic communicative demands shaped his willingness to use English. As he reported adjusting his pronunciation and accent to be understood by others, motivation functioned not as an abstract construct but as a response to real communicative needs. This experience reflects Reinders and Wattana's (2015) argument that digital games can reduce affective barriers and encourage communication, and it aligns with Bozkurt and Durak's (2018) view that engagement in game-based contexts sustains learner motivation over time.

The participant's improvement in speaking skills was closely connected to his frequent use of voice chat, as revealed in his narrative accounts. Rather than treating voice chat merely as a technical feature of online games, the findings indicate that the participant actively relied on spoken interaction to coordinate strategies, respond rapidly, and maintain teamwork in competitive situations. These communicative pressures required him to use English spontaneously, often under time constraints, which gradually reduced his hesitation and increased his fluency. His preference for voice-based communication over text further demonstrates how spoken English became central to his language use during gameplay. This experience echoes Emre et al. (2022), who found that online gaming environments encourage players to communicate actively rather than remain silent, particularly when collaboration is essential.

The participant's exposure to teammates from diverse linguistic backgrounds further highlights the role of English as a shared communicative resource within the gaming community. Although players came from different countries, the frequent use of a similar accent, particularly an American accent, functioned as a form of linguistic alignment that facilitated mutual understanding. Within this collaborative environment, the participant adjusted his accent as a form of linguistic accommodation driven by the need for effective communication. His willingness to modify his pronunciation reflects an awareness of how accent influences communicative clarity in fast-paced, team-based interactions. This adaptation suggests that social interaction and communicative necessity can shape learners' phonological development, illustrating how shared linguistic norms and authentic communicative pressure can foster natural, context-driven improvement in spoken English. Throughout his gaming journey, the participant encountered communicative challenges,

including fast-paced speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and anxiety about making mistakes. However, instead of withdrawing from interaction, he developed coping strategies such as asking for repetition, using translation tools, and accepting corrective feedback from peers. These strategies, repeatedly highlighted in the Results, illustrate how the participant exercised agency in managing communication breakdowns. Peer correction, especially from friends within the gaming community, played a significant role in improving his grammatical accuracy and pronunciation over time. This finding supports Scholz's (2016) claim that interactive gaming communities foster second-language development by providing feedback in meaningful social contexts.

The participant's experiences in games such as *Rainbow Six Siege* and *GTA V* further demonstrate how role-based interaction contributed to his communicative development. In these environments, he was required to plan actions, negotiate roles, and collaborate with teammates through continuous spoken interaction. Rather than practicing isolated language forms, the participant used English to solve problems, express emotions, and make decisions within contextualized situations. These role-play experiences closely resemble real-life communication, allowing him to develop pragmatic language use in authentic settings. Such findings are consistent with Giménez (2024), who emphasizes that role-playing contexts enhance not only linguistic competence but also pragmatic and socio-emotional skills.

The narrative also highlights the role of extramural English learning in shaping the participant's language development. Most of his improvement in spoken English occurred outside formal classroom settings, where opportunities for communicative practice were limited. Continuous exposure to English through gaming communities enabled him to enhance his pronunciation, fluency, and confidence without structured instruction. As indicated in the Results, online interactions often became his primary space for practicing spoken English. This finding aligns with Emeral and Farid's (2024) assertion that extramural activities can accelerate language development and, in some cases, compensate for limited communicative practice in formal education.

Despite these noticeable improvements, the participant continued to feel insecure when speaking English, particularly in face-to-face interactions and when communicating with unfamiliar interlocutors. This ongoing anxiety suggests that affective factors remain influential even as language proficiency increases. Nevertheless, participation in online communities such as Discord provided a supportive environment in which he could interact with diverse speakers, receive feedback, and gradually build confidence. His progression from a hesitant participant to a community staff member further illustrates how sustained engagement encouraged both linguistic and personal growth. In line with Scholz (2016), these findings indicate that supportive digital communities can lower affective barriers and encourage learners to take communicative risks, reinforcing the value of informal, interest-driven learning environments in second language development.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that online gaming functioned as a meaningful space for English learning, as the participant actively used English as a communicative tool to coordinate strategies, exchange information, socialize, and build relationships with international players across

gameplay and online platforms. His narrative demonstrates that English use emerged from practical necessity rather than deliberate learning intentions, evolving from passive listening and imitation to active spoken interaction, accent adjustment, and participation in community-based roles such as moderating and translating content. Although he initially experienced challenges such as limited vocabulary, rapid speech, and communication anxiety, he gradually developed greater fluency, clearer pronunciation, and increased confidence through strategies such as asking for repetition, using translation tools, and imitating peers' speech patterns. The contribution of this study lies in its detailed narrative account of how spontaneous, real-time interaction within gaming communities supports authentic language development beyond formal educational contexts. These findings suggest that online multiplayer games can serve as valuable extramural environments for spoken English practice, particularly in contexts where classroom instruction offers limited opportunities for oral communication, while also highlighting the need to connect informal digital learning with formal pedagogical support to facilitate transfer to face-to-face interaction. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its focus on a single participant, reliance on interview data, and a relatively limited observation period, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. Future research should involve larger participant groups, extended data collection, and mixed-method approaches, such as in-game discourse analysis or cross-genre game comparisons, to more comprehensively examine the role of digital gaming environments in second language learning.

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