"Used on balc, medic is trash" -

A Study of Discourse, Special Language and Use of Non-Clausal
Units in Team Fortress 2

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

The popularity of video games has increased exponentially during the past few decades and online gaming, in particular, has gained more and more active players. The complexity of gamer societies is likewise increasing and people are willing to invest more of their leisure time into developing their gaming skills and partaking in social game-related activities online. Even though there has also been some linguistic research regarding the topic, it has, to the best of my knowledge, not been extensive and has more often than not concentrated on possible second language acquisition related scenarios rather than, for instance, pragmatic, stylistic or sociolinguistic analysis. Consequently, no studies of the discourse, vocabulary or syntax in 'shooter games', for instance, could be found when conducting this thesis. Seeing that gaming environments offer a large source for language use, it is relevant to investigate these environments more closely.

This pro-gradu thesis is a case-study of spoken interactions that take place during a gaming session of a First Person Shooter game called Team Fortress 2 (TF 2). The aim is to research the material by using three different approaches: sociolinguistic, lexical and syntactic. The research questions relating to these methods are as follows; Sociolinguistically, what kinds of functions does the language perform, how do the players interact with the game world, each others, and why? Lexically, what kinds of special words and phrases are being used and what could they imply? Can the language used in this gaming session be classified as special language according specific criteria? Syntactically, Is there a difference between the length and ratio of clausal and non-clausal material compared to a sample from a speech corpus? The material was gathered by transcribing a full match of TF 2, where six players battle against an enemy team in a popular battleground of Badlands. The material is first analyzed by using Gee's (1999) model of an ideal discourse analysis This also serves as a detailed description of the events and activities taking place during the gaming session. The terminological section focuses on determining whether the given definition of special language is applicable for the gaming situation and for providing a complete list of special words and expressions found in the material. The final section consists of dividing the research data into clausal and non-clausal units, measuring the length of each and comparing the findings against a standard language sample from Biber *et al.* (1999).

The results show that the gaming situation is sociolinguistically complex in the sense that the players need to be able to communicate complex concepts and strategies swiftly and efficiently, taking into account the respective skill levels of other players as well as the properties of the map and player characters they are employing, all the while supporting the team's objective and bringing about their expertise in both language and action. The material contains numerous specialized expressions and seems to fit the given description of special language. Furthermore, the amount of non-clausal material in the TF 2 data is statistically very highly significantly higher than in standard language and the length of clausal units is significantly shorter. These findings seem to suggest that while the language, at least in this particular match of TF 2, might seem crude and even banal, the concepts the players are conveying can be exceedingly complex and the language needs to be efficient and precise in order to be usable in a gaming situation. Being the first study to investigate First Person Shooter games, this thesis could be useful for educators, linguists and video game enthusiasts alike and provide a starting point and an example of what kinds of things can be found from such a widely overlooked area of language use.

Avainsanat – Keywords
linguistics, video gaming, discourse analysis, special language, non-clausal material

ITÄ-SUOMEN YLIOPISTO – UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Videopelien suosio on kasvanut räjähdysmäisesti viime vuosikymmenten aikana ja etenkin verkkopelaamisen pelaajamäärät ovat nousseet huomattavasti. Myös pelaajayhteisöt ovat muuttuneet monimuotoisemmiksi, ja ihmiset ovat valmiita käyttämään vapaa-aikaansa niin pelitaitojensa kohentamiseen kuin myös erinäisiin sosiaalisiin, peleihin liittyviin toimintoihin. Vaikka kielitieteellistä tutkimusta aiheesta onkin ollut hieman, se on parhaimman tietämykseni mukaan ollut kohtalaisen suppeaa ja kohdistunut usein kielten oppimiseen eikä esimerkiksi pragmatiikkaan, stilistiikkaan tai sosiolingvistiikkaan. Tätä pro-gradua kirjoittaessa myöskään "räiskintäpelien" diskursseja, sanastoa tai kielioppia ei ollut tutkittu. Tämänkaltaisia pelejä pelataan kuitenkin paljon ja niissä on moninaisia kielenkäytön mahdollisuuksia, joten niiden kielitieteellinen tutkiminen on erittäin hyvin perusteltua.

Tämä pro-gradu on tapaustutkimus yhden räiskintäpelin, Team Fortress 2 (jatkossa TF 2), pelikerran aikana käytetystä puhutusta kielestä. Tavoitteena on suorittaa kolmiosainen analyysi, joka koostuu sosiolingvistisestä, sanastollisesta ja kieliopillisesta osuudesta. Tutkimuskysymykset liittyvät näihin kolmeen osa-alueeseen. Sosiolingvistisessä osassa käsitellään sitä, mitkä ovat kielen tehtävät pelin aikana, miten ja miksi pelaajat vuorovaikuttavat pelimaailman ja toistensa kanssa. Terminologinen osa esittelee, millaisia erikoisilmauksia aineisto sisältää ja mitä niistä voidaan päätellä, sekä pohtii, voidaanko aineiston sisältämä kieli luokitella erikoiskieleksi tiettyjen kriteerien perusteella?. Kieliopillinen osa tutkii, onko tämän tutkimuksen aineiston lauseellisen ja ei-lauseellisen aineksen jakauman ja yksiköiden pituus yleisestä puhekielestä poikkeava. Aineisto kerättiin litteroimalla täysimittainen TF 2 -pelikerta, jossa kuusi pelaajaa taistelee vihollisjoukkuetta vastaan suositulla Badlands-kentällä. Aineistoa analysoidaan ensiksi Geen (1999) ihanteellista diskurssianalyysimallia käyttäen. Tässä osuudessa myös kuvaillaan pelitilannetta yleiskuvan saavuttamiseksi. Seuraavassa osuudessa tarkastellaan aiemmin esitellyn erikoiskielen määritelmän sopivuutta aineiston kieliainekseen sekä tarjotaan täydellinen lista pelitilanteessa käytetyistä erikoisilmauksista. Viimeisessä osiossa tutkimusaineisto jaetaan lauseelliseen ja ei-lauseelliseen ainekseen ja kunkin yksikön pituudet mitataan. Yksiköiden jakaumaa ja pituutta verrataan sitten yleisen puhekielen vastaaviin lukuihin, jotka ovat Biberin ja kumppaneiden (1999) kielioppiteoksesta.

Tuloksista käy ilmi, että pelitilanne on sosiolingvistisesti monimutkainen siinä mielessä, että pelaajien on kyettävä viestimään nopeasti ja tehokkaasti käyttäen monimutkaisia ja laajoja käsitteitä liittyen senhetkisiin strategioihin. Samalla heidän tulee huomioida muiden pelaajien kyvyt ja taidot, kartan sekä hahmoluokkien ominaisuudet unohtamatta joukkueen tavoitteeseen pyrkimistä ja oman osaamisen näyttämistä sekä kielellisesti että taidollisesti. Aineisto sisältää monia ilmaisuja, joita käytetään ainoastaan TF 2 -kielessä ja tämä kieli näyttäisi täyttävän erikoiskielen kriteerit. Näiden lisäksi ei-lauseellisen aineksen määrä aineistossa on tilastollisesti erittäin merkitsevän paljon korkeampi kuin verrokkiaineistossa ja lauseellisten yksiköiden pituus on huomattavasti lyhyempi. Tulokset viittaavat siihen, että vaikka tämän kyseisen TF 2 -pelin kieli saattaakin vaikuttaa tökeröltä tai jopa banaalilta, pelaajien käyttämät ilmaisut voivat olla äärimmäisen monimutkaisia ja kielen tulee olla hyvin tarkoituksenmukaista ja tehokasta pystyäkseen toimimaan pelitilanteessa.

Tästä tutkimuksesta voisi potentiaalisesti olla hyötyä kasvattajille, kielitieteilijöille sekä videopeliharrastajille, sillä se on ensimmäinen tästä aiheesta kirjoitettu työ. Parhaimmillaan se voi toimia aloituspisteenä ja esimerkkinä siitä, millaisia asioita usein ylenkatsotustakin kielenkäytön alueesta voi löytää.

Avainsanat – Keywords
kielitiede, videopelit, diskurssianalyysi, erikoiskieli, ei-lauseellinen materiaali

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The popularity of video games has skyrocketed during the past few decades and online gaming, in particular, has gained more and more active players. The complexity of gamer societies is likewise increasing and people are willing to invest more of their leisure time into developing their gaming skills and partaking in social game-related activities online. The prize-moneys of some video gaming tournaments can reach millions of dollars and the events are filmed and produced by experts. There are even television channels dedicated only for video games in several countries. Given their massive popularity and importance in many people's daily lives it is hardly surprising that gaming has been under scrutiny from numerous different scientific perspectives. Even though there has also been some linguistic research regarding the topic, it has, to the best of my knowledge, not been extensive and has more often than not concentrated on possible second language acquisition related scenarios rather than, for instance, pragmatic, stylistic or sociolinguistic analysis. Consequently, no studies of the discourse taking place in 'shooter games', for instance, could be found when conducting this thesis. Seeing that gaming environments provide a massive avenue for language use, it is relevant to investigate these environments more closely.

This thesis strives to add knowledge to the slowly growing branch of study that deals with the language of video games by conducting a discourse analysis supported by terminological methodology and a syntactic scrutiny on material gathered from players of Team Fortress 2 (TF 2), a game that represents a previously uninvestigated game genre, First Person Shooter (FPS) games. The aim of the thesis is to establish whether features specific to this particular language use situation can be found by means of the aforementioned methods. This is a case-

study and, consequently, the material is analyzed as extensively as possible to provide a good baseline for future studies. The discourse analysis concentrates on the functions of the language while the syntactic and lexical analyses will focus on the "raw" language material at the word and sentence level. The analysis will concentrate on spoken interactions the players engage in during relatively short gaming sessions.

Firstly, the aims and objectives of the thesis are outlined and hypotheses are postulated. Next, I will give a fairly extensive description of TF 2 and some of the social aspects and different gaming styles tied to the playing of the game that need to be considered when analyzing the data, followed by description of the previous research on video games. Then, a brief overview about the different approaches to discourse analysis will be given, providing several definitions and mentioning some of the key theorists. After this overview, Gee's (1999) discourse theory, which acts as both a theoretical and methodological approach for my research and which, consequently, is the most important linguistic theory for this particular study is discussed in greater detail. Then, some of the basic principles of terminology are presented in order to support the main theory and bring depth to the following analysis as well as provide a definition of 'special language', which will be used in the analysis of the data. Subsequently, the properties of clausal and non-clausal material are discussed and general figures regarding their distribution are given. Before describing the methodology, the data is introduced in greater detail. In the results section, the findings from the analyses are presented, beginning with discourse analysis, followed by terminological and lexical analyses. Lastly, the findings are discussed and a conclusion is offered.

The aim of this study is to explore the spoken interactions in a gaming session of First Person Shooter game Team Fortress 2 as a case study to shed light on a previously uninvestigated area of language use. An additional reason for the choice of topic is the amount of time children and adolescents spend playing these games and that it is not known what exactly takes place during these game sessions. Is interacting in the game world somehow inferior to "regular" language use situations? How does it differ from them? This is all to say that this is mainly a descriptive thesis which nevertheless attempts to explore the possibilities to improve and maintain a person's language and social skills while engaging in an entertaining activity. The initial aim is to highlight the "meta game", that is, what the game is like in the first place, the ways the game is played by different groups, illustrating what the gamer community does and why , and generally describing the culture of Team Fortress 2.

After providing this background information in the theory section, the spoken language in the gaming session of TF 2 can then be discussed more comprehensively in the results section. The approach is threefold, in the sense that the material will be analyzed sociolinguistically, lexically, and syntactically. The research questions related to each type of analysis are as follows:

1. Sociolinguistically: what kinds of functions does the language perform, how do the players interact with the game world, each others, and why? How does the players' language use shape the ongoing activity? What kinds of roles do they take and how do they express power?

2. Lexically: what kinds of special words and phrases are being used and what could they imply? Could the language used in this gaming session be classified as special language as defined by Picht and Draskau (1985), rephrased in Cabré (1998: 67-68)

   a. Special languages have a single purpose, in the sense that they are used in a specific social setting and for communication.

   b. They have a limited number of users.

   c. They are acquired voluntarily.

   d. They are autonomous with respect to the general language, in the sense that variation among special languages does not bring about variation in the general language.

3. Syntactically: Are there any syntactic peculiarities in the way the players communicate with each other that differ from general spoken interactions in other situations? What could this imply? The focus will be on non-clausal material (see section 3.3.). Is there a difference between the ratio of clausal and non-clausal material compared to a sample from a speech corpus?

My hypotheses regarding the above research questions are as follows:

1. I will find unique language use which is meaningful and demanding for the players.

2. Sociolinguistically: the players take part in a very complex language use situation that requires great knowledge about the gaming world, other players and effective strategies to convey as much information as possible.

3. Lexically: Special vocabulary can be found and video gaming language in this particular gaming session can be classified as special language, as defined above.

4. Syntactically: The language is simplified and relies on cruder structures than general spoken language. There is great use of non-clausal material.

5. There is a clear polarity between the complex terminology use and sociolinguistic skills compared to the simplified syntactic structures.

2. ASPECTS OF GAMING

To be able to understand the discourse situation in an actual game session of TF 2, one has to be aware of what kind of a game TF 2 is, how it is played, who plays it, and what activities the members of the gaming community take part in during, before, after, and between the game sessions. In the following, a description of these features is given to help in putting the following discourse analysis in its proper context and to argue for the uniqueness of the language use situation. Most of the information in this section is based on personal player experience and discussions with other TF 2 players which is supported by internet sources, such as forums and official game sites (cited where appropriate). After the description, previous research on gaming is presented, highlighting the most relevant studies for this thesis.

2.1. Team Fortress 2

Team Fortress 2 is a free-to-play FPS game in which the players battle in a total of two teams against each other using varying kinds of projectile and, on rarer occasions, melee weapons. There are 9 different character classes that all have their specific attributes and equipment such as a healing 'gun', a grenade launcher, or a scoped rifle, and which thus require distinct playing styles in order to be effective in combat. The basic principle of a game session is to score points by eliminating the opposing team and to avoid casualties to one's own comrades. The game does not strive for realism in its graphics or game engine and the setting is slightly 'cartoonish' in style. Despite not being 'realistic', the various tactics employed by the game's

players are extremely precise and require high group coordination skills if they are to be used effectively. This social aspect is further enhanced by the existing character classes that outline the possible roles, such as healer, support character or 'damage-dealer', that the players can adopt.

TF 2 has a large population of active players (*Steam & Game Stats* [online] reports some 44,000 current players as of February 22, 2012 and peak amounts ranging from 50,000 to 65,000 players [on August 13, 2012]), who fall into two rough categories: casual and competitive players. Whereas the casual players are mainly interested in a more hobby-like gaming experience without any serious competition, the competitive players form static groups that practice actively for their matches in their respective divisions; division one, or the premier league, being the most competitive and selective of the whole system and division 6 the 'beginner league'. The divisions are governed by strict rules and monitored by large, fan-made websites such as eTF 2l.org which is in charge of the management of the European divisions.

It is important to point out that the casual players are the most active ones in creating the 'game culture' by taking part in activities not directly related to the actual playing of the game (i.e. battling against another team). The most important of such activities, and a peculiarity of TF 2, is the accumulation of 'hats' that can be bestowed on the player character. The nature of these items is finely illustrated by the announcement on TF 2 official website: "Throughout history, men have worn hats as a way of showing how much better they are than other men. 'I buy hats,' a behatted man seems to say. 'I am better than you'."

As can probably be deduced from the above quotation, the hats of TF 2 serve no other purpose than showing a player's prestige, especially since some of the pieces of headgear are extremely hard to acquire. Because hats are a sort of alternative way to be recognized as an advanced player, many players are, in fact, willing to spend actual money to acquire these items and to thus show that they are higher in the social ladder of the video game. The description of this behavior serves to point out that there are 'deeper structures' in the game and that the range of social activities is not limited to short sessions of hectic shooting. These alternative ways to play or rather 'enjoy' the game also include forum discussions, collecting 'achievements' (received from in-game activities such as aiding teammates or off-game deeds such as getting as many views as possible on one's YouTube™ videos), and making fan-art.

Contrastively, the richest spoken interaction in the game takes place in the competitive matches such as the one that is to be described in this thesis. The matches in competitive leagues are dramatically different from the casual ones, especially by means of communication. Whereas every-day topics like school and social life are regular in both written and spoken communication in casual gaming situations, the competitive gamers only discuss the match at hand and tend to solely use spoken interaction because it does not require the use of hands which, in turn, makes operating the game's controls more effective. Off-topic discussion during the matches is frowned upon and, instead, highly effective, abbreviated and compressed speech is used to report, if possible, everything (position, amount of damage taken and dealt, for instance) that takes place in the battlefield in relation to the player, his/her allies and the opposing team. This description only applies to the actual gaming situations and does not try to state that competitive gamers would not occasionally or frequently take part in off-game activities or play in casual style and collect hats, for instance. In fact, the players who produce most YouTube™ videos are often competitive players who want to show their

skill to the other players. The reason this information is important is because the language use situations vary significantly depending on the type of gaming that is taking place and that this needs to be taken into account when conducting an analysis of the particular situation.

2.2. Previous research on gaming

As mentioned in the introduction, the study of video game language use is only beginning to gain popularity among linguistics and has not been extensively studied thus far. Moreover, no studies concerning spoken language in this context or any terminological studies on the matter were to be found, nor were there any studies relating to the syntax. However, there are some studies that are relevant to the research at hand and four of the most important ones in terms of their relatedness to the present thesis will be presented: Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio (2009), Thorne (2008), Steinkuehler (2006) and Gee (2003). Albeit conducted from slightly different standpoints and having somewhat different agendas than the present study, Gee's (2003) and Steinkuehler's (2006) studies will also function as the 'ideological' bases for the thought process fueling the analysis of the data. I will attempt to make as valid comparisons to their finding as possible.

2.2.1. Collaborative game play and second language learning

Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio (2009) approach the topic of video game language use from the viewpoint of second language acquisition and additional language learning in collaborative gaming setting by monitoring two young Finnish boys playing *Final Fantasy X,* a Japanese

fantasy video game. The focus of their study is to highlight the ways in which the players employ the vocabulary and other linguistic resources the game provides and collaboratively reproduce this language in their own speech. The researchers found that "[g]ame-playing creates a range of interactional opportunities for using English while managing the game" by means of bilingual (Finnish and English) language use, utilizing the text material the game provides and imitating and otherwise using the speech of the game's characters (*op. cit.* 14). While different from the present study in its approach and aims, Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio's research provides a solid argument to support the assumption that the language of video games is, indeed, complex and rich and that it can provide possibilities for language use for even less advanced learners.

2.2.2. Transcultural communication

In his article (Transcultural communication in open Internet environments and massively multiplayer online games) Thorne (2008) describes the language learning possibilities of video gaming much in the same way as Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio; he supports the claim about the possibilities of video games and emphasizes the 'multi-facetedness' of the gaming environments. The writer's focus, however, seems to be contrasting classroom language learning situations with the ones occurring in the informal video gaming and internet settings and trying to bring about change in the matter. The researcher expresses his concern for the divide between these two language use situations and suggests a heavier implementation of the new technologies inside the classroom.

2.2.3. Discourse in multiplayer online games

Steinkuehler (2006) follows Gee's language research principles and provides a sociolinguistic description of the video game *Lineage* in his paper 'Massively Multiplayer Online Video Gaming as Participation in a Discourse'. His aims are to illustrate how linguistic analysis can provide knowledge about the activities language helps to produce and to debunk the view that playing videogames is a pointless activity by demonstrating the "complexity of practices that make up Massively Multiplayer Online gaming through just such (closer linguistic) an analysis" (*op. cit.* 38). Steinkuehler's (*op cit.* 41) overall material is massive, including data such as months of participant observation in the game, collections of discussion board posts and instant message and "several thousand lines of recorded and transcribed observations of naturally occurring game play" but the entire analysis he presents focuses on a single written utterance by one of the game's players: "*afk g2g too ef ot regen no poms*" or "*Just a minute. I have to go to the Elven Forest to regenerate. I'm out of mana potions*" (*op. cit.* 42).

He first provides a syntactic analysis of this 'every-day' utterance by dividing and converting the message into tone units that serve different functions and thus clarifies the message to readers not acquainted with the game world. He then moves on to the actual discourse analysis of the data and describes the in-game factors that relate to the relevance of the message. Language-in-use factors (building tasks) are analyzed first, followed by scrutiny of the material and social situation in which the player expresses his identity as a particular type of member of the *Lineage* society. The thorough analysis suggests that Steinkuehler's claims are correct and that the discourses of MMOGs are just as complex as any other existing ones. He moves on to conclude that these games

… serve as naturally occurring, self-sustaining, indigenous versions of the types of online learning communities much present research seeks to design and understand while, at the same time, such virtual environments provide a highly visible medium for the collaborative construction of mind, culture, and activity. (Steinkuehler 2006: 51)

2.2.4. Learning in video games

Gee (2003) discusses the ways in which video games can be useful platforms for learning and playing them is a generally reasonably good way to invest one's time. By analyzing multiple video games such as *Arcanum, Deus Ex, Pikmin,* the *Tomb Raider* series, *Sonic, Everquest* and many others, he formulates 36 learning principles that are in effect in what he calls 'good video games'. In Gee's view, a lot can be learned from video games just because they contain unique semiotic systems that require time to master, but that games also work in many other ways that facilitate learning. Although not discussed further in this study, Gee's work illustrates how video gaming in general can be considered as a valid focus for study that can yield interesting and useful results.

2.2.5. Other ongoing research

In addition to the research mentioned here, all these scholars (Piirainen-Marsh, Steinkuehler, Tainio and Thorne) have taken part in a large amount of research relating to the internet, social media and video gaming. Usually the approach has been educational (see e.g. Martin and Steinkuehler, 2010), socio-political (see e.g. Leppänen and Piirainen-Marsh, 2009) or

identity-related (see e.g. Thorne, 2009 and 2011) and therefore not entirely related to the research at hand.

In addition to this research, University of Jyväskylä scholars, including Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio, are working on the 'Languages and Discourses in Social Media' -project, which investigates "multilingualism as a discursive, social and cultural resource on the internet, gaming as everyday social activity and a site for situated learning and identity and communality" (*socialmediadiscourses.fi*). As some of the research concentrates on somewhat different topics to this study and some is still unfinished, the project does not provide, as such, much theoretical background for the present study.

3. THEORY, DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the three different approaches of analysis are presented individually, highlighting their main features and explaining their relevance for this thesis. A description of the data is then given, followed by an overview of how the three different approaches are applied on it.

3.1. Discourse analysis

The underlying notion in discourse analysis, as summarized by Yule (2005: 124) is that "…some of the most interesting observations [in the study of language] are made, not in terms of the components of language, but in terms of the way language is used…" This premise is more or less evident in all the different approaches to discourse analysis. Collectively, regardless of the differences in the methodology and motives to study various subjects, different theories of discourse analysis are interested in the ways in which language-users interpret and convey messages. To elaborate on the definition of 'discourse', Yule (*op. cit.*) provides a commonly used idea of it as 'language beyond the sentence' and mentions that its analysis is usually "concerned with the study of language in text and conversation".

However, the definition is not by any means set in stone and, as Brown and Yule (1983: *viii*) point out, the definition and use of discourse analysis depend on the sub-field of linguistics conducting the research at hand, for instance "…sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics,

philosophical linguistics [or] computational linguistics". Nevertheless, the writers (*op. cit.* 1) conclude that, in linguistic context, discourse analysis must always be concerned about "language in use". Moreover, according to the writers (*ibid*), the view of language as a 'transactional' tool that is mainly used in conveying information is highly misplaced. They suggest that language use almost always includes an interactional quality in which the language-users express their social relations and personal attitudes.

Jørgensen and Philips (2002: 1) seem to support the view of discourse analysis as more of a collection of similar-minded theories, "…a series of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used to explore many different social domains in many different types of studies." The writers (*op. cit.* 1-2, emphasis original) propose a definition of discourse as "*a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)*" and use this definition to present the three variants of discourse analysis they suggest are the most prominent approaches: "Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory, critical discourse analysis, and discursive psychology." Jørgensen and Philips (2002: 4) elaborate on the social constructionist base of the method, shared by all these approaches, and point out that discourse analysis is, in fact, one among many social constructionist approaches, and at the same time one of the most widely used.

Although useful as background information about discourse theory, the approaches Jørgensen and Philips (*ibid*) portray seem to stray, to more or less extent, from the linguistic focus of this thesis and are therefore not discussed in further detail. However, the writers mention one of the key figures in the development and history of discourse analysis who is at least worth mentioning in this context, Michael Foucault. "Foucault adheres to the general social

constructionist premise that knowledge is not just a reflection of reality. Truth is a discursive construction and different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and false (*op. cit.* 13)". As the writers summarize, Foucault views knowledge and truth as relativistic concepts that emerge from the humans' use of language, in other words different discourses, rather than Kantian absolutes that exist as separate entities. During his 'archaeological' and 'genealogical' phases, Foucault created the foundations for numerous approaches towards discourse analysis and provided a theoretical base that has been used over and over again in the course of time (*op. cit.*). As can be seen in the description of the main discourse analysis theory of this thesis, Gee's (1999) discourse theory, the basic principles outlined by Foucault are present, although in slightly different form. Gee refined what the previous researchers had outlined and adopted it into a complete methodology governing the study of language in use.

3.1.1. Gee's theory of Discourse and definitions of key terms

Steinkuehler (2006: 39) states that Gee's theory "has been the most readily applied to understanding cognition in all its distributed and situated messiness" and he uses the ideology of the theory in his own video gaming language analysis, which is discussed further in chapter 5.3. Seeing that Gee's (1999) approach has been used in previous research on the field (even his own – see Gee, 2003) combined with its general adaptability and easy-to-follow steps on conducting an analysis on material, it was a natural choice for the primary research method for this thesis. Additionally, because a part of this research is about identifying similarities and differences between Steinkuehler's (2006) study and the present one, Gee's theory provides a valid comparison point compared to other approaches.

To begin with, Gee's (*op. cit.*) discourse analysis is based on the notion that language cannot exist as a separate entity and that it is never neutral in nature. Gee points out that even supposedly neutral statements — such as the ones in this thesis — are colored by the writer's agenda, be it trying to prove a point differing from the 'popular opinion' to skeptical colleagues, spreading propaganda or simply 'being neutral'. In the case of this thesis, the present writer is trying to be 'academic' by presenting his arguments following the academic guidelines — forming the sentences in particular ways, avoiding certain expressions and favoring others and so forth — and by doing this showing affiliation with the 'institution of academics' and the supposed prestige of the text. The text could be formed differently, but 'anomalous' nuances, sentence structures and expressions would undermine the credibility of the thesis and even make it unacceptable as a Master's thesis.

Gee (1999: 2) explains that writers and speakers "always take a particular *perspective* on what the world is like", involving views about what is 'right' or 'wrong', 'acceptable', 'possible' and so on. People fit their behavior and language use to their present situation and these activities can vary greatly depending on which particular 'role' they are taking at the moment and what roles the people around them have. The peculiarity of language, Gee points out, is that our behavior and language choices also construct the situation we are in at the same time as we speak. According to his logic, there would be no such thing as a 'committee meeting' if people did not behave like they were in a committee meeting by saying things they say, being polite in particular ways and so on. Relating to this peculiarity, Gee (*op. cit.* 85-86, wording and emphasis original) lists six distinct 'building tasks' that we carry-out in every language use situation:

1. *Semiotic building*, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what semiotic (communicative) systems, systems of knowledge, and ways of knowing, are here and now relevant and activated.

2. *World building*, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what is here and now (taken as) "reality," what is here and now (taken as) present and absent, concrete and abstract, "real" and "unreal," probable, possible, and impossible.

3. *Activity building*, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what activity or activities are going on, composed of what specific actions.

4. *Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building*, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what identities and relationships are relevant to the interaction, with their concomitant attitudes, values, ways of feeling, ways of knowing and believing, as well as ways of acting and interacting.

5. *Political building*, that is, using cues or clues to construct the nature and relevance of various "social goods," such as status and power, and anything else taken as a "social good" here and now (e.g. beauty, humor, verbalness, specialist knowledge, a fancy car, etc.).

6. *Connection building*, that is, using cues or clues to make assumptions about how the past and future of an interaction, verbally and non-verbally, are connected to the present moment and to each other – after all, interactions always have some degree of continuous coherence.

Gee's method of discourse analysis is tightly linked to these building tasks and will be discussed in greater detail in the methodology section. At this point it is sufficient to point out that these tasks (discourses with a lowercase 'd') relate to Discourses with a capital 'D', which, as Gee (*op. cit.* 13) puts it, are the

different ways in which we humans integrate language with non-language "stuff," such as different ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing, and using symbols, tools, and objects in the right places and at the right times so as to enact and recognize different identities and activities, give the material world certain

meanings, distribute social goods in a certain way, make certain sorts of meaningful connections in our experience, and privilege certain symbol systems and ways of knowing over others (i.e. carry-out all the building tasks above).

Some of the terminology Gee uses is quite specific and bound to a certain context. Here are the most important concepts that will be used throughout the study and therefore require proper definitions. The first term is ***situated meanings,*** which, Gee (2003), explains as the way in which "[w]ords, symbols, images, and artifacts have meanings that are specific to particular semiotic domains and particular situations (contexts)." The main argument Gee (*op. cit.*) postulates is that elements in language are never independent in the sense that they would have a "general meaning". Language here is defined broadly and thought to include the previously mentioned symbols, images and artifacts in addition to words of a particular language. To exemplify, I may use the verb *love* to describe a movie I just saw or, on a different occasion, tell my wife I love her. Further, I could make a humorous remark about a storm that has just hit the town by asking my friend: "Don't you just love it?" Although one might think that the verb has a somewhat static meaning, it can actually mean multiple different things depending on the context, as can be seen from the above examples. Another term Gee (1999: 2) uses is ***social goods***, which simply means "anything a group of people believes to a source of power, status or worth –". Worth might be anything from "street smarts and looks" to wisdom or knowledge or anything from the long list of things people may appreciate in different places and contexts. In the present study, the ***social goods*** might be, for instance, a player's skill level or the amount of hats he/she has.

3.2. Terminology as a means to define special languages

Terminology, as a field of study, concentrates on "[the] principles and conceptual bases that govern the study of terms" and is, in this sense seen as an "interdisciplinary field that that deals with naming of concepts of special subjects, and their realization in linguistic and other forms (Cabré, 1998: 32). Seeing that video gaming involves a heavy use of specialized terminology, a brief introduction to the theory focusing on the matter and an equally brief analysis would seem to suit the purposes of this thesis. Additionally, Gee (1999: 95) points out that supporting one's discourse analysis with other types of linguistic analysis is acceptable and even preferable, increasing the reliability of a piece of research. In the case of this study, the terminological overview seems to support the analysis of the semiotic building task the best. Furthermore, it could be argued that the possible "special language status" the language use situation during a game of TF 2 may acquire is another argument against the idea of video gaming as barren play and arguably an interesting finding in itself.

The most important factor of the terminology theory, in the context of this study, focuses on the distinction between 'general' and 'special' languages. The importance rises from the need to classify, to some extent, what type of language the players of TF 2 use to see if this language use is, indeed, "complex" in nature, at least from a lexical/terminological viewpoint. It should be noted that while the concept of special language is usually associated with scientific fields of expertise, it can be used, in my opinion, to analyze other types of language as well, at least in certain contexts. The intention here is purely to show how language use situations that can be viewed by many as aggressive and banal can showcase characteristics typical of 'higher forms of language', such as scientific discourse. Here, definitions of general

and special languages are given and applied to the research material upon its gathering and analysis.

Cabré (1998: 59) defines common or general language as the type of language that is known to most of its speakers who use it "according to their expressive needs and the nature of the communicative situation". Special languages, on the other hand, are languages with sets of "subcodes (that partially overlap with the subcodes of the general language), each of which can be 'specifically' characterized by certain particulars such as subject field, type of interlocutors, situation, speaker's intentions, the context in which a communicative exchange occurs, the type of exchange etc. (*ibid*)". Cabré provides several more precise definitions and characteristics out of which Picht and Draskau's (1985) (rephrased in Cabré 1998: 67-68) list of features seems to be most readily applicable for the material of this study:

>
> a. Special languages have a single purpose, in the sense that they are used in a specific social setting and for communication.
> b. They have a limited number of users.
> c. They are acquired voluntarily.
> d. They are autonomous with respect to the general language, in the sense that variation among special languages does not bring about variation in the general language.

In addition to applying this list of definitions to the material, a special word vocabulary will be gathered and presented to illustrate the particularities of TF 2 language.

3.3. Non-clausal units and their frequency in speech

The final part of analysis of the research material concentrates on syntax. To be more precise, the focus will be on the use of non-clausal material in the players' speech. The interest in this particular phenomenon is based on a pilot study, as well as playing sessions in which I have taken part, where "compressed language" can be witnessed. To elaborate, the spoken language from a shorter piece of TF 2 language, for instance, seemed to contain a large amount of speaker turns where verb phrases were simplified or omitted altogether. This was done in a way that seems to deviate from regular spoken language. The goal here is to investigate if these clauses without a verb, that is, non-clausal units are, indeed, more frequent in TF 2 language than in "standard spoken language".

The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber *et al.,* 1999) was chosen because of its extensive description of the phenomenon and due to its corpus-based findings that can be effortlessly compared to the data of the present thesis. To be able to adequately define non-clausal material, it is important to highlight that in regard to **clause,** this thesis follows the definition given in the Longman Grammar (*op. cit.* 120), that is, "a unit structured around a verb phrase". Verb phrases usually denote action or state and are surrounded by elements that give further information about the relationship of the action or the state to the participants in the situation, the type of situation and so on (*ibid*). For further information on the characteristics of clauses as they are treated in this thesis, see *ibid*.

In contrast to clausal units the major characteristics defining non-clausal material are that "(a) internally it cannot be analysed in terms of clause structure, and (b) it is not analysable as a

part of neighboring clause" (*op. cit.* 224). The division of spoken language into clausal and non-clausal units is further justified by Biber *et al.* (1999: 1069) by illustrating how speech generally contains considerably more than just clausal material, that is "structures consisting of an independent clause together with any dependent clauses embedded within it". One could consider a spoken utterance such as in **1a,** below.

        1a   **Mm**, I'm not sure, **maybe ten**."

The parts in bold represent material that does not fit the definition of clausal material but rather consists of independent units that convey meaning but do not include a verb phrase and are therefore beyond the scope of clausal scrutiny.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is reasonable to use an "umbrella term **C-unit** *for both clausal and non-clausal units: i.e. for syntactically independent pieces of speech* (*op. cit.* 1070, emphasis original). 'Syntactically independent' refers to the way in which the pieces of speech cannot be incorporated with the elements around them despite possible discoursal and semantic connections (*ibid*). It is significant to notice that traditionally two coordinated independent clauses have been bundled together as a 'compound sentence'. Conversely, in the context of spoken language, where coordinators such as *but* can act as turn-openers (***But*** *why, is it cold outside?*) and clausal units can be coordinated by non-clausal units (*Two shots into the head **and** the scout is dead.*), the compound C-units are eliminated from the analysis, if only for practical reasons. This goes to say that the parts traditionally considered constituents

of a compound sentence are, instead, counted as separate units. C-units may, however, include coordinate constituents such as *and, but* and so on (*ibid*).

The need for such a classification arises from the way in which the material is analyzed in this thesis, that is, finding the distribution of clausal and non-clausal units within all the C-units in the video gaming situation. Biber *et al.* (*op. cit.*) stress that this non-clausal material is rare in written mediums of language but vastly more common in speech. The study of 20 sequences of 50 C-units from 20 samples of conversation taken equally from BrE and AmE shows that clausal units are generally lengthier than non-clausal units and that they account for over one-third of the units in conversation (*op. cit* 1071). Table 1 (*ibid,* layout modified) illustrates the findings.

Table 1 Distribution and length of clausal units and non-clausal units in a sample of AmE and BrE conversation

	clausal units	non-clausal units	total
unit count	614 (61.4%)	386 (38.6%)	1000 (100%)
word count	4615 (86.0%)	754 (14.0%)	5369 (100%)
words per unit	7.25	1.95	5.37

The scholars note that short length of non-clausal units in speech is largely explained by the numerous single-word inserts, "… that is, stand-alone words such as interjections" (*ibid*). The present thesis shall conduct an analysis similar to the one presented here and compare the results to determine whether there is a difference between the two samples.

3.4. Data

The data for this research consists of a transcription (see Appendix I) of a piece of spoken interaction in a thirty-minute long recorded gaming session of TF 2 accompanied by a video clip from that particular session. The visual material helps, for instance, in the analysis of the utterances in placing them into context and providing information about the possible 'physical', game-world, reactions to them.

In the actual gaming situation from which the recording was acquired there are two teams fighting for the dominance of 'control points' on a highly popular TF 2 map, the Badlands. The teams start from different sides of the map, meet in the center and try to push the other team back, conquering the points one by one and ending the round once one team possesses them all. This particular match takes place between teams BaN (Bitches and Neep) vs. EvC (explanation missing) in TF 2's competitive division and it contains six separate rounds with the same objective. Nevertheless, the tactics the players employ show great variation between the rounds.

The control points in this particular map are arranged symmetrically, so that both of the teams must utilize good mobility and coordination in order to capture the points, which happens by standing on top of the point. The match was recorded on June 6, 2012 and uploaded on YouTube© (Available on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40TohbL8qKE). The audio was recorded from BaN's voice chat and the transcription only applies to that team. The visual imagery was recorded from the viewpoint of player Beetle, and follows his actions on the battlefield throughout the video except for when he is 'dead', in other words waiting to respawn and can observe other players' actions through their first person viewpoint.

The main reason this piece of data was chosen for the research include the length of the match, which corresponds well with a standard match of competitive TF 2 and therefore provides enough material for a case study. The data is actually larger in size than the database employed by Biber *et al.* (see Table 1 and Table 2). Moreover, the relative skill-level of the players is quite high for casual, non-professional players, the availability of the data was convenient and, additionally, the non-nativeness of most of the players represents the general European player population. In fact, only one of the players has English as his/her native language while the others simply have advanced English language skills, at least in this particular context. There are two Finnish players, **Airact** and **Ch3Vy** in addition to the Danish **Beetle**, Dutch **lopata**, British **Will** and Croatian **purple** (the spelling corresponds with the ones used by the players). The amount of different language backgrounds in the data actually reflects quite adequately the player base of TF 2 in general; especially the European competitive scene consists of a plethora of different nationalities who are nonetheless communicating in English in and off-game. This mixture of language backgrounds also provides space for language learning considerations as well as hypothesizing the *Lingua Franca* implications in the discussion chapter, although not analyzed in greater detail.

The transcription was made to make it as readable as possible. The speakers are codified with different colors to improve clarity and referred to by their nicknames in order to maintain anonymity. Utterances coming clearly after the previous player has finished his/her speech act are written directly below the previous line, whereas simultaneous speech is transcribed so that the beginning point of the speech act starts from under the previous speaker's sentence at the point where he/she was interrupted. Example 1 illustrates these features of the transcription style.

Ch3Vy: Will, go second resup!

Beetle: We just got our ass whooped--

                        Airact: Go trash!

                        Ch3Vy: Yeah, we're going trash.

Example 1. An example of the transcription style.

Beetle begins his utterance after Ch3Vy has finished his initial sentence *Will, go second resup*! and is partially interrupted by Airact, who starts his command *Go trash*! approximately in the mid-point of Beetle's word *whooped*. Airact, in turn, is partially interrupted by Ch3Vy, who confirms the order given by his teammate before he has fully finished his utterance. Example 1 also illustrates how unfinished sentences are codified, that is, with two horizontal lines. Commas represent a short pause in a single players' speech while full stops mark a medium pause. Lengthier, over one-second pauses in the dialogue are indicated by vertical dashes between the utterances such as in Example 2, which illustrates the feature.

Ch3Vy: Demo blew his stickies already.

|

Beetle: I'm down. They're all in house.

Example 2. An example of a longer pause between two utterances

3.5. Method

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the analysis is threefold, consisting of sociolinguistic, lexical and syntactic components. The three means of study aim to bring about the postulated polarity present in the material. In other words, the discourse analysis seeks to determine whether there are complex activities and discoursal nuances taking place in the players' communication while lexical scrutiny is comprised of listing all the specialized vocabulary the players employ and strives to determine whether the chosen definition of special language could be used to describe the material at hand. Furthermore, syntactic study focuses on determining to which extent the language is 'simplified and crude', by measuring the amount of clausal and non-clausal material and comparing these to an averages presented in Biber *et al.* (1999). (see Table 1) A more in-depth description of each approach is outlined below.

In the first section, the analysis will give a description of the discourse situation taking place during sessions of TF 2. It is then elaborated on to consider the six language building tasks

language users engage in while communicating, consequently both describing and shaping the ongoing activity by saying certain words and phrases in certain times. A closer description of the building tasks is also outlined in chapter 3.1.1. The aim is to find how the players use language to construct the gaming situation and how they take different 'roles' to act as 'players of TF 2', namely why they use the language in the way they do. Examples of these behaviors include: what kind of game/situation-specific words and phrases they use, how do they try to convey as much information as possible in a hectic situation, how they express their expertise, how do they coordinate strategies with their teammates using language and so on.

The analysis also tries to establish whether some building task(s) are more prominent than others in the data. Gee's (*op. cit.* 92) proposition of an 'ideal discourse analysis' will be followed to answer questions related to all the different building tasks listed previously: semiotic building, world building, activity building, socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building, connection building, and political building. For the supporting questions used to arrive at the results, see Appendix II (Gee, 1999: 93-94). The main goal of the section is to highlight the ways in which the language is used, pointing out hypothetical differences to "general language" if possible. Additionally, this section, coupled with the description of the game, aims at creating as good an overview as possible of the 'essence' of the gaming language in TF 2 and to introduce the reader to the material before the more specific and focused sub-sections.

In the next section, terminological consideration will be given regarding the language material. This analysis concentrates on providing a definition of special language and

comparing it with the findings from the data in addition to presenting a list of special terminology utilized in the language use situation. Special language (Picht and Draskau's (1985) [rephrased in Cabré 1998: 67-68]) is here defined by these criteria:

a. Special languages have a single purpose, in the sense that they are used in a specific social setting and for communication.

b. They have a limited number of users.

c. They are acquired voluntarily.

d. They are autonomous with respect to the general language, in the sense that variation among special languages does not bring about variation in the general language.

In the third and final section of the study, the transcribed material is divided into clausal and non-clausal material according to the methods described in section 3.3. The occurrences of both and the average length of the respective units are then counted and the amounts are compared to the standard values from Biber *et al.* A complete account regarding how the data is divided, what kinds of material was omitted from the analysis, as well as how certain special cases are taken into account is presented in section 4.2.

4. RESULTS

The following analysis is based on a transcription of the spoken utterances during a gaming session of TF 2 with a duration of approximately thirty minutes. The arena of the battle is the map Badlands on Team Fortress 2 and the style of play is Capture Point game mode. The control points in this particular map are arranged symmetrically, so that both of the teams must utilize good mobility and coordination in order to capture the points, which happens by standing on top of the point. The more there are players from the same team participating in this action of *capping* the faster the point is converted to the capping side. Conversely, capping can be delayed or halted altogether by the other team by occupying the same space and trying to eliminate the opposing team's members.

4.1. Discourse analysis

This match takes a total of thirty minutes, during which the teams try to win as many rounds as possible. The first three rounds are, if a bit slow, very favorable to BaN, who wins them all despite some minor setbacks during the matches. During these rounds, the team takes an aggressive stance during most phases of the game and communicates to form offensive strategies on the fly. Some miscommunication does take place as well as momentary irritation but, nevertheless, the team stays focused on their goal at hand and thus manages to secure victory three times in a row. Out of these three rounds, the second rounds is the closest due to difficulties at the last control point, the enemy base, from which the opposing team is able to form a solid defense, retaliate and almost recapture the majority of the other control points.

However, the fourth round has barely managed to begin as it comes to an abrupt end when the entire BaN team is decimated at the first control point at the center of the map and the enemy team is able to secure a fast victory. Moving on to the fifth round, time is starting to run short for the EvC, since they would have to win three rounds in slightly over four minutes to counter BaN's winning streak. This enables BaN to play in a more relaxed manner and, eventually, emerge victorious once more. The last thirty seconds consist of the enemy team abandoning the game server and BaN celebrating on their status-defining victory. During this match, various players report their and the opposing team's actions, shout orders and engage in off-topic discussions (for a complete account of the dialogue during the match, see appendix I). In the following, the six language building tasks are discussed, taking into account the gaming situation described above.

4.1.1. Semiotic building

Speech (in English) is the most relevant sign system in the material, although some non-verbal communication (showing the direction with one's avatar, for instance) does take place. Writing, standard images and gestures are mostly rendered useless because of the hectic nature of the situation and the need to use both hands to operate the necessary game controls. The players do, however, use keyboard shortcuts to make their avatars utter pre-recorded orders and requests, such as 'Medic!' or 'Thanks!' in order to reduce the cluttering of voice-chat messages, which are extremely abundant.

Another significant issue also noted in Steinkuehler (2006), is the heavy use of abbreviations and otherwise 'compressed language'. This feature is most clearly evident in the use of words such as *resup* for 'resupply station' and *stickies* for 'explosive devises with an adhesive installation mechanism'. Aside from using specialized words, the players also tend to simplify their sentences by omitting prepositions, such as in the example sentence (1) by player Ch3Vy, and copula verbs as showcased by example sentences (2) and (3) by Airact and Will, respectively. In short, the players utilize both simplified clauses and syntactic non-clausal units that lack finite clause structure, a phenomenon typical of spoken language (Biber, Conrad and Leech 2002: 440).

(1) Scout going back cap.

(2) Scout on resup.

(3) Scout under, both scouts under.

These features also fit a description of verbal communication in general, as can be derived from this explanation: "Because it relies on context for meaning, conversation can do without the lexical and syntactic elaboration that is found in written expository registers. (*op. cit. 430*)" The writers also mention that the phrases in speech are usually shorter than those in the written registers, a property easily observed by comparing the sentences in this thesis to the ones in the research material, for instance. This type of 'compressed language' is most likely used in order to be as effective as possible in an intense competitive situation, in which all the players need to have an intuitive, reflex-like, understanding of the highly specialized terminology utilized in the gaming situation as can be illustrated by sentences such as (4) by

purple (Appendix I, 33) and (5) by Beetle (*ibid*) which will be more closely analyzed in section 10.2. and further elaborated on section 10.6.

(4) Used on balc, medic is trash.

(5) Demo stickied up, umm, main -- upper -- took seventy-two, though.

The need arises yet again from the intense situation during which even the slightest delays in taking action may lead to the defeat of one's team. The above illustrates the property that is highly significant in the gaming language: expertise. All the players must consider themselves and their teammates masters of the game because they can use all the different gaming strategies and 'game-lingo' and in so doing, they *create* that very same effect. If the players did not speak the way they do in my example data, they would seem less capable and arguably also *be* just that. For an elaboration of this 'magical quality' of language, see Gee (1999).

The findings of this section are elaborated on in section 3.3. and comparisons between standard spoken language and TF 2 language are made. This brief overview acts as an introduction to the type of language the players use throughout the gaming session.

4.1.2. World building

There are numerous situated meanings in the data, chiefly because everything in the players' speech refers to the match they are engaging in. Situated meaning refers to the way in which certain words and phrases only carry meaning when used in a specific place or at a specific time. The examples are especially interesting because they do not only highlight the situated meaning, but also the semiotic aspect of expert language described previously.

It is vital to point out that the high-end competitive playing which the players engage in requires the players to constantly report the situation on the battlefield to the other players so that they can take action. The players 'call' the other team's current vulnerabilities by stating that some character has taken a large amount of damage in the past few seconds, used an item found on the map or positioned him/herself in a particular way, for instance. In the data, player Beetle, upon respawning (re-entering the game) after a defeat tells his team that "Demo has stickied up - - main - - upper" but that he "took seventy-two, though". By doing this, he signals that the opposing team's Demoman (an explosives expert who can deal area-effect damage with his 'stickies' ability) has deployed his signature ability at BaN's headquarters' upper main entrance, but that in doing so, he has taken seventy-two points of damage. This leads to BaN avoiding the upper main entrance in order to not get caught in the blast of the explosives and simultaneously trying to focus down the Demoman, who has been weakened by his encounter with Beetle.

Another occurrence of highly situated meaning and semiotic peculiarity takes place when [P]urple, while defending BaN's last control point, says that she has "used on balc" and that the opposing team's "medic is trash". Purple is playing the medic character class, whose special ability is to make his/her team invulnerable for a short period of time (also known as "uber" ability) and by telling her team that "she used", she is letting them know that they are safe to push forward without fear of getting killed. The word 'balc' refers to balcony and is very often used meaning various balconies situated around the Badlands map. In addition to simply reporting about the increased safety level, purple is also stating that the enemy medic is employing a strategy called 'being/going trash', which refers to going to a position that is guarded from the enemy team's long-range, high-damage projectiles albeit possibly compromising their vision over enemy movement periodically. A couple of seconds later, this piece of information leads to the enemy medic being called 'down', that is, killed, by [L]opata, who has discerned his location and thus cleared their control point area.

It is fair to argue that this type of language use is unique to TF 2 gaming situations and cannot be found in standard spoken English, mainly because there is no need for these particular expressions to be used outside the games of TF 2. This kind of communication requires a great deal of insight as to what information is relevant and what is not and every player needs to have faultless knowledge of the possible outcomes of all the different scenarios the current map and players may bring about. I will elaborate more on specialized words in a separate chapter, but based on these observations it is safe to argue that communicating in TF 2 gaming situation is not an easy skill to master, requiring great situational intelligence and an ability to be efficient, using as little time as possible, while still conveying all the necessary information.

4.1.3. Activity building

The activity building sub-section is probably the most self-evident because the whole of the data is taken from a type of activity, playing TF 2. It therefore requires no extensive elaboration but is still worth mentioning to bring out the 'discourse analytic side' of the activity. It should be noted that activity building refers to the players' use of language to interpret and shape the active situation they are engaging in.

The main activity of the situation is the gaming situation in which the players try to beat the opposing team. Attacking and defending the control points in the map composes the primary sub-activities which are further divided by engaging in one-on-one situations with the opposing team's players and reporting the outcomes, healing party members (in the case of one particular player, the medic) and using special devices such as the 'stickies' mentioned previously. Commands such as "go trash" and "I'm down" act as the linguistic components for these sub-activities and activities which comprise the entire gaming sequence. The examples provided earlier are all intertwined with various activities and one could argue that activity building, while not creating the largest or most interesting language examples, is the central building task on which all the other tasks are built upon. If the players did not communicate the way they do, no-one could take as logical and efficient actions that would advance their teams standing in the battle. Additionally, it would be extremely hard for anyone to determine the need for immediate aid or long-term support on the map.

4.1.4. Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building

Although the players in BaN mostly act as comrades and avoid criticizing each other's playing styles too much, there seems to be a certain hierarchy among the players. Especially Will seems to fit the role of the leader the most, possibly because of his gaming experience or some other factor. He generally gives, if not orders, warnings about the possible consequences of actions such as going in too far into the enemy territory. In example 4, Will instructs Airact on the next thing he should accomplish on the map.

Airact: In later, okay you're down.

Will: Yeah, you just watch the entrance into house.

Airact: Yeah yeah yeah.

Example 4. Will instructing Airact.

In addition, Will lashes out at Ch3Vy when he loudly swears and protests after getting carelessly killed inside a building Will had previously said was being overrun by enemies. Will promptly tells Ch3Vy that he should listen and that he's a "[f]ucking idiot" and proceeds to play in silence during the next minutes. Consequently, lopata starts to direct the actions slightly more during this time, probably because he was a neutral player in the conflict and also a respected player. Other than this minor conflict, the team-members strive to play as a team and complement each other's playing styles with skillful use of skills and strategies.

Moreover, skillful playing is almost always met with encouraging comments such as "Good job!" or "Nice!" from other team-members.

The different player classes create predetermined roles to some extent (The Medic needs to heal and can rarely do damage to the opposing team, The Demoman uses clumsier but more effective ammunition and so on), but these 'functions' do not necessarily change the player identities to a great extent, since everyone is playing in a team with specific people who probably already have established their playing styles and identities. The relationships are somewhat actively transformed by customizing the roles to fit the team's, as well as individual players', playing strategy/ies. Some players tend, for instance, to plant the explosive devices available for the Demoman class into more aggressive locations such as near the other team's characters, whereas others prefer more defensive locations (near the positions their team is trying to hold).

Although some level of pecking order seems to be present in the gaming situation and sometimes players curse and shout at each other, the positive aspects are arguably more important. The players laugh at each others' jokes or actions they deem funny and cheer good performance. Laughing, giggling or chuckling occurs ten times during the match and there are, as mentioned also cases of verbally expressing one's respect or awe, such as saying 'nice' after a good performance.

One notable aspect is that nobody questions or even hints at other players' skill-level in a negative way. Perhaps the players realize the need to soften the most harsh critique so that

everyone can maintain good concentration and does not need to feel excessively bad about themselves. This would seem the most logical explanation since competitive gaming is centered on winning the current game and demoralizing one's own team would be disruptive to that goal.

4.1.5. Connection building

Perhaps the most obvious instance of referring to events not directly related to the immediate gaming situation is the very end of the match, when Ch3Vy states that their team has won and that they are "div four now". This refers to them being able to participate in higher skill-level matchups in the future thanks to their transition to a higher-end TF 2 league. Another instance is in the very beginning of the match, when lopata asks Ch3Vy whether they should "push at the mid again", referring to a tactic employed during some previous game. Other than this, intertextuality is extremely rare in the data and the only references the players make outside the immediate situation date back only some seconds, mostly a minute.

Arguably the more relevant factors are the connections that "are made to previous or future interactions, to other people, ideas, texts, things, institutions, and Discourses outside the current situation" (Gee 1999: 94), although this feature cannot be directly derived from the material. It is, however, safe to state that the players all know each other and have some grasp of the gaming abilities such as their shooting accuracy and 'being a team-player' along with some level of 'mental image' of their personalities and they can, therefore, use very specific terminology and compressed sentences, as discussed in previous sections. Although I cannot

point to specific utterances, I would argue that the examples provided earlier were all made possible by this intertextual knowledge. Another level of the matter is the gaming world Discourse – how the game is played and what kind of people gamers are – into all of which the players have a strong relationship with. Analyzing this feature, however, would require quite more extensive material from both 'in-game' and 'off-game' situations such as gaming tournaments, discussion board talk and so on.

4.1.6. Political building

The most important aspect of political building in the data builds upon the game's internal status and "power" structure. That is to say, the common, "real-life" features related to power such as gender, race, social class, and wealth are rendered meaningless inside the video game. The sole meaningful form of social goods is the players' skill level and thereby status amongst the members of TF 2 gamer community. This is, perhaps, reflected more in the actions of off-game activities such as being influential on message boards and gaining many views for showcase-videos on YouTube, but is nevertheless present in-game as well. To exemplify, the enemy team is more likely to be more cautious of players who are known to possess a high skill-level with a certain character class and can also act upon their observations during a particular match. This is, in a sense, enhanced by the game's internal mechanics such as underlining the supremacy of a certain player over others by posting messages such as in example 5, where the capitalized word 'dominating' can be clearly seen even from a fuzzy picture. Here, underlined with a red line, "BaN.lopata is DOMINATING Rudd".

Example 5. An example of expression of supremacy inside the game engine.

The jokes, taunts and positive comments the players express are more or less always centered around performing (un)skillfully and thus showing ones worth as a pro player. In example 6, lopata expresses his appreciation of another player because he obtained a control point by himself. Some seconds later, Airact complements Beetle for his demanding 'airshot' kill of an enemy soldier.

lopata: Nice cap!

Ch3Vy: I need ammo.

      Will: Trying.

lopata: Nice!

      Airact: Oh wow airshot!

Example 6. Complementing a fellow player for skillful performance

Although not present in this data, it is also very common in the less competitive circles of the game to brag and joke about the player equipment that can be accumulated via trading, paying

real money or finding items in-game. Items are another form of status, as mentioned in the description of TF 2 in section 2 and relate to the wholly separate status and system present in the game. These types of systems are, in my experience, common in mostly all video-games and TF 2 is thus not unique in this respect. Nevertheless, the difference from real life discourse can be argued to be quite significant as there are multiple other aspects of power, status and, generally, social goods present in every-day speech situations than the types highlighted here.

4.2. Terminological analysis and TF 2 terminology list

To begin with, the language used by the players has many characteristics of a special language outlined in section 3.2. (Picht and Draskau's (1985) [rephrased in Cabré 1998: 67-68]) and quoted again here for better readability.

a. Special languages have a single purpose, in the sense that they are used in a specific social setting and for communication.

b. They have a limited number of users.

c. They are acquired voluntarily.

d. They are autonomous with respect to the general language, in the sense that variation among special languages does not bring about variation in the general language.

Obviously, the language presented in this study serves for a single purpose, in the sense that it is used in a specific social setting (the match/es of TF 2 and the discussions between these expert players) and for (verbal, goal-based) communication. The language also has a limited, albeit quite large, number of users, namely the competitive players of the game. Additionally,

all the players acquire the language voluntarily because it helps them in the competitive activity and eases communication in hectic situations. The analysis of the last characteristic is hardly justified with the study of this scope, but it would probably be safe to assume that variation among the TF 2 language does not bring about variation in the general language.

I have already provided definitions for many of the terms and expressions used by the players, but will summarize them all here to further illustrate their specificity and deviation from general language. I have included some names of in-game locations in Badlands in order to highlight the aspects of game culture that is transferred from one generation of players to another. Terms here are listed in alphabetical order.

banana 'a spiral shape structure in the map Badlands'

to cap 'to acquire possession of a control point by standing on top of it'; *to backcap* 'to reclaim a lost point by'

cloak /de-cloak 'to go in/out of camouflage while playing the Spy; can be used to distract and confuse the enemy team'

critz, *crits* 'a special, chargeable weapon for the Medic that, when used, makes the target do critical hits with his weapon and inflict more damage; can be picked instead of *uber*.'

demo 'Demoman, a character class that uses a grenade launcher as a weapon'

GG, gg 'good game'

haunter 'a balcony located in the central house in Badlands; named after player Haunter, who used the location creatively to win matches during earlier years of TF 2'

HP 'hit point/s; represents the amount of damage a player can take before dying. Common in many games.'

kit 'medic kit; used to restore player *hit points*'

to be low 'to have low health level on the player character; potentially dangerous situation that may result in character's death'

to multi 'to cast Medic's *uber* on multiple people; the duration of the ultimate is reduced when *multi'd*'

point 'control point, an area that needs to be controlled in order to win a type of game session'

to pop 'to use *uber*'

resup 'a resupply station, a place from which players receive ammunition and health packages'

roller 'pipe bombs shot by the Demoman with his grenade launcher that do not hit their initial target but explode after a short delay, instead'

stickies 'explosive devises with an adhesive installation mechanism'

to go trash 'to take up defensive positions so that certain types of enemy projectiles cannot harm the players in one's team'

uber 'the special power of the Medic class that makes all the characters immune to damage for a short period of time'

As can be seen even from these short descriptions from only thirty minutes of game-play, the TF 2 gaming language includes many expressions, a total of 18, that are not present in standard language and which can be exceedingly complex in nature. This seems to further confirm my third hypothesis: "Special vocabulary can be found and video gaming language in this particular gaming session can be classified as special language, as defined above." The findings here also seem to complement the observations presented in the semiotic and world building sub-sections of the discourse analysis (sub-sections 4.1.1. and 4.1.2.).

4.3. Distribution of clausal and non-clausal material

The quantitative analysis is conducted by dividing the research data into C-units and classifying each as either clausal or non-clausal material. Generally, all units containing a verb phrase are marked clausal and those without one are considered non-clausal. Moreover, two units separated by a comma, a full stop or a longer pause marker are considered two separate units. Example 7 illustrates how the division was made; the clausal material is in regular print and non-clausal in bold. In the excerpt, there are five (5) clausal and five (5) non-clausal C-units and the word count is 23 for the former and eight (8) for the latter.

Ch3Vy: Going super fast!

Airact: Nice!

Will: Make sure you pressure that Demo as much as possible. - - Scout's shithouse!

Ch3Vy: Scout on me, he took a lot.

Will: Dead.

Beetle: Demo balc, I can't jump him.

Ch3Vy: Nice!

Example 7. An excerpt from the data for quantitative analysis.

The division is relatively straightforward for material such as in Example 3, but there are also some ambiguities and special cases. For instance, if a player voices utterances such as greetings, orders or expletives to a person, that person's nickname is considered to be a part of that utterance. Examples include "Hey, Lopata", "Out, Airact, out!" or "Nice one, Ch3Vy!". It was deemed unnecessary to further divide such short units into even smaller ones. Furthermore, both clausal and non-clausal units are treated similarly and therefore the data does not get skewed because of such a ruling. For these units, the commas are omitted in the transcription to avoid confusion during the analysis. Repetitive verbs such as "Go go go go!" or nouns like "Valley valley valley!" are treated as single clausal or non-clausal units respectively although words are counted separately.

Utterances transcribed 'eh', 'er', 'erm', 'mm', 'umm', 'um' and 'mhm' are counted as words, partly because they are treated thus in Biber *et al.* (1999), partly because they consist of clearly distinguishable sounds that are separate from other words and can usually easily be

interpreted as parts of C-units or separate entities. However, other non-word material such as sighs, grunts, shouts and laughter are not counted as words or even C-units, mainly because it would be excessively tasking to classify them either as a part of a C-unit or a separate unit and since their boundaries are often ambiguous. The amount of these cases is 33, out of which laughter, giggling and chuckling amounts for 10 cases, shouting for six, incomprehensible passages for four and sighing for two. Nevertheless, they do carry meaning discursively and semantically and are discussed, when necessary, in section 4.1. Truncated words are not counted whether they belong to a C-unit or are independent units.

Some further cases include the expression "Goddamn it", which is dealt with as an interjection consisting of two words and is classified as non-clausal material. There were two instances of extremely simultaneous speech from multiple players that contained the same words. On page 19 of the transcription, the simultaneous utterance is counted as four non-clausal C-units with two words and on page 34 the simultaneous utterance is counted as three clausal C-units with two words.

By analyzing the data according to the described criteria, the following results were obtained (Table 2). There were a total of 1431 C-units, of which 52.5% were clausal and 47.5% non-clausal. The amount of non-clausal units is almost 10% higher than in Biber *et al*. (referred to as standard language data in the following), which proved to be statistically a very highly significant[1] difference (χ^2=18.659, df=1, p≤0.001).

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[1] Unless otherwise stated, all p values refer to Chi squared analysis, with Yates' correction, where p≤0.05 is statistically significant, p≤0.01 is statistically highly significant, and p≤0.001 is statistically very highly significant.

The length of a non-clausal unit from the TF 2 material is somewhat smaller (0.17 words per unit) than in standard language. The table illustrating the properties of standard language data (Biber *et al.,* 1999:1071) is presented here to provide unproblematic, side-by-side comparison.

Table 2. Distribution and length of clausal and non-clausal units in a TF 2 gaming session

|	clausal units	non-clausal units	total
unit count	751 (52.5%)	680 (47.5%)	1431 (100%)
word count	2479 (67.2%)	1211 (32.8%)	3690 (100%)
words per unit	3.30	1.78	2.58

Table 1. Distribution and length of clausal units and non-clausal units in a sample of AmE and BrE conversation

	clausal units	non-clausal units	total
unit count	614 (61.4%)	386 (38.6%)	1000 (100%)
word count	4615 (86.0%)	754 (14.0%)	5369 (100%)
words per unit	7.25	1.95	5.37

The overall length of the TF 2 units is considerably[2] shorter than in the standard language, 2.58 words per unit compared to 5.37 words per unit in Biber *et al.* This can mostly be explained by the length of the clausal units, which, for the TF 2 data, is approximately four

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[2] Due to lack of raw data from the standard language sample (Biber *et al.*), no ANOVA tests could be conducted for the length of units or frequency of units per 1000 words. Consequently, the values used for *words per unit* and *frequency of units per 1000 words* are average values calculated from the word and unit count.

words per unit shorter (3.30 vs 7.25) than in standard conversation. This feature is illustrated in chart 1.

Length of C-units	clausal	non-clausal	total
words per unit standard	7,25	1,95	5,37
words per unit TF2	3,3	1,78	2,58
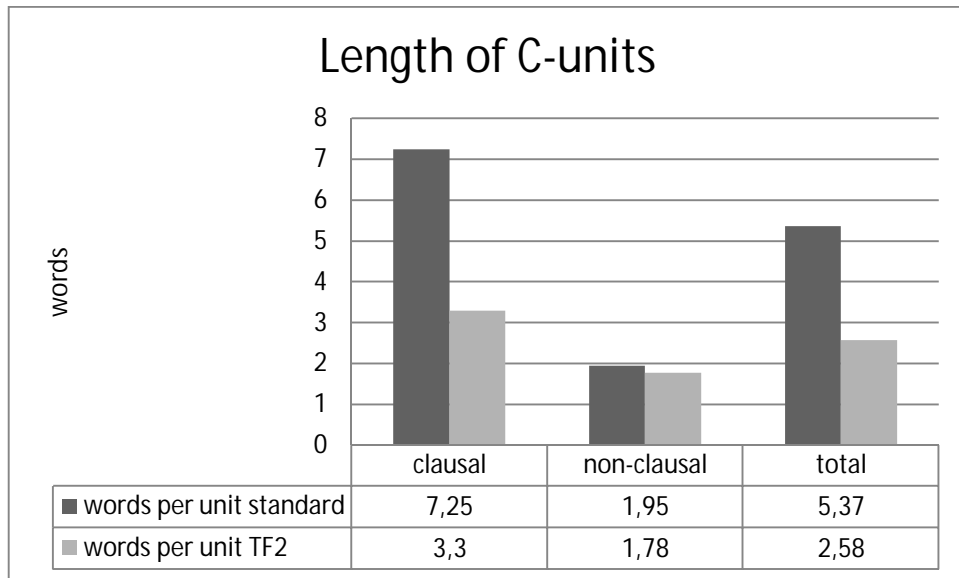
Chart 1. Comparison of the length of C-units in standard language data and TF 2 language data

The previously mentioned efficiency of communication is clearly visible in the way in which all C-units are shorter in TF 2 language than in standard language sample. Unlike in standard spoken language, the articles and prepositions are often omitted in TF 2 spoken interaction to avoid unnecessary words cluttering the voice-chat. This phenomenon is illustrated in example 8.

Will: Scout under, both scouts under.

Airact: I'm in here.

        Ch3Vy: Demo low.

            Airact: Scout valley.

Beetle: They popped, they popped.

Example 8. Omission of articles and prepositions in TF 2 language.

Because of this type of simplification at clausal level, the amount of all C-units is increased while the word count is decreased. Compared to the 5369 words between 1000 C-units in standard language, the data of the present thesis contained only 3690 words, which is 68.7% of the amount in standard language data, but the C-unit count was 43.1% higher (1431). To simplify this, TF 2 employs almost twice as many C-units per 1000 words than standard language does.
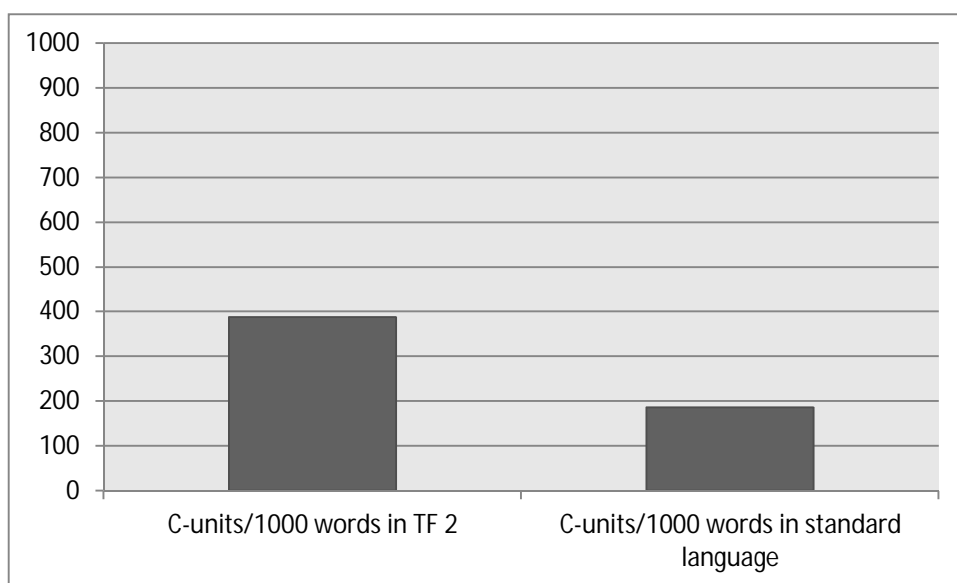
Chart 2. Frequency of C-units per 1000 words.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data yielded both easily interpretable results as well as more ambiguous observations regarding language use. It can be argued that the discourse analysis, while being mainly a descriptive tool, served its purpose as a means to discover the functional aspect of the language and it highlighted the reasons for the particular kind of language the players choose to use.

To begin with, the results seem to suggest that semiotic and world building types of tasks are the most important non-activity related building tasks in the material, activity building being 'a given' in this type of material. In addition to creating the actual situation and interacting in the game context, the players also need to be and act like the professionals that they are and use their language accordingly, thus creating a need for identity building in their speech. Interestingly, the players seem to be simultaneously cooperating and creating highly complex teamwork strategies, and boosting their own identity as members of the gaming community in the form of expert talk – and gaming! This dual role arguably requires well-developed social intelligence just so that unnecessary conflicts do not rise, but also so that the prominent players get noticed by drafting teams who collect talented gamers into the larger leagues. Furthermore, it seems that the language supports game-internal power structures that are centered on the individual skill level of the players and the team-work accomplishments the members of the party achieve. In relation to the research questions, language is used because it helps the team to achieve the goal of winning a match and the utterances are shaped as they are because efficiency is of utmost importance.

The terminological analysis would seem to support my hypothesis that the language in this session of TF 2 does qualify as a 'special language defined by means of language used by a specific group of people to fulfill a specific function and which is not spoken by people who are not members of the gaming community. Specifically, 18 gaming-specific words that are not used in standard, everyday speech were discovered.

The quantitative analysis yielded perhaps the most interesting results in regard to 'pure' linguistics. The language seems to be comprised differently than 'standard' spoken language in the sense that the amount of clausal material is lower and the length of a unit is noticeably shorter in TF 2 language sample. My hypothesis is therefore correct, the language is syntactically simpler than standard language and there is a great deal of non-clausal material, almost 10% more than in the comparison data, which proved to be a very highly significant difference ($\chi^2=18.659$, df=1, p≤0.001). The length of clausal units was not postulated in the hypotheses section, but it would still seem to support the simplicity crudeness of syntax. It might actually be the more significant factor, seeing that the frequency of C-units in my data was almost two times the amount of units in the comparison data.

I would argue that there is a polarity, if not a striking one, between the language in use and language as it appears in its transcribed form as well as in the jumbled, messy communication of the players. To elaborate, the players require a large amount of knowledge about the gaming situation, including the game's mechanics, the place the matches occur (i.e. the map), the skills and play styles of other players and a realistic image of their own abilities. Moreover, the vocabulary of TF 2 is highly specialized and specific and needs to be learned more often than not, during a hectic gaming situation since many of the words describe

phenomena in those situations. Contrastively, the grammar the players use is simplified to the point where it seems almost as if all the utterances rely solely on the context and the need to employ sentence-internal logic is reduced to near zero. Consequently, my hypothesis seems to be at least partially correct in the sense that there is a difference between the complexity of sentences (low) compared to the complexity of terms and understanding of language function (high).

Although the material gathered and the method of analysis differed to quite some extent from the ones of Steinkuehler, the same types of results would seem to emerge. Particularly, the semiotic properties of the language in both studies seem to be complex and rich in nature, which is evident in the peculiarly compressed words and phrases that still manage to convey large amounts of information. Additionally, the complex coordination of in-game activities, albeit of different kinds, is present in both studies' data and would therefore support the argument made by both the me and Steinkuehler that playing games actually requires the use of one's cognitive, social and linguistic abilities, so such gaming cannot be classified as 'barren play'.

Similarities to other studies, as I predicted, are somewhat scarcer, but some similarities do emerge: in this study's material, the players "employ the vocabulary and other linguistic resources the game provides and collaboratively reproduce this language in their own speech" which is exactly what Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio found in their study of collaborative game play in second language learning study. This finding is even more interesting because the players in my data were almost all L2 speakers of English and still used the language creatively and with excellent competence. Perhaps the specialized situation brings forth this

kind of expert language that is not directly related to a person's 'general language level' and which manifests itself in simplifying factors such as the use of copulas and the "condensation" of meaning by using words that refer to entire strategies or gaming concepts. A brief terminological look would seem to support this type of view, at least in the sense that the language the players use has the same type of characteristics as other, potentially highly prestigious special languages such as 'scientific language', the language used by professionals.

The results gathered here are probably valid and reliable when it comes to this specific gaming event, but cannot be generalized to include, for instance, everyone in the TF 2 gaming community or even mainly European players aged under 30 – a description that fits the players represented in the material. It is noteworthy, however, that discourse analysis, in particular, poses some problems that have to do with reliability. As Gee (*op. cit.* 94) puts it:

> …just as language is always reflexively related to the situations so that both make each other meaningful, so, too, a discourse analysis, being itself composed of language, is reflexively related to the 'language-plus-situation' it is about. The analyst interprets his or her data in a certain way and that data so interpreted, in turn, renders the analysis meaningful in certain ways and not others.

Naturally, even though the method seems to include a high amount of subjectivity, the reliability of the thesis can be increased by discussing it with other, more experienced researchers and comparing their interpretations of the data to the interpretations presented here, for instance. More importantly, the two other methods of analysis employed in this thesis support many of the findings of the discourse analysis. A large amount of special

vocabulary was found and explained in the lexical section and the peculiarity of 'compressed speech' was at least partly explained by the syntactic analysis. There is arguably quite good triangulation in the methodology in the sense that it does not rely purely on either quantitative or qualitative methods and neither is it fully based on one linguistic theory but instead utilizes three different approaches. Additionally, the methodology used was selected specifically to provide valid answers to each of the research questions and I argue that it has accomplished that.

As mentioned in the introduction, video-games are extremely popular worldwide and especially young people engage in a great deal of interaction with people whose mother tongue is different from their own. This creates a possibility for as entirely new variety of global English or *lingua franca* English to emerge from these situations. *Lingua franca* language use refers, generally speaking, to "untaught", naturally occurring verbal or written communication between people who do not speak the language as their mother tongue (see, for instance, Seidlhofer 2001 and 2004, Jenkins 2007). This thesis proved that there are occurrences of *lingua franca* language use in video games and that non-natives can even play competitively using English as their medium of communication. It would be an extremely interesting to compile a comprehensive corpus of gaming language with sub-corpora comprised of different game genres or even different games. Then, tendencies in other *lingua franca* corpora could be compared to the ones found in the video game corpus. Other possibilities of future research include studying the effects of playing FPS gaming while acquiring a second language and evaluating the benefits and downsides, such as developing vocabulary versus deteriorating grammatical knowledge.

There are both positive and negative sides in conducting case studies such as this study. The negative side is, of course, that the results only indicate what could be found in a large-scale study instead of providing ready, generalisable, results about the 'language of TF 2' or 'the language of video gaming'. The quantitative material is obviously the most notable section affected by lack of material. Nevertheless, with regard to this study, the quantitative section, while not randomly sampled from a larger corpus, did actually contain more C-units than the sample discussed in the Longman Grammar (Biber *et al.* 1999). The largest positive factor is that the material could be subjected to a thorough analysis from many perspectives and that it managed to supply very interesting results from each of these perspectives. Numerous examples could be provided and the ways in which this particular gaming group functions could easily be seen.

This study set out to examine a genre of language use that had not been previously investigated, First Person Shooter games. The description of the game and analyses of a single gaming session provided enough information to encourage a scholar interested in games to start looking for larger patterns in video gaming language in general. The findings, while fully valid with regard to the particular gaming session, may not be generalisable, but are nevertheless an indication that there are interesting linguistic phenomena to be found from this kind of material. Before this study was conducted, no research had been done regarding the topic and now it seems there is definitely room for more.

Education specialists can surely benefit from this study as it is, but can also look to expand their scope of research towards video gaming research. It is clearly visible that the activities performed and language used require a great deal of knowledge and experience from the players of video games and that the activity and the language deserve the respect of scholars. Hopefully, this study will only be one of the first among many video gaming language studies and will provide a solid baseline and an example of ways to describe and analyze the phenomena manifesting in them.

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APPENDIX I Transcribed data

Details of the data:

Recorded on June 6, 2012 and uploaded on YouTube© (Available on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40TohbL8qKE). The audio was recorded from BaN's voice chat and the transcription only applies to that team. The visual imagery is recorded from the viewpoint of player Beetle, and follows his actions on the battlefield throughout the video except for during the times when his character is dead and he can view the match through other players' perspective. Bold print is used for non-clausal material and regular print for clausal.

Team Composition of BaN (team RED during the match) and color coding of player aliases:

Airact - Starts with and often uses Scout.

Beetle - Starts with and often uses Soldier.

Ch3Vy - Starts with and often uses Demoman.

Iopata - Starts with and often uses Soldier.

purple - Starts with and often uses Medic.

Will - Starts with and often uses Scout.

CONTENTS

Beetle: there's...

lopata: Ch3Vy shall we push at the mid again?

Will, Beetle and Airact: *chuckling*

Airact: Going choke!

Will: I'm lagging.

Ch3Vy: Going super fast!

Airact: Nice!

Will: Make sure you pressure that Demo as much as possible. - - Scout's shithouse!

Ch3Vy: Scout on me, he took a lot.

Will: Dead.

Beetle: Demo balc, I can't jump him.

Ch3Vy: Nice!

Ch3Vy: Valley valley valley!

purple: The --- scout on me.

Ch3Vy: Down.

Beetle: Ch3Vy down.

Ch3Vy: Fall back... Unless you can out-dm them.

Beetle: Medic their own house. Medic their own house.

Airact: Well it's three vs four.

Airact: Solly down.

Ch3Vy: He took the kit, he took the kit.

Airact: There's only demo medic.

Ch3Vy: There are only two up there so you can do it.

purple: Iiii'm up in two.

Ch3Vy: I'm up in two as well.

0.5 min.

Airact: Okay, they're going mid.

Will: We need help.

purple: We're up.

Airact: Medic.

Beetle: I can't see.

Will: --- is coming

Airact: On resup.

purple: Cheers.

Ch3Vy: Herps.

Airact: Scout on resup.

Will: Herp.

Beetle: Yeah, they have uber.

Ch3Vy: Yeah, they have uber.

Will: Holding the house.

Airact: Taking the kit.

Ch3Vy: Hold on our um, our train because they have uber.

|

Airact: In later, okay you're down.

Will: Yeah, you just watch the entrance into house.

Airact: Yeah yeah yeah.

Will: On a...

lopata: They're spamming choke.

Will: Soldi, take cover for it.

Airact: I'm watching the hometown.

Will: They're both on bridge.

lopata: purple and I building a bit far.

Airact: Okay.

1 min.

Airact: Solly haunter in-

purple: Seventy.

Airact: They're all in house.

Airact, Beetle, purple and Will: *shouting simultaneously*

Beetle: They took a lot of spam.

Airact: Taking the health bag.

Beetle: They're still house .

Iopata: Demo balc, spamming.

|

|

Will: Scout under, both scouts under.

Airact: I'm in here.

Ch3Vy: Demo low.

Airact: Scout valley.

Beetle: They popped, they popped.

Will: They popped, they popped.

Airact: They popped under.

Iopata: I need some ammo before we go in. Wait. - - Three rockets.

Ch3Vy: Let's go. Go go go go go!

Will: Going now.

Iopata: Yeah, we're going in.

purple: Stickies.

Ch3Vy: *shouts*! I'm down.

Iopata: Demo low, medic down.

Beetle: Soldier down.

Airact: Scout down.

Ch3Vy: Scout going back cap.

1.5 min.

Will: He's down.

Ch3Vy: Ah okay.

purple: Iiiii'm down.

Airact: The kit's for.

Ch3Vy: One up, it's the demo, it's the demo.

Will: Airact, stay.

Airact: Yeah, I am... capping.

Iopata: Can you get the health Beetle, umm, he does.

Airact: I am getting health...

Ch3Vy: purple how long.

Beetle: Get him in choke, get him choke.

purple: Three.

Iopata: I'm too low to jump.

purple: Two.

Beetle: We can't, umm, he's jumping back.

purple: I'm up

Airact: They're all up.

Will: Yeah, but he only just.

Ch3Vy: We're coming from house with Purple.

Iopata: I'm on mid.

Airact: I'm watching resup. - - Scout there.

Beetle: Demo balc, scout balc.

Ch3Vy: Can't go in yet, or what?

Airact: Naaah.

Will: Yeah yeah yeah, no.

Will: They're they're they're back on. Pushing forward now. Hop!

Iopata: All right, nice.

2 min.

2.5 min

Beetle: Help Will escape, I guess.

Will: It's it's fine, I've escaped.

lopata: Ah, it's okay.

Will: No!

Airact: Scout's balc -- both.

purple: Seventy.

Airact: Soldier spamming.

Will: Good position -- don't let him into resup. - -There you go.

Beetle: Soldier house.

Will: Oh behind behind! Soldier.

purple: Ninety.

Beetle: He took sixty, some more.

Airact: Oh whoa, he's still so weak.

purple: Uber ready.

Airact: Twenty-eight .

Ch3Vy: We're two down.

Will: He's on your left, Beetle. - - Nice, nice.

Beetle: Scout balc.

Will: There's scout and soldi down.

lopata: We have the uber ready on mid.

Airact: Yeah.

Ch3Vy: I think they haven't seen my sticks on the rocks on, on the

Choke.

Airact: *makes a 'tsk' sound*.

lopata: One is a bit out -- so.

Beetle:Demo house -- Demo down, they're going house

Ch3Vy & Airact: They're coming - - the house.

3 min.

3.5 min.

Beetle: They lost demo.

Ch3Vy: Yeah, we should push now.. Soldi low, let's go!

lopata: Okay.

purple: I'm back.

lopata: I'm going in choke now.

Ch3Vy: Yup, because no demo, no sticks.

lopata: They're holding trash, one solly is on bridge alone.

|

purple: BANANA!

Will: Airact -- I'm alone

purple: Let's go Banana.

lopata: Mm-hmm.

Airact: Scout behind you. I'm down

purple: They're trash.

lopata: Soldier's gonna jump I guess.

Ch3Vy: Le Banana!

purple: Soldi didn't jump . - - Soldi jump.

lopata: Down.

Ch3Vy: Ooh.

Will: Scout house.

purple: Another solly jump. - - I used ...

lopata: They popped too.

purple: Trash.

Beetle: Scout Behind.

Airact: Yeah.

Will: That's all right, it's all right, we got ---

Lopata: Demo jumps.

4 min.

Beetle: Still scout behind.

Will: It's fine.

Airact: Not in house.

lopata: Where was he last time?

Beetle: Valley.

lopata: All right.

Ch3Vy: Ooh!

Beetle: Don't die Ch3Vy.

Lopata: Demo's spamming choke.

purple: Spamming.

Will: Can't see him.

Beetle: ??

Airact: Yeah same -- scout resup.

purple: Got fifty.

Ch3Vy: Kill the demo, kill the demo, he's over-extending. --- He's -- dooown, what!? Like one

HP or something.

Will: Soldier in house.

purple: Medic is healing him.

Airact: Okey, I'm getting heals

Will: Gone back.

lopata: So, that scout is still behind.

Ch3Vy: The demo got to be punished when he over-extends like that.

lopata: Right.

Airact: Soldi in--

lopata: Demo's spamming again with soldi in and a medic as close.

Airact: Solly house, solly house.

Beetle: On my way there -- Demo in here.

4.5 min

|

purple: Ninety-five.

Will: I'm watching for this scout.

       purple: We have.

Beetle: Soldier is haunter.

Will: Which one was it?

Airact: The other.

Beetle: Demo still spamming

       Ch3Vy: Demo spamming, took a pipe.

Beetle: Soldier house -- Stickies blown.

        Ch3Vy: Soldier spamming - - demo spamming.

Will: This is interesting.

  Airact: Solly still house.

purple: Solly -- house, close.

      Airact: Solly .

Ch3Vy: They're pushing!

lopata: They jumped reaaaally far.

 Airact: I'm down.

  Ch3Vy: Both are separated from the medic.

     Airact: Scout house.

       purple: Used.

         Will: Both scouts in house.

           purple: Medic is choke.

lopata: The demo is behind or something.

     Airact: Solly house, I'm weak.

Ch3Vy: Soldier under.

      Airact: Demo down.

5 min.

5.5 min.

Ch3Vy: Soldier down.

Beetle: Medic's still in- - he's below.

Iopata: Scout is low, took seventy.

Airact: Scout down.

Will: Soldier jumping here.

Iopata: Soldier down.

Ch3Vy: Soldier valley.

purple: Two up.

Will: One up.

Ch3Vy: He took a sticky.

Iopata: One up -- Just cap it.

purple: Medic. Alone.

Beetle: He's dead.

Ch3Vy: Down.

Beetle: I let him live for as long as possible.

purple: Umm, Stonebridge.

Iopata: Push right in.

Ch3Vy: Demo up.

purple: One up.

Airact: Yeah yeah yeah one up.

Beetle: Stickies --

purple: Stickies on point.

Airact: Three or four - four up.

Will: Four up.

purple: Left side heavy, left side heavy! -- I'm upstairs.

Beetle: I'm down.

Beetle: Soldier so weak.

6 min.

|

Will: Coming from behind.

purple: ??

Will: Oooh!

lopata: Oh, nice try Will!

Ch3Vy: Soldier down.

Beetle: Up, respawned.

Will: No Airact no, ooh.

lopata: Airact, what was that?

purple: Ninety.

Will: Get out get out Airact -- Stay alive, stay alive.

Airact: Yeah yeah.

Will: We need someone to hold right for when they spawn.

Airact: I have seventy.

Will: Going to go spy.

purple: Okay.

lopata: Purple, we'll meet on balc.

purple: Yes.

Will: They've got uber advantage.

|

Will: Just push in with the uber.

Ch3Vy: Let's go -- yeah.

lopata: A'ight, going in.

purple: Wait wait Beetle for heals, wait wait.

lopata: Okay. - - We're going in. - - -   Now.

Will: Okay.

purple: Umm, I will uber Ch3Vy.

6.5 min.

Ch3Vy: No sticks.

Iopata: Going in now.

purple: Pyro.

Iopata: Pyro. He took a lot. Down.

purple: Pyro.

Ch3Vy: Low, down.

Will: Go in Airact.

Iopata: Low.

Airact: Both demo and solly there.

Iopata: Medic down.

purple: Medic down.

Iopata: Focus heavy, bottom left. Down.

Airact: purple HUGE!

purple: I'm down. - - Demo is 10 HP, right side.

Ch3Vy: Urgh!

Will: Got him.

Airact, Beetle and Iopata: *Simultaneous incomprehensible*

Will: I've gone spy.

Airact: They just got spawns - they got spawners.

Ch3Vy: Lucky demo, fucking roller.

purple: I go kritz.

Airact: *chuckle*

purple: Wait Iopata , wait.

Iopata: Beetle will pick you up.

Airact: Scout balc.

Ch3Vy: *sigh* just don't rush now.

Airact: Yeah, I'm not.

7 min.

7.5 min.

Ch3Vy: It has taken eight minutes already, but who cares.

Will: I'll get I'll get the medic, I'll get the medic.

Ch3Vy: Hold outside, because we have crits.

Airact: I'm holding a upper lobby, I can get out.

Airact: Scout main.

lopata: Okay Beetle, go.

Will: Okay, I did manage make it over.

|

Beetle: Stickies somewhere?

purple: Seventy. - Get ready to get in.

Airact: Want me to distract a bit, Will?

purple: Are you ready? Will?

Will: Oh no! Oh my God, what the fuck?! He's low, the medic's on like ten HP.

Airact: He's in spawn, he's in spawn.

purple: We have crits.

lopata: Okay, we're going in main with crits now.

There's a scout on balc.

Airact: Scout behind, took seventy.

lopata: On main.

purple: Used, right side something, right side medic.

Airact: I'm down. Scout behind.

lopata: Scou- they have a spy!

Will: They have a spy.

lopata: purple

purple: Spy behind you.

|

8 min.

Ch3Vy: Down, I'm down.

purple: Back pop.

Ch3Vy: They were in spawn.

Will: Yeah yeah, the medic had to retreat because he was so low.

Iopata: Nice purple. -- *chuckles*, she gets the --

Ch3Vy: Beetle is on last.

Airact: -- hit that though.

Iopata: I'm up.

Ch3Vy: No oh, is demo down?

purple: Scout is still chasing.

Will: Yeah yeah, he's going back, he's going back, he's gone away.

purple: I'm outside. -- I'm Stonebridge

Beetle: Ah sh--

Ch3Vy: We still have, we have a huge advantage now.

Will: A WHAT!?

Ch3Vy: Or not huge but we have crits advantage, so.

|

Will: *laughs*

Beetle: Okay, get out.

Ch3Vy: Okay, now don't die separately.

Airact: Yeah, I know.

Iopata: Spy! Spy de-cloaked under bridge or something.

purple, Will, Ch3Vy: *incomprehensible*

Airact: Solly balc.

8.5 min.

Ch3Vy: Can't see anything.

Iopata: They have a spy.. or in house, no he's on spire.

        purple: A scout spire.

                  Iopata: Spy or scout, I'm gonna jump.

Beetle: Soldier jumped.

|

purple: I'm down.

        Ch3Vy : Oh, what the fuck..

      Airact: Oh what -- he's down.

        Ch3Vy : Let's just out-DM them now, let's go!

Will: I'll spy, I'll spy.

        Airact: I took the health.

            Beetle: Again.

Will: Last chance, last try.

Beetle: Third time's the charm

|

Airact: They they spawned.

        purple: Mid.

          Ch3Vy: I distracted them. A lot.

Iopata: *laughs*.Nice. Dat drop!

        Will: They dropped.

Will: I dropped.

Iopata: I'll meet you in main Purple.

        Airact: Solly weak, solly down.

|

|

9 min.

9.5 min.

Will: They dropped, umm.

|

Iopata: Okay, just build this and push in.

Airact: I'm down.

Ch3Vy: Umm.

Will: I've gone back.

Ch3Vy: Stay outside.

Airact: Demo sixty.

Beetle: Scout balc.

|

|

Beetle: He's second resup, I believe.

Iopata: Mm.

Will: Really?

Beetle: I didn't see if he went back.

Will: Let's meet.

Airact: I'm up.

purple: Seventy.

Airact: I'm on mid.

purple: Could we try - - from top right with crits -- or not?

Will: He's top lobby, he's top lobby.

10 min.

Iopata: No, we gotta do it right now.

Ch3Vy: Just main.

Will: There's something balc, something balc.

Airact: Yeah, going going going.

Ch3Vy: No sticks.

Will: It's a soldier!

Airact: Coming to point.

Iopata: We're going in main now

Ch3Vy: Scout pit.

Beetle: Scout pit.

purple: Used.

Airact: Solly down.

Ch3Vy: Demo down.

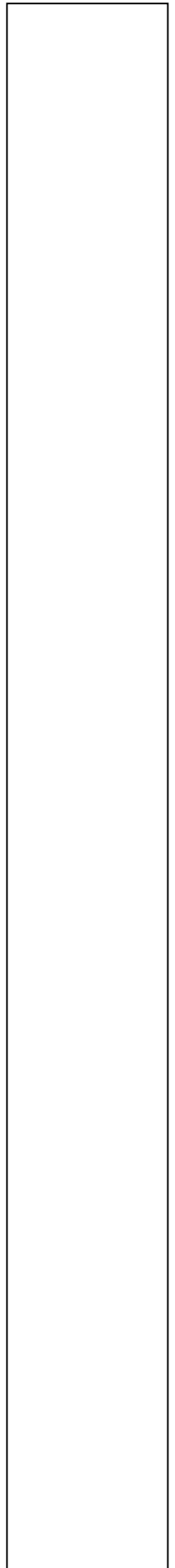purple: Left side, they are in,

they are in spawn.

Will: Nice nice -- get in, get in!

Iopata: I'm gonna cap.

Will: Stickies on point. - - Good one, guys!

Airact: Yeah.

purple: Normal.

The teams reset to their spawn points and SECOND round starts.

Airact: Going choke.

|

|

Ch3Vy: Fast.

|

|

Will: Shit house. No no. - - Solly valley valley valley!

Ch3Vy: I need to fall back, I'm, oh, I'm down.

purple: Go choke, go choke now - - oh okay.

      Beetle: Soldi jumped.

Will: I'm down. - - Scout on point.

   lopata: Scout down.

      Beetle: Too soldiers down.

        Ch3Vy: Yeah, they are three up.

      Airact: --

          purple: There are three up.

Beetle: Demo balc. Or -- yeah.

Airact: Scout down.

purple: Demo is left side, valley or balc.

lopata: No, balc.

 Ch3Vy: Balc.

     Beetle: Kill the demo.

purple: I'm on 50 -- HP.

    Airact: I'm down, I'm down.

    Will: He is in, he is in house with medic.

Ch3Vy: Take health purple.

10.5 min.

11 min.

Will: Ooh, so much juggle.

Iopata: He was so low. Fuck.

Beetle: He's still here.

purple: I'm okay.

Beetle: He's with medic now.

purple: Hi Iopata.

Iopata: Mhm.

|

Beetle: Medic down, something up.   I'm dead.

Iopata: *chuckle*Nice.

Will: I'm up.

Ch3Vy: Low.

purple: We are choke.

11.5 min.

Iopata: Oh, sticks sticks sticks! -- Okay, they're blown. We're ready to go they don't have the medic, just bomb 'em.

purple: Scout second resup.

Will: Yeah, both of them, I'm down.

Beetle: Just push them slow.

purple: We used.

Will: Out Airact, out.

Iopata: Solly down.

Airact: Yeah yeah yeah, I'm coming.

Will: We're gonna blow...

Iopata: was that the demo Ch3Vy?

Beetle: Oh, he has full health

Ch3Vy: Yeah, demo is down.

Airact, Will, Iopata, Beetle: Scout/solly house.

Will: Yeah, both scouts house, coming behind you, backcapping mid, backcapping mid.

Beetle: I'm gonna block.

Iopata: Stacking it.

Ch3Vy: Jump the, jump the point.

Iopata: Stacking it.

Will: Yey, you've got it, you've got it.

Iopata: Going last.

Ch3Vy: Just go straight in.

Airact: Nice.

Ch3Vy: Ahh, they spawned -- no no no, don't go. Even though the scouts are behind.

Iopata: Okay.

Will: Watch out, behind you!

Ch3Vy: He's here.

Will: Behind you, on top, on top!

Ch3Vy: What the...

|

Ch3Vy: Taking ammo all the way from house.

Airact: Scout balc .Took twenty.

purple: Fifty.

Beetle: Scout's still back. He's still.

Will: Lol, how did I not hit him?

Airact: *laughs*, yeah.

Beetle: Just didn't hit him *giggle*.

Will: I know.

purple: Seventy.

Beetle: Watch the spawns guys.

12 min.

Airact: Scout.

Will: Oh shit. *chuckle*

Airact: *chuckle* That taunt. Demo spawned.

purple: We have ninety.

Will: A scout.

Ch3Vy: Let's go. Upper left this time.

Beetle: Medic is inside.

Will: Yeah, I'm trying to get demo to pop . - - Coz we need those stickies to gone before we can get in. Actually I might go main Airact.

Airact: What?

lopata: We're ready to go.

lopata: Top right, Ch3Vy is already in.

Ch3Vy: Demo's down, demo is down.

Airact: Mhm.

Will: Okay, good good.

purple: We use.

lopata: Scout going behind, main.

Will: I got him!

lopata: Nice.

purple: Stay here lopata. Top right, top right.

Beetle: They used.

lopata: Get back a bit purple.

lopata: Spam the point now!

purple: Reload everything, reload reload. - - Solly jumped me. - - Another one. And scout here.

Will: *shouts*.

Ch3Vy: How are you still alive?

12.5 min.

13 min.

Iopata: Just shootin' people.

Airact: Scout behind.

purple: Oh, unlucky.

Iopata: Fuck.

purple: Top left demo.

Iopata: They're out.

purple: He's balc, he's going balc, demo going balc.

Will: Hold second.

Airact: Yeah.

Ch3Vy: HAH! Scout took a pipe, in balc.

purple: Watch for sticky traps on lobby.

Beetle: Scout's --

Iopata: Airact is going for backup.

Airact: Yeah, they're holdin last, they're holding last

purple: We're up on mid, going choke.

Airact: Solly balc! I'm down.

Beetle: He took some.

Airact: Goddamn it.

Will: Oh, oh my GOD. He's on four HP.

Iopata: *chuckles*.

Airact: Fucking bitch.

Ch3Vy: Just just stay back.

Airact: I'm up.

Will: I= I'm using the option to go spy again then.

Beetle: Go sniping.

Will: Oh, I might as well, sorry.

Ch3Vy: Umm, something second resup, or was it Air?

13.5 min.

14 min.

Airact: No.

Beetle: Two scouts balc.

purple: Eighty, choke.

Airact: Solly valley, medic balc.

Beetle: Soldi balc.

Will: Okay, I'm getting behind them.

|

Airact: OHH SHIT, stickies.

All: *incomprehensible*

purple: Medic balc, medic solly balc.

lopata: I'm gonna jump point.

Ch3Vy: Scout down.

lopata: Nice nice.

purple: Scout left side lopata.

Ch3Vy: He's low.

purple: Solly on point.

Airact: Noo!

Will: *shouts*, oh my God!

lopata: I'm gonna jump him, medic is on the balc, on that thing too.

purple: But scout is behind.

Ch3Vy: Nohh!

lopata: No.

Beetle. Soldier on --

Ch3Vy: They have uber.

lopata: Medic popped

All: ---

14.5 min.

Ch3Vy: *sighs*, why didn't you block the point?

lopata: Um, I did.

Ch3Vy: No, I just, eh.

lopata: Oh, like that, yeah.

Airact: Solly down.

 purple: Demo is Stonebridge.

    lopata: Okay, we have crit.

Beetle: He took something.

              Airact: I'm really weak.

purple: We have uber.

Airact: Don't push in, we don't have second.

              lopata: Stickies blown.

              Will: I know, I know.

purple: Solly on spire.

Will: Scout me, both scouts on me - - I'm down.

lopata: They're coming in.

Beetle: Demo jumped.

Will: Scouts top -- they came behind , err.

              Beetle: Demo is second resup -- oh bridge -- took fifty

                 Airact: Demo down.

Beetle: Solly jumped on point.

Ch3Vy: Soldi low under bridge, scout took pipe as well.

Beetle: Didn't -- do they have it as well.

Will: No they used it on.

    Airact: Solly's jumped, I'm down.

|

15 min.

15.5

Iopata: Solly in house, watch out, I don't have any ammo.

Will: They're out close.

Iopata: Solly in house, watch out.

Ch3Vy: No , he went back, he went back.

Will and Beetle: *incomprehensible*

Iopata: Okay.

Beetle: We could have used it to just kill 'em.

Airact: Yeah.

Beetle: Soldier house, scout house.

Ch3Vy: Do they have uber? If they don't, just push in.

Will: Oh fu--

purple: They have it now.

|

Airact: Scout behind.

|

Will: Scout scout barrel. - - I'm keeping em' busy.

Iopata: Okay.

Will: There's soldi on point.

Beetle: Soldier on bridge.

Airact: Demo choke.

purple: They're close choke, they're close choke.

Beetle: Soldier and scout second resup.

Iopata: Nice cap!

Ch3Vy: I need ammo.

Will: Trying.

Iopata: Nice!

Airact: Oh wow airshot!

16 min.

purple: Let's go.

Will: *shouts*! Soldier on point. Low life, soldier on point.

Iopata: Ch3Vy jump.

Will: He's on forty.

Ch3Vy: What?

purple: Stickies choke, stickies choke.

Airact: We have no scouts...

purple: I can't but.. Stickies choke!

Iopata: I'm doing it.

Ch3Vy: Mm.

purple: Demo and medic behind, they popped. --

Iopata: They popped.

Ch3Vy: Demo is down.

purple: Scout is going mid, through house.

Will: Mid Airact.

purple: He's here!

Airact: I'm mid, I'm coming mid.

purple: Go our choke, go our choke.

|

Ch3Vy: They are only three up --

Will: We've got, we've got it. -- Come back to mid!

Airact: Yeah yeah yeah.

Ch3Vy: No, you can push. Straight away! Their demo wasn't up and there was only three.

Will: Scout's balc. Demo bridge, soldier bridge.

Airact: I'm down.

Will: Yeah, bring.

Beetle: Something up, I'm down.

16.5 min.

17 min.

Airact: I'm shs=, doing shit.

Will: Now. Keep bringing one by one.

purple: Solly jumped.

Will: Scout coming from behind.

Ch3Vy: Okay, fall back.

|

|

purple: Eighty on mid.

Will: It's on our slope.

purple: Scout is our house. - - They're close Ch3Vy, come back!

Will: Come out now.

|

lopata: Up.

Ch3Vy: We have it, we could block it.

lopata: Gotta, umm -- forward.

Ch3Vy: Ah, they're all in point.

|

Beetle: Scout in, took fifty.

purple: We used.

Beetle: Down.

Will: Demo down.

Ch3Vy: They multied a lot.

Will: Let's get in.

Ch3Vy: Soldier down.

purple: House, something.

Airact: Scout.

Will: Five V three.

17.5 min.

18 min.

Iopata: There are three up.

Ch3Vy: Okay ,let's go for purple.

Airact: I can't hit for shit.

Beetle: Medic took a lot.

Will: Take it, the soldier.

Beetle: Soldier took eighty-five.

purple: Cap it, so they don't forward spawn.

Ch3Vy: Medic down.

       Will: Yeah.

           Beetle: Nice.

Ch3Vy: Demo is up, by the way.

          Will: It's on gray bridge.

|

purple: I'm house.

       Beetle: Scout on spire, he's bridge.

|

Airact: I'm on point.

  Will: Demo really low in lobby.

          Beetle: Stickies on point.

Airact: Yeah.

       Will: Scout came balc, scout balc.

Iopata: Just go banana.

     purple: Banana! Solly jump!

Ch3Vy: Solly jumped -- umm.

         Airact: I'm out.

            Beetle: Down.

Ch3Vy: Scout on me - Fuck!

18.5 min.

Will: Scout banana!

Ch3Vy: Oh, I'm down. - - Now just cap it and - no, don't go, you're three down.

    purple: We have.

                Will: Scout bridge.

Beetle: Scout bridge, going behind you guys.

purple: He's behind.

Airact: I'm up.

    purple: Used.

Beetle: Scout blue balc, could you save me -- uh nice save.

purple: Watch for stickies, watch for stickies! - - Right side.

Airact: I'm on it.

    Will: Medic came in.

Airact: Scout spire, took twenty.

    lopata: Beetle jump!

      purple: They're Stonebridge.

Beetle: Demo is blowing stickies.

    purple: Solly jump. Right side behind you -- lopata demo.

    Airact: Scout down.

      Ch3Vy: Medic is down. I'm down, medic is down guys.

      lopata: Demo down.

Beetle: Go on point.

    Ch3Vy: Two on last, two on last.

    Will: 30 hp soldier.

    Airact: Go on last, solly on second, solly on second.

      lopata: Let's go that high ground

Ch3Vy: It's a scout!

    Will: And a thirty HP soldier.

19 min.

Airact: Just get to second.

All: Nice!

Will: We didn't get it, we just didn't die.

Beetle: Soldier's carrying, *wooh*!

19.5 min.

19:39, BaN wins another round and the teams reset. Round THREE begins.

Beetle: That jump.

Iopata: Yeah, it was really nice.

|

|

Will: Shithouse- - No, valley, soldiers, valley valley -

Ch3Vy: Umm, I am so - what the fuck!?

Airact: Why do you push so forward?

purple: Go choke, go choke, go choke now. I'm low.

Airact: I'm down.

Will: Medic down.

Iopata: Get the health in house. Or umm, no regen.

Will: Let's go back.

Iopata: -- fall back a bit.

Beetle: Soldi house.

purple: Solly house.

Beetle: He's down.

purple: Demo is on point.

Ch3Vy: Go in! There's not many for them. And the-

Will: Soldi down.

Beetle: We don't have it yet.

Ch3Vy: Yeah, but there is one on the point.

Beetle: Stickies in, stickies -

Airact: Two.

Will: Med eh, scout is low.

Beetle: Stickies blown.

|

20 min.

20.5 min.

purple: Are you in house Ch3Vy? Ok.

Beetle: Demo, choke. Wanted to jump

Ch3Vy: Go.

Will: Ooh -- f=..

purple: Behind us, scout!

Iopata: Scout behind!

Iopata: That near miss.

Ch3Vy: What the fuck am I doing?

purple: Stickies choke, stickies choke.

Airact: Holy Jesus that Ch3Vy.

Iopata: Blown.

Ch3Vy: Umm, soldi 50 HP, k, gray bridge.

Will: Soldier second resup, get back Airact.

Airact: Trying -

Iopata: Solly jumps.

Airact: Getting heals.

Will: Yeah.

Iopata: Another solly on the point.

Airact: Or not.

purple: Used.

Airact: I guess we're pushing. - - Waiting for heals.

Will: Right.

Airact. I'm in. With eighty but still.

purple: Demo is balc.

Airact: Solly second resup, I'm down.

Ch3Vy: Really need some help there.

Will: Three people on me, how are you not -

21 min.

purple: Solly -

Ch3Vy: What the FUCK is this soldier doing in house!? They're behind you. All.

Will: Fucking listen, you idiot!

Ch3Vy: Behind you, guys. - -

purple: Go back, go back, go back.

Ch3Vy: Yeah, I listened. Still.

lopata: I got bounced.

|

|

purple: I'm down

Airact: I'm out.

purple: In five.

|

Ch3Vy: Just hold last, two scouts on point.

lopata: Pyro.

|

Airact: Demo spamming.

|

Will: I'm pyro.

Airact: I'm watching left.

Ch3Vy: Demo main. Medi dropped dropped dropped.

Airact: Damn, solly left!

lopata: You're gonna ..

Airact: Solly left.

purple: Medic down.

lopata: Nice, okay.

Ch3Vy: Yeah, something still top, lobby.

21.5 min.

22 min.

Beetle: Demo stickied up um main -- upper -- took seventy-two though.

|

Iopata: Scout top lobby.

|

purple: Eighty.

22.5 min.

|

Iopata: Want to use the advantage?

Beetle: Soldi main, soldier main.

Airact: Scout left.

Iopata: Down, demo stickied main.

Ch3Vy: Good job man.

Beetle: Stickies blown.

purple: Yeah, sure.

Iopata: Want to use the advantage?

Will: Yeah, true.

Iopata: Alright. We're coming out now.

Ch3Vy: Shrp=, Airact run.

Iopata: Medic is.

purple: Right side

medic.

Airact: Okey.

Ch3Vy: Just stay last with heavy

Airact: Okay.

purple: Used on balc.

Beetle: Demo right, demo right.

purple: Used on balc, medic is trash.

Airact: Scout in left.

Beetle: Took a lot.

purple: Medic is low! Banana!

lopata: Medic down.

purple: Back cap.

Ch3Vy: What the fuck?

Beetle: Scout point.

Ch3Vy: Soldi jumped. I'm down, goddamn it... lopata -

lopata: I'm going for it to cap.

Beetle: I'm balc.

Ch3Vy: Will um, no Airact uh, yeah. Point, just go on point.

|

Airact: I'm really weak.

|

|

Ch3Vy: We still have advantage.

Airact: Scout balc, scout balc.

lopata: Yeah. He's on point. - - No, he's lower.

Will: Whoops.

Airact: Down.

Ch3Vy: We still have advantage.

lopata: Demo is choke alone, spamming.

Ch3Vy: Let's go with it, it's --

purple: ninety-five.

Ch3Vy: Go from house, go from house.

purple: We have.

Ch3Vy: Sorry lopata.

lopata: No problem.

23 min.

23.5 min.

Ch3Vy: They're here.

Airact: Just go valley dude.

purple: Used! - - We are in.

Beetle: Demo low -- demo down.

Will: Soldier jumped behind.

Airact: Scout shithouse, scout behind.

lopata: The medic is in house.

Ch3Vy: Mhm.

Ch3Vy, lopata, purple: Stack it.

Beetle: Scout -- he took fifty.

Will: I'm low.

purple: Solly will block it, they will block it.

Ch3Vy: Medic down.

Beetle: Soldier down.

Ch3Vy: Hell no they will.

lopata: Back cap.

Will: Yeah, he's low.

lopata: Okay, nice.

purple: I need HP, wait Beetle, wait.

lopata: There's still have solly behind, watch out.

Will: Yes.

Airact: Yeah.

lopata: Mhm.

Airact: Solly on point.

|

Airact: Demo balc!

Will: House.

24 min.

24.5 min.

purple: Erm, he's in house, our house Beetle. Solly.

lopata: Up. I can take him.

Beetle: You should just ignore him, leave him be.

purple: Check the hiding place above .

Will: He's -- dead, he's on mid.

Ch3Vy: Okay.

Beetle: They don't have a soldier for last fight.

Ch3Vy: Yeah.

purple: Have you killed him?

Will: No, we don't but he's fucking stuck.

lopata: He's going for the health.

Beetle: Just ignore him.

Airact: Sniper -- Sniper.

lopata Solly is low.

Ch3Vy: It's --

lopata: I can't, I was on mid. I spawned there. Fuck.

Will: I can't just.

purple: Ninety.

Airact: Sniper spwitch= back -- erm, switched back

purple: Ninety-five.

Ch3Vy: Go --

purple: We have. - - Used. - - Medic is in spawn.

Ch3Vy: I'm putting sticks on point.

Airact: Scout right, took seventy.

Will: Stickies blown but more on already.

Beetle: Scout down.

Airact: I'm down.

25 min.

|

Beetle: I'm down, almost capped it.

Beetle: Nice!

Airact: Nice!

purple: Nice!

25.5 min.

After another victory, the round four begins at 25:34, with four minutes 28 seconds left on the server time.

Airact: Four minutes.

Ch3Vy: Let's get one more. Just steamroll them in the middle.

Beetle: Valley then?

Ch3Vy: Huh?

Beetle: Go valley then.

Ch3Vy: No.

Beetle: You can go whatever.

Ch3Vy: No, don't go valley.

|

|

Beetle: Demo balc.

Ch3Vy: Mhm. - - And soldier's valley.

Beetle: And soldier's valley.

Airact: I'm down.

purple: Solly jumped. - - On choke.

Ch3Vy: Oh fuck, I'm down.

purple: Two solly jumped on choke.

Ch3Vy: Fall back, fall back.

lopata: Yeah, sandwiched.

purple: Yeah.

purple: I'm down.

Ch3Vy: Oh god…

Airact: Hold last, hold last.

|

26 min.

|

Beetle: Demo is fifty

purple: In two.

Iopata: I'm the same.

|

|

Will: Pyro.

Airact: They're here.

Ch3Vy: They're pushing from main. - - Um what, I'm down.

|

Beetle: Demo is sticking. The point. Soldier left. Left, they used.

                              purple: Top right Iopata, scout!

Will: Demo down.

                Beetle: I'm down.

                        Will: Going back.

                           Iopata: Scout behind.

Ch3Vy: Point point point.

                Will: Point point point.

Iopata: Yeah, they ubered. It was too late anyway.

26.5 min.

BaN loses the first round in the series and, with just a little over three minutes to go, the teams reset and round 5 begins.

|

|

27 min.

Airact: Don't over-extend Ch3Vy.

Ch3Vy: I didn't.

Will: Scout shit house.

Ch3Vy: How does the demo not take any damage.

purple: Solly jumped.

 Ch3Vy: Umm, what, no -

    purple: I'm low.

Airact: Scout.

lopata: Get the house.

Airact: I'm down.

purple: I'm not going in house.

 Ch3Vy: Medic is low not down.

Beetle. I'm down.

Ch3Vy: I thought you called medic down.

lopata: We are on bridge.

27.5 min.

Ch3Vy: They just focused me on mid.

Airact: Valley in.

lopata: Let's block this with uber.

Ch3Vy: Yeah.

Will: Yeah, we're going behind as well.

purple: Okay.

  lopata: Jumping up.

purple: Used.

Will: They used as well.

purple: I can't catch you from here.

   Will: Yeah yeah yeah.

     Iopata: No problem.

|

|

Will: Medic down.

Airact: Nice.

purple: They're two up.

Ch3Vy: One up.

Airact: Oh wow, my aim..

purple: I'm going crits.

Ch3Vy: Lemme take health on their house.

   Beetle: Two up.

      Ch3Vy: Fuck, I'm not gonna -- risk myself anyway

purple: I will spawn forward.

 Beetle: Scout valley, scout valley. I'm down.

Iopata: Up.

purple: I'm up.

|

Will: Load.

|

|

|

Will: They're pushing slightly in.

Beetle: GG guys.

Airact: GG.

| 28 min. |
| 28.5 min. |

purple: They're spamming pretty...

|

Ch3Vy: Soldier down.

Airact: I have --

        Iopata: Just move in for the lolz now, it's one minute.

purple: Seventy.

 Will: Medic down.

purple: Eighty critz.

   Airact: Solly took some. - - Solly 197.

purple: Ninety.

      Beetle: Soldier down.

|

Beetle: Demo - -

   purple: Scout behind. - - Used.

Beetle: Demo down, nice Ch3Vy.

Airact: How did we win this? This fight, I mean.

Will: We killed the medic.

Beetle: Scout on last.

Beetle: Medic down.

Iopata: *chuckles*.

29 min.

BaN wins round number five and a new round begins. However, the opposing team calls it a GG (good game) and most of them disconnect from the server.

Airact: We can win, we can get a point. Oh, we actually can't.

Ch3Vy: *shouts*! Rage quit.

Airact: Raging.

Iopata: Portuguese, hah!

Ch3Vy: Okay, we won, we're div four now.

Airact: *hoorayh*!

|

Beetle: *woo-hoo*!

|

|

Beetle: Let's lose to two .

Airact: *laughs*.

|

|

Airact: *woo-hoo*! Let's go again!

Ch3Vy: I was bottom, fuck's sakes.

Airact: Lolololol.

Beetle: Wait ninety.

Iopata: Waiting ninety to start again.

29.5 min.

30 min.

30 min. 19 sec.

APPENDIX II (Gee 1999: 93-94)

Questions to ask about building tasks

Semiotic building

1. What sign systems are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation (speech, writing, images and gestures)? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?
2. What ways of knowledge and ways of knowing are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?
3. What social languages are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

World building

4. What are the situated meanings of some of the words and phrases that seem important in the situation?
5. What situated meanings and values seem to be attached to places, times, bodies, objects, artifacts, and institutions relevant in this situation?
6. What cultural models and networks of models (master models) seem to be at play in connecting and integrating these situated meanings to each other?
7. What institutions and/or Discourses are being (re-)produced in this situation and how are they being stabilized or transformed in the act?

Activity building

8. What is the larger or main activity (or set of activities) going on in the situation?
9. What sub-activities compose this activity (or set of activities)?
10. What actions (down to the level of things like "requests and reasons") compose these sub-activities and activities?

Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building

11. What relationships and identities (roles, positions), with their concomitant personal, social, and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition), feelings (affect), and values, seem to be relevant to the situation?
12. How are these relationships and identities stabilized or transformed in the situation?
13. In terms of identities, activities, and relationships, what Discourses are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

Political building

14. What social goods (e.g. status, power, aspects of gender, race and class, or more narrowly defined social networks and identities) are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?

15. How are these social goods connected to the cultural models and Discourse operative in the situation?

Connection building

16. What sorts of connections – looking backward and/or forward – are made within and cross utterances and large stretches of the interaction?

17. What sorts of connections are made to previous or future interactions, to other people, ideas, texts, things, institutions, and Discourses outside the current situation (this has to do with "intertextuality" and "inter -Discursivity")?

18. How do connections of both these sort in 16 and 17 help (together with situated meanings and cultural models) to constitute "coherence" – and what sort of "coherence" – on the situation?

SUOMENKIELINEN TIIVISTELMÄ (FINNISH SUMMARY)

Johdanto

Videopelien suosio on kasvanut räjähdysmäisesti viime vuosikymmenten aikana, ja etenkin verkkopelaamisen pelaajamäärät ovat nousseet huomattavasti. Myös pelaajayhteisöt ovat muuttuneet monimuotoisemmiksi, ja ihmiset ovat valmiita käyttämään vapaa-aikaansa niin pelitaitojensa kohentamiseen kuin myös erinäisiin sosiaalisiin, peleihin liittyviin toimintoihin. Niin ikään peliturnausten palkintorahat voivat olla miljoonien dollarien suuruisia, ja tapahtumien tuottaminen ja kuvaaminen järjestetään ammattilaisvoimin. Joissakin maissa on jopa televisiokanavia, joilla näytetään ainoastaan videopelaamista. Ei lienekään yllättävää, että videopelejä on alettu tutkia tieteellisesti monesta näkökulmasta. Vaikka kielitieteellistä tutkimustakin on ollut hieman, se on parhaimman tietämykseni mukaan ollut kohtalaisen suppeaa ja kohdistunut usein kielten oppimiseen eikä esimerkiksi pragmatiikkaan, stilistiikkaan tai sosiolingvistiikkaan. Tätä pro gradua kirjoittaessa myöskään "räiskintäpelien" diskursseja, sanastoa tai kielioppia ei ollut tutkittu. Tämänkaltaisia pelejä pelataan kuitenkin paljon ja niissä on moninaisia kielenkäytön mahdollisuuksia, joten niiden kielitieteellinen tutkiminen on erittäin hyvin perusteltua.

Teoreettiset lähtökohdat ja aiempi tutkimus

Tutkimuksessa tukeudutaan pohjatietoon Team Fortress 2 -pelistä, joka on kerätty virallisilta sivuilta sekä omistani että muiden pelaajien kokemuksista. Lisäksi menetelmällisesti käytetään diskurssianalyysiä (Gee 1999), terminologian erikoiskielen määritelmää (Cabre

1998) sekä lauseellisen ja ei-lauseellisen aineksen käsitteitä sekä yleistä jakaumaa kielessä (Biber *et al.* 1999).

Ensimmäinen osa analyysistä perustuu diskurssianalyysiin, jonka pohjimmainen ajatus on kielen funktio tai käyttötarkoitus eli se, mitä kielellä tehdään. Menetelmä siis tutkii sitä, miten kielenkäyttäjät välittävät ja tulkitsevat viestejä. Kielen luonne eräänlaisena totuuden muovaajana ja välittäjänä on yleinen näkemys, jonka esimerkiksi Jørgensen and Philips (2002) ottavat esille. He mainitsevat teoreetikko Michael Foucaultin, joka määritteli tiedon ja totuuden (ei niinkään kantilaisten absoluuttien kuin ihmisten kielenkäytön säätelemiksi) relativistisiksi käsitteiksi. Diskurssianalyysiä voidaan käyttää moninaisten asioiden tutkimiseen, mutta tässä tutkimuksessa Geen (1999) teoria valittiin siitä syystä, että se sisältää helposti sovellettavissa olevat analyysin vaiheet ja koska sitä on helppo soveltaa. Sitä on käytetty aiemmin tutkimuksissa, mukaan lukien hänen omassaan (Gee 2003) sekä Steinkuehlerin (2006) artikkelissa, jossa kirjoittaja kuvailee teoriaa sanoen, että sitä "on mitä auliimmin sovellettu ajattelun ymmärtämiseen sen kaikessa hajanaisuudessaan ja sotkuisuudessaan" (Steinkuehler 2006: 39, käännös omani). Teoria on pohjimmiltaan linjassa aiempien diskurssianalyytikoiden ajatusten kanssa, mutta sisältää diskurssitilanteiden jaottelun kielen rakennustehtäviin, joita voidaan tarkastella erikseen ja täten tuoda tutkimusaineistosta esiin haluttuja asioita (ks. Appendix II).

Terminologia keskittyy "erityisten kohteiden käsitteiden nimeämiseen ja niiden ilmentymiin lingvistisissä ja muissa muodoissa" (Cabré, 1998: 32, käännös omani). Tässä tutkimuksessa pyrkimyksenä on tuoda esille se, miten monimutkaisia pelikielen käsitteet voivat olla ja kuinka ne saattavat jopa sopia erikoiskielen määritelmään, jota saatetaan käyttää usein

esimerkiksi arvostettujen ammattikuntien tai tieteellisen yhteisön kielestä. Terminologisen teorian pääosana toimiikin erikoiskielen määritelmä (teoksesta Picht and Draskau (1985), uudelleenmuotoiltu teoksessa Cabré (1998: 67–68), suomennos omani):

a) Erikoiskielillä on yksittäinen tarkoitus siinä mielessä, että niitä käytetään tietyssä sosiaalisessa tilanteessa ja viestimiseen

b) Niillä on rajattu käyttäjämäärä

c) Ne opitaan vapaaehtoisesti

d) Ne ovat itsenäisiä yleiskielestä siten, että erikoiskielessä tapahtuva muutos ei aiheuta muutosta yleiskielessä.

Kieliopillinen osio koostuu teoksesta *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber *et al.,* 1999), jossa tehdään puhekielen yhteydessä jako lauseellisen ja ei-lauseellisen aineksen välillä. Lauseellisella aineksella tarkoitetaan yleisesti verbin sisältäviä yksiköitä ja ei-lauseellisella kaikkea muuta. Tutkijat kutsuvat tätä ainesta kummatkin tapaukset sisältävällä yläkäsitteellä C-yksikkö (C-unit), joka viittaa syntaktisesti itsenäisiin sekvensseihin. Syntaktisesti itsenäisellä tarkoitetaan, että kahta C-yksikköä käsitellään erillisinä, vaikka niillä olisikin semanttinen tai diskursiivinen linkki, jos niitä ei voi sisällyttää ympäröivään ainekseen lauseopillisesti. Tästä johtuen koordinoidut lausekkeet nähdään siis kahden C-yksikön liittoina. Esimerkiksi puheenvuoro "*Two shots in the head and the scout is dead*" ("*Kaksi laukausta päähän ja tiedustelija on kuollut"*) nähtäisiin siten, että "two shots in the head" olisi ei-lauseellinen C-yksikkö ja "and the scout is dead" olisi lauseellinen C-yksikkö. Tutkimusta varten käytetään yleiskielestä otetun näytteen lauseellisten ja ei-

lauseellisten C-yksiköiden jakaumaa sekä yksiköiden pituutta ja verrataan niitä pelikielen vastaaviin lukuihin.

Kysymysten asetteluun sekä analyysin huomioihin vaikuttaa myös aiemmat tietokonepeleistä tehdyt tutkimukset, jotka ovat erilaisesta fokuksestaan huolimatta hyödyllisiä pohjatiedon lähteitä. Piirainen-Marsh ja Tainio (2009) käsittelevät toisen kielen oppimista sekä lisäkielenoppimista Final Fantasy X -pelissä kahden suomalaisen pojan pelaamana ja havaitsevat pelin tarjoavan vuorovaikutusmahdollisuuksia englannin kielellä sekä täten tehostavan kielen oppimista. Thorne (2008) löytää samankaltaisia elementtejä internetroolipeleistä, mutta korostaa artikkelissaan mahdollisia, omista tutkimustuloksistaan kumpuavia muutoksia luokkahuonetilanteisiin, jotta ne voisivat vastata paremmin internetympäristöjä. Steinkuehler (2006: 51) puolestaan suorittaa diskurssianalyysin Lineage-pelistä todistaakseen sosiolingvistisellä analyysillä videopelien olevan hyödyllistä toimintaa siinä mielessä, että ne "tarjoavat hyvin nähtävissä olevan foorumin kehittää ajattelua, kulttuuria ja toimintaa". Hän argumentoi voimakkaasti videopelien hyödyllisyyden puolesta ja käyttää analyysin esimerkkinään erästä erityisen "tiivistä" lausahdusta, joka sisältää monimutkaisia käsitteitä.

Tutkimuskysymykset

Tämä pro gradu on tapaustutkimus yhden "räiskintäpelin", Team Fortress 2 (jatkossa TF 2), -pelikerran aikana käytetystä puhutusta kielestä. Tavoitteena on suorittaa kolmiosainen analyysi, joka koostuu sosiolingvistisestä, sanastollisesta ja kieliopillisesta osuudesta. Tutkimuskysymykset liittyvät näihin kolmeen osa-alueeseen.

1) Sosiolingvistinen osa: Mitkä ovat kielen tehtävät pelin aikana, miten ja miksi pelaajat vuorovaikuttavat pelimaailman ja toistensa kanssa? Miten pelaajien kieli vaikuttaa pelitilanteen muodostumiseen? Millaisia rooleja pelaajilla on, ja miten he ilmaisevat valta-asemaansa?

2) Terminologinen osa: Millaisia erikoisilmauksia aineisto sisältää, ja mitä niistä voidaan päätellä? Voidaanko aineiston sisältämä kieli luokitella erikoiskieleksi edellä mainittujen kriteerien perusteella?

3) Kieliopillinen osa: Onko aineistossa havaittavissa jotakin yleisestä puhekielestä poikkeavaa piirrettä? Mitä siitä voitaisiin päätellä? Tämän tutkimuskysymyksen rajauksena on ei-lauseellinen aines. Onko tämän tutkimuksen aineiston lauseellisen ja ei-lauseellisen aineksen jakauman ja yksiköiden pituus yleisestä puhekielestä poikkeava?

Tutkimuskysymyksiin liittyvät hypoteesit ovat:

1) Löydän erityislaatuista kieltä, joka on pelaajille mielekästä ja haastavaa.

2) Sosiolingvistinen osa: Pelaajat ovat osallisena monimuotoisessa kielenkäyttötilanteessa, joka edellyttää suurta tietomäärää pelimaailmasta, muista pelaajista sekä tehokkaista tiedonvälitysstrategioista.

3) Terminologisesti: Erikoissanastoa on löydettävissä, ja tämän pelitilanteen kieli voidaan luokitella erikoiskieleksi.

4) Kieliopillisesti: Kieli on yksinkertaistettua ja nojaa karkeampiin rakenteisiin kuin yleiskieli. Ei-lauseellista ainesta käytetään paljon.

5) Terminologian hallinnan ja sosiolingvistisen taidon sekä yksinkertaistetun kieliopin välillä on selkeä polarisaatio.

Aineisto ja menetelmä

Aineisto kerättiin litteroimalla täysimittainen TF 2 -pelikerta, jossa kuusi pelaajaa taistelee vihollisjoukkuetta vastaan suositulla Badlands-kentällä. Tavoitteena on saada symmetrisen kartan kaikki "hallintapisteet" oman joukkueen haltuun ja estää vastustajia valtaamasta niitä takaisin. Pelaajista **Ch3Vy** ja **Airact** ovat Suomesta, **Beetle** Tanskasta, **lopata** Hollannista, **Will** Briteistä ja **purple** Kroatiasta (kirjoitusasut vastaavat pelaajien käyttämiä). Aineiston valintaperusteita ovat sen pituus tapaustutkimusta varten, vertailukelpoisuus yleiskielen aineistoon pelaajien korkeahko taitotaso, aineiston helppo saatavuus (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40TohbL8qKE) sekä pelaajien kielitaustojen määrä, joka jossain määrin edustaa eurooppalaista TF 2 -pelaajakantaa.

Aineistoa analysoidaan ensiksi Geen (1999) ihanteellista diskurssianalyysimallia käyttäen (katso Appendix II). Se keskittyy kuuteen diskurssitilanteissa ilmenevään kielen rakennustehtävään. Tässä osuudessa myös kuvaillaan pelitilannetta yleiskuvan saavuttamiseksi. Seuraavassa osuudessa tarkastellaan aiemmin esitellyn erikoiskielen määritelmän sopivuutta aineiston kieliainekseen sekä tarjotaan täydellinen lista pelitilanteessa käytetyistä erikoisilmauksista. Viimeisessä osiossa tutkimusaineisto jaetaan lauseelliseen ja ei-lauseelliseen ainekseen ja kunkin yksikön pituudet mitataan. Yksiköiden jakaumaa ja pituutta verrataan sitten yleisen puhekielen vastaaviin lukuihin, jotka ovat Biberin ynnä muiden (1999) kielioppiteoksesta.

Tutkimustulokset

Tuloksista käy ilmi, että pelitilanne on sosiolingvistisesti monimutkainen koska pelaajien on kyettävä viestimään nopeasti ja tehokkaasti käyttäen monimutkaisia ja laajoja käsitteitä liittyen senhetkisiin strategioihin. Samalla heidän tulee huomioida muiden pelaajien kyvyt ja taidot, kartan sekä hahmoluokkien ominaisuudet unohtamatta joukkueen tavoitteeseen pyrkimistä. Niiden ohella korostuu erityisesti oman osaamisen esiin tuominen sekä kielellisesti että taidollisesti. Intertekstuaalisuus on hyvin vähäistä ja liittyy yleensä pelimaailman sisäisiin tekijöihin. Intensiivisessä tilanteessa ei ole aikaa puhua muuten kuin välittömästi käsillä olevasta asiasta ja luottaen muiden pelaajien kontekstinhallintaan. Pääsääntöisesti pelaajat pyrkivät myönteisen palautteen antamiseen ja erityisen taidokkaiden suoritusten kehumiseen. Mielenkiintoisena tekijänä on pelin käyttöliittymän sisäinen, valtahierarkioita vahvistava elementti, jossa toisen pelaajan ”dominoinnista” (useaan kertaan tappamisesta) tulee erillinen maininta näytön ylälaitaan.

Aineisto sisältää monia ilmaisuja (18 uniikkia ilmausta), joita käytetään ainoastaan TF 2 -kielessä. Aineistossa esiintyvä kieli näyttäisi täyttävän erikoiskielen kriteerit siksi, että sitä käytetään ainoastaan pelitilanteissa ja keskusteluissa TF 2 -eksperttien välillä ja se on aina verbaalista, tavoitehakuista viestintää. Kielellä on rajattu, joskin varsin suuri määrä puhujia, jotka ovat kaikki pelin pelaajia. Pelaajat opettelevat kielen vapaaehtoisesti, sillä heidän tavoitteenaan on mahdollisimman jouheva kommunikaatio kilpailullisissa pelitilanteissa. Tämän aineiston pohjalta on mahdotonta ottaa kantaa siihen, aiheuttaako muutos TF 2 -kielessä muutosta yleiskielessä, mutta lienee turvallista olettaa, että se ei sitä saa aikaan.

Näiden lisäksi ei-lauseellisen aineksen määrä aineistossa on lähes kymmenen prosenttia korkeampi kuin verrokkiaineistossa, mikä on tilastollisesti erittäin merkitsevää (χ^2=18.659, df=1, p≤0.001). Lauseellisten yksiköiden pituus on huomattavasti lyhyempi. TF 2 -aineistossa on yhteensä 1 431 yksikköä, joista 52,5 presenttia ovat lauseellista ja 47,5 poresenttia ei-lauseellisia. Verrokkiaineistossa vastaavat luvut ovat 61,4 prosenttia lauseellista ja 38,6 prosenttia ei-lauseellista. TF 2 -aineistossa lauseellisten yksikköjen keskimääräinen pituus on 3,30 sanaa, kun taas yleiskielessä yksiköt ovat keskimäärin peräti 7,25 sanaa pitkiä. Nämä löydökset näyttäisivät olevan linjassa aiemmin mainitun kielen tehokkuuden kanssa, sillä kieliopillisesti aineisto vaikuttaa huomattavasti keskivertopuhekieltä riisutummalta.

Pohdinta

Tulokset viittaavat siihen, että vaikka tämän kyseisen TF 2 -pelikerran kieli saattaakin vaikuttaa tököltä tai jopa banaalilta, pelaajien käyttämät ilmaisut voivat olla äärimmäisen monimutkaisia ja kielen tulee olla hyvin tarkoituksenmukaista ja tehokasta pystyäkseen toimimaan pelitilanteessa. Selkeää polarisaatiota kielen funktioiden ja sanaston sekä kieliopin välillä ei välttämättä ole kuitenkaan löydettävissä, joskin jonkinasteisesti se on havaittavissa. Kieliopin hallitseminen kenties vaatii pelaajalta vähän työtä ja sanastojen ja pelin ymmärryksen hankkiminen paljon.

Linkit aiempaan tutkimukseen ovat oletusten mukaisesti varsin vähäiset, mutta viitteitä yleisistä videopelikielen tendensseistä on havaittavissa. Kuten Steinkuehlerin (2006) tutkimuksessa, myös tässä pro gradussa videopelikieli havaittiin monimuotoiseksi ja

tiivistetyksi ja pelinsisäisten toimintojen koordinoiminen samaan tapaan pelaajille haastavaksi. Muista tutkimuksista lähinnä Piirainen-Marshin ja Tainion artikkeli (2009) vastaa omia löydöksiäni jonkinasteisesti. Siinä todetaan pelaajien hyödyntävän pelin sisäisiä kielellisiä resursseja ja sanastoa.

Tutkimus lienee sen verran luotettava, että löydökset pätevät tähän nimenomaiseen pelikertaan, mutta niitä ei voi yleistää koskemaan pelikieltä yleensä, tai edes alle 30-vuotiaita, eurooppalaisia TF 2 -pelaajia. Tästä huolimatta tutkimus on sikäli hyödyllinen, että se valottaa räiskintäpelien kielenkäyttöä ja pelaajakulttuuria tavalla, jota ei ole ennen tehty. Kielitieteellinen tutkimus tästä aiheesta on kuitenkin vasta tiensä alussa ja mahdollisuuksia jatkotutkimukselle on paljon. Ilmeisin tapa olisi kasata korpus, joka sisältäisi satojen tai tuhansien pelikertojen puhutut ja kirjoitetut viestit joko yhdestä pelistä, tietyn lajityypin peleistä tai useiden eli pelityyppien edustajista. Korpustyön pohjalta voitaisiin tehdä vertailuja esimerkiksi koulumaailman kielenkäyttöön ja näin luoda poikkitieteellisyyttä kasvatustieteen suuntaan. Vaihtoehtoisesti voitaisiin tutkia *lingua franca* -mahdollisuuksia ja verrata pelikieltä erilaisiin maailmanenglantivariantteihin (ks. esim. Seidlhofer 2001 and 2004, Jenkins 2007). Tästä tutkimuksesta voisi olla hyötyä kasvattajille, kielitieteilijöille sekä videopeliharrastajille, sillä se on ensimmäinen tästä aiheesta kirjoitettu työ. Parhaimmillaan se voi toimia aloituspisteenä ja esimerkkinä siitä, millaisia asioita usein ylenkatsotustakin kielenkäytön alueesta voi löytää.