Bachelor's project

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A Look at How the Communication in Counter Strike: Global Offensive Compares to English as a Lingua Franca

Bachelor's project in English
Supervisor: Susanne Mohr
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Abstract

This paper looks at how English is used for communicating in the game Counter Strike: Global Offensive, as well as how that communication can be compared to English as a Lingua Franca or if the communication can be considered an example of English as a Lingua Franca. The data used to discuss these questions was gathered with an online questionnaire, where any Counter Strike: Global Offensive player could give examples of what phrases they use when playing the game. With the data gathered, I could conclude that the communication in Counter Strike: Global Offensive relies on phrases being simple and short, as there is little time to communicate the information to the rest of the team. With this fact, I could look at how it compares with English as a Lingua Franca, what I found was that the communication in Counter Strike: Global Offensive, although sharing some similarities with English as a Lingua Franca, it could not be considered an example of it. This is because the fundamental reasons for how English is used are different, while speakers of English as a Lingua Franca do not aim to simplify English, the players of Counter Strike: Global Offensive, rely on simple phrases.

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1. Introduction

This paper takes a deeper look into the language used in gaming, more specifically, Counter Strike: Global Offensive is the game that is the focus in this paper. In addition to the gaming language that I will be looking at, I will also look at English as a Lingua Franca. I will be looking at how the language used in game communication can be compared with English as a Lingua Franca. Additionally, could the communication in Counter Strike: Global Offensive be considered an example of English as a Lingua Franca communication?

As I said, the game that I will be looking at is Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), which is a multiplayer first-person shooter game developed by Valve and Hidden Path Entertainment. Although there are several game-modes that can be played in this game, the one that is relevant in this paper is the competitive mode. This game mode consists of two teams of five players, where one team is the terrorists, and the other team is the counter-terrorists. The goal of the terrorists is to plant the bomb, while the counter-terrorists aim to defuse the bomb. The round can also be won by either side killing the enemy team. The match ends when the first team reaches 16 rounds won, or it can end in a 15-15 tie. In between each round there is a brief pause during which players buy their equipment, after the first 15 rounds, the players will switch sides, making it so that each team will play both the terrorists and the counter-terrorists. It is worth noting that CS:GO is a game that is played professionally as well, however my research does not look at how professional players communicate and focuses on the average CS:GO player.

The data used in this paper was gathered with an online questionnaire, answered by players of Counter Strike: Global Offensive. With the questionnaire, I was able to gather examples of phrases that are used in CS:GO communication, as well as thoughts from the participants about the difficulty they experienced when learning these phrases.

In this paper I will start with looking at the research that has been done on English as a Lingua Franca and look at what are the main discussion points in English as a Lingua Franca research. In that chapter I will also look at previous research about video games, more specifically research that looks at the communication in video games. After that I will explain in more detail the methodology that was used to gather the data, as well as how the questionnaire used to gather data was designed. Following that, the next chapter will focus on looking at the data that collected. Lastly, the last chapter is where I will be looking at what insights into communication in multiplayer games the data gives us and how it relates to the

English as a Lingua Franca, as well as discussing whether CS:GO communication could be looked at as an example of ELF.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 English as a Lingua Franca research

Throughout the research that has been done on the topic of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), several researchers have proposed varieties of English to be used as the common variety in ELF communication. Meierkord (2012) writes about the research on ELF and mentions Ogden's Basic English and Nuclear English as examples of varieties that have been proposed by researchers. Meierkord (2012) writes that all these varieties proposed by researchers have in common a suggestion of a "common core" (p. 1944), however she continues with the fact that no researcher has provided results to support the theory of a common core in ELF communication or that there is a common variety that has developed amongst the speakers. Meierkord (2012) concludes that ELF communication is heterogeneous because of speaker's different Englishes, Meierkord (2012) also adds that when miscommunication occurs there are are cooperation strategies that compensate for it.

Jenkins (2007) also discusses the issue of a common variety in ELF communication in her book about attitudes and identities surrounding ELF. In the chapter "Misinterpretations of ELF", Jenkins (2007) writes about the misconceptions of ELF being monocentric and that there is a goal to establish a single norm to which all users should conform to. Jenkins (2007) writes about the research and writings on this topic by Seidhofler and more specifically Seidhofler's list of misconceptions. The fourth misconception on this list is about researchers suggesting one monolithic variety, to which Seidhofler's response is that "there is not a single variety called ELF, and that while common processes are emerging from the data – as can be expected in any language contact situation – there is plenty of scope for and evidence of local variation." (as cited in Jenkins, 2007, p. 20). Although Seidhofler confirms and agrees with the fact that there are some common features that exist, there is sufficient evidence of variation, rejecting the theory of there being a monolithic variety.

Cogo (2013) is another researcher that writes about the notion of a common variety, writing that "it is not homogeneous, as it includes people with different linguacultural backgrounds, and is highly variable, as the speakers may change more or less frequently over time and space" (p.7). Referring to the speakers, Cogo (2013) makes a point that it is natural that ELF is not homogeneous as the speakers are from different backgrounds, which is in line

with what Meierkord (2012) says on the topic as well, concluding that the interactions between speakers is not homogenous as a result of the speakers' different backgrounds.

Detering (2013), however, argues that there is a common core, although in a different sense than what has been discussed above. Detering (2013) writes that "the Lingua Franca Core represents a finite set of pronunciation features which, it is claimed, are necessary for achieving international intelligibility in spoken English." (p. 7), suggesting that instead of there being a single variety used in ELF, there are common features throughout the different varieties of English that are found in ELF communication. These features refer to pronunciation and Detering (2013) argues that they are important to learn to achieve intelligibility. Additionally, Detering (2013) lists the features that were set out by Jenkins, these are: the consonants of native-speaker English except [θ] and [ð]; aspiration on initial voiceless plosives; initial and medial consonant clusters; vowel length distinctions; the quality of the nurse vowel; the placement of the intonational nucleus. Detering (2013) concludes with the thought that ELF speakers are focused on intelligibility and that it is important to determine which features enhance it and which are likely to cause misunderstandings.

In ELF research it has been discussed whether speech community is a concept that can be used about ELF speakers, the concept 'community of practice' has been proposed as a replacement. Ehrenreich (2017) defines a community of practice as "a group of people who regularly interact with each other by means of a shared communicative repertoire in order to accomplish a common task". Ehrenreich (2017) argues that the concept is, however, not suitable to replace the concept of a speech community, as communities of practice "generally describes smaller and more cohesive group configurations" (Ehrenreich, 2017). Nonetheless, Ehrenreich (2017) writes that the concept of a community of practice can be used as an analytical tool, especially when researching the use of ELF in group-based social contexts.

Furthermore, Ehrenreich (2017) examines the three critical dimensions, proposed by Wegner. These dimensions specify what a community of practice is, in order to differentiate it from other communities – either non-practice-based ones or non-community forming types of practices (Ehrenreich, 2017). The three dimensions are: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. Mutual engagement is about the members interacting on a regular basis in order for the group to be coherent and while the primary channel for this is face-to-face interaction, computer mediated communication complements it (Ehrenreich, 2017). The joint enterprise of the group refers to "the goal or purpose that motivates the participants' interrelated actions, as "their negotiated response to their situation"" (Ehrenreich, 2017). Lastly, the shared

repertoire is developed to negotiate meaning among the members of the community of practice, Wegner explained that the repertoire includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, etc. (as cited in Ehrenreich, 2017). Ehrenreich (2017) writes further that a group is either a community of practice, or not, furthermore, the groups that do not fit Wegner's three dimensions cannot be transformed into a community of practice for research purposes.

As presented by the works that I looked at, it is argued by ELF researchers that there is no single variety that exists in ELF communication, neither is it likely that one will emerge on its own. However, there are core elements that contribute to intelligibility, these elements have been proposed by Jenkins and additionally, there are other researchers that agree that while there is no single variety, there are common features. The concept of a community of practice is less of a replacement to the concept of a speech community and more of an analytical tool, however communities of practice are important as it coincides with the notion that there is no single variety of ELF, therefore looking at a speech community or community of speakers would be difficult.

2.2 Video Game studies

Researchers have looked at video games from different perspectives and have looked at how video games can be a source of motivation for people to learn language (Rudis & Postic, 2018), as well as how it is a place and an opportunity to learn language. Other studies have also looked at language that has been created for and by the online community, like Leet speak, or 1337 5p34k, (Blashki & Nichol, 2005; Perea et al., 2008). However, the research that will be most relevant in this paper and that I will be focusing on is research about the communication between players.

In his research, Manninen (2003) examines all of the interaction forms that are available to players in multiplayer games and discusses his findings through the framework of the Communicative Action Theory. Manninen (2003) categorizes the interaction forms into 12 main categories: avatar appearance, facial expressions, kinesics, occulesics, autonomous /AI, non-verbal audio, language-based communication, spatial behaviour, physical contact, environmental details, chronemics and olfactics. Manninen (2003) states that his model's main benefit is to provide a "loose framework for categorizing the sub-concepts related to interaction forms in multiplayer games." Although Manninen (2003) does not propose a way to solve the low in-game support for communication forms, he concludes that a combination of interaction forms would "enhance the overall interaction and further increase the communicative,

collaborative and constructive aspects of multiplayer games." (Manninen, 2003, Conclusion, para. 4).

Another research about interaction between players was conducted by Wright, et al. (2002), in which they studied the interactions between players in a game called Counter Strike. The interactions from their findings were categorized into 5 categories: Creative game talk, game conflict talk, insult/distancing talk, performance talk and game technical/external talk. The interactions gathered by Wright, et al. (2002) cover strategic and technical discussions to conversations about things outside of the game, like cultural references. An important note in the research is that the categorization was done for illustrative purposes, and that the types of talk were difficult to distinguish as they overlapped (Wright, et. al., 2002). Further into their analysis of the interactions, Wright, et. al. (2002), chose to focus on the creative game talk and looked at how names that players choose, both contribute to creating a humorous environment amongst players, as well as how the names can communicate information about a player's status, interests, gender, age, and sexuality. Additionally, Wright, et al. (2002) looked at how jokes and irony are used to defuse tense situations that are caused by mistakes made during the game and misunderstandings. The conclusion the researchers came to was that there is a complex social world, full of rules and conventions that appear invisible to outsiders and sometimes even to those who are new to the world (Wright, et al., 2002).

In addition to research about purely English-based communication in games, there has been research about how there are situations where all the players speak the same language (other than English), where said players will still use English in their communication. Sunde (2016) looked at how players speaking Norwegian still use specific game jargon in English. The game that is talked about in this study is Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) and the participants in this research explain that the terms they use in English are specific to CS:GO (Sunde, 2016). The participants explain it further by saying that these specific terms have been integrated in the Norwegian player base, which is why it is natural for them to use and undertaking the process of translating them would be unnecessary and would hinder their communication (Sunde, 2016). In addition, Sunde (2016) explains that the participants expressed that using these terms also adds to the atmosphere in the team. Sunde (2016) concludes with the fact that aside the practicality of it, the use of English can be seen as symbolical and has to do with identifying with the culture.

3. Methodology

The research question of this paper is whether there are differences between ELF and English used in gaming. To be able to attempt to answer that question, I needed examples of how English is used in gaming, to then be able to see if any of the trends and theories from ELF could be applied. For that purpose, I need qualitative data, which was gathered with an online questionnaire, created with Nettskjema. The reason I chose an online questionnaire to gather my data is that it is the best way to reach as many people in the CS:GO community, and get as many examples as possible, which I can then use to analyse and compare with ELF. However, with an online questionnaire, where I do not select who answers the questions, there is a risk of getting answers that are not serious and participants who would attempt to tamper with my results. The questionnaire was posted in a reddit forum r/Global Offensive and was open for answers for 7 days, during which 96 responses were collected.

3.1 Questionnaire design

The aim of the questionnaire was to gather examples of phrases players use to communicate in CS:GO, as well as getting some opinions from them on how they communicate and their reasonings. Therefore, this questionnaire consists of multiple-choice questions, Likert scale questions and open-ended questions (cf. appendix 1). The questionnaire is split into four sections.

The first section is to establish how much CS:GO the participants play and how often as well as how they communicate. The first two questions ask how many hours of CS:GO the participant has played and how often they play the game. The next questions asks whether the participant plays with a premade team, if answered with a yes, they will be asked to pick where they communicate with their team. If the participant answers no, they will move on to the next question, which asks whether they communicate when they play with a non-premade team. If the participants answers yes, they will once again pick where they communicate, if they answer with a no, they will move on to the next section. When asking about premade and non-premade teams, what is meant is that a premade team is where the team is already matchmaking together, while a non-premade team will be a team that is made by matchmaking.

The second section is where the participant writes the phrases they use in different situations in the game. The situations listed are: before the round, when changing positions, when they are defending, when attacking, and general information about the enemy team.

This part is split into two, to separate between phrases used when using voice chat and when using text chat.

The next section separates the native English speakers and non-native English speakers. In this section non-native speaker answers two questions with a Likert scale, where they evaluate their knowledge of English, from fluent to not fluent. There is a separate question for spoken English and written English. The last question in this section is about where the participant learnt English, where several options are listed with the participant being able to pick multiple options as well as listing the percentage of how much English they think they learned.

The last section is where the participant evaluates how difficult it was learning the phrases they use. The participant will choose between very easy, easy, hard, and difficult and based on they answer they will get another question. If the participant chooses very easy or easy, they will get a multichoice question with a list of reasons that can explain why they found the phrases easy to learn, as well as an option to write other reasons. Similarly, if the participant chooses that it was hard or difficult, they will get a multichoice question with a different list of reasons and an option to write in other reasons.

3.2 Participants

As I already explained, the questionnaire was posted in a public online forum and therefore anyone who wanted to, could participate. This is because I did not want to select out a specific group of participants, as the age and gender is not relevant to my inquiry, and I am not differentiating between them. In other words, this survey was conducted by voluntary response sampling, which is a random sampling technique. No personal data was collected with the questionnaire. However, the participants were asked whether English is their mother tongue. This is relevant to the study, as I am also looking at whether the presumable simplicity and lack of grammar contributes to non-native English speakers, specifically those with limited English knowledge, contributed to them learning the phrases that are used in the game, as well as whether it helps them communicate with their teammates.

3.3 Methodological weaknesses and limitations

When reviewing the answers, I found that I made a mistake when making the questionnaire. Unlike some questions, that are meant to be visible only if the participant chose a specific answer, the question about where the participant learnt English was visible to

everyone. The section where native English speakers and non-native English speakers is designed in this way. If the participant chooses that they are a native speaker, they will move on to the next section, as no other questions were supposed to be visible for them in this section. However, because of my oversight, the before mentioned questioned was visible to native English speakers as well.

Another thing that I realized when reviewing the answers is that a lot of participants were confused in the open-ended questions section, as I did not specify text chat and voice chat. This led to a lot of participants writing their answers for voice chat in the text chat question and upon realizing the mistake, participants wrote in the voice chat question that they had mixed up their answers. This could have been avoided if I had specified 'text' chat, instead of writing 'chat' and 'voice chat'. One of the participants wrote in the voice chat section that "[they] don't use voice", in this case, having to answer these questions regardless is a case of bad questionnaire design. Because there were participants that do not use either text chat or voice chat at all, I should have made these questions visible to only participants who, earlier in the questionnaire, chose that they communicate via text chat or voice chat.

An important thing to note is that the majority of participants valued themselves as either mostly fluent or fluent in English, however this does not represent the entire player base. There are certainly players who, both, do not speak or understand English at all, as well as players who have very low English proficiency, my research fails to represent this part of the CS:GO player base, which is why it is important to note that the findings of this research do not reflect the phrases used by players who do not speak English, as well as do not include opinions on how difficult it was to learn the phrases from players with low English proficiency.

4. Results

In this chapter I will look at what results and answers I got from the online questionnaire, however, the results discussed in this chapter do not include all of the questions from the questionnaire. Some questions were left out in the final analysis of the results, as I realized they were not as relevant as I thought when I designed the questionnaire. The questions that are omitted from this chapter is the question about where the participants learnt English, as well as questions about how much CS:GO participants have played and how often they play it. Furthermore, not all of the answers from the open-ended questions could be listed and discussed here, for more details about individual answers in the open-ended questions section, see appendix 2.

4.1 Participants' communication with teams

Figure 4.1 shows that out of the 96 participants, 56 participants play with a premade team, while 94 participants communicate with their team even if the team is not pre-made. In figure 4.2 shows how participants communicate with their premade team, in this figure we see that out of the 56 participants who play with a premade team, the majority communicate with their team through only Discord. Additionally, there are only 7 participants that do not use Discord at all, using either only in-game text and voice chat or other. Discord is a popular platform for messaging, and audio and video calls, in either private chats or larger groups called servers. There were 13 participants in total who selected 'other', all of these 13 participants listed Teamspeak as the platform they use for communicating. Teamspeak is like Discord, a platform used for audio calls only. From figure 4.2 we can see that, when playing with a premade team, text chat is rarely used, and when it is used, it is used in combination with either in-game voice chat or a different option for voice communication.

Figure 4.2 shows how participants communicate with their non-premade team. Out of the 94 participants that do communicate when playing with a non-premade team, which is seen in figure 4.1, the majority uses only in-game voice chat. While in-game text chat is used more when playing with a non-premade team, only 2 participants list that it is the only form of communication they use, while the other 36 participants use text chat in combination with the in-game voice chat or other. The 4 participants that marked 'other' in this question listed Discord and Teamspeak, meaning that they will use Discord or Teamspeak combined with in-game voice or text chat to communicate when they are playing with a partially premade team. The fourth participant in 'other' listed pinging as another way of communicating with their team. The main take-away from figures 4.1 and 4.2 is that the majority of the participants use voice chat, either in-game or a third-party app, with only 1 participant saying they do not use a third-party app for communication, and 2 participants not using voice chat when playing with a non-premade team.

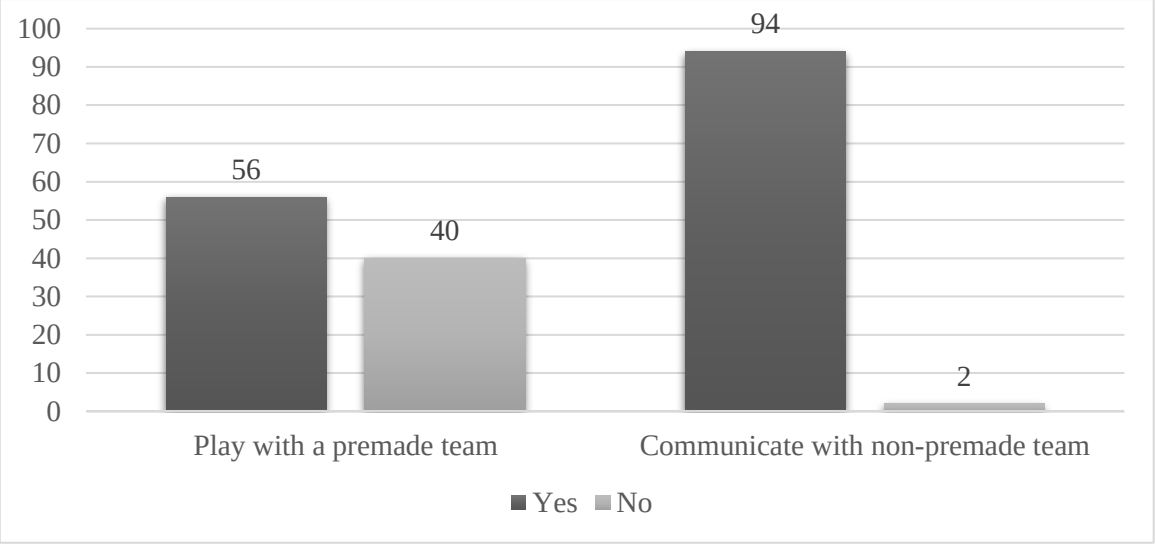

Figure 4.1: How many participants play with a premade team and how many participants communicate with a non-premade team

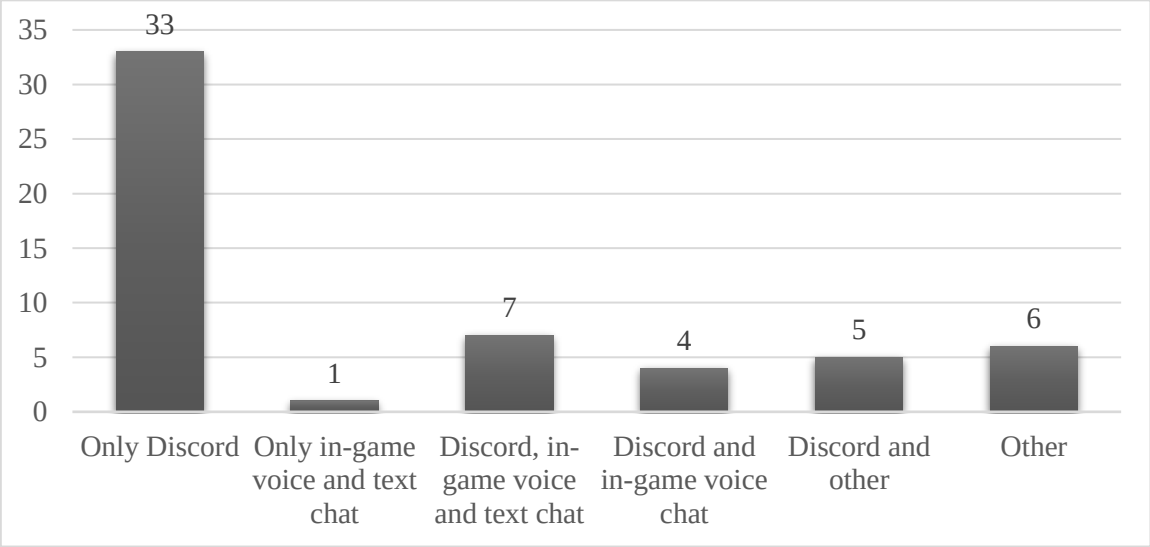

Figure 4.2: How do participants communicate with their premade team.

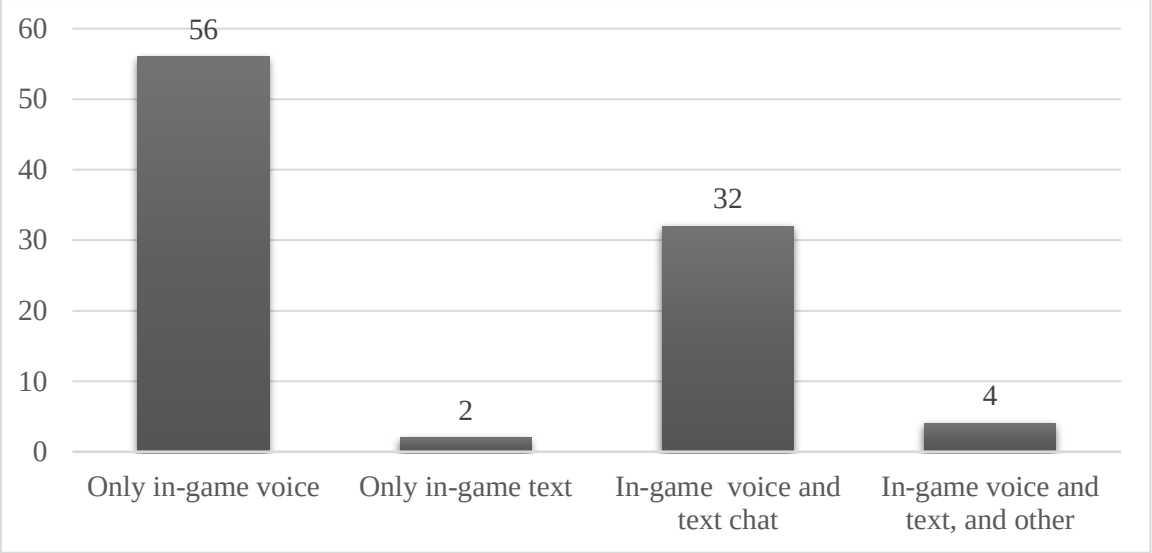

Figure 4.3: How do participants communicate with their non-premade team

4.2 Native English speakers and non-native English speakers

Figure 4.4 shows that most participants are non-native English speakers, additionally, as figure 4.5 shows, the majority of non-native English speakers, identify as almost fluent or fluent. The results of this section, especially separating native English speakers and non-native English speakers is beneficial when looking at the questions in the next sections, which deal with how difficult participants found learning the phrases was. Additionally, figure 4.5 shows that there were no participants that are not fluent in either spoken or written English, additionally there were few participants that chose almost not fluent. These results show, as discussed in the methodology chapter, that my data does not cover the part of the player base that is not fluent in English.

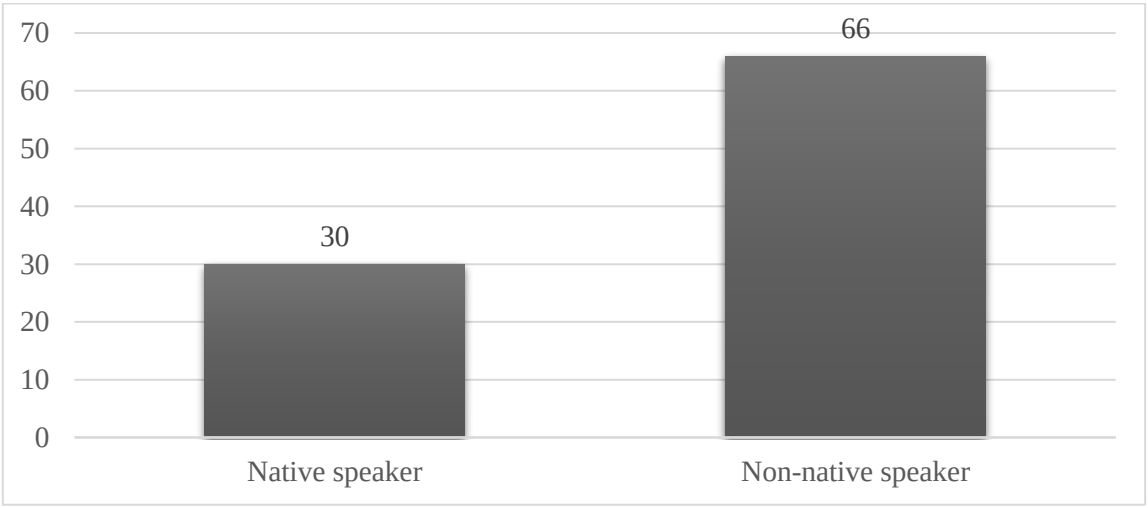

Figure 4.4: Number of native English speakers and non-native English speakers

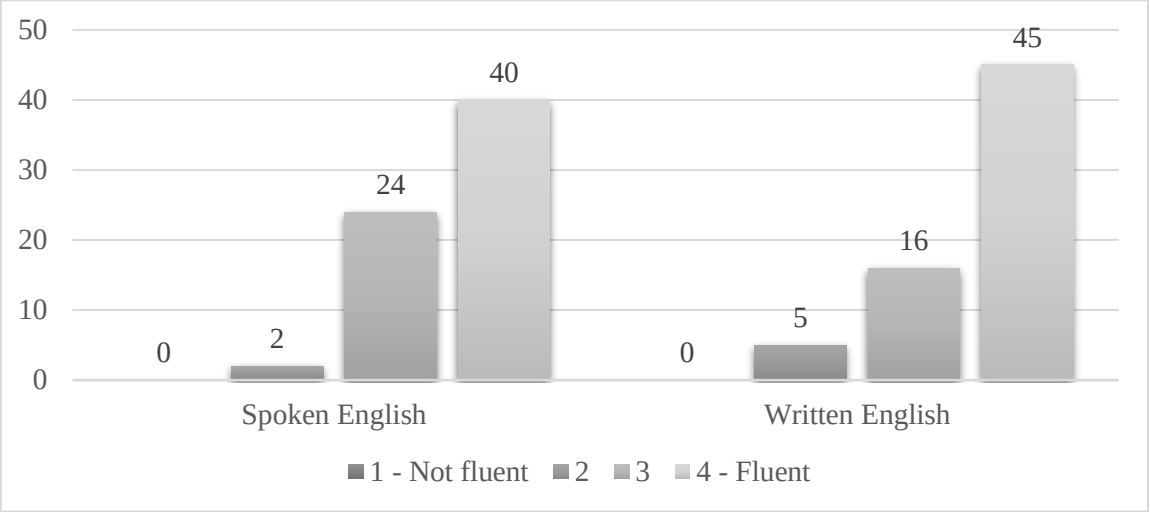

Figure 4.5: Non-native English speakers' opinions on how fluent they are in English

4.3 How difficult was it to learn the CS:GO phrases?

When looking at whether the participants think learning phrases was difficult figure 4.6 shows that most of both, native speakers and non-native speakers found learning the phrases used in CS:GO either very easy or easy, with only 3 native English speakers and 3 non-native English speakers finding it hard to learn the phrases. Figure 4.6 shows that whether the participant is a native English speaker or not does not have an impact on how difficult it will be to learn the CS:GO phrases.

Figure 4.7 shows the reasons why participants think they found learning phrases easy, listing simple, short phrases as the main reason. One of the four participants that listed other reasons for finding phrases easy to learn, wrote that it is easy because it is functional and is driven by what information is useful. Figure 4.8, however, shows that the main reason participants found learning the phrase difficult was the fact that they were too specific to the game. A participant specified that "lots of general between fps game phrases were easy to learn. Phrasing and terms specific to CS maps and economy were far harder", which is highly likely the case for most games that have unique aspects and therefore, unique terms.

Participants, who chose 'other' also highlight that there are some callouts that are dedicated to professional players, which presents a challenge to players who are not familiar with what is happening in e-sports. Additionally, a participant said that the callouts that refer to something on the map, do not change when the map changes, making it so new players might be confused when the callout does not exist on the map anymore, but is still being

used. The data shows that the reason participants said that they found learning phrases to be easy was mainly related to the simplicity of the language, however when participants stated that they found learning the phrases to be difficult, it was because the phrases were too specific to the game or there were completely new to the language used in gaming.

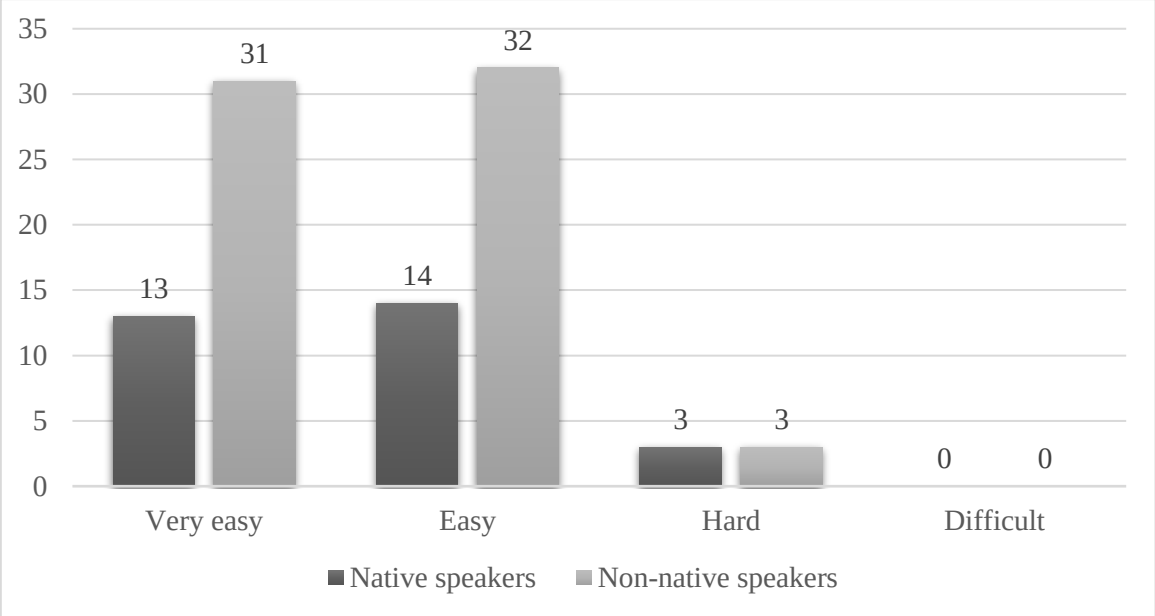

Figure 4.6: How difficult did the participants find learning CS:GO phrases was.

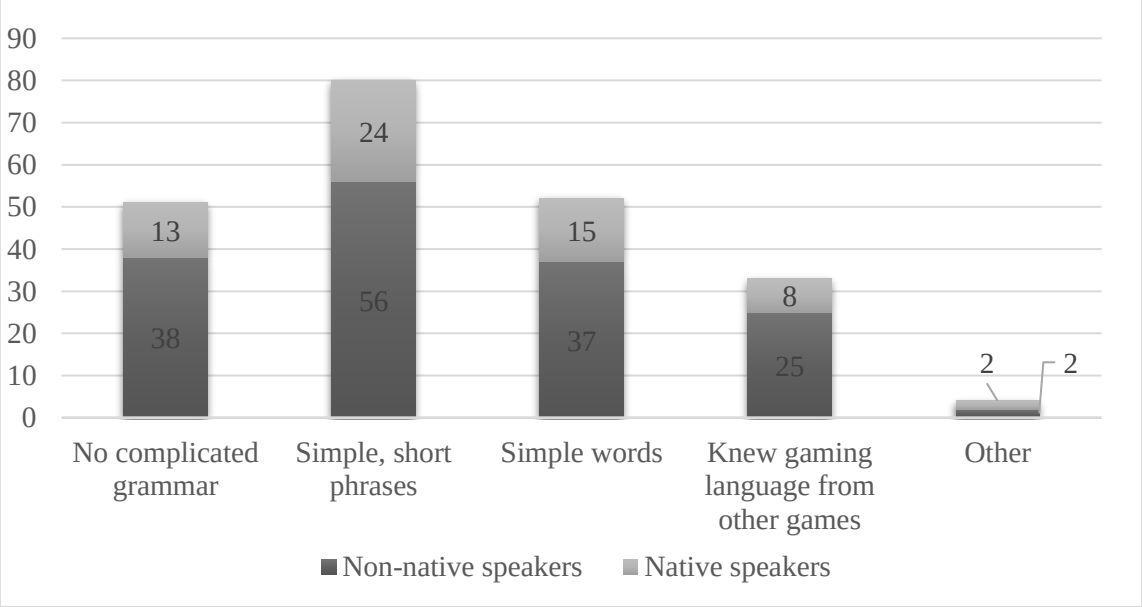

Figure 4.7: Reasons why participants found CS:GO phrases to be easy to learn. Native English speakers and non-native English speakers are separated.

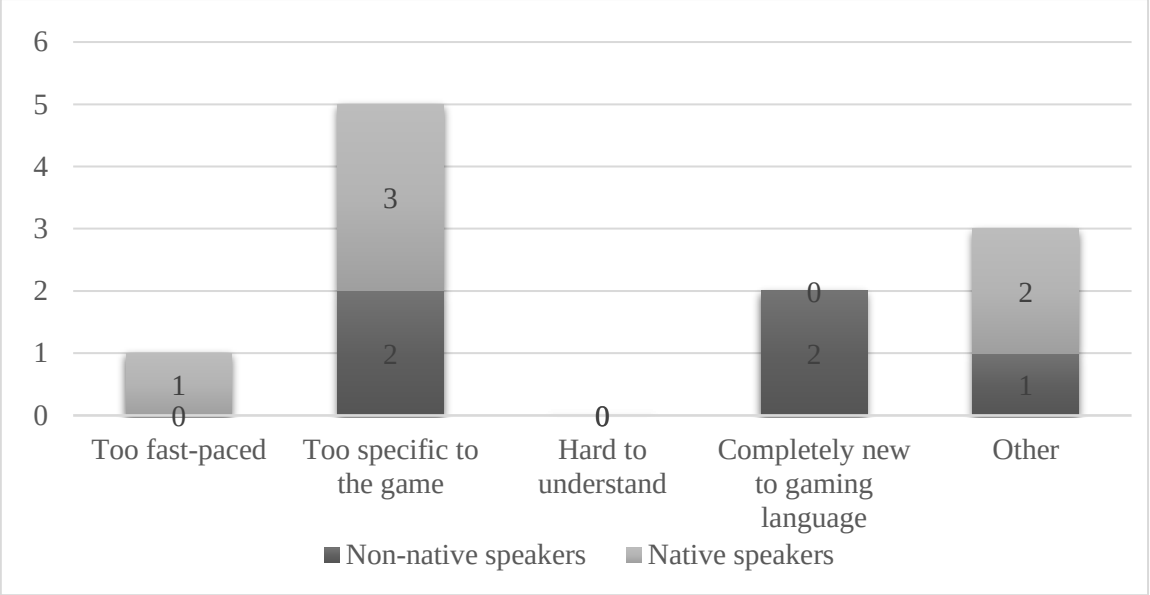

Figure 4.8: Reasons why participants found CS:GO phrases to be hard to learn. Native English speakers and non-native English speakers are separated.

4.3 Open-ended questions

The first question deals with phrases and callouts that participants will use when changing positions. The most common phrases listed by participants are “rotating to X”; “going to X”; and “X”. These phrases are used to communicate to their team that they are moving from one point on the map to another and are usually accompanied by the name for the site or position they are moving in, in the case of the last example, a player would write or only the location they were moving to. The X stands for the location on the map, like A or B, an example of how the phrases would be used is: “rotating to B” or “going B”.

The second question is when the participant is attacking, where the most common phrases are “pushing” “going X” and “rush X”, as well as the phrases in the previous question, these will often be accompanied by the position they are talking about. Other information that is communicated by participants is the number of enemies that they spotted, the damage they did to enemies and the utilities they used (like grenades, flash bangs, etc.).

The third question asks for phrases and callouts when the participant is defending, where the most common phrases listed are “holding X” “watching X” and number of enemies spotted and their position. Phrases about the use of utilities are also mentioned a lot, these are phrases like “flashing”, “smoking” and “mollying”, as well as calling out the utilities that the enemies have used.

The fourth question asks participants to list phrases they use when communicating information about enemies, the information that they communicate is how many enemies are in a certain location, the health points (HP) of enemies, the damage the participant has done and the weapon the enemy has. “Y in X” is the most common phrase used to communicate where the enemy is, Y being how many enemies there are and X being the location on the map, for example “3 in B”. Examples for communicating HP and damage are: low, tagged, dinked, hit for Z or minus Z, where Z stands for the damage dealt in number.

The last question is about the phrases used before the round starts. Several participants wrote that this is the time to strategize, either about the weapons they are going to buy, or where they are going to go and how they are going to play next round. Phrases such as “eco”, “full buy” and “force” are used when discussing the weapons that they are going to buy, either buying as little as possible and saving their money or forcing to buy weapons. When discussing their plan for the round participants use phrases such as “going to X” “rush X” and “X” where X is a position on the map, such as B or A.

Although the questionnaire is split into two section, text chat and voice chat, the results did not show any major differences in the terms and phrases that they use. The phrases that were mentioned the most in the text chat section, were also the phrases that were listed by most participants in the voice chat section.

5. Discussion

5.1 Discussion of the results

From the open-ended questions and the comments from some of the participants we see that CS:GO players communicate with simple phrases, that often only consist of one word. Because of that little grammar is present in the communication. This is especially true for text chat, as there is little time to write complete sentences and it is more likely that players would only write “A” or “push B”. When it comes to voice chat, I assume that there will be more instances of complete sentences and more grammar when players are in situations with more time, like before the round starts, although, most of the time the short phrases will be used and in the midst of a round there will still be little time to say more than just “pushing”

In addition to participants writing that they do not use text chat because it is too slow to read and there is no time to write in text chat, participants mentioned in the comments at the end of the questionnaire, that the game is fast-paced, and things move quickly and therefore, there is not much time to convey important information. In a comment at the end of the

questionnaire a participant wrote that “CS:GO communication is all about efficiency and easy-to-say words that everyone can understand. Making it efficient and knowing when to speak is probably the hardest thing, as communication can also directly block in-game sounds.”, the participant points out another aspect that confines the communication in CS:GO, disturbing other players. As important as sharing information with your team may be, it is even more important that the other players are able to hear what is going on around them so that they may react if an enemy is near, unnecessary communication may interrupt that, causing a loss for the team.

Although I expected that more non-native English speakers would find learning the CS:GO phrases hard, the majority of participants found learning the phrases either very easy or easy (c.f. figure 4.5), although, as I thought, the simplicity of the language, more specifically the simple phrases are the reason learning the language is not as challenging. Furthermore, the participants who found learning the phrases hard were equally non-native English speakers as well as native English speakers. It is, however, worth mentioning that the majority of participants rated themselves as being fluent, therefore the findings cannot be generalized to the whole CS:GO community, as my data does not include people who are not fluent in English.

The interactions that I have gathered with my questionnaire fall into Manninen’s (2003) language-based communication category. Furthermore, in the Communicative Action Theory, this type of communication would be defined as a strategic action (Manninen, 2003). Wright, et al. (2002), who focused on the creative game talk in their research, would roughly categorize my data as performance talk, which was also one of the most frequent type of communications they saw.

5.2 ELF and CS:GO language

When comparing ELF and CS:GO language, the first thing that should be looked at is the simplicity or complexity of the language that is used and how they can be compared on that level. What we see is that this is the first major difference between the two. Cogo (2011) wrote that “ELF is not about simplification, as speakers do not avoid idiomatic language, instead they use expressions they are more familiar with or create idiomatic expressions that are more appropriate and understandable in their contexts.” (p. 103). While we read that ELF is not about simplifying the English language, and there are examples of complexness and

richness in ELF, the data that I have looked at shows that it is exactly the opposite in CS:GO communication, where the simpler the phrase is, the better.

On another note, there is the grammar that is used in the communication. As the data discussed previously shows, the phrases and communication in CS:GO have little to no grammar, and very simple grammar when it is present, this being one of the key requirements for the communication to be as efficient as it needs to be. When it comes to grammar in ELF communication, Meierkord (2012) writes that "individuals engaging in lingua franca communication in English use fewer lexical items and grammatical structures than are potentially available in (a) the standard varieties and (b) the local indigenized varieties associated with their home countries" (p. 1947). This presents us with the first potential similarity between the two, as it appears that there is simple grammar in ELF communication and little use of it, like in CS:GO.

This, however, appears not to be the case as Meierkord also writes that "they utilize verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal means available to successfully make up for any restrictions in terms of vocabulary, grammar or pragmatic competences." (2012, p. 1947). This presents us with the real reason the grammar used in ELF is simple, the lack of knowledge makes it so, however, the speakers will use other strategies to compensate, meanwhile, the lack of grammar in CS:GO is a conscious decision, made to make the communication more efficient. Additionally, there are participants that listed simple grammar as a reason they learnt the phrases with ease, however, that is a beneficial side effect and is not the reason for lack of complex grammar structures.

As we can see from the data, and as I have discussed, the phrases used in CS:GO communication are simple phrases, often with no grammar and contain simple words. On the other hand, as shown by the research looked at, although the speakers often use less complex grammar structures, the fact remains that ELF communication is not about simplification. Additionally, the use of simple grammar structure is due to lack of knowledge, while in CS:GO communication the goal is simplified language with no grammar, with the reason being making the language as simple as possible so that the communication can be as efficient as possible. Although, when looking at UNESCO's 1953 definition of ELF: "a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them" (As cited in Meierkord, 2012, p. 2), one could say that CS:GO communication is an example of ELF, with the knowledge that the data from my questionnaire provided, we see that this is not the case. In other words, we can conclude that CS:GO communication should not be looked at as an example of ELF communication.

5.3 CS:GO and communities of practice

As mentioned before, a community of practice is defined by Ehrenreich (2017) as “a group of people who regularly interact with each other by means of a shared communicative repertoire in order to accomplish a common task”, by this definition we could say that a team of players who regularly play CS:GO together could be a community of practice. Furthermore, as Ehrenreich (2017) states, the community of practice needs to fit into all three dimensions that were proposed by Wegner to be a community of practice, again if we assume that the group of people we are talking about are a team that regularly plays CS:GO together, they fit the first dimension of mutual engagement. The second dimension, a joint enterprise or a mutual goal could be winning the match or even a round. The third dimension, a shared repertoire is the CS:GO language. Because the group fits all of these dimensions it could be considered a community of practice.

Furthermore, Ehrenreich (2017) points out that communities of practice are small and cohesive groups, which is why the concept is not considered a replacement of a speech community and is merely used as an analytical tool in ELF research. However, if we consider a single team a community of practice, the concept would be fitting, as a CS:GO team only consists of 5 people and could therefore be considered a small and cohesive group. On the other hand, as the language is shared amongst all players of CS:GO, the same should be applied to CS:GO language as it is to ELF, which is that the term communities of practice can be used as an analytical tool and cannot include the whole community.

5.4 Common cores

Here we find another similarity between CS:GO language and ELF, both have common features, however there is no common variety or common language. In the theoretical background I looked at two types of common cores that are discussed in ELF research. The first is the misconception that there is a common variety in ELF communication, which Meierkord (2012), Jenkins (2007) and Cogo (2011) write about. The other is common features that are needed for international intelligibility, which Detering (2013) writes about. Meierkord, Jenkins (2007), and Cogo (2011) dismiss the notion of a common variety in ELF, however Jenkins (2007) also writes about common processes that Seidhoifler has written about. The research that I looked at suggests that, while there is no common variety of English in ELF communication or that a common variety will eventually develop amongst

the speakers, there are common features that can be found in several English varieties used in ELF.

While there is no definitive gaming language, just as there is no common variety in ELF communication, there are phrases that overlap gaming languages. Games that have a similar concept to CS:GO will use similar phrases, phrases like general phrases for moving around the map and information about enemy health and damage dealt would be used in both games. On the other hand, if we were to compare CS:GO to a game that is very different in concept, like for example a battle royale, where it is last man or last team standing, with several teams in a single match. What we would see is that, while some general positioning phrases like "rotating" would remain, phrases that are specific to the CS:GO economy system or position callouts would not be seen in the other game. Additionally, there would be phrases for situations in those types of games that one would have no use for in CS:GO. Additionally, there are callouts that will be unique for CS:GO, like specific names of weapons, or callouts based on map positions that the community has developed, which will be the case for every single game.

If we look at gaming language as a language for all video games, we see the same occurrence as in ELF, where, although there are common features, there are examples of variation, making it so that there is no single variety that is used. Although the common features in gaming language and the common features in ELF refer to two very different things, the conclusion remains the same.

6. Conclusion

The questions of this paper were, what CS:GO communication looks like, how can we compare it to ELF and whether the CS:GO communication could be considered an example of ELF. To see what CS:GO communication looks like I gathered data where I asked the participants to give me examples of phrases they would use. These examples showed that the phrases mainly consist of a simple word and is often accompanied by the location that is being talked about. In other words, the data showed that the phrases used by players of CS:GO are simple and short, and contain no complex grammar. The data gathered in this paper, along with the additional comments from the participants make it possible to conclude that CS:GO communication relies on phrases being simple and to the point, to allow the communication to be as fast-paced as the game. As there is often no time for lengthy sentences filled with nuanced information, the examples we see are simple phrases, mostly

consisting of one simple word. Furthermore, while the reason for the grammar in the phrases being simple and most often, there being no grammar used, is mainly efficiency's sake, it also helps with why most participants said that they did not find learning these phrases difficult.

Comparing the phrases and the general findings about CS:GO communication to ELF showed that there are similarities between the two, like the fact that there is no common variety in either ELF communication or communication in video games, and the concept of communities of practice. However, CS:GO communication is fundamentally different from ELF. The major difference being that while ELF communication still has richness and complexness, and is in no way meant to simplify the English language, CS:GO communication relies on that not being the fact. The reason behind examples of simple grammar and less grammar in ELF communication is the lack of knowledge, however in these instances there are strategies that compensate for this. Nevertheless, in CS:GO, as I have said, the use of simple phrases is what makes the communication possible and efficient. The different reasons for using the language in the way it is used in CS:GO and ELF is why we can say that CS:GO communication should not be looked at as an example of ELF, for while they are using English to communicate with people with different mother tongues, the language in CS:GO is used too differently to be compared with ELF.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, the findings of this paper do not reflect the whole player base, as the data gathered does not include those who do not speak English and those who would say that they are not fluent in English. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude that learning these phrases is not difficult to learn in general, as a crucial part of the player base have not given their opinion on the matter.

Further research on this topic could focus on exactly the limitation of my study, which is that my study does not incorporate players who are not fluent in English. Future studies could look at the experience of players who communicate in other languages or players who use English to communicate in the game and are not fluent in English. Similarly, like the research done by Sunde (2016) it could be looked at whether it is just CS:GO specific phrases that are used even when the language spoken is not English, as well as looking at whether words and phrases from other languages are present in communication when the language used is English. Additionally, further study could look at whether learning phrases used in gaming language has helped people, who were previously not fluent in English, become more fluent.

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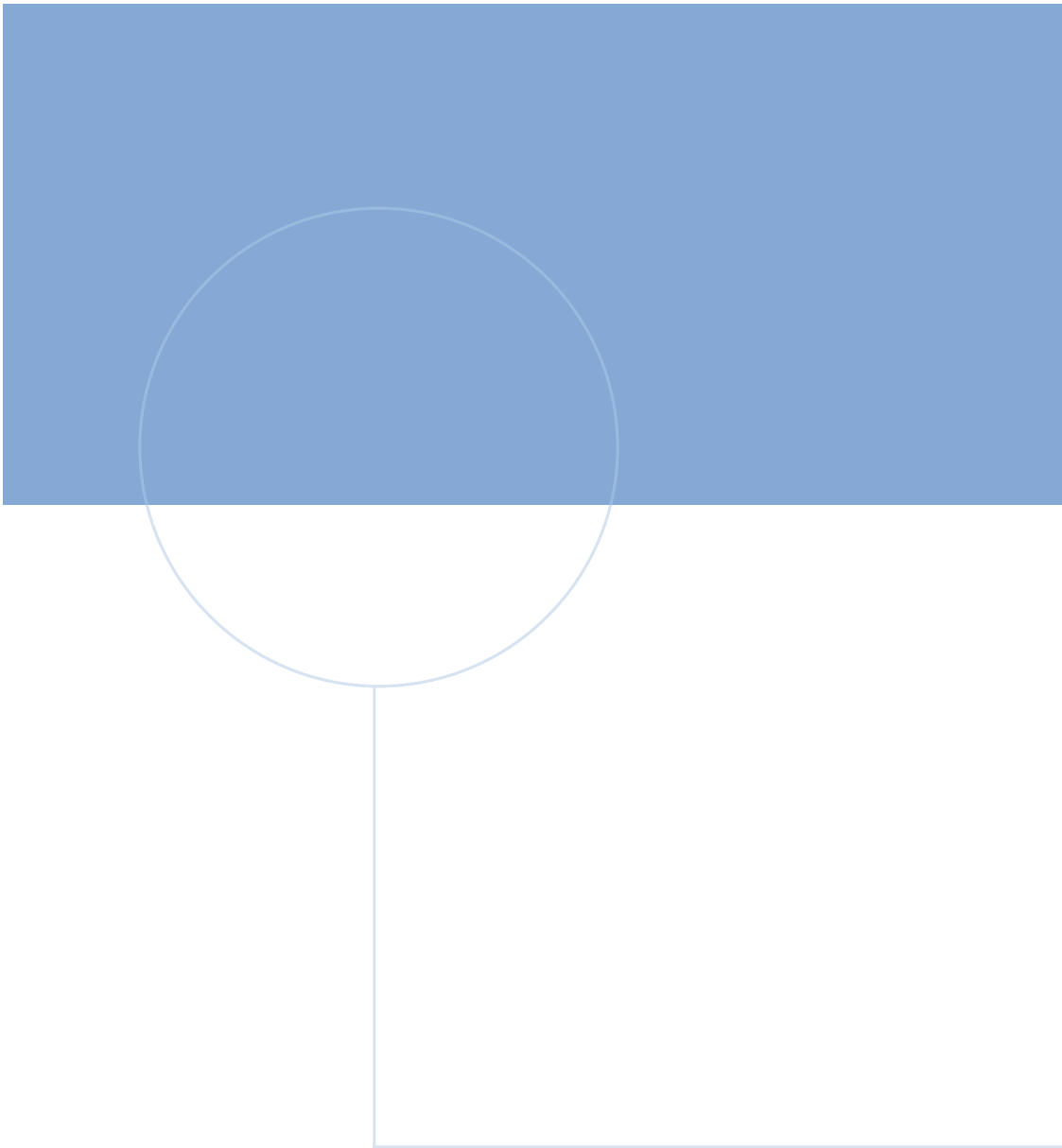

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