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Are you talking to me? An Analysis of Streamed Video Game Matches from an Interactional Point of View

Video games and streams have gained importance in today's digital world and we believe that analyzing their discourse is crucial given the high proportion of society that consumes these products. We have decided to study the interactional mechanisms that exist within matches of League of Legends that are streamed on YouTube and Twitch. These are the units for our analysis. Specifically, we ask ourselves: How is interaction achieved in streamed matches of League of Legends and what conversational features do they exhibit? The concepts we will apply include sequential structure, speech event, frame, deixis, footing, and intertextuality, audience, multimodal communication, among others.

The streamed game, League of Legends, is a MOBA[1] video game in which a team wins by pushing through to the enemy base and destroying their "nexus." In this scenario, at least two speech events can be identified as occurring simultaneously.

The primary speech event is the League of Legends match, which presents multiple modes of interaction. The norms of interaction are influenced by the game's competitive nature, the roles of the participants, and the specific rules of the game. Players interact with one another through:

- A chat box: It has two channels, one for team communication and another for both teammates and members of the opposite team.
- A voice channel: Players can communicate orally, similar to a phone call. This is an optional channel, as many players choose not to join in.
- Signals: Players interact through "pings" and "emotes," which are sent by pressing a button, allowing rapid communication.

Simultaneously, the second speech event is the streaming of the match. The interactants are the streamer, who plays the game, and the viewers, who watch the match, listen to the streamers' conversation, and read the players' chat. On the streaming platform, viewers leave messages in a chat, and the streamer may read these messages while playing or hear them read aloud by a text-to-speech converter, to which they then respond orally.

Among our findings, we've discovered that, within the streaming speech event, there are different frames. For example, in one of the videos of our samples, the streamer "Agustinita" shifts from narrating the gameplay to the viewers (the "in-game frame") to chatting with the audience about non-game-related topics (the "social frame"). She first quotes a message and then replies to it orally:

—"*No te subiste la R*[2]"(Quote) Bueno, igual no la iba a usar ahora, así que *chill*, boludo. Na, na, na. **Soy una mala de mierda. Todos los días me levanto y estoy condenada a ser la persona más mala de League of Legends, ¿entienden? O sea**.

1. Multiplayer online battle arena
2. The "R" is a very important and powerful skill in the game.

Similarly, within the video game match, the frame could shift from intense strategy discussions to casual in-game banter.

Another finding indicates the use of deictics where the deictic center is situated in the virtual space of the game rather than on a shared physical level, which sometimes leads to confusion among the players. In one of the examples, the streamers are guiding each other through deictics, as follows:

—**Vente**, **vente** conmigo. (Ibai)
—¡**Vente**, **vente aquí**! (Rubius)
—¡**Vente aquí**!
—¡**Aquí** no!¡Aquí!¡Por **ahí** no!
—¡**Aquí**!¿**Aquí dónde**?
—¡**Aquí**!¡Estoy **aquí**!
—¡**Aquí**! Sí, lo mato yo. ¡Dale!
—¡Tú pegale!
—Ojo, ojo, ojo, ojo.
—*Flashea*, ¡joder! Te **vas**, te **vas**.
—Salgo cagando hostias.
—Te **vas**, te **vas**, te **vas**.
—Me piro con dos cojones.
—Vale, vale, vale, algo es algo, joder.

Lastly, we've found that streamers signal who they are addressing (the streaming audience or their fellow teammates) through different means, such as different deictic expressions, altering their prosody (e.g., a lighter or more animated voice), or changing their body posture (e.g., turning towards the camera).

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