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Rhet 105
February 28, 2006
Inside Language

After spending many hours, at many different times, from 3:00 in the afternoon to 3:00 the morning, I feel that I am no longer an outsider to this gaming society that was once a subculture to me. By now I have even participated in a few games, and while of course they do not let me play in the ranked games, I too have become familiar with Halo and its corresponding language. At the beginning of this project I would not have known the difference between playing in campaign, training, and a ranked game. After many hours of observation, and also an interview with two very intense gamers I now have a tight grasp on most of the common language associated with gaming, especially Halo and Halo 2.

From observation I have learned the obscenities the Halo players often yell at times are hysterical and meant to be, but also out of complete frustration. I have learned that although they may say there will be serious gaming going out at a certain time, the gaming consists of one game and one game only. This one game has taken over a great percentage of their life. I have not only learned, but experienced, that spending time with and around them will start to have an effect on a person. It might be a coincidence, but all of the gamers I observe playing Halo talk about a million miles a minute. When attempting to transcribe the interview I had to rewind the tape numerous amounts of times, as I am sure everyone did, but they talk so unbelievably fast it was a tough task to try to understand them. I have noticed that I have begun to speak more quickly, and especially when I am around them. Yet, this is not the only special aspect of speech these gamers exhibit.

In my specific subculture all the guys say so many phrases twice. This is something I notice in speech, but was brought to my attention even more so when transcribing the interview. They have common phrases coined while playing Halo that cross over into real life situations.

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They term n00bz must be spelled that way in terms of Halo, but in real life is commonly spelled newbs. Obviously this is not an actual word in either situation, but it is common lingo used in both to mean the same. I will further explain the meaning of n00bz, newbs, and newbie, later in the glossary. They informed me of during the interview that while most of the lingo applies to and is known by most all Halo players, there are terms specifically unique to their group. I have also noticed that much of the language they use in gaming they use in regular life also. An example of a term often repeated twice in the room I typically observe is, "I like where your heads at, I like where your heads at." This is a phrase from the movie Wedding Crashers, but this group of guys randomly began saying it twice. This is only one of many things repeated. A simple "alright" will turn into "Alright, alright," or "okay, okay." I have been friends with this group of guys all year, so I have been around them before observing this subculture, but only now after spending even more time, extra time, around them do I find myself beginning to respond to someone saying "okay, okay," rather than just a simple "okay". Sometimes I'll catch myself and laugh about it in disbelief, but other times someone will say "Laura, you're saying everything twice.". I expected that spending this extra time with this group would leave me to understand the entire lingo that I didn't in the beginning, but I am amazed that this time with them has changed the way I speak myself.

Another thing I have learned through not only this interview, but just this observation is how much I can enjoy spending time gaming. Before I would never sit in a room and watch a group of guys gaming because I believed it to be boring and stupid, but throughout this project I have found myself completely entertained and sometimes spending more time observing than necessary. Just last night my friend and I spent an hour walking from one guy's room to the other just to be entertained by watching them game. We decided it is not necessarily the game

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that is entertaining us, but the watching and listening to them play. As I said, the way they talk so fast, yell at one another, yell at the opposing team, who may very well be a 12 year old, and get so frustrated with themselves and just yell in general is at times hilarious. Some of the words and phrases that come out of their mouths can be rather obscene, of course it is nothing we have not all heard before, and nothing most college students do not say themselves. Others can just be extremely hysterical, and so creative and out of left field that I wonder how they ever think to say such a thing. One of the guys is so intense when he plays that he is my favorite to watch. He gets so passionate and so upset if the slightest thing goes wrong. He will be on his headset directing his teammates where to go and telling them he just dropped a bomb on "butthole rock". They have code names for every different place in every different game. From observing I have concluded they do this so that their teammates will understand where or what they are referring to without revealing information to the opposing team.

Finally, after the interview I have learned that while there is Halo lingo every player knows, there is definitely different lingo from person to person. Also, when these gamers refer to Halo I have come to know this automatically means Halo 2. They informed me that once Halo 2 came out there was no need for the original Halo anymore and none of them even have the original with them anymore, or if they do it is in the bottom of the stack. Gaming is in fact as serious as I thought it was to them though. I recall debating about whether or not I would be able to observe gaming for my project due to the fact that the gaming may not occur often enough or fit into my schedule. I know can see I had absolutely no worries. The gaming occurs daily, and when I ask them when they will be gaming I have learned that I can count on a beginning time of 9:00p.m. to last for at least two to three hours, and if it does not that I will pause only to restart later in the night. At this point in time I feel like I have a good understanding and appreciation

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of what means what to these guys, and how the lingo fits into not only the Halo gaming, but also the speech of their, or should I say our, everyday lives.

Glossary of Terms

N00bz: Someone who is new, or an amateur to the game. Also someone who is simply playing like an amateur.

Spawn: Coming back to life after being killed.

Example: In team slayer mode the opposing teams compete to whoever gets 50 kills first. So even once a player dies, they come back to life until one team reaches 50.

Nade: Short for grenade. Can be used as a verb or noun. “Nade ‘em” “Throw a nade.”

Modding: Cheating. People can tamper with their X-Boxes and hardware to cheat.

Lag: Same as computer. Experiencing lag can be detrimental because things can be happening without a player knowing and can end up getting them killed.

Pwn: Dominating or kicking butt against the enemy.