

Gamer Speak: Analyzing Masculine Speech in Gaming Culture

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The video gaming community is often stigmatized as having characteristics of toxic masculinity, such as misogyny, homophobia and a tendency for violent behavior. While it has been well documented that the video gaming community is dominated by male gamers, and that there are many instances of toxicity within the community, does this mean that the speech of the community is overwhelmingly masculine, in the stereotypically hegemonic sense? If not, what kind of masculinity, or femininity, is the typical gamer more likely to perform in their speech? And is there evidence of this speech actively working to reinforce the characteristics of toxic masculinity within the community? The purpose of this paper is to answer these questions, through reviewing previously researched academic articles, and through discourse analysis of three random online discussion boards, analyzing the use of masculine speech features within each discussion. The research portion seeks to identify what aspects of speech qualify as masculine, give context of gamer culture as well as insight into the online gaming community, and identify the role masculinity plays within modern gamer culture. The analysis portion analyses randomly

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selected discussion boards from the gaming community, sharing opinions on video game topics on games such as the Kingdom Hearts franchise, Red Dead Redemption 2 and Cuphead. Through using discourse analysis, excerpts from these discussions are analyzed for any of the aspects of masculinity found within the research section. Lastly, the findings from the analysis are summarized and concluded, and all the questions put forth are answered.

Video gaming culture, since its emergence in the early 80's, has been generally perceived as a male dominated community. The stereotype of the young white male as the typical *Gamer* does have a basis in the reality of the video gaming base. According to a study from the Pew Research Center, about 72% of men from the ages of 18-29 say they often or sometimes play video games, as well as 41% of people asked being white. This outweighs the 49% of women in the same age range who say they often or sometimes play video games (Brown, 2017). From these statistics, it can be concluded that the community of gamers is dominated by men. However, it is not necessarily fair to assume that the majority of gamers are toxically masculine. Games have been criticized for the representation of primarily masculine characters as leads and heroes, while more feminine characters tend to be relegated to the role of scantily clad damsel (Mou, 2009, p.927-928). While this is not particularly unique to the medium of video games, the fear of these kinds of representations impacting younger developing gamers is heightened by the interactive nature of video games.

Through analyzing the discourse between gamers on online discussion boards, qualities of traditionally masculine speech will be identified, and the ways these qualities are being used by those within the discourse. Qualities of traditionally feminine speech acts within the discourse will also be identified, as well as the implications of these speech acts for the video gaming community.

Masculine Speech

Masculine speech is an under-investigated field; by comparison, the amount of research done for feminine speech and the speech of women in general is vast and spans decades. It is understandable for the large amount of research focusing on the feminine aspects of language associated with women, as it has been historically seen as deficient compared to the speech of men. There is also the underlying belief in western society that masculine is the standard, the default form of speaking, while feminine speech is studied in how it differs (Connell, 2005, pg. 68). It is constructive to keep in mind that the traditional concept of masculinity within western society is a flawed one and should be looked at from a perspective removed from what society has built for us. There are multiple kinds of masculinities that masculine speakers construct for the sake of gender identity. As Connell writes, "Masculinities are configurations of practice that are constructed, unfold and change through time." (Connell, 2005, pg. 77) Masculinities can be indexed in a variety of ways by the person choosing to do so, and can be categorized into three categories of masculinity.

First, hegemonic masculinity, masculinity in terms of power, was the standard for studying masculinity for years, and to an extent is still standard in modern research. However, focusing on power structure as it relates to sex is an issue, and serves to reinforce older stereotypes of male dominance of female speakers, and in reality, not many men utilize hegemonic structures in their lives (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, pg.831). Hegemonic masculinity is instead focused as a category of masculine speech, rather than the standard. The goal for dominating power structures within a discourse, either through social standing or physical strength, would fall into this category. This category of masculinity is most likely the kind of masculinity often associated with *Toxic Masculinity*, as it oftentimes works to disenfranchise other genders

or groups of people for the sake of power (Connell & Messerschmidt, pg. 852). Any attempt to enact this type of speech (assertions of power in any capacity for the sake of higher standing within a discussion) would thus be indexed as “Hegemonic” masculinity.

Second, subordinated masculinities are any form of masculinity that is dominated by the hegemonic varieties. This applies to homosexual masculinity mainly, but can be used to reference any masculinity that does not fall under hegemonic. In the subordinated masculinity, insults are common to mark those subordinated, generally in a weaker or feminine way (ex. Sissy, wuss, nerd, chicken, wimp, etc.) Those who fall into this type of masculinity tend to be subordinated to the bottom of the power structure, and will be marked as such by those dominating within a discourse (Connell, pg. 78-79).

The third type of masculinity is the complicit masculinity. As stated before, despite the fact that hegemony is a minority in most men, the ideals and general subordination towards women that come with it persist. This in large part is due to the complicity that some men, who do not actively seek to hold power, but are content to ride along with the benefits that accompany their gender holding more power. Those content with the privileges provided by traditional masculinity, that do not see any need to upset the balance would fall within this category of complicity (Connell, pg. 79-80). Speakers who do not assert their own power structure within a discourse and do not find themselves on the subordinated end of a structure would fall within this margin.

These categories house the general dynamic between masculinities, though there are still a variety of masculinities that can be found within each dynamic, and even more beyond just these three categories. Masculinity based on gender is the main focus of this study, but it should be mentioned that masculinities based on other factors, such as race, are practiced as well. Though it can just as easily fall within the previously mentioned categories, in western society,

hegemonic masculinity can act to marginalize these types of masculinities to maintain their own power structures. White-supremacists who marginalize non-white races do so in reinforcing their own status, by lowering the status of others (Connell, pg. 80-81). Though this is not exclusive to race based masculinities, and can be seen with homosexual masculinities as well. How a person uses language in a group will give further insight into which of these categories they fall within.

Gaming Culture and the Community

Video gaming as having a culture is a subject of debate. As argued by Stuart Hall, culture is studied as it relates to the social practices performed by specific groups, as well as ideas shared by that group (as cited in Shaw, 2010, p.405). As a culture that would primarily be focused on the consumption of video games, it is hard to pinpoint what exactly constitutes a member of this kind of culture. Does playing games every day for 12 hours each day make you more of a gamer than someone who only plays the occasional game of Tetris now and then? Are you more of a gamer if you actively participate in the community surrounded around gaming or if you choose to play games on your own without participating in the wider online communities? At the end of the day, it is hard to give an answer to these kinds of questions, and depends on the person you ask.

For the purposes of this study, there will be a focus on those who most likely self-identified as gamers within the gaming community. In this regard, a member of the gaming community can be identified as anyone who actively takes part within discussions based around video games or the industry around games. Though it is stereotypical to classify gamers as purely introverted, antisocial and disassociated from reality, this is not necessarily true for the average gamer. Those who actively play games are just about as likely to be employed with some

form of higher education under their belt than those who are unemployed or seeking employment with just as much or less education (Brown, 2017). The video gaming community is like any other community within modern culture, rather than its own separate culture outside of popular culture (Shaw, 2010). No one is particularly excluded from it or exempt, and anyone can join in of their own accord, as long as they are well versed in gaming enough to keep up with conversations.

There are issues of toxic behaviors within certain gaming sub communities that further delegitimize the whole wider gaming community. Misogyny and sexism seem to be the largest issue associated with most gaming communities, as well as within the industry itself. In the wake of the *GamerGate* controversy of 2014, which began when a female game developer was accused by an ex-boyfriend of sleeping with a games journalist for a positive review of her own game, the perception of the gaming community has worsened considerably. After numerous threats and hate comments were lobbed at women within the gaming industry and community, mainly for their critiques of female representation within gaming, the view of many hardcore gamers as toxically masculine woman haters was given some credence (Todd, 2015, Pg.64-64). *GamerGate* may be a modern example of extremist masculinity within gaming at its worst, but is not the only reason or example of why the gaming community has such a bad perception from the outside.

Masculinity in Gaming Culture

The data does support both the industry and larger gaming communities as being heavily male centric. By extension it would seem that gaming itself is a heavily masculine field, dominated by many of the ideals are associated with masculinity. There is a heavy emphasis on competition in many video games, on amassing more power and status than other players. This is in correlation with the traditional ideal of

hegemonic masculinity; physical and societal power are seen as the main goals for masculine people (Eckert & Mcconnell-Ginet, 2003, p.47-48). That drive to keep playing, to gain a higher score and to make it to the top of a leader board is in service of this very same ideal. To have your status boosted within a gaming community, and recognized by others. It is most likely these common qualities found in video games that reinforces the more toxic sides of masculinity.

Toxic masculinity, the more modern name of hegemonic masculinity, within gaming culture is seen as the prevailing type of masculinity, most likely due in part to the history of video games lacking proper representation. In a 2009 study of gender and racial stereotypes within video games, it was found that out of 19 games surveyed, all leading protagonists were male, 74% were white. None of the female characters found were antagonists, with most being categorized as helpers or needing to be rescue, as well as over half of them being unrealistically thin, and a quarter wearing somewhat revealing clothes (Mou, 2009, pg. 927). These results are further supported by another study that sampled 133 of the top games, and found that 89.5% of primary characters were male, as well as 85.5% of secondary characters being male (Williams, 2009, pg. 824-825).

It is the objectified and delegitimize perception of women and femininity that characterize toxic masculinity. While video games are definitely not the only reason for hegemonic masculinities position within the gaming community, when a majority of video games end of reinforcing these characteristics, there is a potential for influence. What is being represented within the games, the unrealistic perception and role of feminine characters, the role of masculine protagonists as the strong, powerful hero, when portrayed enough, can skew the world perception of those playing the games over time (Ivory, 2006, pg. 105). This is especially likely for younger, developing gamers, still developing their gender identity. They could begin to accept that it is

expected for a women to be secondary, for them to be thin and attractive, relying on the strong, young, white masculine protagonist to rescue them (Mou, pg. 929).

Methodology

Despite how antisocial gaming may seem to most on the surface, there are an array of avenues for gamers around the world to have discussions with one another. Popular social media sites aside (ex. Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, etc.) plenty of websites focused on video gaming content provide discussion boards and forums for people to communicate, usually with threads dedicated to a specific game or gaming topic. For the analysis, three discussion threads were pulled to focus on, two from the gaming subreddit on Reddit and one from a forum on the gaming site GameFAQs. These threads were selected randomly, with preference for threads that contained at least 10 or more posts from users, as well as threads specifically aimed at an opinion-based dialogue between the participants rather than simple answers for polls or answers to problems found in a specific game.

From these selected forums, there are plenty of instances of users interacting with one another. As most of these forums are lengthy, with various anonymous users posting, excerpts will be presented from the thread for analysis, focusing on the specific points in a forum where users directly reply to one another. The topics of each forum are opinion based, either directly asking the users a question pertaining to a specific game or a general question related to games as a whole.

For the sake of a blind analysis, any information about these users will be excluded, including their usernames. Each participant will be labeled within the discussion as *Participant* followed by a number to identify them. *P1*, *P2*, so on, as each new participant is introduced within the discussion. There is also an assumption to be made, since these are discussions coming from specific communities on these sites,

that some of these participants may already be acquainted with each other from previous discussion threads. There is also the chance that some of these participants know each other outside of the discussion board space, beyond just acquaintances. Unless stated otherwise, there is no previous knowledge to be given here about each participant other than that most of them seem to be avid users of their chosen sites. Some of these participants can be seen on other threads outside of the chosen ones and are quite active within the selected threads as well. My analysis will answer the following questions:

- Does gamer speech lean more toward hegemonic masculine?
- What kind of masculinity does the typical gamer index?
- Is there evidence of delegitimizing femininity?

Discussion board: “Am I the only one that despises gummi ship levels in kh2?”

The first dataset for analysis is taken from a Reddit discussion thread that occurred on January 14 2018 at 1:40 pm. Specifically, this thread is taken from the “r/KingdomHearts” SubReddit. “Kingdom Hearts” is a Japanese action role-playing video game, and these excerpts are from a thread within that community sharing opinions on a specific mechanic within the games.

For context, each of the three main *Kingdom Hearts* games requires players to travel from level to level using what is called a *Gummi Ship*. This is a spaceship that players are encouraged to customize and required to fly through *Star Wars*-esque levels, shooting and dodging enemy ships. Gamers can not skip these stages until they have completed them at least once, and each game changes the style in which these stages are played.

This discussion board in particular is discussing whether or not anyone who has played the first or second *Kingdom Hearts* liked these Gummi Ship levels. This is an opportunity for gamers within a specific community to express opinions back and forth, anonymously. The

extent to which they present their own identity will be limited purely to their use of language.

This thread, as will be shown, exemplified both characteristics common to feminine speech and masculine speech. Hegemonic masculinity is less prevalent within the speech of most of the participants, and most of the speakers either engage in subordinated masculinity or complicit masculinity at most. P1 seems to characterize the aspects of subordinating masculinity the most, though none of the other *Participants* actively go to subordinate him, as is characteristic of hegemonic masculinity. The discussion begins:

P1: Am I the only one that despises gummi ship levels in kh2?

It just feels like it breaks the gameplay, one minute it's story and fighting then you're done that part of the world and to get to the next one you have to do a bullet hell type level to get to the next world, I just don't get it. Maybe I'm the only one

The author of this thread, P1, starts with their question, not in a firm or assertive tone, rather in an unsure tone. While they use a strongly opinionated word like "...despises," they lessen the impact of that word. Asking "Am I the only one," and saying "Maybe I'm the only one," expresses their uncertainty and hesitancy to assert that this may be a problem within the game. This is a characteristic most commonly associated with feminine speech called a *hedge*, in which a speaker will lessen the impact of an utterance by qualifying it, in this case qualifying their opinion as something that may just be an issue on their end rather than a flaw with the game, despite providing evidence and for how this

may be a problem with the game. The first response to this question is slightly more assertive:

P2: Feels a lot better than the kh1 Gummi stuff. At least in the KH2 version, it feels like you're moving fast.

P1: Yea that is true, it just seems like a chore rather than a fun part of the game, it's nice I only have to do it once to open a world and it stays open for good.

Here, P2's response is not saying that the game mechanic is bad or good, but that in comparison to the first game in the series, it "Feels a lot better." Still, not particularly asserting an opinion though, only justifying that if they felt it was faster, it would be an improvement from the first game. There is the clear and concise response that it just "Feels a lot better," that is not qualified by a hedge as with P1. P1's response to P2 does agree to an extent, but does not back away from their point entirely. Instead of inciting further debate, P1 instead digresses to a positive note.

P3: I'm the opposite. Kh1 was more fun imo. It felt like you were flying through space and there were interactions like black holes and monstro. Kh2 was a minigame that kinda broke immersion. Like you're flying through space then suddenly there's roads and highways or waterfalls and islands

P1: That's what I was looking for it breaks immersion, thank you lol I couldn't think of the right word that describes it perfectly

P3's interaction starts by stating their opinion on the subject as well, listing their reasoning and evidence for their opinion rather than just asserting their own point of view. There is no hedging here, but there is justification for their belief rather than any assertion that their opinion should be taken on blind faith. P1 responds, not to contradict P3, but instead to collaborate, showing how grateful they are to P3. This shows a willingness to work with strangers in your community, rather than working against them. In the next exchange, a fourth *Participant* continues the conversation, though not agreeing with P1.

P4: All I knew at the time that I first played 1 and 2 was that I had no clue what I was doing on either game, but KH2's felt fast and flashy

P1: It is faster than kh1 it just feels like a chore that's all

P4 states their own lack of knowledge of playing the games though adds their opinion of them, agreeing with P2 and P3. However, as with P2, there is no definitive answer given for P1's question; rather responders share their opinions of the games. P1, in a shorter response this time, repeats the same response given before, with a the hedge "just" and justification of "that's all," potentially to deescalate a heated debate.

P5: Get ready. Nomura said the Gummi ship is going to make a return in KH3

P1: Who knows maybe they will do something different to it make it enjoyable this time around

In the last excerpt from this discussion, P5, does not answer P1's question but offers a comedic response, perhaps in an attempt to build off of P1's already stated opinion. In a way, by not contradicting P1, P5 gives the sense that they also agree and dread what is to come for the series. P1, rather than building on the implied negativity in P5's response, offers a more optimistic spin, with only a slight bit of snark at the end.

Discussion board: "Red Dead Redemption 2 review: so big it feels like a chore"

This second set of data comes from a discussion board on the r/Games Subreddit, for the game *Red Dead Redemption 2*. Specifically, this thread is in response to a review published on the *WIRED* magazine website, titled "Red Dead Redemption 2 review: so big it feels like a chore." To summarize Matt Reynolds' review, *Red Dead Redemption 2* is a perfectly crafted successor to open-world action role playing game *Red Dead Redemption*, but has an excessive amount of "immersive" features that end up making the whole game feel more like doing chores than playing a game for the sake of entertainment (Reynolds, 2018).

Perhaps it is due to this discussion thread as a response to a critical review of a popular game, or the fact that this game is aimed at an older, more masculine demographic, but this thread indexes the most towards hegemonically masculine. It is not as extreme as or vile as some would expect of toxic masculinity within the gaming community, but there are instances of *participants* asserting their own status within the gaming community, backhandedly insulting other gamers who differ in opinion and shooting down differing opinions without collaboration or compromise.

Here is an excerpt from just one of the lengthy discussions within the thread:

P1: I think people are going a little overboard with how "slow" this game is. I'm the kind of person that usually hates the cinematic stuff but the game hasn't been nearly as bad as people are saying it is. Granted I really wish they avoided certain outdated mechanics like tapping to run and whatnot. Jesus that's annoying.

P2: It's exactly as slow as RDR1 was. I'm beginning to think I'm the only person that played that game.

P3: Seriously, RDR1 could be insanely slow. Like people mention Mexico as the drop off point, but before that you're herding cattle and doing odd jobs to help quirky side characters that really should be helping you but don't even after you do what they want.

P4: It really is an immersive experience.
If you want to sprint through and "complete" it, you can't just run around skipping the experience for completion. And it's not a shooter like some want it to be.
When they slowed me down to walk with Dutch and these guys and listen to the story dialogue I had two choices: Get whiney and impatient.
Relax, sip a drank, and learn more about these characters as if I'm actually going to get invested in this story for 60+ hours.

And having been grinding tiers in Blops4 at high speeds, it was very refreshing to just relax and vibe with the quiet of the game.

At the start of this discussion, P1 makes a clear point in contradicting the article that started this thread. They begin by being assertive, by saying too many are writing this game off as slow, and providing context of their own background to qualify why it is that they have the experience and perspective to speak about this topic. There is concession to some of the flaws within the game, so as to seem balanced in their opinion and show their lack of bias. P2 is more indignant, asserting how it is no different from the first game, and that other people who are criticizing do not have as much experience as some one like themselves. P3, while agreeing with P1 and P2 on how slow each game is, does not agree with them, providing no opinion on the game being discussed. P4 continues with the same sentiments as the previous speaker, yet has a more condescending tone in their response, seemingly blaming the opinions of those who found the game slow on being “whiney and impatient.” Rather than trying to reconcile with the points of those who may contradict their perspective, P4 instead chooses to call out those who disagree, and assert their own status and position by citing their gaming credentials. “...grinding tiers in Blops4,” for context, means playing the online game *Call of Duty: Black Ops 4*, a first-person shooter game set in a futuristic war zone, for extended periods of time to achieve a higher ranking within the community. By saying this, P4 is casually bragging and asserting their own status as a hardcore gamer, and by extension, as someone who should be taken seriously when discussing games.

Below, we can see that P5 is the first to post in favor of the reviews perspective, actively contradicting the previous speakers.

P5: It's not immersive, it's a movie that you get to watch and push buttons when prompted. It is a shooter, considering how many guys you have to kill to complete missions. So the fact that the shooter engine is clunky, cumbersome and slow to respond, makes the game difficult to like.

P6: [It's not a shooter like some want it to be.] I agree. It's like when someone who's usually only around dogs tries to play with a cat like it's a dog and then gets frustrated when it doesn't do what they want.

P5: Yet every mission you have to use the shooting engine. You have to kill many bad guys in order to complete the game. No point in having a shooter with delayed and cumbersome controls.

P5 begins by contradicting P4 from the start, giving no concession; instead, P5 asserts an opposing stance by providing their own evidence to support their point. P6 responds directly to a point made by P4, agreeing and providing their own analogy to relate their point. P6 does not take a hard stance, but instead voices their own thoughts to add further back up in the games defense. P5, however, counters P6, debating their own side of the argument, in an assertive way.

P3: Immersive to me is when I'm having so much fun I don't realize how much time has passed. Didn't get that from RDR.

P7: im going to assume this is different from person to person. i did get that immersion you're describing. went to bed at like, 2:30 saturday morning before i realized it was wayyyy past when i thought i was gonna stop playing.

P8: Yeah I agree. I think people are confusing "immersive-ness" and "realism".

Like I can get immersed in a game of Civilization for hours, but I wouldn't call it a game that aims for realism. I haven't played RDR2 yet so I can't comment on that, but based on what I've heard from you, the person you replied to, and general opinion, it seems like it aimed heavily for realism, not immersion.

P9: No, it's definitely both. It's just not a game for everyone. The game is deliberately slow and methodical. It is, for me, the single most "immersive" game I've played. But people who don't enjoy something that takes a lot of your time just to get through a simple side mission aren't going to enjoy it. This isn't a game that satisfies the player's desire for instant gratification in any way. Everything you do pays off, it just takes a while to do so.

P5: You guys don't understand what immersive means. How can a game that is basically a movie be immersive

P3 responds again, not adding their opinion on the game being discussed, but rather providing a take on the meaning of immersive, no hesitation or hedge in regards to their opinion on the matter, rather a pure assertion of the first game in the series' lack of immersion. P7 would be the first in the discussion to start their statement with a hedge,

qualifying that what they are about to say is not a certainty but then provides their perspective on the topic. P8, agreeing with P3 and P7, prefaces their statement by saying that people's perception of immersion may be incorrect, and then goes on to state what they believe to be a proper metric for immersion. P8 does make a concession, stating they cannot comment on the game in question directly, due to a lack of first hand knowledge, although P8 comments based on what has thus far been discussed anyway. P9 directly counters P8 and qualifies in their statement that not everyone may feel the same way they do. P9 criticizes players who disagree as merely disliking delayed gratification, faulting the players for any issues they had with the game, rather than faulting the game itself. P5, once again, asserts their counter position, this time putting down the speakers who expressed their opinions on the matter of immersion, and putting their knowledge into question.

Discussion Board: “Cuphead confirmed for the Switch”

This final set of data comes from a *GameFAQs* discussion board where participants discuss the news that the game *Cuphead* would be ported to the Nintendo Switch. *Cuphead*, a run-and-gun action game, was originally a Microsoft Windows and Xbox One exclusive game, not available to play on any other video game console. When this board was created, the news of *Cuphead* coming to the Nintendo Switch had just broken.

While this thread does index more hegemonically masculine, it is not as aggressively so as the excerpts above. There are instances of providing evidence of knowledge and background within the community; it is not always done for the sake of asserting status within the community, however. More than hegemonic masculinity, this dataset indexes complicitly masculine, with instances of subordinating masculinity.

These excerpts are the reactions these speakers had, pertaining to the games ability to play on the Nintendo Switch as well as the game no longer being exclusive to Microsoft:

P1: i remember ~ a year ago people saying the switch wouldnt be able to handle this game

P2: Yup, almost everyone were claiming that the switch wound never be able to run this kind of graphics and fluid environments.

P3: I'm going to need to see this for myself to believe. The game ran on pentiums at launch.
Also the game was never Xbox exclusive.

P1 insinuates that the Nintendo Switch is generally seen as a weaker video gaming console, and now this will validate the abilities of the Switch. Perhaps P1 owns a Nintendo Switch and feels that this will also validate their choice of console. P2 also shares this sentiment maybe for the same reasons. P1 and P2 also seem to be sharing their knowledge of previous discourse, likely to add credence to their stance on the subject. P3, however, counters their points, expressing disbelief, as well as putting forth their own higher knowledge of how the game functions in order to add credibility to their own statement.

P4: On consoles it was. Microsoft funded the Xbox version (sorta like Nintendo with Bayonetta 2 and Sony with SF5).

It coming to Switch isn't a huge shock. Microsoft probably realizes they can't make much more money from it on

Xbox alone. Licensing it for Switch should kickstart some more interest.

P5: The game could run on a toaster. It'll be fine on Switch. It was more the fact it was published and funded by Microsoft that made it seem impossible.

P4, in answer to P3's final point, states a fact to correct P3 and offers an analogy in order to further clarify. P4 also expresses little shock at the news, providing evidence for their own stance and knowledge on the subject and by extension their position on the subject as someone who is more knowledgeable on the subject. P5, deflating the claims of the first three speakers, contradicts the positions of P1, P2 and P3, by extension adding credibility to their own position.

P6: Not published, only funded, or helped fund.

P7: This. It could run on low end computers. It's basically 2D animated sprites with an old movie filter on top of it

P6, rather than contradicting P5, corrects P5's statement, not qualifying their statement in any way, just putting it forth to aid in clarifying the subject. P7, like P5, deflates the statements of the first three, providing a simplified explanation of the way the game runs, in a condescending way. Although, P7 may also be attempting to give a helpful piece of knowledge for the sake of clarification. However, P7 still puts forth their own credibility and knowledge of the way the game works and thus provides their own position within the discourse.

Conclusion

Does gamer speech lean more toward hegemonic masculine? Based on the excerpts above, all three of them have a majority leaning towards complicit masculinity. Complicit masculinity, while not the same as hegemonic masculinity, does nothing to upset hegemonic aspects of speech, which none of the participants seemed to do. While hegemonic masculinity does seem to be present in most of these excerpts, they are not as aggressively hegemonic as might be expected. Seven users above, mostly in the *Red Dead Redemption 2* discussion excerpts, exhibited qualities of hegemonic masculinity, insulting or disenfranchising the opinions of others for the sake of increasing status.

What kind of masculinity does the typical gamer index? Out of the 21 *participants* in the excerpts above, about twelve of them index more toward complicit masculinity, not going out of the way to dominate or assert positions within the discourse, yet not doing anything to eschew the position provided for them by other hegemonic users. For example, within the *Red Dead Redemption 2* discussion board, P3, having already put forth their position as a seasoned *Red Dead Redemption* player, providing their opinion on immersion, opened the door for P7 to agree and put forth their own opinions on the matter. P7 did not have to give any rationale for their side of the argument as they could go along agreeing with someone who has already provided credence to their own argument. Below complicit masculinity, there were seven users who exhibited qualities of hegemonic masculinity, and two that fell within the subordinating category. Those two can be seen within the *Kingdom Hearts* discussion thread as P1 and P4. While neither of them are directly subordinated in a traditional sense of being insulted, most all of the users do not validate the opinion or answer the question P1 put forth. In this regard, P1 is placed lower in position compared to the other *participants*. The fact that P1 also does not actively seem to boost their position or credibility within the discussion in anyway adds to this analysis, which also describes P4.

Is there evidence of delegitimizing femininity? There does not seem to be any active or passive instances of delegitimizing femininity. P1 in the *Kingdom Hearts* thread did utilize stereotypically feminine characteristics in their speech, but no one seemed to criticize them for it, let alone insult them for it in any way. Despite some of the flaunting of status within the community, all the conversations were civil in tone, without being as destructive or inflammatory, as is expected of the community.

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