

FRAMING ENGLISH LEARNING AT THE INTERSECTION OF SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL PRACTICES

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Abstract

From an early age Swedish students typically use and learn English as a second language in out-of-school contexts, for example when watching TV and video clips and playing computer games online. This is an important premise for learning English in school. It is hence of interest to understand relations between learning in and out of school, especially considering the digitalization of Swedish schools and new media technologies becoming available for all students.

This study aims at describing students' accounts of learning English in out-of-school contexts and their reasoning of how this learning relates to learning English in school. The data consists of interviews with 47 eleven-year-olds. Goffman's concept of framing is used as an analytic tool. The results are presented in terms of two dimensions of reasoning; Accepted and Non-Accepted Language Learning Environments and Language Learning as Intention or Side-Effect. Results on what environments students regard as important for learning English are also reported.

Key words: *Second language learning, framing, out-of-school learning, ICT*

1 INTRODUCTION

From an early age Swedish students typically use and learn English as a second language in out-of-school contexts, for example when watching TV and video clips and playing computer games online. An interesting dimension to technology and learning is what the students engage in, and learn from, in their spare-time of their own free will without giving efficiency, or indeed learning, a single thought. In an average day, 75% of 15-24-year-olds watch TV (NORDICOM 2012). In the same age group, 74% use the Internet to listen to music (ibid.) Many young Swedes also play digital games. According to a report from the Swedish Media Council (2010), 80% of the 9–12-year-olds asked played digital games in their spare-time. In another report, about 5% of the girls and over 20% of the boys in the ages 10-18 play TV or computer games 3 hours per day or more (Statistics Sweden 2011). Some of these games involve communicating in English, a language not native to all.

A foreign language is commonly described as a language which is not spoken in the learner's immediate environment whereas a second language is (Bhaskaran Nayar 1997). The global spread of English is highly noticeable in the Nordic countries, and this is partly a result of policy decisions (Phillipson 2001) and the prevalence of international bodies and corporations. Some of the spread of English can also be attributed to subcultures linked to music and computers, thus indicating a bottom-up process of profusion (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 2001). The Nordic countries are by many seen as having developed from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries to countries where English is learnt as a second, or additional, language (L2) to the native or first language (L1) (e.g. Phillipson 1992; Taavitsainen & Pahta 2004; Cabau-Lampa 2005). The predominant view on learning English as a second language is that it is different from learning the first language (e.g. Lightbown & Spada 2006); the first language is learnt by immersion and without overt instruction, a time-consuming process rarely afforded by the learner of a second language. As a consequence, teaching materials for English look very different from those for Swedish, the former tending to focus more on form and instruction than the latter. However, when Swedish 15-year-olds self-reported on their activities involving English outside school, the numbers added up to a mean value of 18.4 hours per week (Sundqvist 2009). In a similar study with self-reporting 15-year-olds, the boys said to use

English on average 3.3 hours per day outside school, and the girls 2.5 hours (Olsson 2011). While those numbers do not speak of full immersion, they certainly say something about how much English that Swedish students engage in on top of their two hours of English lessons in school.

One of the things the students in the abovementioned studies did in their spare-time was watching TV and films. In Sweden, very few programmes on TV or films are overdubbed; they have subtitles in Swedish instead. This practice exposes the viewers to quite a substantial amount of spoken English as programmes and films in English are very frequently shown, and this in turn has an impact on the spread of English (Gottlieb 2004). Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012) found in a study of Swedish 11-12-year-old students that their results on vocabulary tests correlated with the amount of time spent playing digital games at home. A study of Dutch and American *World of Warcraft* playing students highlights the linguistic complexity offered not only by the game itself but also other game-related environments (Thorne, Fischer & Lu 2012).

The learning of English can take place in various situations and settings. When distinguishing between formal and informal learning environments, the former is usually linked to school and the latter to outside school environments. However, as Bransford et al. (2005) point out, it is not merely a question of physical location but more of a distinction between e.g. explicitly didactic instructional practices and peer-to-peer interactions. Learning is pervasive and is therefore embedded in activities engaged in throughout the day. However, there are studies showing that students make a clear distinction between what school is and what it is not (Lantz-Andersson, Vigmo & Bowen 2012).

In the wake of the increasing digitalization of schools, many studies have focused on whether the effect of information and communication technology (ICT) usage can be measured in increased test results (Silvernail & Lane 2004; Gulek & Demirtas 2005; Dunleavy & Heinecke 2008; Warschauer 2008; Zucker 2009; Suhr et al. 2010; Pinkham et al. 2011). However, questions of where and how learning takes place also come into focus. Today digital games are increasingly being used in school environments with the intent of reproducing the enthusiasm students display in connection with spare-time game-play (c.f. Renaud & Wagoner 2011). Students evidently use digital games and say they feel that they are learning from them, but do they think it would be possible to learn that way in school, to incorporate that way of learning into the institutionally framed educational context?

In order to understand what the students in the present study say, a theoretical approach inspired by Goffman's (1974/1986) framing theory will be used. According to this theory, when participants in an activity share the same, or at least a very similar, interpretation of what is going on, they also share frameworks. A social framework stems from people's shared view on an event and it typically involves will, aim and control. However, as Goffman (ibid.) points out, individuals can only frame situations within the limitations of existing social structures and organizations, thus making institutions important for framing.

School is a powerful institution and the frameworks that are part of schooling are strong. To understand the conditions for how young people in contemporary society learn English it is important to understand how they reason about using and learning English in and out of school, at the boundary of formal and informal learning.

2 AIM

The study aims at describing students' accounts of learning English in and out of school and how learning English in school relates to learning English out of school. A first question is what learning environment students view as important for learning English. A second question is how students frame the use of out-of-school learning resources in school settings.

3 METHOD

In order to examine the research questions, two classes with 11-year-old students were interviewed. The interviews were carried out within a larger research project of a 1:1 (one laptop per child) project¹ (cf Petersen & Bunting 2012; Sofkova Hashemi & Johansson Bunting 2012). The participating students attended a Swedish comprehensive school in a relatively affluent urban area. 47 students, 19 girls and 28 boys, took part in the interviews. To make the students feel less apprehensive, they were interviewed in pairs (cf Formosinho & Araujo 2006). In order to reduce the risk of one student dominating the other, the students were asked individual and direct questions. Also, the students paired in the current study often disagreed on things and began to discuss and develop their answers, something which less often resulted in unity. The interviews were conducted in a room at the school. At the time of the interviews, the students were familiar with the researcher who had been in the two classes on several occasions (13 hours in total).

All interviews were conducted in Swedish. The questions were arranged in clusters around a specific topic in order to encourage reasoning. Although the interviews were considered in their entirety, the following questions were focused upon: *Where do you learn the most English? What do you think you learn the most English from? Are you given the opportunity to learn that way in school? What would you like to use the computers for in English in school?* The questions and answers considered relevant for this study were transcribed verbatim and the chosen excerpts were translated into English.

4 THEORETICAL TOOLS AND ANALYSIS

The concept of framing (Goffman 1974/1986) was used as an analytic tool. According to Goffman (ibid.), when people share the same, or at least a very similar, view of “What is it that’s going on here?” (p. 8) they also share frameworks. Social groups share primary frames, frames that make activities meaningful without having to rely on previously existing frames. When an activity is transformed into an activity which resembles the original one but is understood by the participants to be different, that activity is keyed. For example, a radio play of a news programme is an upkeying of such a programme, but if the same play is understood as being the real thing, the play activity has been downkeyed. Each keying, or transformation, adds another lamination to the frame, thereby becoming increasingly distant from the original meaning. In addition to organizing meaning, frames also organize involvement, and that involvement can lead to engrossment, “the matter of being carried away into something” (ibid., p. 347). However, every now and then something happens which disturbs or even breaks the frame, and those frame breaks are often marked by outbursts of laughter or anger. Furthermore, framing encompasses both individual and societal issues as individuals can only frame situations within the limitations of existing social structures and organizations. This makes institutional settings important for framing.

The analysis of how students frame the use of out-of-school learning resources in school settings was based on the students’ reasoning in answering the interview questions. In an iterative procedure, the transcriptions were read several times in their entirety and recurring answers and descriptions were identified and subsequent patterns emerged.

The analysis of what learning environment students view as important for learning English was based on the specific questions *Where do you learn the most English?* and *What do you think you learn the most English from?* This analysis then provided a backdrop to the further analysis of student framing which was based on the follow-up question *Are you given the opportunity to learn that way in school?* and the question *What would you like to use the computers for in English in school?*

In the analysis of environments for learning English, both *what* environments the students recognize and the *relative importance* of these were focused upon. The latter issue was looked at in terms of frequency of appearance in the group of students. In this analysis, the students’ answers will be presented both as a total and split into girls and boys. This was considered fruitful as the answers to a large extent involved media usage, something which previously has been shown to differ for girls and boys (c.f. Swedish Media Council 2010; Statistics Sweden 2011; NORDICOM 2012).

¹ That project was funded by University West, Sweden.

5 RESULTS

The results will be presented in two sections. First the students' accounts of what learning environments they view as important for learning English will be presented under *Environments for learning English*. Then the section *Student framing of the use of out-of-school learning resources in school settings* will follow where how the students frame the use out-of-school learning resources in school settings will be explored.

5.1 Environments for learning English

The students give varying answers to the questions *Where do you learn the most English?* and *What do you think you learn the most English from?* both regarding content and numbers. Some give one alternative and some list several things they learn from. The answers fall into the categories Teaching materials, TV/Film, Being abroad, Games, Relative, Music and Video clips. (Fig. 1.)

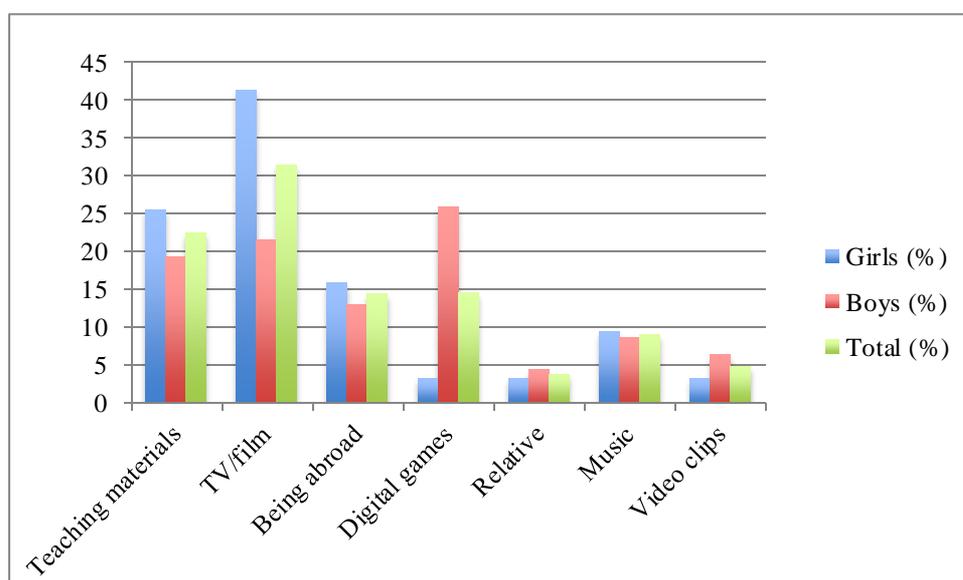


Fig. 1: Language learning environments.

The graph above represents three sample groups. The first sample is the percentage of the number of answers given by the girls, the second the percentage of the boys' answers and the third the percentage of the total number of answers given². The sample groups are skewed to account for the fact that there are 40% girls and 60% boys in the group.

The figure shows that *TV/film* is what the most students say they learn English from followed by *Teaching materials*. Relatively many mention *Being abroad* and playing *Digital Games* as what they learn the most from. However, as a whole, the majority of the students mention other things than *Teaching materials* as being important for their learning. This can be seen as a clear indication of English having become a second language (L2) and that learning English today to a large extent is done in informal environments.

The girls say that *TV/film* is what they learn the most English from, with *Teaching materials* coming in second. For the boys, *Teaching materials* is in third place, while *Digital games* is said to be the most important. That so many girls mention *TV/film* and boys *Digital games* indicate differences in consumer patterns.

² The total number of answers given was 78. The girls gave 32 answers and the boys 46.

Based on the results shown in this figure, the forthcoming account will focus on the categories TV/film and Digital games. The other two were excluded as Teaching materials already is school exclusive and Being abroad obviously would be tricky to arrange on a biweekly basis in a school context.

TV/film

Over 30% of the students' answers are about them learning the most English from TV and film. More girls than boys say that TV/film is an important resource for language learning. In fact, many girls mention only TV/film when asked what they learn the most English from (Excerpt 1).

Excerpt 1

It's in front of the TV when you hear the pronunciation. Because then they speak English and then you can read the subtitles and understand the word that way. So that's pretty good. (Lovisa)

Lovisa (Excerpt 1) says that she learns most of her English from TV. She picks up on the multifaceted learning opportunities on offer and mentions both hearing the English language spoken and reading the Swedish subtitles for extra support. As TV programmes in Sweden rarely are overdubbed, listening to spoken English helps her with knowing how to pronounce words and seeing the Swedish written text in the subtitles become a supplement for understanding.

Digital games

15% of the students' answers involve learning most of their English from computer or video games. However, when looking at girls and boys separately, their answers differ greatly. Only just over 3% of the girls claim to learn the most from games, whereas 26% of the boys quoted games as their main language learning environment.

Many of the students play digital games outside school. An analysis of the answers to questions regarding whether they play games in their spare-time, 87% of the students answer that they play computer or video games. 74% of the girls say that they play games, but when asked if they play in teams or whether the games they play involve communicating with other players, only 11% say that they play such games. For communication purposes, the girls mention using social networking sites such as Facebook (and then primarily in Swedish) instead of gaming. Although few girls name games as their main learning source of English, they still acknowledge their potential for language learning and mention similar reasons for learning as for TV/film; hearing the pronunciation and reading text.

It is, however, mainly the boys who speak about games as learning environments. 96% of the boys play games and out of those 85% play games in which they communicate with other participants as part of the game. Frequently mentioned games are *World of Warcraft* and *Call of Duty*. The boys present different arguments as to why they think they learn English when playing games. One boy points to the need for using the language: "Because you only speak English there. Like all the time. And write in the chat and talk to people" (Emil). Another highlights the frequency of use: "[I]n English class we learn a lot, but we don't have that very often. For example if you play every other day you learn more" (Tobias). There is also the desire to play as a motivational factor for language learning:

Excerpt 2

You have to know English in order to play. And since that's what you want that's what you achieve. (Albert)

The boys who play computer and video games engage in a different type of games to the girls. As so many of the boys play communicative games³, they also point to that particular usage as developing their language.

To summarize, the four most mentioned language developing environments are TV/film, Teaching materials, Being abroad and Digital games. The girls and boys all say that they learn from the three first categories in similar measures. The boys, however, stand out when it comes to games. They also talk about games in conjunction with learning English with great engagement.

5.2 Student framing of the use of out-of-school learning resources in school settings

In this section, two themes will be presented that describe important distinctions the students make in their reasoning about learning English in and out of school. These themes are termed *Accepted and non-accepted language learning environments* and *Language learning as intention or side-effect*. It is noteworthy that these were not the only themes that emerged, but they were, however, the most salient. In the first of these themes, the students reason about whether they think they are given the opportunity to do certain activities in school and also if there are things they would like to use the computers for in school that they currently do not. In the second, the students reason about why certain learning environments are accepted while others are not.

5.2.1 Accepted or non-accepted language learning environments

A pattern that emerged in the analysis is that students make a clear distinction between *accepted* and *non-accepted* learning environments in their reasoning about contexts for learning English. When replying to the questions *Are you given the opportunity to learn that way in school?*, a follow-up question to what they think they learn the most English from, and *What would you like to use the computers for in English in school?*, the students say that TV/film largely is allowed during lessons in school whereas games are not. It thus seems that TV/films are accepted environments in the formal school system as they fall within the Learning English in School frame. Digital games do however not fit into this particular frame and are thus not accepted. The excerpts below show some of their answers to the aforementioned questions and their reasoning around why or why not they get to do that in school.

The students show widespread agreement in what they say about the presence of TV/film in the teaching. Excerpt 3 exemplifies a typical answer.

Excerpt 3

Interviewer: Do you think you get to learn that way in school sometimes?

Diana: Yes.

Albin: Yes, we watch English films and stuff sometimes.

The students say that they do get to see TV programmes and films as part of their English lessons. A few of the students say that they are completely satisfied with the teaching, and when asked if there is something they would like to do in English class that they do not presently do, they simply answer 'no'. There are, however, many that have suggestions of what they would like to do but which they say is not accepted, as can be seen in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4

Interviewer: Is there something you feel you'd like to do with the computers that you don't do?

Jesper: I don't even know what there is to do in English.

Tobias: Play Minecraft. No, only kidding.

J: At least it's English.

³ 'Communicative games' here means games in which communicative activities affect other participants in the same environment.

T: No but I can't think of anything.
J: No.

Tobias does at first have a concrete suggestion of what he thinks would be a good language learning activity in class, but then he corrects himself, saying that he was not being serious. Even when he gets support from Jesper who considers the possibility of using the game in class, he cannot bring himself to stand by his earlier suggestion of playing a computer game in school. Tobias is one of the students who says that he learns most of his English from playing digital games, but he still finds it difficult to consider using that particular language learning environment in school because he knows it is non-accepted. Similar sentiments are expressed in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5

Interviewer: If you got to choose, what would you like to do with the computers in English class?

Christoffer: Play. (laughs)

Hugo: No, but...

C: Watch South Park.

H: (laughs) Maybe, kind of what we do now.

C: No- but. We would have been on, sort of...

H: Well, preferably you'd like to do stuff that aren't school. (giggles)

I: For example what?

H: Play games.

C: Go to South Park.se.

I: Why wouldn't that be possible?

H: Because it's not school.

I: But couldn't it be school?

H: No... Well yes- it could.

C: South Park is English.

H: Yes they speak English.

C: And there's not, yes there's Swedish text. Isn't there?

H: No there isn't.

Christoffer has a clear idea of what he would like to do in English class, but Hugo is more hesitant. He says that he is happy with what they do now, but then giggles nervously and admits that he would like to play games. He does not think that it would be possible, however, as it is a non-accepted school activity. Another environment, *Southpark.se*, is then suggested by Christoffer. From what the boys say, this is also a non-accepted environment in school. In addition to showing how the two students reason about what are accepted and non-accepted language learning environments in school, this excerpt is also shows how the students discuss and reason with each other and draw conclusions they would not have reached on their own.

The students have clear ideas of what are accepted and non-accepted language learning environments. Some games are accepted, but they are a specific type of games as can be seen from what the students say in Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6

Interviewer: Could that be something to do in school then, play?

Samuel: No. There are a few games we are allowed to play, like math games and stuff.

I: What do you think to them then?

S: Boring. Not so much fun.

I: Why are they boring?

S: There's like no life in them, it looks so boring when all that comes up are different sums.

I: If you got to play games like online games then? Call of Duty or something like that? Would that be something?

S: Yes that would be something.

I: Why do you think that you can't?

Amanda: Well, games...

S: It costs, costs money.

A: Well, I don't know, you're not allowed to play games in school I think, so...

I: But why is that so?

A: I don't know, it's a bit difficult...

S: Because I think it's meant for learning, not playing games.

Samuel says that he thinks the computer games that they get to play in school are boring. The commercial games he enjoys playing at home and which he says he learns English from are non-accepted learning environments in school as school is meant for learning. What Samuel says points to a complicated and sometimes contradictory relationship between out-of-school and school practices. What the students claim to learn from at home does not belong in school as school is for learning. The excerpt also illustrates how the interviewer pushes the students to dare to consider other learning environments for school than the ones already on offer.

Olivia says that she learns from games, films and YouTube (Excerpt 7). When asked if this is something she gets the opportunity to use in school, she says that it is not allowed.

Excerpt 7

Interviewer: Why do you think that you don't do this in school if it's a good way of learning?

Olivia: We aren't allowed to because it can disrupt like, we're not allowed to go to certain websites because some can't handle it. This is school, real schoolwork. We wouldn't learn as much then. It feels like people just do stuff, play and carry on, instead of doing proper schoolwork, like.

Olivia makes a distinction between real schoolwork and less serious learning environments which can have a disruptive influence on the work and which some of the students therefore cannot handle. Although she herself says to learn most of her English from the very environments that are non-accepted in school, she expresses a fear of not learning properly were they to be introduced in school.

5.2.2. Language learning as intention or side-effect

The students describe the difference between the environments in the previous theme in a way which can be interpreted in terms of intent to educate or entertain. In accepted learning environments learning is the primary *intention* whereas in the non-accepted environments the learning comes as a *side-effect*. What the students say can be understood as an articulation of the differences between formal and informal learning. In other words, they distinguish between different frameworks. When the students reason about their language learning, some seem to do so from within the Learning English in School frame, while others position themselves outside the institutionalized school frame.

Malin and Gustav have different preferences regarding language learning environments. Both, however, request more film in school, but a specific type of film (Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8

Interviewer: You [Gustav] learn mostly from games? And you [Malin] learn mostly from film you think. Do you think that you get to learn that way in school?

M: No.

G: Like no.

[...]

M: [S]ometimes we watch a film in class, but we should have a little film that we watched, like [...]

G: Like a popular film and not some downgrade film.

The students concede that they already watch films in school, but the type of films they watch is not to their satisfaction. The films in school are not as entertaining as they would like them to be.

Victoria and Erik say they learn from playing *WoW* and watching YouTube clips, but express limitations in school regarding certain environments (Excerpt 9).

Excerpt 9

Interviewer: Would it be good to get to learn that way in school?

Erik: Yes.

Victoria: Yes.

I: Do you think that you do that?

E: No.

V: Yes. A little, but a little, no.

E: We're not allowed to be on Youtube.

According to what the students say, YouTube is off-limits in this particular school context. This is possibly because there is a fear that students will spend more time on its entertaining clips than its explicitly educational ones.

In addition to the traditional paper textbook and workbook, the students also have a CD with exercises and games which is part of the same teaching materials. The following exchange illustrate how two students comment on that material (Excerpt 10).

Excerpt 10

Interviewer: The computers then, what do you do with them?

Mattias: Play, Facebook... (laughs) No, just kidding.

I: I mean in school.

M: I know, I know.

Jonna: We use the Magic disc and...

M: That lame disc with the like flying fairy with a CD in her hair. (giggles)

Mattias first mentions things that he links with computers, but as they are not regarded to be primarily educational in a school context, he laughs the suggestions off. He takes a second chance at showing his dismay over the computer usage in school however, ridiculing both the looks of the CD and its content. The Magic CD is part of their school teaching materials and it has a clear educational intent. In Mattias's eyes it is therefore linked to being lame.

The students also talk about the potential risks of playing commercial computer games in class (Excerpt 11).

Excerpt 11

Interviewer: But in general with games and stuff- do you think it would work?

Jakob: No. Everybody would be sitting playing and nobody would care what the teacher said.

I: What do you think (E)?

Elin: Yes, I think so too.

J: Yes, 'It's breaktime!' 'No, we'll stay and play.'

Jakob vocalizes the possibility of student engrossment if introducing commercial games in school and how it could challenge school routines and order. Although the students say that they learn from games, they do not see it as possible to incorporate commercial games into the school context.

The students say that they sometimes get to play computer games in English class. However, they make a clear distinction between the computer games they are allowed to play in school and the ones they play at home (Excerpt 12).

Excerpt 12

Interviewer: Do you think you get the opportunity to learn that way in school? Though games, for example.

Anton: Yes, or, but those games aren't as much fun.

I: Why is that?

A: Because it's like, it's just learning. And I prefer action games and there's not a lot of that in English class.

Matilda: The games are mostly to change the words and stuff. I mean, they are not proper game-games, it's mostly practising English.

Neither Anton nor Matilda are impressed by the games allowed in class. They do not consider them to be proper games, as learning so clearly is their intention. The students thus differentiate between the types of games played out of school and in school.

For some, TV and games offer similar language development opportunities. When the interviewer asked one student why she thought she learns more from TV and games than other things she replied:

Excerpt 13

Because you listen to it while it's fun to watch or play. You get something to think about. Like if it moves, then you hear it and it's sucked into the brain although you don't think about it. And meanwhile you have like fun watching TV or playing. (Lovisa)

Lovisa explains how she likes to learn English while she is busy doing things she enjoys, how learning then happens without particular effort. She is describing how she is learning the language as a side-effect.

Content, in the students' eyes, seems to take precedent over form. The analysis of the excerpts above indicate a dichotomy which can be described in terms of education and entertainment. Education is serious and its primary intention is developing the students' English. The students themselves, however, express that they learn from environments that engage them. They seek new and exciting experiences which challenge what is permissible. Therefore, trying to simply copy the same technology in school as used for entertainment in order to mimic what the students really enjoy learning from is not regarded kindly by the students ("downgrade films", "the lame CD with the flying fairy", "not proper game-games"). The students play commercial games and watch YouTube clips because they are interested in the content ("Let's take a break' 'No, we'll stay and play"). Developing their English is merely a side-effect.

6 DISCUSSION

In the present study, students reason about learning English outside school and put this in relation to the learning of English in school. The students name several language learning environments, but the ones focused on are TV/film and Digital games as these are environments that the students say they learn from and which feasibly could be incorporated in school, and to some extent already are⁴. The analysis resulted in two themes; *Accepted or non-accepted language learning environments* and *Language learning as intention or side-effect*. The students describe the learning environments in terms of what is accepted and non-accepted in school. They say that they watch TV and films in school, although not necessarily the type of films they would prefer. They also at times get to play computer games in class, but only certain games. The type of games they play at home, commercial ones, are not allowed. It seems that what divides the programmes and games allowed in school from the ones that they watch and play at home is whether their intent is to educate or to entertain. Language learning is the intention of the programmes and games in school, whereas the language they learn when watching programmes and playing games outside school is a side-effect.

What the students say stem from their experiences of attending school. When they express their opinions on learning English, their answers reveal both what English learning looks like in their classroom but also more general views on what school as an educational institution is. From a Goffmanian (1974/1986) perspective, this can be understood in terms of frames. In this study, Learning English in School is the framed activity, the one the students more or less share the definition of. However, as the empirical data consists of interviews in which the students speak about

⁴ It is worth noting that the present study does not deal with how efficient it is to use for example digital games in teaching considering the resources available.

Learning English, the interview activity is also framed. The interviews are no longer part of the Learning English in School frame, they have become once removed from the primary activity. Goffman calls such representations of an activity upkeyings. Hence, there are multiple laminations here; the frame referred to and the upkeyed frame of the interviews. This is important to keep in mind when interpreting what the students say. The interviews took place in school and the interviewer was a representative of the formal education system. The institutional influence was thus strong and quite likely reinforced the frame and made it more difficult for the students to reason outside the institutional frame.

The students' accounts of where they engage with English are similar to results reported elsewhere (Sundqvist 2009; Swedish Media Council 2010; Olsson 2011; Statistics Sweden 2011; Sylvén & Sundqvist 2012). The girls in this study say they learn the most from TV/film and the boys say they learn from playing video or computer games. This corresponds to results from reports of girls' and boys' media habits (Swedish Media Council 2010; Statistics Sweden 2011). These findings point to that gaming is an arena which provides particularly the boys with alternative opportunities for (informal) language learning, something which may change their premises for learning English. The gaming environment offers a linguistic complexity (Thorne, Fischer & Lu 2012) that the students describe in terms of both receptive and productive skills. As they use more English in their spare-time, where language learning is a side-effect, than during the intentional language lessons in school, one may wonder what the effects of this could be. What English is it that they actually learn in the different environments?

Although the students claim to learn from gaming out of school, they are not unequivocally positive regarding playing computer games in school. What games are played in school is decided by somebody else, depriving them of initiative. It also seems that content takes precedent over form. Just because the students like playing games, they do not like playing all games. When material whose intent primarily is educational is introduced in the guise of a game, the students are not fooled. A game should contain certain elements and be engaging; they expect more from a game than simple practice (Excerpts 6, 12). Considering the current trend of trying to reproduce the enthusiasm students display in out-of-school gaming in a school context (Renaud & Wagoner 2011), both by using "game design elements in non-game contexts" through gamification (Deterding et al. 2011, p. 10) and game-based learning where actual games are used for instructional purposes (e.g. Squire 2005), it is interesting that the students in this study so clearly scorn the games ratified by school. In view of what the students say, it is important not to confuse forms and content; just because students learn from content in a certain medium outside school, merely using that medium with another content and intention in school will not make the students learn as in out-of-school contexts.

Game playing outside school often involves engrossment. Engrossment is, according to Goffman (1961), a typical component of gaming which is especially noticeable when the experience is shared with someone. This absorbed state-of-mind is illustrated by the boy who says it would be impossible to use commercial computer games in school because they would not stop to have recess (Excerpt 11). Taking breaks at predetermined intervals is an important part of school as an institution. Breaks are parts of the rigid rim of the framed school activity Learning English and therefore the students find it particularly difficult to consider doing something which breaks that frame. Interesting here is that the students often seem to want to go outside the school frame, but breaking it is just not accepted (Excerpts 4,5,6,10). When they briefly do break frame, this is accompanied by hesitation, giggling and quick assurances that they are only joking, something which Goffman (1961; 1974/1986) calls flooding out and which are distinctive marks of frame breaking. An illustration of how strong this frame is can be seen in Excerpt 5 when the interviewer tries to pull one of the students out of the frame with leading questions but does not succeed. The frame is just too strong.

According to what the students say, watching TV programmes and films for learning English is largely unproblematic in school and they do it quite often. TV programmes and films can be pre-screened by the teacher and thus vetted as suitable for learning in school. The content of YouTube clips and online computer games are more difficult to predict as they are of a more synchronous character. This makes them more problematic, and they do therefore not fit into the existing school frame. Interesting to remember, however, is that TV once was a controversial, new medium which was

not accepted in school. When computers were first introduced in schools they too represented a new medium and were looked upon with some suspicion. Buckingham (2000) says that responses to digital technology are ambivalent, much in the same vein as opinions earlier differed on the merits and dangers of television. From being a questioned medium, computers went on to be the answer to many an educationalist's hope for more efficient learning (Silvernail & Lane 2004; Gulek & Demirtas 2005; Dunleavy & Heinecke 2008; Warschauer 2008; Zucker 2009; Suhr et al. 2010; Pinkham et al. 2011). Even though the premises for using TV and computers in school are quite different, the historical example of the TV medium entering schools indicates that it is possible for new practices to become incorporated into the school frame. The Learning English frame exists because we construct it and thus it can be altered.

The students have learnt what language learning environments are accepted in school, something which can be seen in most of the excerpts by how they express such a firm understanding of what school is. They almost talk about what you can and cannot do in school in terms of a primary framework; that how things always have been done are that way because it is the only way they can be. Many students say they learn English from playing digital games, yet they cannot fathom learning by playing such games in school. This result highlights the relationship between learning English in and outside school and that the students are aware of what is accepted within the different frames and act accordingly.

The boundary between learning in school and out of school is clearly marked by the students. However, as Bransford et al. (2005) point out, the distinction between formal and informal learning environments is more than a question of location. In this study, the boundary that becomes visible is drawn up from location as well as dimensions of acceptability and intention. The students may make distinctions between the two sides of the boundary, between formal and informal learning environments, but they intersect and negotiate that very boundary on a daily basis. It is at that intersection of school and out-of-school practices that questions arise concerning what environments could be interesting for language learning in the future.

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