

## Hate Speech towards Female Game Players in Valorant Game

Wirakarn Pornying<sup>1</sup> , Sutraphorn Tantiranat<sup>2\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>MA Student in English for Communication of Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Burapha University, Chon Buri, Thailand

<sup>2</sup>Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Burapha University, Chon Buri, Thailand

### APA Citation:

Pornying, W., & Tantiranat, S. (2024). Hate speech towards female game players in Valorant game. *Journal of English Language and Linguistics*, 5(3), 374-392. <https://doi.org/10.62819/jel.2024.657>

**Received:** November 18, 2024

**Revised:** December 19, 2024

**Accepted:** December 20, 2024

### Abstract

This study examined the types of hate speech towards female game players in Valorant on the North American (NA) server. The data was collected from 36 videos (out of 1,254) from seven female YouTube channels between 2020 and 2023, where hate speech occurred during gameplay. This study utilizes a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The researchers created precoding schemes based on Bahador's (2023) framework of hate speech. Moreover, the researchers identified types of discrimination reflected through hate speech inspired by Kowert's (2020) model. The findings show that the most common type of hate speech was "Negative character" (37%), followed by "Disagreement" (24%) and "Negative action" (20%). Less frequent types included "Demonizing and Dehumanizing" (16%), while "Death" and "Violence" each appeared in only 1% of cases. Five types of discrimination were identified: Offensive name calling, Trolling/Griefing, Sexual harassment, Sexual assault, and Threats of physical violence. Notably, instances of hate speech can be categorized into more than one type of discrimination categories. These findings highlight the current state of online gaming, particularly the discrimination faced by female game players. They can raise awareness among victims, parents, influencers, and the gaming industry to detect hate speech effectively.

**Keywords:** discrimination, female game players, hate speech, Valorant game

---

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: sutraphorn.ta@go.buu.ac.th

## Introduction

Coliver (1992) defines hate speech as any expression or act that is intended to abuse, insult, intimidate, or harass an individual. This type of speech carries an explicit or implicit message of violence, discrimination, or hatred towards someone based on their race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, or membership in any other group. Gaming platforms can connect people online worldwide, allowing them to connect immediately via texts or voice chats. At the same time, these platforms can be a significant venue for the spread of hate speech among young people. Female game players often encounter significant challenges in online gaming, facing exploitation and harassment. This abuse usually manifests as hate speech, which reinforces broader discrimination against females in gaming.

Discrimination can be reflected through hate speech, especially discrimination against societies of identity (e.g., axes of ethnicity, culture, ability, age, nationality, gender, etc.) is a threat to one's inherent legitimacy and agency (Berjot & Gillet, 2011; Crenshaw, 1991). The term "gender discrimination" describes the inequality of individuals of one gender by individuals of the other gender, particularly the unfair treatment of women by men who believe that one gender is superior to the other (Pearsall & Hanks, 2001). Kowert (2020) claims that gender discrimination primarily affects non-men in the video game industry. However, it can affect any gender "not only for females, but for trans, non-binary, gender fluid, and other folks of non-conforming genders" (p.2). Therefore, most genders other than men are underrepresented in the online gaming community, especially female game players who often encounter discrimination while playing games.

This study focuses on the First-Person Shooter (FPS) game Valorant, which is currently gaining popularity. Female game players have mostly experienced hate speech in online gaming. This demonstrates the underrepresentation of women in the online gaming community, and hate speech may contribute to this issue. Hence, it is worth investigating hate speech towards female game players.

## Literature Review

This section presents a literature review of the study, beginning with an exploration of hate speech and its associated frameworks. It also examines types of discrimination reflected through hate speech. Furthermore, the discussion of previous studies has been integrated into these sections.

### *1. Hate Speech*

Hate speech "has been prevalent in human interactions in many forms over time in the actual world (such as racism and prejudice), and now it has been found a carrier in the virtual world defined by social media Internet" (Thomas, 2011, pp. 60-61), or even in online gaming. Any message is easily accessible and quickly communicated to many people; the latter has become an obvious driver of hate speech. Kowalski et al. (2012) point out that some Internet users produce cyberbullying or hate content as the Internet has enabled social mobility for others.

However, the target of hate speech seems to be gender, especially females. Especially internet social networks have empowered users to express their voices at an almost marginal cost. However, there is also a dark side to this practice, as social media enables online harassment, cyber-hate, cyber-bullying, and anti-social behavior (Alserhan & Elareshi, 2020).

## *2. Hate Speech Framework*

Bahador (2023) develops the hate speech model based on a comprehensive content analysis of the US news media and a review of the academic literature on hate speech and related topics directed at a group of people. Bahador (2023) organizes different types of hate speech into six categories. First, Disagreement focuses on rhetoric targeting beliefs or ideas. Responses challenge claims, ideas, or attempt to change someone's mind. The second, Negative Actions, involves nonviolent but harmful actions metaphorically associated with a group. The third, Negative Character, includes nonviolent characterizations and insults such as stupid, thief, aggressor, fake, and crazy. The fourth, Demonizing and Dehumanizing, uses subhuman or superhuman characterizations such as rat, monkey, Nazi, demon, cancer, and monster. The fifth, Violence references inflicting physical or metaphorical/aspirational harm or death, such as punching, raping, torturing, or mugging. Lastly, Death type pertains to rhetoric involving literal killing by a group, with responses calling for the elimination or death of the group, such as being killed, annihilated, or destroyed.

## *3. A Review of Previous Studies on Hate Speech*

A study adopted Bahador's model on the Facebook platform. Faiq and Noori (2022) examine the reactions of Kurdish and English commentators on the Facebook platform. They found that English commentators predominantly used terms in Negative action type like "G idiots," while Kurdish commentators often employed dehumanizing language, including "Acting like donkey starts again" and "All those dirty Satan" (p.85). The study highlights how identity markers, such as nationality, gender, and religion, shape hate speech. This is directly relevant to gender-based hate speech in Valorant, as it provides a basis for examining how gender intersects.

Another interesting study examines chat interactions among Southeast Asian participants in an online competitive Dota 2 game, highlighting the distinction between trash-talking and toxicity. Hate speech, a form of toxicity, includes notable examples that align with our precoding schemes. These examples are: "Chinese dog" (Demonization and Dehumanization), "brain=0" (Negative Characterization), "I will slap you" (Violence), and "pig" (Demonization and Dehumanization). This study fills a crucial gap in our understanding of toxic behavior and trash-talking in online gaming, specifically focusing on Southeast Asian players of Dota 2, a topic that has not been extensively researched before (Lim et al., 2024).

The study "Online Hate Speech on Twitter from the Perspective of Pragmatics" investigates hate speech dynamics on Twitter, analyzing language use through pragmatics. Findings indicate that hate speech often employs speech acts such as insults, threats, and dehumanization. Rhetorical tools like sarcasm and euphemisms are used to mask discrimination, while techniques like gaslighting shift blame and silence victims. The study

emphasizes understanding these mechanisms to enhance moderation and develop more effective countermeasures against hate speech in online spaces (Liu, 2024). By examining how insults, threats, and dehumanization function as speech acts, the study provides a framework for analyzing similar dynamics in Valorant. Understanding these linguistic patterns could help identify how hate speech is expressed in the game's voice communication systems.

Based on the analysis conducted by Bartlett et al. (2014), it can be deduced that a considerable portion of sexist language found on Twitter falls under the category of "casual misogyny." This particular classification refers to the usage of terms such as "rape", "slut", and "whore" in a non-threatening or non-abusive manner, often employing them metaphorically. Thus, it would seem that in comparison to men, female game players are more likely to experience online harassment and encounter expressions of hatred within online forums (Meyer & Cukier, 2006). By drawing parallels between the findings of Bartlett et al. (2014) and the gaming context, our research can contribute to a deeper understanding of how normalized gendered language perpetuates harassment and exclusion in online gaming environments. Therefore, our research could examine whether the hate speech observed in Twitter studies also appears in Valorant.

McLean and Griffiths (2019) investigate an online discussion forum, specifically from posts made by 271 female game players. They found that female game players reported frequently experiencing playing alone, playing anonymously, and moving between groups due to the lack of social support, and toxic language like "Fat" is part of this ongoing pattern of gender-based harassment. Additionally, Ekiciler et al. (2022) found that it is identified in online gaming chat logs. The words are divided into three categories: "Whore", "Cunt", and "Fuck". These female game players who have been harassed while playing may be the reason why discrimination often occurs because there may be a female game player on a male game player's team. Both studies emphasize how language in chat logs reflects underlying discriminatory attitudes, which is directly relevant to analyzing how hate speech in Valorant manifests during gameplay.

According to Alice and Valerie (1984), gender roles are shaped by societal expectations and the historical division of labor, which traditionally assign domestic tasks like cooking to women. This framework underpins the stereotype of "women in the kitchen," which is often used as a gendered insult in gaming environments (e.g., "go back to the kitchen"). Such phrases reinforce traditional views that women belong in domestic roles and question their presence in male-dominated areas like online gaming. Therefore, this phrase could align with our study on hate speech within the Valorant, which can lead to further discrimination.

Additionally, a study analyzing hate speech toward players in League of Legends chat found that personal skill critiques often escalate to personal insults. From around 5,000 messages sampled from millions of chat lines per server, "shut up" was recorded over 1.5 million times, while "bitch" appeared more than 1.17 million times. This indicates a high prevalence of hostile language, with skill criticism quickly turning into aggressive, demeaning exchanges, reflecting a culture of frequent verbal aggression in competitive gaming (Belskie et al., 2023b). This aligns with our focus on hate speech in Valorant and provides a basis for exploring similar patterns in its gaming environment.

#### 4. Discrimination

Discrimination based on gender has been a particular issue for females. Despite the fact that females currently represent approximately half of the nation in most developed countries (Vermeulen et al., 2017), they are still significantly underrepresented in occupations that males have traditionally dominated due to significant domain-specific gender biases. Thus, gender discrimination is the unequal or disadvantaged treatment that affects any person because they belong to a specific gender.

Discrimination in online gaming can also be ignited by voice, especially female voices in a team that requires teamwork when playing. Kuznekoff and Rose (2013) study male and female interactions in online gaming. They found that participants reacted more negatively to female voices, with three times more negative comments directed at the female voice, many rooted in gender discrimination. When a female game player cheerfully greeted everyone with a “Hello, everyone,” she was met with an unexpected and harsh response: “Shut up, bitch.” The findings show that interactions and behaviors in online gaming are guided by some of the discrimination that female game players encounter in online gaming. In this regard, discrimination continues to affect female more than male game players.

Online gaming has become increasingly popular. Nevertheless, it has also brought up problems such as discrimination, which hurts the expanding gaming communities. Discrimination in online gaming can take various types. Thus, one’s experiences with this discrimination can vary.

Kowert (2020) lists types of discrimination and provides their definitions as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Types of Discrimination*

Term	Definition
Trolling / Griefing	Deliberate attempts to be provoked.
Offensive name calling	Abusive, derogatory language or insults.
Sexual harassment	Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual remarks.
Sexual assault	The act of intentionally sexually touching another person without their consent or coerces or physically forces a person to engage in a sexual act against their will.
Threats of physical violence	Conveying threats of physical or mental injury.
Stalking	Online monitoring or information gathering is used to threaten or harass.
Discrimination	Unjust treatment due to your gender identity.
Sustained harassment	Harassment that occurs over multiple instances or a longer period.
Doxxing	Having personally identifying information made public.
Swatting	Someone making a false to dispatch emergency services.

### *5. A Review of Previous Studies on Discrimination*

A survey examining the global distribution of game developers between 2014 and 2021 revealed that in 2021, the majority of game developers, 61%, were male, while women accounted for 30% of game developers (Clement, 2023). Based on the discrimination types, Kowert (2020) outlines various discriminatory behaviors that can occur online, particularly in gaming or social platforms. They organized a “Class Project” to address gender-based discrimination in the games industry. The project aimed to draw attention to the issue and propose solutions for the future. The survey gathered responses from 58 members of the gaming industry, providing firsthand accounts of their experiences with gender-based discrimination and harassment. The most common types of discrimination reported were Trolling/Griefing and Sexual harassment, with 75% of participants experiencing these forms. Participants reported instances of deliberate attempts to provoke or instigate conflict, often through inflammatory or offensive remarks. Discrimination and Offensive name calling were also prevalent experiences, reported by 67%. Participants shared instances where they were subjected to abusive and derogatory language or insults based on their gender or identity. Half of the participants (50%) reported enduring sustained harassment in the workplace, indicating the severity and prolonged nature of these incidents. This study demonstrates how frequent gender-based discrimination is in the games industry because females are still underrepresented in the gaming industry. Our study can investigate whether similar behaviors are prevalent in Valorant and how they specifically target female game players.

A study explored the differences in trolling behaviors and definitions between gaming and social media platforms. The study revealed that in-game trolling (occurrence 20 times) is often characterized by behavioral actions aimed at disadvantaging teammates, while social media trolling is associated with more malicious behaviors, such as spreading misinformation 13 times and personal attacks 9 times (Cook et al., 2023). However, a notable limitation was the lack of specific examples or qualitative insights into these behaviors.

Based on this concern, the researchers would like to know the different types of hate speech towards female game players and the types of discrimination reflected through hate speech. Various important factors require attention, especially in online gaming, because hate speech can lead to discrimination. Previous studies have investigated social media platforms and multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) games, such as Facebook, Twitter, League of Legends and Dota 2 (Faiq & Noori, 2022; Liu, 2024; Belskie et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2024). However, there has been no specific examination of hate speech within shooter games like Valorant.

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To identify types of discrimination reflected through the hate speech.
2. To explore words or phrases that are mostly used and classify the types of hate speech towards female game players in Valorant Game.

## Research Questions

1. What are hate speech encountered by female game players in Valorant Game?
  - 1.1 Which words or phrases are mostly used in hate speech encountered by female game players in Valorant Game?
  - 1.2 What are the types of hate speech encountered by female game players in Valorant Game?
2. Which types of discrimination are reflected through the hate speech?

## Methodology

### *1. Research Design*

This study utilizes a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. A qualitative research strategy was employed to capture the richness and depth of information, while a quantitative strategy was used to determine the number of specific word groups in the content. However, qualitative methods enable the exploration of the social and cultural context in which hate speech and discrimination occur in Valorant Game.

### *2. Data Sources*

The data for this study were collected from YouTube videos showing female game players being confronted with hate speech while playing Valorant. The researchers searched these videos using YouTube thumbnails or descriptions with titles such as “The Female Experience UNCENSORED | Valorant” and “The Female Experience in Valorant.” The data collection process took place from 2020 to 2023. Videos mostly found hate speech towards female game players on the North American (NA) server (the location access for game players in the United States). The researchers discovered that seven out of 16 female YouTubers faced hate speech from other gamers. There were 36 videos related to experiences with hate speech out of a total of 1,254 videos, each approximately ten minutes in duration.

### *3. Data Collection Procedure*

First of all, the 36 videos were collected only in-game voice chat because game players mostly use voice chat to communicate with the team. These YouTubers show how female game players were discriminated against in the Valorant game via hate speech.

Additionally, the voice chat was automatically transcribed into text using the AI program Savesubs. Relevant instances of hate speech were then identified and sorted the data in Microsoft Excel. This prepared the data for the creation of a precoding scheme based on Bahador's (2023) theory.

### *4. Data Analysis*

To answer words or phrases used in the hate speech question (RQ1), the researchers counted the number of hate speeches used in each video. In this process, the researchers used frequencies and percentages to present the data. Furthermore, to answer the types of hate speech

towards female game players in Valorant Game, the researchers used the coding schemes adapted from Bahador’s (2023) model to explore types of hate speech found in the videos to classify different types of hate speech.

The researchers created precoding schemes based on Bahador’s (2023) theory. Nevertheless, Bahador did not provide unclear details of the definitions or examples of hate speech. Therefore, the researchers read the transcript several times and created a precoding scheme by coding instances. After coding, the researchers reviewed the codes that can be changed, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Precoding Scheme*

Type of hate speech	Definition	Example words/phrases/sentence
1. Disagreement	Rhetoric involves expressing disagreement with ideas or beliefs. It can include questioning claims, opposing viewpoints, or attempting to influence someone's perspective. Based on this definition and data coding, the researchers have adapted the definition to refer to power relations and force.	Girl, girlfriend, baby girl, queen, my kitten, Shawty, sweetie. Call me daddy. Suck my dick Go back to the fucking kitchen. Make me a sandwich right now. Give me your address.
2. Negative action	Negative action refers to non-violent negative behaviors connected to a specific group. It also includes rhetorical words or phrases with ambiguous implications regarding violence, such as “defeat” or “stop.” The researchers noticed after watching the videos that the definition could relate to the act of blaming and threatening female game players when they make a mistake.	Shut up, suck, bad, hate, lie, I’m recording your voice. Get off the game.
3. Negative character	Negative character involves non-violent negative descriptions or insults directed at individuals or groups. Based on the definition, it refers to a judgment of the appearance or voice of female game players. However, it could make the listeners feel uncomfortable or ashamed.	dumb, stupid, simp, asshole, idiot, pea brain, annoying. sound sexy, fat, obese, fatty, dyed hair, whore, overweight, dirty, slut, ugly, selfish, delusional, stubborn, a pussy, cunt, bimbo, single mother, fucking female, trans, tranny, femboy,



**Table 2 (Continued)**

Type of hate speech	Definition	Example words/phrases/sentence
4. Demonizing and Dehumanizing	Rhetoric involves negative characterizations that dehumanize or demonize individuals or groups. Dehumanization refers to despised sub-human entities. Demonization involves portraying an enemy as superhuman.	bitch, dogshit, pig, monkey.
5. Violence	It is implied by rhetoric that physical injury, aspirational, or metaphorical bodily harm will be inflicted. Based on the definition, it could be used to threaten a female game player without their permission with an aggressive word or something sexual that may lead to physical harm.	Fuck(sex), raped
6. Death	Death refers to literal violence that is lethal, the most serious, and entails incitement to violence and murder. The definition refers to getting rid of the female game player getting out of the game by using strong words with death involved.	Kill yourself, Hang yourself.

After coding schemes, the researchers used Microsoft Excel to organize the data. The dataset was structured to contain eight columns, which are as follows: 1) Female Youtubers 2) Hate speech 3) Disagreement 4) Negative action 5) Negative character 6) Demonizing and Dehumanizing 7) Violence 8) Death. To guarantee the reliability of this study, the researchers consulted experts in Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics who provided coaching and reviewed the results to improve the accuracy of the analysis. Additionally, the researchers enlisted the help of an American Valorant game player with a strong grasp of slang to verify the correctness of the slang used by teenagers in the game.

**Table 3**

*An Example of Categorization of Hate Speech*

Female YouTubers	Words/phrases of Hate speech	Disagreement	Negative action	Negative character	Demonizing and Dehumanizing	Violence	Death
YouTuber 1, Clip 1	You're fucking stupid bitch dumb			/(stupid) /(dumb)	/(bitch)		

**Table 3 (Continued)**

Female YouTubers	Words/phrases of Hate speech	Disagreement	Negative action	Negative character	Demonizing and Dehumanizing	Violence	Death
YouTuber 1, Clip 1	You are probably fat			/(fat)			
YouTuber 1, Clip 1	I will fuck you tonight					/(rape)	
YouTuber 1, Clip 1	Don't be a simp			/(simp)			
YouTuber 6, Clip 4	Heal him, bitch				/(bitch)		

To answer Research Question 2 (RQ2), the researchers identified various types of discrimination reflected in hate speech, primarily drawing from Kowert (2020) and other previous studies for comparison. The researchers observed that hate speech can encompass multiple types of discrimination. After analyzing the frequency of hate speech and discrimination, the researchers compared their similarities and differences.

## Results

### *1. Words or phrases are mostly used in hate speech encountered by female game players in the Valorant Game*

From all the 36 videos, the researchers identified 480 instances of hate speech. Examples of the top 10 most frequently used instances are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*The Frequency and Percentage of the Terms/Phrases Encountered by Female Game Players in Valorant Game*

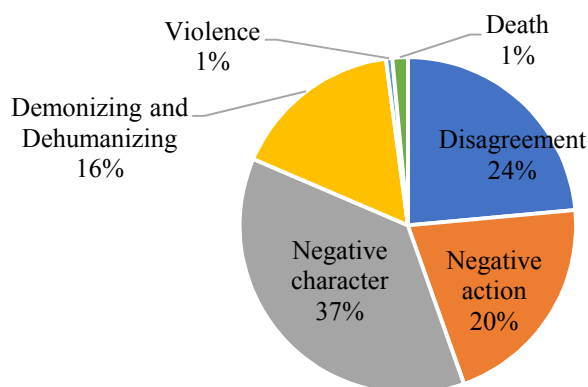
Terms/phrases	Frequency and Percentage of Occurrences
Bitch	12.70
Fat	10.41
Shut up	10.00
Whore	3.95
Dumb	3.95
Girl	3.75
Ugly	2.50
Stupid	2.50
Go back to the kitchen	2.50
Suck	2.08
Others	47.29
Total	100

As shown in Table 4, the top 10 mostly used hate speech terms are 1) “Bitch”, 2) “Fat”, 3) “Shut up”, 4) “Whore”, 5) “Dumb”, 6) “Girl”, 7) “Ugly”, 8) “Stupid”, 9) “Go back to the kitchen”, and 10) “Suck”. Among these, the most frequent term is “Bitch”, with 64 instances (12.70%). The second most used term is “Fat”, with 50 instances (10.41%), followed by “Shut up”, with 48 instances (10.41%). “Whore” appears 19 times (3.95%), followed by “Dumb” with 18 instances (3.75%). Similarly, “Stupid,” “Ugly,” and “Girl” appear 12 times (2.50%). Although “Go back to the kitchen” comprises only 2.29 %, it is remarkable that this phrase is used by nine male game players against female game players. Lastly, other hate speech terms that are outside the top ten total 227 instances (47.29%), including “Daddy,” “Pussy”, and “Fatty.”

Figure 1 categorizes six types of hate speech encountered by female game players. The most frequent type is “Negative character,” accounting for 37%, followed by “Disagreement” at 24%, and “Negative action,” at 20%. Demonizing and Dehumanizing make up 16% of occurrences. The least common types, both involving “Death” and “Violence,” occur at only 1% each.

**Figure 1**

*Types of Hate Speech Encountered by Female Game Players in Valorant Game*



The highest percentage of hate speech type found, Negative character (37%), refers to a judgment of the appearance or voice of the female game players. The top 10 mostly used Negative character terms are 1) “Fat”, 2) “Whore”, 3) “Dumb”, 4) “Stupid”, 5) “Ugly”, 6) “Annoying”, 7) “Overweight”, 8) “Trans”, 9) “Simp”, and 10) “Idiot”. “Fat” is the most frequently used term, appearing 44 times (24.71%), as in the following examples:

“You are probably fat”. (Excerpt 1, YouTuber 1, clip 2)

“I can hear the fat on your neck every time you talk.” (Excerpt 2, YouTuber 1, clip 5)

“Whore” and “Dumb” are the next most common, with 19 instances (10.67%) and 18 instances (10.11%).

“You are such a whore.” (Excerpt 3, YouTuber 1, clip 9)

“You are dumb whore.” (Excerpt 4, YouTuber 5, clip 1)

“Stupid” and “Ugly” appear 12 times, accounting for 6.74% each. “Annoying” appears 10 times (5.61%). Although “Overweight”, which appears 5 times (2.80%), means fat, it could reflect an intent to offend or shame in politeness rather than “Fat”.

“You are definitely overweight. I can hear it in your neck.” (Excerpt 5, YouTuber 1, clip 5)

“You are overweight.” (Excerpt 6, YouTuber 4, clip 3)

Additionally, “Stupid” and “Dumb” are used more frequently than “Simp” and “Idiot”, possibly due to their flexibility in different contexts and widespread use. The other terms, which appear 49 times (28.08%), represent a wide range of Negative character references. This suggests many instances within this type, although each is less frequently used.

The second-highest percentage of types of hate speech found is Disagreement (24%), which refers to disagreeing at the idea/belief level including power relation and force. The top 10 mostly used Disagreement terms and phrases are 1) “Girl”, 2) “Go back to the kitchen”, 3) “Daddy”, 4) “Queen”, 5) “Kitten”, 6) “Baby girl” 7) “Baby” 8) “Make me a sandwich” 9) “Shawty”, and 10) “Suck my dick.” “Girl” is the most frequently used term, with 12 instances (10.81%). Followed by the phrase “Go back to the kitchen,” which appears 11 times (9.90%). “Daddy” and “Queen” are tied for the third most frequent terms, each appearing five times (4.50%). Additionally, terms and phrases like “Kitten”, “Baby girl”, “Baby”, “Make me a sandwich.”, “Shawty” and “Suck my dick.” Each instance shows a lower frequency from two to four times, with percentages between 1.80% and 3.60%. The other terms and phrases have the highest collective frequency 63 times (54.95%) of the total. This indicates a wide range of other less frequent terms and phrases of this type, for instance:

“That is my girl.” (Excerpt 7, YouTuber 1, clip 1)

“Go back to the fucking kitchen.” (Excerpt 8, YouTuber 3, clip 2)

“Don't you have like a kitchen to go to or something?” (Excerpt 9, YouTuber 4, clip 4)

“Come here, baby girl.” (Excerpt 10, YouTuber 3, clip 1)

These are heavily gendered, reflecting a significant focus on undermining or belittling female game players based on their gender. Moreover, these instances may be used to convey ownership, leading other game players in the team to believe that they are a couple.

The third-highest percentage of types of hate speech found is Negative action (20%), which refers to the act of blaming and threatening female game players when they make a mistake. The top 10 mostly used Negative action are 1) “Shut up”, 2) “Shut the fuck up”, 3) “Suck”, 4) “Hate”, 5) “Bad”, 6) “Shut your fucking mouth”, 7) “Shut your bitch up”, 8) “Get off the game”, 9) “Terrible”, and 10) “Lie”. “Shut up” is the most frequently used term 48 times (47.52%). Followed by “Shut the fuck up” with 23 times (22.77%). “Suck” and “Hate” also appear frequently used terms 10 and 8 times, respectively, contributing 9.90% and 7.92%. Other instances such as “Bad”, “Shut your fucking mouth.”, “Shut your bitch up.”, “Get off the game.”, “Terrible” and “Lie” occur with lower frequencies ranging from one to three times, with percentages from 0.99% to 2.97%. The others were three times (2.97%) of the total. The prominence of phrases like “Shut up” and “Shut the fuck up” indicates a strong pattern of trying

to silence female game players. Also, “Suck,” “Bad,” and “Terrible” were the terms used to blame female game players for their poor performance as follows:

“You kind of suck with it.” (Excerpt 11, YouTuber 1, clip 8)

“You play so fucking bad.” (Excerpt 12, YouTuber 7, clip 1)

“Like women suck Valorant” (Excerpt 13, YouTuber 5, clip 1)

These occurrences reflect a broader issue of gender-based harassment, where female game players are disproportionately targeted for their perceived lack of skill.

The next type of hate speech that the female game players encounter is Demonizing and Dehumanizing (16%), which refers to sub-human and superhuman characteristics. The top five most commonly used terms in these categories are 1) “Bitch”, 2) “Dogshit”, 3) “Pig,” and 5) “Monkey.” the most used term in this type is the term “Bitch”, with 61 times (78.20%). “Dogshit” is the second most common term, appearing seven times (8.97%). “Pig,” “Poop,” and “Monkey” are less frequent terms, with percentages ranging from 1.28% to 3.84%. Other terms appear four times (5.12%). The use of the term “Bitch” as the most frequent term in this type is specifically directed at female game players, as seen in the following examples:

“Just a fucking bitch.” (Excerpt 14, Youtuber 7, clip 1)

“You are dumb bitch.” (Excerpt 15, Youtuber 1, clip 5)

“Heal him, bitch.” (Excerpt 16, Youtuber 6, clip 4)

Additionally, female game players were referred to as “Dog shit,” “Pig,” “Poop,” and “Monkey,” which demonized them by comparing them to animals or waste. These findings align with prior research by Lim et al. (2024), which examined chat interactions in Southeast Asian Dota 2 games and identified similar dehumanizing terms, including “Chinese dog” and “pig.” While Lim et al. focused on the general application of hate speech as a form of toxicity, the current study provides deeper insights into its gendered implications, particularly against female game players.

The next to last type of hate speech is Death (1%), which refers to getting rid of the female game player out of the game by using strong words with death involved, such as the term “kill”. Their common phrases include: 1) “Kill yourself,” 2) “Hang yourself,” and 3) “Unalive yourself.” “Kill yourself” appears most frequently, five times (71.42%). The phrases “Hang yourself” and “Unalive yourself” each appear once (14.28%). By suggesting these suicide phrases, the aim is to pressure female game players to stop playing the game.

Lastly, the result revealed that the “Violence” type (1%) involves threatening a female game player without their permission with an aggressive word or something sexual that may lead to physical harm, which can be found in three phrases. The phrase “I will fuck you.” occurred twice (66.66%). Additionally, “I will rape you right now.” with one time (33.33%). These findings align with the observations of Lim et al. (2024), who identified similar Violence, exemplified by phrases like “I will slap you.” These phrases refer to the act of sexual acting without her permission, which can lead to physical harm.

## 2. The Types of Discrimination Reflected Through Hate Speech

Based on the types of hate speech identified above, the researchers categorize them into five types of discrimination, adapted from the Kowert (2020) model, as follows:

1. Trolling/ Griefing (T) refers to speech that involves inflammatory or provocative language aimed at provoking reactions from female game players.
2. Offensive name calling (O) refers to the act of insulting female game players by calling them rude names.
3. Sexual harassment (SH) refers to any verbal communication or language that is of a sexual nature and is unwelcome or unwanted by the female game players.
4. Sexual assault (SA) refers to any sexual verbal or forcing a female game player to perform sexual acts.
5. Threats of physical violence (TH) refers to the use of language or communication to threaten or force female game players by suggesting or implying real-life physical harm.

**Table 5**

*Types of Discrimination Reflected through Six Types of Hate Speech*

Hate speech	Percentage (%)	Type of Discrimination
1. Negative character	37%	Offensive name calling (O)
		Trolling/Griefing (T)
2. Disagreement	24%	Sexual harassment (SH)
		Sexual assault (SA)
3. Negative action	20%	Trolling/Griefing (T)
4. Demonizing and Demonizing	16%	Offensive name calling (O)
5. Death	1%	Threats of physical violence (TH)
6. Violence	1%	Sexual assault (SA)

Regarding the types of discrimination reflected through hate speech, five types were identified. Negative character was most frequently associated with Offensive name calling (O). Interestingly, Disagreement was often manifested through Trolling/Griefing (T), as well as through instances of Sexual harassment (SH) and Sexual assault (SA). Negative action, another type of discrimination, was also linked to Trolling/Griefing (T). Additionally, Offensive name calling (O) can be reflected through Demonizing and Dehumanizing same as Negative character. Threats of physical violence were reflected through Death (TH). Notably, Violence was driven by a desire to commit acts of Sexual assault (SA).

## Discussion

The findings of this study revealed numerous instances of hate speech directed toward female game players in Valorant.

The findings align with other research studies, the Internet has enabled social mobility for others to harass online (Alserhan & Elareshi, 2020; Kowalski et al., 2012). Therefore, there is a notably more significant occurrence of online hate directed at females than males (Bartlett et al., 2014; Meyer & Cukier, 2006). Thus, many important factors should be considered, particularly when playing online games.

### *1. The Types of Hate Speech toward Female Game Players in Valorant*

The analysis of hate speech revealed distinct types of derogatory language. The most prevalent type is Negative character. The term “Fat” is a prominent insult directed at female players, appearing in 24.71% of the insults in our study. Both our findings and those of McLean and Griffiths (2019) show that “Fat” is frequently used to shame women’s appearance, making body-shaming a persistent form of gender-based harassment. Although “Overweight” (which occurred 5 times) also means similarly to fat, it could reflect an intent to offend or shame with politeness compared to the bluntness of “Fat”. The next most common is “Whore” (which occurred 19 times), which is often found at the end of sentences, as exemplified in Excerpt 3 (“You are such a whore”) and Excerpt 4 (“You are dumb whore”). This term was also found to be used against female game players in online gaming chat logs (Ekiciler et al., 2022). This reflects a gender pattern in hate speech that undermines the role and worth of women in gaming.

Interestingly, the Disagreement type was also a frequent type, with terms like “Girl” (10.81%) and “Baby girl” (2.70%) often used to belittle female players or imply they are romantically linked to male teammates. This pattern supports findings from Kowert (2020), who suggests that gendered terms are often weaponized to undermine female players’ credibility and place them in subservient roles. Interestingly, the phrase “Go back to the kitchen” (9.90%) aligns with Alice and Valerie (1984), who posit that societal expectations and historical divisions of labour reinforce the stereotype that women belong in domestic spaces. Such phrases reinforce traditional views that women belong in domestic roles and question their presence in male-dominated areas like online gaming.

The third most common type of hate speech identified in this study was Negative action (20%), which involves blaming or threatening female game players, regardless of whether they made a mistake. Common phrases such as “Shut up” and “Shut the fuck up” were frequently directed at female game players. The term “Shut up” reflects a pattern of silencing female game players in online gaming spaces. These findings also align with Kuznekoff and Rose (2013), who highlighted how female game players often receive disproportionately negative responses in online gaming environments. For example, even a simple greeting from a female player, such as “Hello everyone,” can provoke hostile responses like “Shut up, bitch.” This type of hate

speech illustrates the pervasive issue of silencing and demeaning female game players based solely on their gender.

The next one of hate speech that female game players encountered is Demonizing and Dehumanizing (16%). The term “bitch” comprised 78.2% of this type. Male game players often direct this term at female gamers in various ways, as exemplified in Excerpt 14 (“Just a fucking bitch”) and Excerpt 16 (“Heal him, bitch”). The term “bitch” emerged as a dominant form of hate speech, indicating its widespread use as a gendered insult across gaming platforms (Belskie et al., 2023). Additionally, female game players were subjected to insults like “Dog shit,” “Pig,” “Poop,” and “Monkey,” which aimed to dehumanize them by equating them with animals or waste. Such comparisons are consistent with Bahador’s (2023) analysis, highlighting how these terms reduce individuals by likening them to subhuman or degrading forms (Bahador, 2023).

Another type of hate speech that female game players encountered, though less frequent, is Death (1%). Phrases like “Kill yourself,” “Hang yourself,” and “Unalive yourself” are often directed at female game players. Such phrases are frequently used as insults or mockery when a player is perceived to perform poorly, reflecting a disturbing escalation of verbal abuse aimed at pushing female game players out of the game.

Lastly, the finding revealed that Violence accounted for 1% of the hate speech encountered, with phrases like “I will fuck you” and “I will rape you right now” being directed at female game players. These expressions refer to non-consensual sexual acts, threatening physical harm and contributing to a deeply unsafe environment for women. This aligns with findings from Bartlett et al. (2014), who observed similar use of the term “rape” on platforms on Twitter, where it was commonly used to target and harass females.

## *2. The Types of Discrimination Reflected through Hate Speech*

The findings highlight several types of discrimination reflected through hate speech, with five primary types identified. Negative character and Demonizing and Dehumanizing were the most prominent, often expressed through Offensive name calling (O). Previous research supports this trend; for example, 67% of females in the gaming industry reported experiencing Offensive name calling, while 77% of 900 female game players faced similar abuse (Kowert, 2020). Additionally, three forms of discrimination were identified in contexts of Disagreement: Trolling/Griefing (T), Sexual harassment (SH), and Sexual assault (SA). These findings align with Kowert’s research, where 75% of participants in the gaming industry reported experiences of Trolling/Griefing and Sexual harassment. Another key form of discrimination, Negative action, was similarly linked to Trolling/Griefing (T), reinforcing its disruptive nature. Previous research on Griefing emphasizes this behavior as being driven by personal dissatisfaction or a desire to hinder others’ success (Cook et al., 2023). Further, Threats of physical violence (TH) were often expressed through Death, with phrases like “Kill yourself” reflecting an intent to harm, potentially to the extent of causing death. Most alarmingly, Violence was found to be driven by a desire to commit acts of Sexual assault (SA), including explicit threats such as “I



will rape you right now”. These violent sexual comments were identified as tools to assert dominance over female game players, revealing the intersection between gender-based discrimination and extreme types of hate speech.

In summary, hate speech often serves as a medium for expressing discriminatory beliefs, making it a reflection of broader discriminatory practices. Discrimination entails unfair treatment based on characteristics such as gender, while hate speech acts verbally. In the context of the Valorant Game, discrimination against female players frequently takes the form of hate speech, where derogatory language and insults are used to reinforce discrimination. Thus, hate speech is a crucial tool in perpetuating gender-based discrimination within gaming communities.

## **Conclusion**

The examination of hate speech towards female game players illuminates several key aspects of hate speech use and discrimination in Valorant Game. First, it is evident that in the current Valorant gaming community, women continue to be targets of various types of hate speech, contributing to discrimination. Despite the game's design to promote teamwork, female game players experience hate speech that reinforces gender inequality. In addition, discrimination reflected through hate speech can lead female game players to quit gaming. Such experiences can have a profound and lasting effect on players' mental health, diminishing both their confidence and enjoyment of the game. The seriousness of these issues underscores the necessity of addressing and mitigating hate speech within online gaming communities in order to foster a safer and more inclusive environment for all players. This emphasizes this problem to interested groups of individuals, such as victims of this problem, parents, or influencers who may encourage people to stand up against hate speech. Furthermore, the results might be helpful to the gaming industry, especially to developers of games that employ this knowledge to identify hate speech. As a result, this study will show how it can influence changes in the gaming community.

## **Recommendations**

### *1. Implications*

The findings of this study offer significant implications for the current state of online gaming society regarding the use of hate speech towards female game players in Valorant Game, one of the most popular shooting games on the market. First, the study aims to raise awareness of sexist language in gaming communities and promote the reduction of hate speech. This change can help create a more inclusive environment for female players. Drawing on Wardhaugh and Fuller's (2015) argument, they suggest that changing language norms can lead to broader behavior changes, reducing sexism and promoting equality in online interactions. Second, the findings of this study can inform the development of more effective in-game reporting systems and moderation tools. That is to say, game developers can use these insights to detect and prevent hate speech. By identifying the types of hate speech in gaming, this study has the potential to drive innovation in detecting and preventing hate speech in online games, which can be extended to other online game platforms.

## 2. Further Studies

Future research should focus on exploring other team-based strategy games or platforms like mobile games where victims experience hate speech, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the online gaming environment. Additionally, future studies could compare hate speech experiences across different genders, including female and LGBTQ+ game players, to provide deeper insights into the issue.

## References

- Alserhan, F., & Elareshi, M. (2020). University students' awareness of social media use and hate speech in Jordan. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, 13(2), 548–563. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3709236>.
- Bahador, B. (2023). Monitoring hate speech and the limits of current definition. *Challenges and perspectives of hate speech research*, 291–298. <https://doi.org/10.48541/dcr.v12.17>
- Bartlett, J., Norrie, R., Patel, S., Rumpel, R., & Wibberley, S. (2014). Misogyny on Twitter. *Demos Quarterly*, 1–18. <https://demos.co.uk/research/misogyny-on-twitter/>
- Belskie, M., Zhang, H., & Hemminger, B. M. (2023). Measuring toxicity toward women in game-based communities. *Journal of Electronic Gaming and Esports*, 1(1). 2022–0035. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1123/jege>.
- Berjot, S., & Gillet, N. (2011). Stress and coping with discrimination and stigmatization. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2011.00033>
- Cook, C. L., Tang, S. Y., & Lin, J. T. (2023). Comparing shades of darkness: trolling victims' experiences on social media vs. online gaming. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14, 1163244. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1163244>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1229039>
- Eagly, A. H., & Steffen, V. J. (1984). Gender stereotypes stem from the distribution of women and men in social roles. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(4). 735–754. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.46.4.735>
- Ekiciler, A., Ahioğlu, I., Yıldırım, N., Ajas, I., & Kaya, T. (2022). The bullying game: Sexism based toxic language analysis on online games chat logs by text mining, *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 24(3). 1–16 <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol24/iss3/7>
- Faiq, A., & Noori, M. (2022). Hate speech forms and implications in English and Kurdish social media. *Journal of University of Human Development*, 8(4), 80–88. <https://doi.org/10.21928/juhd.v8n4y2022.pp80-88>
- Kowalski, R. M., Limber, S. P., & Agatston, P. W. (2012). *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kowert, R. (2020). Dark participation in games. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11. 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.598947>
- Kuznekoff, J. H., & Rose, L. M. (2013). Communication in multiplayer gaming: Examining player responses to gender cues. *New Media & Society*, 15(4), 541–556. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812458271>

- Lim, E. H., Vungthong, . S., & Trakulkasemsuk, W. (2024). Trash-talking versus toxicity: An analysis of /all chat exchanges between Southeast Asian players of an online competitive game. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 17(1), 816–856. Retrieved from <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/270445>
- Liu, Z. (2024). Online hate speech on Twitter from the perspective of pragmatics. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Public Administration*, 4(1), 322–326. <https://doi.org/10.62051/ijsspa.v4n1.37>
- McLean, L., & Griffiths, M. D. (2019). Female gamers' experience of online harassment and social support in online gaming: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 17, 970–994. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-018-9962-0>
- Meyer, R., & Cukier, M. (2006). Assessing the attack threat due to IRC channels, *International Conference on Dependable Systems and Networks (DSN'06)* (pp. 467–472). Philadelphia. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/1633535>
- Pearsall, J., & Hanks, P. (2001). *The new Oxford dictionary of English*. Language Education Press.
- Thomas, S. (2011). South Africa: ANC Youth League President issues apology following conviction for hate speech. *HIV/AIDS policy & law review / Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network*, 15(3), 60–61.
- Vermeulen, L., Bauwel, S. V., & Looy, J. V. (2017). Tracing female gamer identity. An empirical study into gender and stereotype threat perceptions. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 71, 90–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.01.054>
- Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. M. (2015). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (7th ed.). Wiley Blackwell.