

**Valorant as a Digital Game-
Based Platform for EFL
Speaking Practice:
A Mix-Methods Study of
Learner Perceptions**

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Abstract

This study explores EFL learners' perceptions of using Valorant as a medium for developing speaking skills in an EFL context. While digital game-based learning has been widely studied, the use of commercial multiplayer games for spontaneous English speaking practice remains underexplored. This study employs a mixed-methods design involving 20 questionnaire respondents and five participants in semi-structured interviews. Data were collected through close-ended questionnaires and follow-up interviews. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages), while the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis within an interactive model of data analysis, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that voice chat in Valorant is perceived as a useful and engaging tool for practicing English speaking, particularly in improving fluency, confidence, and real-time communication. It is also considered relatively easy to use, although challenges related to communication clarity and limited vocabulary persist. Additionally, playing Valorant enhances learners' motivation to use English through both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. However, learning practices tend to be informal, relying on spontaneous strategies such as listening, imitation, and repetition rather than structured planning. In conclusion, Valorant demonstrates strong potential as a complementary tool for supporting EFL speaking development, particularly when integrated into Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) or informal learning frameworks, although its effectiveness depends on individual differences.

Keywords

Computer-Assisted Language Learning, Digital Game-Based Learning, EFL Speaking Skills, Informal Language Learning, Learner Motivation

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INTRODUCTION

Digital game-based learning has been widely recognized as an innovative approach in education, particularly in language learning, as it integrates entertainment and instructional elements to create meaningful learning experiences (Chapelle, 2003; Prensky, 2003). From a technological standpoint, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) can be used to explain why such tools are accepted (Davis, 1989), which emphasizes perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as key determinants of technology adoption. In language learning contexts, these factors may influence learners' willingness to use digital games as learning media, especially when games provide interactive features such as voice chat that enable authentic communication. Digital games are especially helpful for EFL learners because they provide immersive environments that encourage engagement and mimic real-world communication, as suggested by previous studies (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

Despite these advantages, developing speaking skills remains a major challenge for EFL learners due to factors such as limited exposure to the target language, speaking anxiety, and insufficient opportunities for meaningful oral interaction (Bailey & Nunan, 2005; Horwitz et al., 1986). Traditional classroom settings often provide limited time and space for communicative practice, which may result in low confidence and lack of fluency in real-life communication (Brown & Lee, 2025). Previous studies have shown that digital media such as YouTube can enhance learners' motivation and engagement in speaking activities by providing flexible and attractive learning environments (Concesal & Roslaini, 2024). Therefore, alternative learning environments that encourage spontaneous and interactive communication are needed. Multiplayer online games, in particular, provide collaborative spaces where players must communicate in real time to achieve shared goals, thereby creating opportunities for natural and purposeful language use in relatively low-pressure contexts (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

One example of such an environment is Valorant, a tactical multiplayer online game that requires players to engage in real-time voice communication and strategic collaboration. In team-based multiplayer games, communication is not merely supportive but essential for coordinating actions, sharing information, and achieving collective goals (Simpson et al., 2022). Specifically, studies on Valorant have shown that players rely heavily on voice and text communication to organize strategies and respond to dynamic in-game situations, making language use a functional necessity during gameplay (Ramadhan & Nurdiansyah, 2024; Susanti, 2022). This aligns with broader research indicating that multiplayer online games create collaborative environments where communication, trust, and coordination are central to player performance (Gong et al., 2026). Furthermore, previous studies have demonstrated that voice chat interactions in Valorant can support the development of communication skills, including fluency, confidence, and interpersonal competence (Amalia et al., 2024; Budiputra et al., 2025). These characteristics make Valorant a relevant and promising medium for facilitating spontaneous and authentic English use in informal learning contexts. Research has also indicated that digital game-based learning can enhance learners' motivation, engagement,

and participation, which are essential for developing communicative competence (Dörnyei, 2014; Susaniari & Santosa, 2024). In addition, game-based environments can reduce anxiety and encourage more active participation in speaking activities (Cornillie et al., 2012).

However, although previous studies have reported positive effects of digital games on language learning, research focusing specifically on commercial multiplayer games such as Valorant remains limited. This focus is important because, unlike single-player games which primarily involve individual interaction with game content, multiplayer games require real-time communication, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative decision-making among players, all of which are closely related to the development of speaking skills. Such interactional features encourage learners to produce spontaneous language, respond to others, and maintain communication under time pressure (Sykes & Reinhardt, 2012). Despite this potential, most existing studies tend to emphasize general learning outcomes or instructional effectiveness, while learners' peer-based perceptions of using commercial multiplayer games for speaking practice remain underexplored. This gap is significant because learners' perceptions play an important role in shaping their motivation, engagement, and participation in language learning (Dörnyei, 2009). Furthermore, studies on commercial online games, as opposed to purpose-built educational games, are still relatively scarce in EFL speaking contexts (Lee & Drajati, 2019; Mustari et al., 2024), particularly those examining how spontaneous communication in multiplayer environments supports speaking development. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring EFL learners' perceptions of using Valorant as a medium for speaking practice.

Therefore, this study aims to explore EFL learners' perceptions of using Valorant as a medium for developing English speaking skills in an EFL context, with a particular focus on learners' experiences, motivation, and communicative engagement during gameplay. In line with this objective, the study seeks to investigate how peers perceive the use of Valorant as a medium for developing speaking skills in an EFL context and how they perceive the influence of playing Valorant on their motivation to communicate in English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) remains a significant challenge for many learners due to limited exposure to the target language, high levels of speaking anxiety, and insufficient opportunities for authentic communication (Bailey & Nunan, 2005; Horwitz et al., 1986). Speaking requires not only linguistic competence but also confidence, fluency, and the ability to interact spontaneously in real-time situations (Brown & Lee, 2025; Long, 1996). In many traditional classroom settings, opportunities for meaningful oral interaction are limited, which often results in low communicative competence and reduced learner confidence. These empirical challenges highlight the need for alternative learning environments that can provide more interactive and engaging opportunities for speaking practice. Immersive

learning environments such as English Day have been found to improve learners' speaking fluency and confidence through continuous real-life communication practice (Suseno & Rosdiana, 2025).

One approach that has gained increasing attention is digital game-based learning. Digital games are considered effective learning tools because they combine engagement, interaction, and immersive experiences that can facilitate authentic language use (Prensky, 2003). Recent studies have further demonstrated that digital game-based learning significantly enhances learners' motivation, engagement, and overall learning experience in language education (Nadeem et al., 2023; Zhou, 2024). From a theoretical perspective, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by (Davis, 1989) provides a useful framework for understanding learners' adoption of digital technologies. According to TAM, users' acceptance of a technology is influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. In the context of language learning, these factors play an important role in determining whether learners are willing to use digital games as a medium for practicing English. Games that are perceived as useful and easy to use are more likely to be adopted by learners as part of their informal learning practices.

Previous studies have demonstrated that digital games can create meaningful opportunities for language learning by providing interactive environments that encourage communication and collaboration (Reinders & Wattana, 2015). In multiplayer online games, players are required to communicate with others to achieve shared goals, which naturally promotes the use of language in authentic contexts. Research on massively multiplayer online games (MMOs) has shown that such environments facilitate negotiation of meaning, real-time interaction, and spontaneous language production, all of which are essential for developing speaking skills (Thorne et al., 2012). Similarly, multiplayer game-based tasks have been found to enhance learners' pragmatic competence and communicative ability through contextualized interaction (Sykes et al., 2008), while other studies highlight that game-based environments such as World of Warcraft provide affordances for collaborative communication and language use in meaningful contexts (Rama et al., 2012). More recent research also shows that digital game-based learning contributes significantly to the improvement of speaking skills and communicative competence, particularly through real-time interaction and task-based communication (Gunawan, 2025; Mustari et al., 2024; Safari, 2025). In addition, game-based environments can reduce affective barriers such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes, thereby encouraging learners to participate more actively in speaking activities (Aftinia et al., 2025).

In addition to speaking development, digital games also play a crucial role in shaping learners' motivation and engagement. According to (Dörnyei, 2009), motivation is closely related to learners' attitudes and perceptions toward the learning process. When learners perceive a learning tool as enjoyable and beneficial, they are more likely to engage actively and persist in their learning efforts. Empirical studies have confirmed that game-based learning environments increase learners' willingness to communicate and actively use the target language in meaningful contexts (Hilmun et al., 2020; Lee &

Drajati, 2019). Furthermore, recent systematic reviews highlight that digital game-based learning fosters collaborative learning, interaction, and sustained engagement, which are essential for language acquisition (Dwi Prastiwi & Lestari, 2025; Taş & Keleş, 2025; Yulistiyanı et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of research on digital game-based learning, most studies have focused on educational games, massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), or mobile learning applications (Peterson, 2010). Research on commercial competitive games, particularly tactical multiplayer games that require fast-paced communication, remains limited. Moreover, previous studies tend to emphasize learning outcomes or instructional effectiveness, while learners' peer-based perceptions and experiences are still underexplored. This indicates a gap in the literature, especially in understanding how learners perceive and utilize commercial games as informal learning tools in real-life contexts.

Therefore, this study addresses this gap by exploring peers' perceptions of using Valorant as a medium for developing English speaking skills in an EFL context. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on structured learning environments or educational games, this research investigates a commercial multiplayer game that requires real-time voice communication and collaboration. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on learner-centered perspectives, particularly how peers perceive the usefulness, ease of use, and motivational impact of using Valorant for speaking practice. By examining these aspects, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how informal digital environments can support language learning, especially in developing speaking skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods design to explore peers' perceptions of using Valorant as a medium for developing English speaking skills. Mixed-methods research combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, quantitative data were used to provide a general overview of learners' perceptions, while qualitative data were used to gain in-depth insights into their experiences. English speaking practice occurred naturally during gameplay rather than in a formal classroom setting, allowing for the exploration of authentic communicative experiences.

The participants of this study were peers who actively play Valorant and use English in voice chat during gameplay. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select participants who met specific criteria: (1) actively playing Valorant, (2) using English for in-game communication, and (3) having experience interacting with other players. A total of 20 participants completed a close-ended questionnaire, while five participants were selected for follow-up semi-structured interviews based on their willingness and the richness of their responses.

Data were collected using two instruments: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire consisted of 18 close-ended items measured using a four-point Likert scale, which were analyzed descriptively using percentages to identify

general patterns of participants' responses. The questionnaire focused on aspects such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, motivation, and learning behavior during gameplay. The semi-structured interviews consisted of eleven open-ended questions designed to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences, perceived benefits, challenges, and motivational aspects of using Valorant for speaking practice.

The data collection process was conducted in two stages. First, the questionnaire was distributed online to all participants to obtain a general overview of their perceptions. Participants completed the questionnaire voluntarily after being informed about the purpose of the study and ethical considerations, including confidentiality and informed consent. Second, follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted with five selected participants to explore their experiences in more depth. The interviews were carried out online and recorded with participants' consent.

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively using percentages, while the qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis within the interactive model of qualitative data analysis proposed by (Miles & Huberman, 1994), including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data triangulation was applied to enhance the credibility of the findings by comparing results from both data sources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the study and discusses the findings based on relevant theories to draw conclusions. This study employed a mixed-methods approach by combining questionnaire data and semi-structured interviews to explore 20 Valorant players' perceptions of using voice chat to improve English speaking skills. The questionnaire data were used to provide a general overview of participants' responses, while the interview data offered in-depth insights into their experiences. Data were collected online. The questionnaire examined players' perceptions across four aspects: perceived usefulness of voice chat, perceived ease of use, motivation and self-confidence in using English during gameplay, and learning behavior or self-regulation in developing speaking skills.

4.1 The use of Valorant as a medium for developing speaking skills in an EFL context

4.1.1 Perceived Usefulness

According to the data, most Valorant players perceived voice chat as a highly useful tool for improving their English-speaking skills. A large majority of respondents agreed that voice chat enhances their speaking practice, with 30% strongly agreeing and 65% agreeing, indicating that 95% of participants had a positive perception. Similarly, 60% strongly agreed and 35% agreed that playing Valorant increases their opportunities to practice speaking English. In terms of communication effectiveness, 55% agreed and 30% strongly agreed that voice chat makes their English communication more effective, although 15% expressed some

disagreement. Additionally, 60% agreed and 35% strongly agreed that voice chat makes it easier for them to practice speaking English. Overall, 50% agreed and 35% strongly agreed that voice chat in Valorant is useful for improving their English-speaking skills. These findings indicate that voice chat in Valorant is widely perceived as beneficial, particularly in enhancing speaking practice, increasing opportunities for communication, and facilitating more effective and easier use of English in a gaming context.

Table 4.1 Students’ Perceptions of the Usefulness of Voice Chat in Valorant for Improving English Speaking Skills

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
Using voice chat in Valorant improves my English speaking practice.	39	6	65	13	5	1	0	0
Playing Valorant increases my opportunities to practice speaking English.	60	12	35	7	5	1	0	0
Communicating through voice chat in Valorant makes my English communication more effective.	30	6	55	11	15	3	0	0
Using voice chat in Valorant makes it easier for me to practice speaking English.	35	7	60	12	5	1	0	0
Overall, I find voice chat in Valorant useful for improving my English speaking skills.	35	7	50	10	15	3	0	0

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: *“Voice chat is very useful. It forces me to speak quickly and clearly, especially when giving callouts. It helps me practice real-time communication.”*

P3: *“Very useful, it helps me improve quickly because I practice every game.”*

Both participants perceived voice chat in Valorant as a highly useful tool for improving English speaking skills. They emphasized that voice chat provides opportunities for real-time communication, requiring them to speak quickly, clearly, and consistently during gameplay. This continuous practice helps enhance their fluency and speaking ability, indicating that voice chat plays a significant role in facilitating effective and practical language use.

4.1.2 Perceived Ease of Use

The data indicate that most Valorant players generally perceive voice chat as relatively easy to use for communication in English, although some challenges remain. A majority of respondents agreed that learning to use voice chat is easy, with 15% strongly agreeing and 75% agreeing. Similarly, 20% strongly agreed and 65% agreed that voice chat is easy to use overall when communicating in English. However, when it comes to actual interaction with teammates, responses were more

varied, as 25% strongly agreed and 45% agreed, while 30% expressed disagreement. The greatest variation appeared in terms of clarity and understandability, where only 5% strongly agreed and 30% agreed, while a significant 65% of respondents reported difficulty, including 40% who strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that although voice chat is generally considered easy to learn and use, issues related to communication clarity may still hinder effective interaction for some players.

Table 4.2 Students’ Perceptions of the Ease of Use of Voice Chat in Valorant for English Communication

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
Learning to use voice chat in Valorant is easy for me.	15	3	75	15	10	2	0	0
Voice chat in Valorant is easy to use when communicating with teammates.	25	5	45	9	25	5	5	1
Communication through voice chat in Valorant is clear and understandable.	5	1	30	6	25	5	40	8
Overall, I find voice chat in Valorant easy to use for communicating in English.	20	4	65	13	15	3	0	0

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: *“It’s quite easy for me. At first, I struggled with pronunciation, but over time I got used to it. The biggest challenge was confidence.”*

P3: *“It’s quite easy for me now, though it was hard at first.”*

Both participants perceived voice chat in Valorant as relatively easy to use, although they experienced initial difficulties, particularly related to pronunciation and confidence. Over time, they became more comfortable and found it easier to communicate, indicating that ease of use improves with practice and experience.

4.2 The influence of playing Valorant on their motivation to communicate in English

4.2.1 Vividness of Future Self

According to the data, participants showed moderately positive perceptions regarding their ability to imagine themselves confidently speaking English in international Valorant matches. A total of 15% strongly agreed and 45% agreed, indicating that 60% of participants were able to visualize themselves as confident English speakers in future gaming contexts. However, 30% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed, suggesting that a considerable number of participants still experience uncertainty or lack of confidence in their future self-image. These findings indicate that while many players have developed a positive vision of their future English-speaking selves, confidence levels remain varied among individuals.

Table 4.3 Students’ Perceptions of Their Vividness of Future Self as English Speakers in Valorant Gameplay

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I can picture myself confidently speaking English in international Valorant matches.	15	3	45	9	30	6	10	2

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: *“I imagine myself speaking English fluently and naturally while playing. Yes, I feel confident about that.”*

P2: *“I imagine myself being more fluent but still careful. I feel moderately confident”*

Both participants were able to visualize themselves using English in future gameplay situations, indicating a generally positive future self-image. One participant expressed a high level of confidence, imagining fluent and natural communication, while the other showed moderate confidence, envisioning improvement but still with some caution. This suggests that although learners can picture themselves as more competent English speakers, their confidence levels vary.

4.2.2 Perceived Plausibility

According to the data, most participants perceived playing Valorant as a realistic way to improve their English speaking skills. A total of 20% strongly agreed and 60% agreed, indicating that 80% of participants held positive beliefs about the effectiveness of the game for language development. Meanwhile, 15% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed, showing that a small proportion of participants were less convinced about its impact. These findings suggest that the majority of players consider Valorant a plausible and practical medium for enhancing their English speaking ability, although some skepticism still exists among a minority of learners.

Table 4.4 Students’ Perceptions of the Plausibility of Using Valorant to Improve English Speaking Skills

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I believe that playing Valorant can realistically help me improve my English speaking skills.	20	4	60	12	15	3	5	1

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: *“Yes, definitely. Because it’s interactive and practical, not just theory.”*

P2: *“Yes, but it depends on consistency.”*

Both participants believed that playing Valorant can realistically help improve English speaking skills, indicating a generally positive perception of its effectiveness. One participant expressed strong confidence, emphasizing its practical and interactive nature, while the other showed a more cautious view, suggesting that its effectiveness depends on consistent practice. This implies that although the game is considered a plausible learning tool, its success may vary based on individual commitment.

4.2.3 Harmony between Ideal & Ought Selves

According to the data, a majority of participants felt encouraged to use English in Valorant due to expectations from other players. Specifically, 20% strongly agreed and 60% agreed, indicating that 80% of respondents were positively influenced by social pressure or communicative demands within the game. On the other hand, 15% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed, showing that a small number of participants did not feel significantly encouraged by these expectations. These findings suggest that the alignment between learners' ideal selves and the expectations of others (ought selves) plays an important role in motivating them to actively use English during gameplay.

Table 4.5 Students' Perceptions of the Harmony between Ideal and Ought Selves in Using English during Valorant Gameplay

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I feel encouraged to use English in Valorant because other players expect me to communicate in English.	20	4	60	12	15	3	5	1

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: *“Mostly personal desire. I want to improve, but also because English is commonly used in the game.”*

P2: *“My motivation comes from both my personal desire to improve and the expectations of other players.”*

Both participants indicated that their motivation to use English in Valorant comes from a combination of personal desire and external expectations. They expressed a willingness to improve their speaking skills while also recognizing the influence of the game environment, where English is commonly used and expected. This suggests that both internal and external factors work together in encouraging learners to actively use English during gameplay.

4.2.4 Activation (Priming)

According to the data, most participants felt that playing Valorant motivates them to use English more frequently. Specifically, 10% strongly agreed and 70% agreed, indicating that 80% of respondents experienced increased motivation to use English during gameplay. Meanwhile, 20% disagreed, showing that a smaller group of participants did not feel the same level of motivation. These findings suggest that Valorant plays a significant role in activating learners' use of English, as the interactive and communicative nature of the game encourages more frequent language use.

Table 4.6 Students' Perceptions of the Activation (Priming) Effect of Valorant on Their Use of English

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
Playing Valorant motivates me to use English more frequently.	10	2	70	14	20	4	0	0

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: *"It motivates me a lot. For example, when I need to lead the team, I'm pushed to speak more clearly"*

P3: *"The game pushes me to speak because communication is important to win."*

Both participants indicated that Valorant actively motivates them to use English more frequently during gameplay. They highlighted that game situations, such as leading a team or the need to win, push them to communicate more clearly and consistently. This suggests that the interactive and goal-oriented nature of the game plays an important role in activating learners' use of English.

4.2.5 Feared Self

According to the data, participants showed mixed perceptions regarding fear of being ignored when they cannot communicate well in English. A total of 15% strongly agreed and 20% agreed, indicating that 35% of participants experienced this concern. However, a larger proportion, 40% disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, meaning that 65% of respondents did not feel significantly afraid of being ignored. These findings suggest that while some learners still experience anxiety related to communication, the majority tend to feel relatively comfortable using English during gameplay, indicating lower levels of feared self among most participants.

Table 4.7 Students’ Perceptions of Feared Self in English Communication during Valorant Gameplay

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I am afraid of being ignored if I cannot communicate well in English while playing Valorant.	15	3	20	4	40	8	25	5

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: “Yes, especially at the beginning. I was afraid of being ignored, but now I don’t worry much.”

P2: “Yes, sometimes I feel nervous about misunderstanding others.”

These responses indicate that feelings of fear and anxiety are present among some participants, particularly at the early stages of using English in gameplay. However, such fears tend to decrease over time as players gain more experience and confidence. This supports the questionnaire findings, where although some participants reported fear of being ignored, the majority did not strongly agree, suggesting that anxiety exists but is not dominant and can be gradually reduced through continued practice.

4.2.6 Goal-setting (short-term steps)

The results show that participants demonstrate varied engagement in setting short-term goals during gameplay. A total of 55% of respondents (10% strongly agree and 45% agree) reported that they attempt to achieve specific targets, such as using more English words or phrases. However, a considerable proportion, 45% (30% disagree and 15% strongly disagree), indicated that they do not apply such strategies. This suggests that while goal-setting is practiced by some learners, it is not consistently adopted, and many players still rely on more spontaneous forms of communication rather than structured improvement efforts.

Table 4.8 Students’ Use of Goal-Setting (Short-Term Steps) in Practicing English during Valorant Gameplay

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I try to achieve specific targets, such as using more English words or phrases for communications during gameplay.	10	2	45	9	30	6	15	3

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: “Yes, I try to use new vocabulary every time I play.”

P4: “No, I don’t set specific goals.”

The responses show a contrast in participants’ use of goal-setting during gameplay. One participant actively tries to use new vocabulary in every game, indicating a conscious effort to improve speaking skills through specific targets. In contrast, another participant does not set any goals, relying entirely on spontaneous communication. This suggests that while some learners apply simple goal-setting strategies, others do not engage in structured efforts, supporting the finding that goal-setting is not consistently practiced among players.

4.2.7 Action planning

The data indicate that most participants do not actively engage in planning how they use English during gameplay, with 65% of respondents disagreeing and 5% strongly disagreeing with the statement. This shows that the majority of players rely on spontaneous communication rather than pre-planned strategies. Only a smaller proportion, 20% agreeing and 10% strongly agreeing, reported that they plan their language use. These findings suggest that English communication in Valorant is largely situational and reactive, with limited use of structured action planning among players.

Table 4.9 Students’ Use of Action Planning in English Communication during Valorant Gameplay

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I plan how to use English when communicating with teammates in Valorant.	10	2	20	4	65	13	5	1

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: *“Sometimes I prepare common callouts or phrases.”*

P4: *“Not really planning, I just speak naturally.”*

The findings indicate that planning how to use English is not consistently practiced among participants. Some players occasionally prepare simple elements, such as common callouts or phrases, showing a limited form of action planning. However, others do not plan at all and rely on spontaneous communication during gameplay. This suggests that action planning is not a common practice and that language use in Valorant tends to be immediate and situational rather than structured.

4.2.8 Learning techniques

The data indicate that most participants tend to apply certain learning techniques when using English during gameplay. A majority of 75% (45% strongly agree and 30% agree) reported that they make efforts to manage how they use English when communicating with teammates. However, a smaller portion, 25% (10%

disagree and 15% strongly disagree), indicated that they do not engage in such practices. These findings suggest that, although not universal, many players demonstrate an active awareness of their language use, reflecting a more intentional approach to learning compared to purely spontaneous communication.

Table 4.10 Students’ Use of Learning Techniques in Practicing English during Valorant Gameplay

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I plan how to use English when communicating with teammates in Valorant.	45	9	30	6	10	2	15	3

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P2: “I listen carefully and imitate others.”

P5: “I learn from teammates and repeat expressions I hear often.”

The findings show that participants commonly use informal learning techniques during gameplay, particularly through listening, imitation, and repetition. These strategies reflect an active effort to improve their English by learning from teammates and adapting commonly used expressions. This supports the questionnaire results, indicating that many players engage in practical and interaction-based learning techniques rather than relying solely on spontaneous communication.

4.2.9 Self-regulation (monitoring progress)

The data suggest that most participants do not consistently monitor their progress in speaking English during gameplay. A majority of 70% (45% disagree and 25% strongly disagree) indicated that they do not pay close attention to their development, while only 30% (10% strongly agree and 20% agree) reported actively tracking their progress. This implies that self-regulation in the form of monitoring improvement is relatively limited, and many players rely more on natural engagement rather than consciously evaluating their speaking development.

Table 4.11 Students’ Self-Regulation in Monitoring Their English Speaking Progress during Valorant Gameplay

Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
I pay attention to my progress in speaking English while playing Valorant.	10	2	20	4	45	9	25	5

SA: Strongly agree A: Agree D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

P1: “Yes, I notice I speak faster and more confidently now.”

P4: “No, I don’t pay much attention to progress.”

These responses reveal that self-monitoring is not consistently practiced among participants. Some players are aware of their improvement, such as becoming more fluent and confident, indicating a certain level of self-regulation. However, others do not pay attention to their progress at all, relying solely on participation without reflection. This supports the questionnaire results, suggesting that monitoring progress is relatively limited and not a common habit among most players.

The findings of this study indicate that voice chat in Valorant plays a meaningful role in supporting English speaking development among EFL learners. Most participants perceived it as useful for practicing real-time communication, improving fluency, and increasing confidence. This supports the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Fred D. Davis, which states that perceived usefulness influences users' acceptance of technology. It also aligns with previous studies (Reinders & Wattana, 2015; Ananda et al, 2025; Sardi et al., 2025) highlighting those digital games provide authentic opportunities for language use. In terms of perceived ease of use, voice chat was generally considered manageable; however, some participants experienced difficulties related to fast-paced communication and limited vocabulary, suggesting that ease of use is influenced not only by the technology itself but also by learners' language proficiency.

Regarding motivation and self-confidence, the findings show that Valorant encourages learners to use English through both personal motivation and game-related demands. This is consistent with Zoltán Dörnyei's theory emphasizing the role of motivation in language learning. Although some participants initially experienced anxiety, most reported increased confidence over time, supporting the idea that repeated practice can reduce speaking anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986).

In terms of learning behavior, most participants relied on informal strategies such as listening, imitation, and repetition rather than structured planning or goal-setting. This indicates that learning in gaming contexts tends to be incidental and interaction-based (Reinders, 2017), yet still contributes to improvements in speaking skills. Overall, while Valorant can effectively support speaking development through authentic interaction and increased motivation, its effectiveness may vary depending on individual proficiency and learning preferences; therefore, it is best viewed as a complementary tool rather than a replacement for formal language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study explored EFL learners' perceptions of using Valorant as a medium for developing English speaking skills in an EFL context. The findings indicate that voice chat in Valorant can function as an effective tool for supporting speaking development, particularly in enhancing fluency, confidence, and real-time communication skills. Most participants perceived voice chat as useful and motivating, as it provides authentic opportunities to use English in meaningful and interactive contexts, where communication is necessary for successful collaboration.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to the growing body of research on digital game-based learning and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) by highlighting the role of informal, game-mediated interaction in supporting speaking development. The results suggest that language learning in multiplayer online games occurs in a largely spontaneous and interaction-driven manner, aligning with the concept of informal language learning, where learners acquire language through authentic use rather than structured instruction. This study also extends previous research by emphasizing that real-time voice-based interaction in commercial multiplayer games creates a unique environment for developing communicative competence, particularly through immediate feedback, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative communication.

In terms of novelty, this study demonstrates that commercial tactical multiplayer games such as Valorant provide a distinctive context for English speaking practice that differs from traditional classroom settings and purpose-built educational games. The requirement for real-time communication, combined with high levels of engagement and collaboration, offers learners a dynamic space to practice spontaneous speaking, which is often limited in formal EFL environments.

However, the findings also reveal that learning in this context tends to be informal and unstructured, as most participants did not engage in explicit strategies such as planning, goal-setting, or systematic self-monitoring. Instead, they relied on natural interaction processes such as listening, imitation, and repetition. This suggests that while such environments are beneficial, their effectiveness may vary depending on individual differences, including learners' confidence, proficiency, and willingness to communicate.

Therefore, from a pedagogical perspective, this study suggests that integrating commercial multiplayer games into language learning—particularly within CALL or blended learning frameworks—can enhance students' speaking opportunities and motivation. However, to maximize learning outcomes, such informal practices should be complemented with structured instructional support, such as guided reflection, vocabulary scaffolding, or task-based activities. By combining informal game-based interaction with formal learning strategies, educators can create a more balanced and effective approach to developing EFL speaking skills.

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