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LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN THE GAME CHAT OF RISE OF KINGDOM

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Abstract
The rapid development of online games has given rise to dynamic virtual communities, where language plays a central role in strategic coordination and social bonding. The participants were the players of Rise of Kingdoms Game and the data were taken from the chat between the players. This study examined the linguistic characteristics used in Rise of Kingdoms (RoK) chat and how these elements have function in communication between players. Qualitative descriptive discourse analysis was used to collect data in the form of randomly selected English conversation logs through manual transcription of alliance messages and private conversations. The study identified five main categories of abbreviations as the result, such as TP for teleport, technical acronyms like AoE and YSG, register loans like DM, metaphorical extensions like Kraken for high-spending players, and player identity markers like F2P.

Keywords— Abbreviation, Acronyms, Chat, Games, Linguistics Features, Rise of Kingdom

Introduction
The rapid growth of online gaming has fundamentally transformed how people interact and form communities. Games are one of the media for children to learn that can develop connitivous, social, emotional and physical students, (Khasanah, 2025). In recent years, the expansion of online gaming have revolutionized the entertainment industry and created a new arena for social interaction as (Alafnan, 2025). Online games have developed rapidly. Playing online game can have an impact on an adolescent's physical health, (Wibowo, Belladiena, & Nuswantoro, 2024). Modern games are not only entertainment but also social platforms where players form relationships and express their identities through language. Within these virtual spaces, players from diverse linguistic backgrounds communicate in real time, often under intense time constraints. One emerging phenomenon is the use of specialized vocabulary and communication

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norms, or jargon, which serves as a linguistic hallmark of gaming subcultures. For example, Kowert in (Sehar, 2025) notes that the term *"gamer"* itself has become everyday jargon in gaming culture, reflecting how strongly language and identity are intertwined for players.

Rise of Kingdoms (RoK) is a massively multiplayer online (MMO) strategy game in which players build civilizations, form alliances, and wage wars in real time. Since its release in 2018 by Lilith Games, RoK has attracted over 100 million downloads and remains one of the top-grossing strategy games. The game features various chat channels – including alliance, kingdom, and world chat – where players coordinate actions, negotiate, and socialize. In such contexts, efficient communication is essential: a study of Valorant noted that in-game chat is an essential way for players to speak to other players and coordinate strategies, (Susanti, 2021). Similarly, RoK players rely on chat to manage alliances and execute collective gameplay. However, the language of these chats is informal, fast-paced, and scattered with abbreviations, memes, and buzzwords. This suggests that the in-game chat environment forms its own speech community, with shared linguistic practices and in-group codes.

Despite its importance, the linguistic dynamics of Rise of Kingdoms chat have not been thoroughly studied. Existing literature on gaming discourse has examined toxicity, power dynamics, and inclusivity, as well as general gamer slang in titles like Valorant and Fortnite. Yet, each game can have unique terminology tied to its mechanics and culture. RoK's global player base, including many non-native English speakers likely produces a rich mix of linguistic features in chat. Usually online game players communicate in their way to improve their English vocabulary. The use of English language reflecting some characters in online games has given deep impact to the awareness of English vocabulary (Prihandini, Sudana, & Kurniawan, 2021). Given the increasing role of digital communication in everyday life, understanding how language functions in games like RoK can illuminate broader issues of language change, slang adoption, and intercultural exchange.

This research, therefore investigates the linguistic features and jargon present in Rise of Kingdoms in-game chat. The study is important both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it contributes to our understanding of how language evolves in digital communities, reinforcing the view that game chats are lush ground for discourse study of language and power. Practically, insights from this research may help game designers and community managers improve communication tools, and help language educators recognize how gaming influences modern English usage. By blending theories of sociolinguistics and computer-mediated communication with empirical analysis of RoK chat logs, this research establishes an academic foundation for exploring video game discourse.

Literature Review

Definition of Terms

This research focuses on two core concepts: linguistic features and in-game chat within the context of Rise of Kingdoms. Linguistic features refer to the structural characteristics of language usage including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse practices that are observable in communication. In online gaming, linguistic features include things like abbreviations (e.g. *brb*,

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gg), acronyms (e.g. *AFK* for *away from keyboard*), slang, and emoticons. For example, (Sehar, 2025) described how gaming language often involves time-sensitive communication that leads to brevity and creative word forms. Gamer language shows lexical innovation: new words or repurposed old words (e.g. *noob*) that serve context-specific functions. These features emerge to succinctly convey complex game tactics and culture.

In-game chat is the real-time text (or voice) communication feature built into many multiplayer games. In Rise of Kingdoms, chat channels allow players to communicate without leaving the game interface. This study will analyze text-based chat, which often appears as a scrolling window in the game UI. In-game chat can be public (visible to all players in a kingdom) or private (e.g., alliance-only). It serves both strategic and social functions: players use it to coordinate attacks, share resources, recruit members, or simply socialize. For the purposes of this research, *in-game chat* refers specifically to the textual exchanges between players within RoK's interface. As (Susanti, 2021) demonstrates in Valorant, "the in-game chat feature is an essential way for players to speak to other players" during gameplay. In this context, researcher will focus on the *language content* of these chat messages rather than the technical mechanics of the chat system.

Computer-Mediated Communication in Online Games

Online multiplayer games like *Rise of Kingdoms* are inherently forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC). Players collaborate and compete through in-game chat and other digital channels, creating a new culture of communication. As (Khairunisa, 2022) observed, "CMC in MMORPGs occurs between players who are in different places but placed in one team. CMC is becoming a new culture of playing games together". In this context, game chat becomes a key site of social interaction: players often judge and adapt to each other based on in-game conversation, learning to tolerate cultural differences and cooperate across linguistic barriers. Gaming CMC thus blurs geographic and social distance, with participants gaining confidence in language use and teamwork through such mediated interaction.

Other studies echo that players view game communication instrumentally. For example, Leeuwen in (Sehar, 2025) found that League of Legends players often treat in-game chat "regardless of its content" as a potential precursor to team breakdowns. This suggests that gamers can be skeptical of chat, perceiving it as risky rather than purely informative. In sum, the literature positions online game-chat both as a collaborative channel and as a social battleground: it enables teamwork across distances, but also carries the risk of misunderstanding and conflict.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design aimed at producing a detailed, contextualized account of language use in the Rise of Kingdoms game chat. Qualitative description is appropriate for exploring phenomena in natural settings without statistical measurement. It focuses on presenting participants' language in everyday terms, rather than quantifying it. In this context, the goal is to describe the variety of linguistic forms and communicative strategies used

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by players in Rise of Kingdoms chat. Rather than testing a hypothesis, the study seeks to document and categorize patterns of language use (such as jargon, speech acts, and discourse markers) as they naturally occur.

The data are collected from the chat between the players and then they are analyzed and classified based on those chats. A qualitative descriptive design aligns well with discourse analysis in computer-mediated communication (CMC). By analyzing in-game chat messages, the research examines language-in-use among players in a virtual environment. Discourse analysis offers the theoretical framework: it treats chat as placed discourse that reflects social relations and community standards within the game. For example, recent work notes that discourse analysis can reveal how player language constructs power relations, ideologies, and community bonds in online gaming (Alafnan, 2025).

In a similar manner, this study uses a discourse-analytic perspective to discover how linguistic choices in the game (jargon, abbreviations, etc.) function pragmatically during the gameplay. Thus, the research design is qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive, focusing on meaning and context rather than numeric measurement. The specific objectives are to (a) document the types of specialized vocabulary and in-game slang (jargon) used by players, (b) identify pragmatic markers (e.g. greetings, requests, compliments) in chat, and (c) illustrate how these features facilitate teamwork, coordination, or social bonding. By adopting a flexible, descriptive approach, the study can capture nuances of player communication (e.g. tone, context, and intent) that might be missed by quantitative methods.

Result and Discussion

Result

In the chat data, was frequently observed by the researcher. game-specific jargon – specialized terms and abbreviations that have meaning only within the Rise of Kingdoms community. For example, players may write “Come tp here!”, using “tp” as a verb meaning “moving”. These invented or repurposed terms allow players to communicate complex commands succinctly. Such jargon serves as in-group shorthand: it streamlines coordination but also reinforces community membership. As (Alafnan, 2025) observes, gamers often “wield language as a form of social capital,” using certain terms to signal that one belongs to the group. In other words, knowing and using the proper game jargon marks a player as experienced and part of the guild, while outsiders or novices who do not understand the terms may feel excluded.

(1) Example 1 - TP

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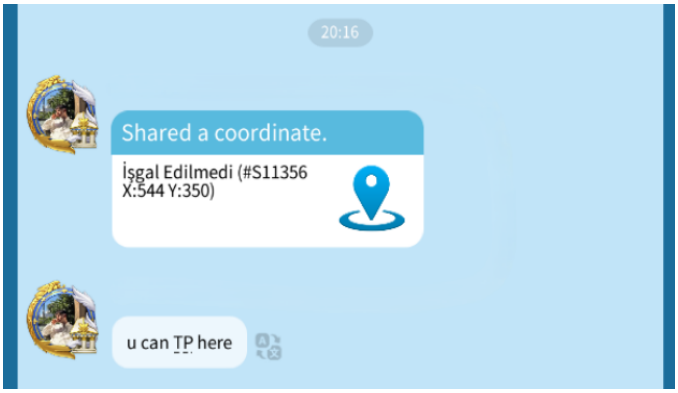


Figure 1

Player A: u can TP here

In this example, "TP" is a standard abbreviation for "teleport," which moves a city instantly to a designated coordinate in the game context. Experienced players know that "TP here" means using a teleport item to the specified location (e.g. #S11356 X:544 Y:350).

By using "TP" instead of the full word, players save time and avoid ambiguity during an urgent moment. For outsiders, this shorthand might be indecipherable, but for alliance members or players it immediately triggers the full battle plan. These examples show that jargon both speeds up communication under pressure and reinforces the alliance's shared knowledge.

(2) Example 2 – Ball

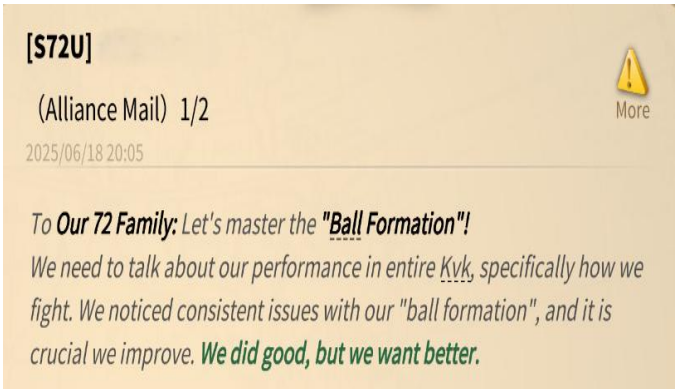


Figure 2

Alliance Mail: To Our 72 Family: Lets master the "Ball Formation"!

In this context, "Ball" describes a tight defensive clustering of troops resembling a ball shape on the map. In sociolinguistic terms, it's a semantic compression of tactical procedure into

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jargon, reflecting lexical efficiency and in-group identity: out-group players would need explanation, while insiders grasp full meaning immediately

(3) Example 3 - DM



Figure 3

Player A: Look dm Luke

In here, "DM" borrows from broader digital discourse ("direct message") and embeds it in-game. Linguistically, this is register borrowing, drawing on shared digital conventions to convey meta-communication about private chat a reflection of hybrid CMC vocabulary. This term signals a meta communication discussing how communication happens rather than what is communicated.

(4) Example 4 – AoE & YSG

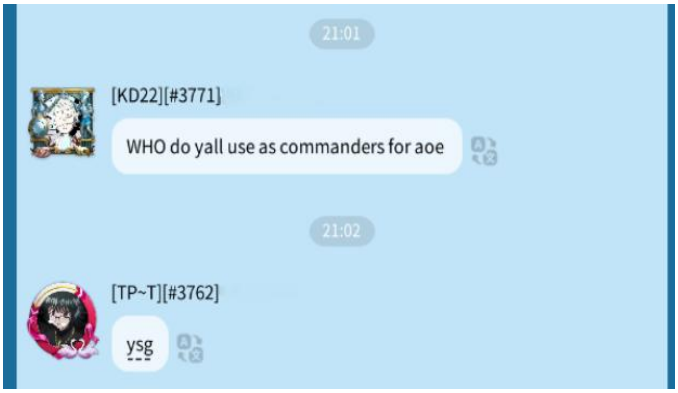


Figure 4

Player A: WHO do y'all use as commanders for aoe
Player B: ysg

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In this case, AoE ("Area of Effect") is a prime example of technical jargon widely adopted and adapted by the Rise of Kingdoms community, demonstrating the efficiency and specificity required for tactical communication in a complex strategy game.

In Rise of Kingdoms, "AoE" retains its core meaning, specifically refers to commander skills or troop attacks that damage or affect multiple units or an entire area on the map. Commanders like Yi Seong-Gye (YSG), Zhuge Liang, and Liu Che are often described as having strong "AoE" skills.

Meanwhile, "YSG" is a prime example of an initialism/acronym used as proper noun shorthand within the Rise of Kingdoms community, reflecting both efficiency and the high prominence of specific game entities.

In summary, "AoE" and "YSG" are excellent examples of the linguistic features of acronymization, initialize, and semantic precision driven by the need for efficiency and functional communication within the Rise of Kingdoms in-game chat. They demonstrate how players adapt and create a specialized lexicon to navigate the complexities of the game, share strategic insights, and build a common understanding within their community.

(5) Example 5 – Kraken



Figure 5

Player A: How many kraken in 71
Player B: [Showing a photo]
Player A: 3

In this context, the term "kraken" in Rise of Kingdoms serves as a potent example of specialized jargon that has emerged from and is largely confined to the game's community, particularly within its in-game chat environments. In common parlance and mythology, a "kraken" refers to a gigantic, legendary sea monster. This primary meaning evokes images of immense size, power, and perhaps a somewhat mythical or awe-inspiring presence.

In Rise of Kingdoms, the term undergoes semantic extension to metaphorically describe a player who has spent an *exorbitant* amount of real-world money on the game. This financial

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investment translates directly into unparalleled in-game power, resources, and progression speed. The metaphor is apt: just as a mythical kraken dominates the seas, a "Kraken" player dominates the game world through sheer financial might, often appearing unstoppable and overwhelming to other players. This shows how existing vocabulary is repurposed and given new, game-specific connotations.

(6) Example 6 – F2P

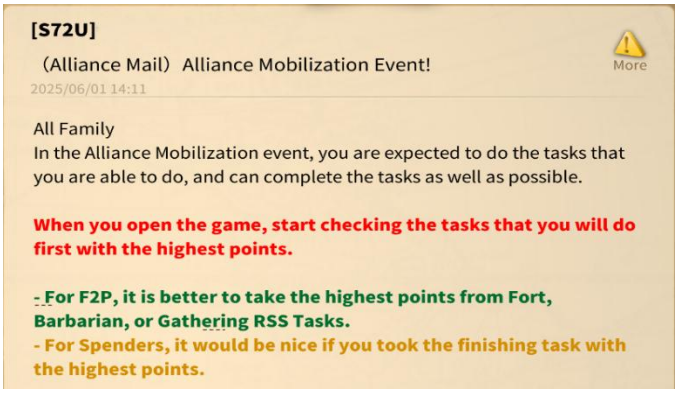


Figure 6

"F2P" or widely known as Free-2(to)-Play is a foundational term in the Rise of Kingdoms lexicon, not just describing a player type but also embodying a significant aspect of the game's economic model and the social dynamics within its community. The term "F2P" is a widely recognized acronym in Rise of Kingdoms, serving as a crucial piece of jargon that describes a player's financial engagement with the game. Its usage in chat reveals insights into player identity, social stratification, and strategic advice.

One of the most common uses of "F2P" in chat is in the context of strategic advice. Players will ask for or offer "F2P-friendly" commander pairings, research priorities, event strategies, or resource management tips. This indicates the term's practical utility in guiding gameplay. It allows players to quickly understand the context of advice given namely, that it's tailored for someone playing without the benefit of financial boosts.

Similar to "AoE" and "YSG," "F2P" provides a highly concise and efficient way to convey a significant amount of information about a player's economic status and play style. This brevity is essential for rapid communication in real-time chat, especially during alliance discussions or when seeking specific advice. In conclusion, "F2P" is a crucial piece of jargon in Rise of Kingdom in-game chat. Its analysis reveals how players use language to; categorize and identify themselves and others based on financial engagement, reflect and discuss the economic realities and social hierarchy within the game, facilitate strategic advice and community support tailored to specific play styles, lastly to embody the efficiency of communication through acronymization in a dynamic gaming environment.

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Discussion

Linguistic features identified in Rise of Kingdoms (RoK) in-game chat, as detailed in the preceding findings. By systematically analyzing these observations through the theoretical frameworks of sociolinguistics and computer-mediated communication (CMC), this discussion aims to provide a thorough response to the core problem statement outlined. Specifically, it will explore the characteristic linguistic features and jargon, their communicative functions, and their profound role in shaping player communication and community identity within the dynamic environment of RoK.

The Lexicon of RoK: Terminology and Specialized Vocabulary

The Rise of Kingdoms chat environment cultivates a unique lexicon, characterized by game-specific jargon, abbreviations, and repurposed terms. This specialized vocabulary functions as a distinct linguistic hallmark of the gaming subculture, enabling highly efficient communication while simultaneously signaling in-group membership. The linguistic data reveal a dynamic system of lexical innovation. This system is driven by the specific communicative needs inherent in the game, particularly the demand for brevity in time-sensitive interactions, as observed by (Sehar, 2025) regarding gaming language. The abbreviation and borrowing seen in "TP" and "DM," and the metaphorical extension in "Kraken" all underscore how digital communities actively shape language to suit their unique interactional demands.

Analysis of Specific Jargon Examples:

"TP" (Teleport): As an abbreviation for "teleport," "TP" is used to command or suggest instantly moving a city to a designated coordinate. This is a classic example of clipping and abbreviation, driven by the imperative for speed and efficiency in real-time chat. While indecipherable to outsiders, it is immediately clear to insiders, reinforcing group cohesion. As (Alafnan, 2025) observes, gamers often "wield language as a form of social capital," and the fluent use of "TP" perfectly illustrates this by marking players as experienced and integrated within the community.

“Ball" (Ball Formation): This condensed term describes a "tight defensive clustering of troops" on the map. It represents a semantic compression of a complex tactical procedure, reflecting both lexical efficiency and a strong sense of in-group identity. This term functions as a cognitive shortcut; it does not merely shorten a phrase but triggers an entire mental model of a complex maneuver. This reduces cognitive load during critical moments, allowing players to instantly recall and execute a strategy without lengthy explanations. The efficiency gained is not just in typing fewer letters but in facilitating advanced strategic coordination, enabling more complex gameplay to be managed through simplified linguistic cues.

“DM" (Direct Message): Borrowed from broader digital discourse, "DM" signifies a "direct message" for private chat within the game. This is an instance of "register borrowing," where conventions from general computer-mediated communication (CMC) are integrated into the specific gaming context, highlighting the hybrid nature of gaming vocabulary. The use of "DM" indicates that RoK chat is not a closed linguistic system but one that actively draws from wider

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internet communication norms. This fluid boundary between general CMC and game-specific discourse implies a constant evolution through borrowing and adaptation. Furthermore, the term signals "meta-communication" discussions about how communication itself occurs, not solely about the game's content demonstrating the sophistication of player interaction.

"AoE" (Area of Effect) & "YSG" (Yi Seong-Gye): "AoE" refers to commander skills or troop attacks that affect multiple units or an entire area, while "YSG" is an acronym for the commander Yi Seong-Gye. These are prime examples of technical jargon and initialisms/acronyms, demonstrating the necessity for efficiency and precision in tactical communication, especially concerning game mechanics and prominent entities. (Alnadi, 2024) notes that English words are "predominantly inserted in the form of individual words or short phrases, particularly in relation to gaming-specific vocabulary," even in multilingual contexts. This reinforces why terms like "AoE" and "YSG" are widely adopted and understood across the global player base.

"Kraken": This metaphorical term describes a player who has spent an "exorbitant amount of real-world money" to gain unparalleled in-game power. This term showcases semantic extension and metaphorical usage, reflecting the game's economic model and the social hierarchy it creates, where financial investment directly translates into in-game dominance. The term "Kraken" carries significant social weight, implicitly acknowledging power imbalances within the game where financial capital translates to in-game dominance. It serves as a linguistic tool to categorize players and understand their potential impact on game play, directly relating to how language reflects and constructs social power within a community, as discussed in sociolinguistic dynamics literature. The widespread understanding of this term suggests that the game's economic structure profoundly influences its social dynamics and the language used to describe them, serving as a linguistic tool for acknowledging and navigating the game's inherent inequalities.

"F2P" (Free-2-Play): This acronym describes a player who does not spend real money on the game. "F2P" is a foundational term that categorizes player identity based on financial engagement. Its usage facilitates strategic advice tailored to specific play styles, reflecting the economic realities and social hierarchy within the game. The term "F2P" is not merely a label; it functions as a critical filter for advice and strategy. Players explicitly seek "F2P-friendly" tips, indicating that the community recognizes distinct play styles and needs based on financial investment. This segmentation allows for targeted support and advice, fostering a sense of shared experience among those with similar economic constraints. This demonstrates how language actively structures community support systems and strategic discussions, ensuring that advice is relevant and actionable for different player demographics.

Conclusion

The findings of this research, gave a comprehensive summary of the linguistic features and jargon identified in Rise of Kingdoms (RoK) in-game chat. It then delves into the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, before proposing avenues for future research. This

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research embarked on an exploration of the intricate linguistic landscape within Rise of Kingdoms' in-game chat, aiming to understand the characteristic linguistic features and jargon, their communicative functions, and their role in shaping player communication and community identity. The central problem addressed by this thesis was: "What are the characteristic linguistic features and jargon of Rise of Kingdoms in-game chat, and how do they function in player communication?" The analysis yielded several key conclusions in response to this overarching question and its sub-issues:

First, the study extensively documented the specialized terminology, or jargon, that dominates RoK chat. Terms such as "TP" (teleport), "Ball" (troop formation), "DM" (direct message), "AoE" (Area of Effect), "YSG" (Yi Seong-Gye), "Kraken" (high-spending player), and "F2P" (Free-2-Play) are not arbitrary. Instead, they represent a dynamic system of lexical innovation driven by the need for brevity and precision in time-sensitive interactions. These terms demonstrate semantic compression, abbreviation, register borrowing, and metaphorical extension, all serving to convey complex game concepts efficiently.

Second, the research identified prevalent linguistic patterns beyond individual terms. The widespread use of abbreviations and acronyms is a hallmark of RoK chat, enabling players to convey extensive information with minimal characters, crucial under intense game play constraints. This aligns with observations that gaming language often involves time-sensitive communication leading to brevity and creative word forms by (Sehar, 2025).

Third, the study interpreted the functional significance of these linguistic choices. Jargon primarily enhances communication efficiency and strategic coordination, allowing for rapid and unambiguous communication during complex in-game actions. However, this efficiency creates a paradox: while highly effective for insiders, it simultaneously forms a significant barrier for newcomers, highlighting that gaming jargon can "foster group cohesion but also create barriers for newcomers". Beyond strategic utility, pragmatic markers like "pls," "ty," "lol," and various emoticons play a vital social role. These elements, though low in literal meaning, are crucial for managing interpersonal rapport, expressing attitude, and fostering camaraderie, humanizing text-based interactions and strengthening social bonds within alliances. "Lol," for instance, often functions as a discourse marker to signal light-heartedness or mitigate potentially aggressive statements, thereby managing "facework" and preventing misinterpretation by (De, 2021).

Finally, the research explored how jargon and linguistic patterns signal community identity. The fluent use and understanding of RoK-specific jargon clearly mark in-group membership, differentiating experienced players from novices. This phenomenon aligns with the idea that gaming acronyms serve as "linguistic markers that differentiate insiders from outsiders" by (Susanti, 2021) Knowing and using the jargon act as a form of "social capital," granting players a sense of belonging and credibility (Alafnan, 2025). This linguistic cohesion, however, also acts as a "gate keeping" mechanism, creating a barrier for those unfamiliar with the linguistic code. The language also reflects power dynamics, with terms like "Kraken" acknowledging financial investment as a source of in-game dominance. Overall, RoK chat functions as a vibrant "linguistic ecosystem" where language is constantly evolving to meet multifaceted communicative purposes, reflecting the community's unique needs, culture, and social structures.

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