

## REVEALING LANGUAGE LEARNING POTENTIAL: EXPLORING DISCORD AS A DYNAMIC TOOL FOR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

**Atoriq Nurriza, Alvanda Adindra**

Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang

atoriq.nurriza.2202218@students.um.ac.id

alvanda.adindra.2202218@students.um.ac.id

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**Abstract:** : This study explores the potential of the Discord application as a tool for language acquisition, specifically focusing on its effectiveness from the perspective of its users. This study aims to give another perspective about language acquisition in discord application through Discord's user perspective. A qualitative approach with thematic analysis were employed in this study which employed interviews as methods of data collection. The participants of this study were users from discord that already joined Discord at least two years ago. To make the results have an impact on education, the participants are also students from high school or university in Indonesia. The Findings showed that users give positive opinions about the use of Discord as a learning media of English. The Discord application provides an advantage as a learning tool or media for the acquisition of English. The learning process is facilitated by the Discord application, which is user-friendly and provides a variety of features to aid in the development of speaking skills..

Keywords: discord, discord's user, perspective discord's user, language

### INTRODUCTION

Currently, people extensively use the internet and social media as tools for education, communication, community building, job searching, gaming, and other purposes. The rapid advancement of science and technology necessitates the implementation of changes as well as the study of multimedia technologies for English language training (Kumar et al., 2021). When studying English as a second language (SLA), learners can enhance their English language skills with various media. These factors also encourage many students to use social media as a medium for improving their speaking skills, particularly in the post-pandemic era where learning involves not only traditional methods but also technology. The technologies have succeeded in replacing conventional language education (Kumar et al., 2021). Scholz (2017) conducted another study where they utilized World of Warcraft outside of the classroom, followed by a class discussion about it. Based on those two studies, it can see that since the pre-pandemic era, many teachers have used social media, especially games, for learning.

Miarso (2009) defined learning media as any tool that engages students' emotions, thoughts, motivation, and focus, thereby facilitating the learning process. Furthermore, Musfiqon (2012) characterized it as an instrument, either intangible or material, utilized by teachers to provide content and enhance its efficacy and efficiency for students. According to Smaldino et al. (2014), there are six fundamental categories of media utilized in the teaching

and learning process: text, audio, images, video, tools (items), and individuals. Books, posters, written materials on boards, and digital displays on computer screens are examples of textual information. Audio covers all auditory things, whether live or recorded, including voice, music, environmental sounds, and noise. Visuals cover all visual representations, including diagrams on computer screens, board illustrations, photographs, graphics in books, cartoons, and similar formats. Video is a medium that combines audio and visual elements, producing auditory motions that can be saved on DVDs, streamed online, or shown as computer animations, among other formats. Students can manipulate and interact with physical objects and models, which are three-dimensional objects. Students can also be considered media because they play a critical role in education, where students acquire knowledge from classmates, teachers, and adults.

Furthermore, Smaldino et al. (2014) suggested that teachers can employ collaborative learning tools such as classroom websites, wikis, social networking platforms, and learning management systems to facilitate 21st-century students' learning across diverse levels aligned with their objectives and predicted outcomes. Previous theories classify Discord as a learning management system, encompassing five of the six fundamental media types: words, sounds, pictures, video, and interpersonal interaction. One of the social media platforms that enthusiasts worldwide employ to facilitate communication while playing online games is Discord. After creating a Discord account, users can select the subjects in which they want to participate by creating or joining specific servers or "groups." The desktop version of Discord's user interface matches that of the mobile version, including its features. The user must swipe left to view the server list, as well as the text and voice channel lists. Viewers can reach the primary interface displaying the messaging feature by swiping right. There have been several reports on the practical application of Discord as an educational medium. Ramadhan and Albaekani (2021) the use of Discord in relation to students' speaking skills, focusing on the application's effectiveness, practicality, and lightweight characteristics, particularly its size and voice chat capabilities. The research primarily examined the perspective of senior high school students. Wulanjani (2018) highlighted the impact of Discord on students' listening skills, highlighting its potential to transform students' attitudes, fostering more activity, interactivity, motivation, and creativity. The research samples concentrated on university students. Odinkaya et al. (2021) demonstrated statistical findings regarding Discord's impact on EFL students' word understanding.

Arifianto and Izzudin (2021) demonstrated students' acceptance of the perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) of Discord as an educational platform. Discord offers a stimulating and user-friendly platform that does not require significant mobile data usage. Nevertheless, their comprehensive study indicates that students' resistance to utilizing Discord is primarily due to external factors, which include internet connectivity, compatible devices, and students' enthusiasm for learning during the pandemic. Furthermore, the research samples concentrated on university students.

The research on the use of Discord as a language learning tool has predominantly focused on the perspectives of students and teachers, emphasizing its application in formal educational settings. The present study offers significant understanding of the platform's efficacy and educational possibilities. This limitation makes it hard to get a full picture of how Discord can help with second language acquisition (SLA), since the information is mainly based on structured learning settings and not on the details of less formal learning situations. Consequently, institutional expectations and traditional learning frameworks may skew or bias these findings.

The aim of this study is to provide a new perspective on Discord as a Learning Media for Second Language Acquisition. However, most previously mentioned studies have not

explored Discord from the user's perspective, instead focusing solely on how students and teachers use it for English learning and teaching, potentially leading to bias in the research. Therefore, to avoid bias, the researchers conducted this study with participants who utilize Discord as a Learning Media for Second Language Acquisition, representing diverse perspectives.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This current study employed a qualitative approach with thematic analysis that was particularly suited for exploring user perspectives and experiences on Discord in second language acquisition (SLA). Thematic analysis allowed the researchers to identify, analyse, and report patterns within qualitative data. This approach involved systematically coding and categorizing comments to uncover underlying themes related to the educational use of Discord, thereby provided a comprehensive understanding the role as a learning tool.

Additionally, thematic analysis can be adapted to different research questions and data types, making it ideal for studying digital platforms like Discord, where user experiences are diverse and context-dependent (Nowell et al., 2017). By focusing on themes that emerge from users' interactions, this design could highlight the benefits and challenges associated with using Discord for SLA, provided insights that might not surface through quantitative approaches alone.

### **Participants**

They were three students. Student A, Student B, and Student C were enrolled in this study. The users were selected using purposive sampling, as this was a narrative study that relied largely on the stories provided by the participants. The participants were selected based on their motivations for joining and the amount of time they have spent on Discord, which must be at least two years. This criterion was important since it was ideal to have participants who had spent a significant amount of time on the application. This allowed the researcher to collect a greater number of stories from the participants.

### **Data Collection**

Interviews served as the study's primary data collection methods. After three months of closely observing the users, participants were interviewed to learn about their experiences and opinions. The interview questions cover the following topics: why they joined the discord, their experience there, their preferred channels for honing their English skills in the online community, and their assessment of the overall experience.

Stories from the interview transcripts were combined with some information from the field notes taken during observation to create a narrative report. The three users collaborated with the participants to validate this narrative report as one of the ways to provide a legitimate narrative inquiry report.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher categorized the interview data into three segments to construct a narrative or report with a coherent structure, comprising a beginning, middle, and end (Bell & Waters, 2014). The first interview question, which attempted to figure out the rationale behind their participation in the Discord, created the foundation for this narrative report. The main section of this narrative covered the procedure of the event. Most of the narrative on their participation in Discord originated from these two segments. The last section covered

the participants' perspectives on their overall experiences with Discord and their perspectives on the application's informal language acquisition.

## **FINDINGS**

The participants were asked the same questions about Discord and the relation to EFL learning. They were given the same time to be interviewed, around 15 minutes. The errors they made such as mixing the language into Indonesian or other languages were still tolerated during the interview. Another error such as pauses, and repetition were still not encountered. Below are further explanations about the findings:

Students A:

Q1: Why do you join discord?

A1: I joined discord because when I was in junior high school, people around me used discord instead of WhatsApp or line. I was always out of touch; I did not really know what they were talked about until I used discord.

Q2: Tell me about your experience in discord and language learning.

A2: It was a blast, but it was to be careful since we did not know who was behind the screens. Discord's one of the biggest social media companies, not only Indonesian used discord, and Paedophile's everywhere and for English learning, it was got much better. Not only English but other languages also like Tagalog, Hindi, and some other languages.

Q3: What are your preferred channels or features to acquire your English?

A3: I talked with others and used voice features.

Q4: What do you think about the overall experiences on Discord?

A4: Good, just be careful. I did not know what to say.

Students B:

Q1: Why do you join discord?

A1: I downloaded Discord because my friend told me for communicated in Discord, learned language, and played online games together.

Q2: Tell me about your experience in discord and English learning

A2: for my experience on discord, I have been able to create my own server and set up some bots. For English, I studied at school. Sometimes by watching movie,

Q3: What are your preferred channels or features to acquire your English?

A3: Maybe the chat channel and voice channel in English that had many members were used English for communication.

Q4: What do you think about the overall experiences on Discord?

A4: One of the experiences that I hated when we played a game, suddenly the server on the voice channel downed. The sound was unstable.

Q1: Why do you join discord?

A1: To learn new knowledge.

Q2: Tell me about your experience in discord and English learning.

A2: In discord, I learned many things like roleplay, voice acting, and learning English by using voice chat to chat with random people on the server.

Q3: What are your preferred channels or features to acquire your English?

A3: Voice chat, because it helped me speak English even is was informal.

Q4: What do you think about the overall experiences on Discord?

A4: Quite good, even though we need to be careful because many people changed their real identity in Discord.

From the answers above, we could see that those three participants gave different opinions about discord. Their answers mostly showed positive attitudes about discord and their relation to learning English. These could be seen by looking at student's B and student's

A answers. The answers from student B and student A gave a positive response about the voice channel on Discord. Therefore, speaking skills was an important skill that can be improved.

Most students utilizing this platform adopted a neutral position, since they did not require adaptation to new features prior to advancing their English learning through Discord. Furthermore, several had challenges, especially issues navigating the Discord environment. This occurred due to Discord. They were required to join a server, each of which had an individual approach for acquiring English. Therefore, even elderly members of Discord must adjust to join the new server on the platform.

## **DISCUSSION**

Using the data from this investigation, the researcher discovered that Discord has several features that make it a useful tool for learning how to speak. As an online learning tool, the Discord program is incredibly efficient and simple to use. These applications are more convenient for users who want to learn English freely because they can use them without having to pay attention to any rules of learning English. Furthermore, by using voice features, this program is more engaging. Discord has some features that enables communication between each other.

Kruglyk et al. (2020) demonstrated that the utilization of Discord's straightforward and proven application launch system offers numerous advantages. Furthermore, Discord is entirely free, with no specific requirements for premium payment or subscription, according to Gorbatuc and Dudka (2019). Dewantara (2020) indicates that the utilization of the Discord application enhances the dynamism and interactivity of social connections, particularly benefiting classroom engagement. Furthermore, Kruglyk et al. (2020) indicated that Discord demands a reduced system responsibilities and it suitable with nearly all operating systems. A significant advantage of employing Discord is its effortless and rapid software installation process. To install the application, simply obtain it from the official website, customize it, and finish the registration process.

Based on the data collection, using communication features in the voice channel can really support their English especially in speaking skills. This claim is based on lessons taught using Discord applications and the findings of user's interviews. According to the data, they become more engaged and motivated in learning English using discord. The same as Dewantara (2020) stated for teachers involved in online learning, this application can serve as both motivation and an alternative. Due to the increased opportunities for speaking in English, users are more motivated to study the English language. It is relevant with Ramadhan (2021) suggests about speaking. It is a skill that students develop through their listening experiences and their bravery in attempting to speak English.

It is crucial to interact when learning English. If the facilities are adequate, students will be more motivated. However, using the Discord app is incredibly useful and successful as a substitute for online learning resources for pupils. This needs to be counterbalanced with engaging teaching methods for pupils in order to increase motivation, as well as user-friendly software and enjoyable learning exercises. Learning media essentially serve as a tool for teachers to aid in student learning. Its usage as a teaching tool by a teacher is more significant than. If the teacher cannot balance the online learning media employed in the learning method, it will be worthless. Students will experience a lack of drive as a result, and learning will turn into a passive activity. In addition to that and according to the results from this research, we can conclude that users who are also students give positive attitudes towards the use of discord as learning media.

## CONCLUSION

As indicated by the results and the discussion above, the Discord application offers numerous benefits as a learning instrument or media for the acquisition of English. The Discord application facilitates the learning process by being user-friendly, offering a variety of features to assist in the development of speaking skills, and imparting new knowledge. Additionally, it includes a voice channel feature that facilitates audio communication within the discord session. This function enables teachers to establish interactive learning environments that foster student engagement. This can be a significant help to teachers in encouraging students to improve their English-speaking abilities. This study is intended to provide academics with a resource that will clarify the use of the Discord application as a learning instrument for learning English and its relationship to gender stereotypes in the future. The researchers are also cognizant of the fact that the research is still far from being completed and that there are still numerous errors in the selection of word and phrase construction. The researchers assume that future studies will provide improvements and correct the errors of this study.

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