

**EFL Learners' Perceived Benefits of Online Community for
Enhancing Communication Skills**

THESIS

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

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**EFL LEARNERS' PERCEIVE THE BENEFITS OF AN
ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR ENHANCING
COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

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Communication Skill**

THESIS


It has been defended in *sidang munaqasyah* before the board of examiners and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

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STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OF SCIENTIFIC THESIS

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Hereby declare that in writing this thesis, I:

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Banda Aceh, 21 January 2026



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

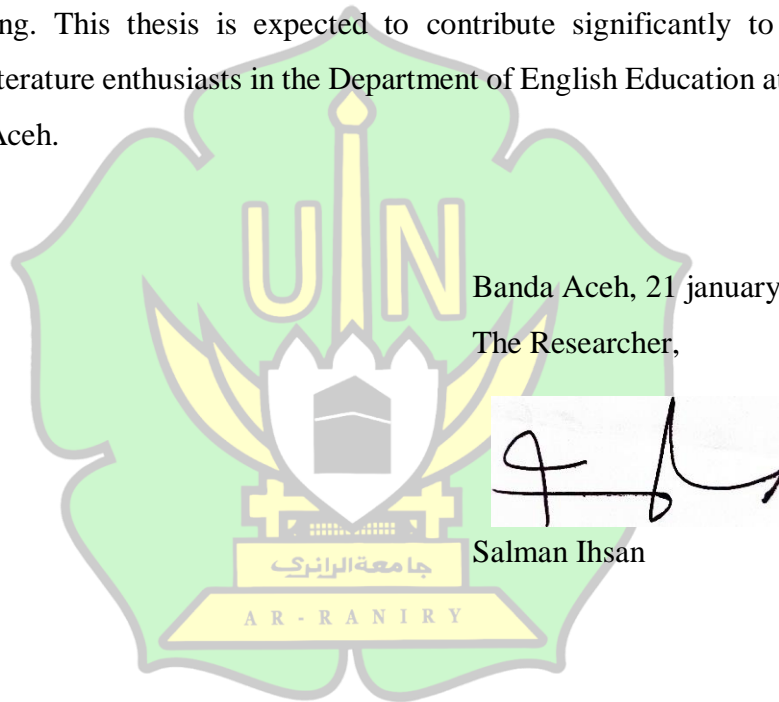
Alhamdulillah, all praise be to Allah SWT, the Almighty God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, who always gives me health, strength, ease of knowledge, and blessings to complete this thesis. Blessings and greetings are continuously poured out to the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his family and friends, who have enlightened human life.

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Finally, the limitations of this study and my limitations necessitate the importance of receiving recommendations and comments. It is important in addressing the weaknesses of the research and enhancing understanding and proficiency in academic writing. This thesis is expected to contribute significantly to students, lecturers, and literature enthusiasts in the Department of English Education at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.



Banda Aceh, 21 January 2026

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the perceived benefits of Discord as an online community platform for enhancing the communication skills of EFL learners, as well as identifying which specific features of the platform contribute most significantly to those improvements. EFL learners frequently face limited exposure to authentic English-speaking environments, and digital platforms such as Discord represent a promising avenue for autonomous and informal language learning. This research employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through written interviews (asynchronous text-based interviews) using open-ended questions and analyzed using the thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) active students of the English Language Education Department (PBI) 2023 batch at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh; (2) active Discord users who log in at least once or twice per week; and (3) users who consciously utilize Discord for the purpose of practicing or learning English. From an initial pool of 15 respondents, 11 participants met the data saturation and quality criteria and were included in the final analysis. The findings reveal two overarching themes. First, participants perceive Discord as a psychologically safe virtual community that effectively reduces language anxiety, fosters confidence, and increases their willingness to communicate by replicating a low-pressure, peer-driven environment. Second, the platform's multimodal features particularly text channels, voice channels, and screen-sharing each serve a distinct and complementary role in developing different dimensions of communication competence, including informal vocabulary acquisition, speaking fluency, and active listening skills. In conclusion,

Discord functions as an effective supplementary tool for EFL communication skill development by providing authentic, informal, and socially supportive language practice that formal classroom settings often cannot replicate. These findings suggest that educators should consider integrating Discord as a low-stakes "third place" for English practice to complement traditional instruction.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is designed to introduce the main idea of the entire content within this research, including the background of the study, research question, research aim, significance of the research, and terminology.

A. Background of the Study

Due to limited exposure to English-speaking situations, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners have particular difficulties in language learning and sometimes require more structured instruction than native speakers. Studies indicate that EFL learners benefit significantly from interactive and context-rich teaching methods that enhance vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatic usage, which are often underdeveloped due to a lack of daily exposure to English (Ding, 2024). Rezai (2023) said limited exposure to English can lead to poor communication skills among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, conversely, creating a reluctance to engage with the language, despite the fact that consistent interaction is essential for developing fluency and confidence.

For learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing effective communication skills is not only beneficial, but is a central to the learning objectives themselves. Successful communication in the target language serves to build positive relationships and is the foundation for collaborative success. As emphasized by Sato and Dao (2021), positive and meaningful interactions significantly increase learners' willingness to communicate. This ability not only reduces the potential for misunderstanding but also builds learners' confidence too. Carnegie (2024) stated Effective speaking and attentive listening are both components of good communication, highlighting the fact that both understanding others and expressing ideas are necessary for successful communication. Collectively, these professional

opinions demonstrate how effective communication skills lay the foundation for productive interpersonal relationships in a variety of domains of life.

However, achieving this level of communicative confidence is particularly challenging in the local context of this study. Habiburrahim et al. (2020) identified that Acehnese EFL learners, in particular, struggle with significant psychological barriers that hinder their ability to speak. Their study highlights that factors such as fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and a lack of vocabulary often lead to silence in the classroom. This suggests that while the goal of EFL learning is active communication, the traditional classroom environment in Aceh may induce anxiety that counteracts this goal. Therefore, there is a pressing need for alternative learning spaces such as digital platforms that can provide the interaction described by Sato and Dao while mitigating the anxiety identified by Habiburrahim et al.

In the social constructivism theory that was mentioned by Vigotsy (1978) about the space where learners can practice and enhance communication skills through social interaction is related to the position of technology in this digital era. Nowadays, technology can significantly improve English communication abilities since it gives learners engaging and easily accessible resources to practice and advance their language proficiency. Language acquisition requires immersive practice and real-time feedback, which are provided by technologies like social media, online learning environments, and mobile applications (Chun et al., 2016). These developments not only make language acquisition easier, but they also make it possible for people to communicate in English with others around the world, overcoming barriers related to geography and culture.

With the development of digital technology, we may now communicate in both synchronous and asynchronous settings using tools like audio, video, photos, and messages (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019). Teachers and students are looking for efficient online tools to communicate and enhance learning outcomes as a result of the growing interaction between higher education and digital technology, which includes more online lectures and classes (Johnson et al., 2019). A software called "Discord,"

which was first made available to gamers in 2015, has shown potential as a connector (Thornton, 2021).

As a comprehensive platform that facilitates both private and public conversation. Discord is a social platform that has been popular among online gamers (Odinokaya et al., 2021). Discord is also called an online community because Discord operates through servers, which are like digital communities focused on specific interests, topics, or goals. Within servers, users can join text and voice channels, fostering both asynchronous and real-time communication (Encouraging Community Building, Customization and Accessibility, Enhanced Social Interaction, and Inclusivity Across Interests) (Danjou, 2020).

The way of operating Discord, by Maintaining "servers," which function as communication hubs and house scaffolded communication affordances called "channels," is made possible by the free program (Odinokaya et al., 2021). Operators can create protected channels with a variety of interaction options, including audio and video conversations, chat rooms, direct messaging, and integrations with other services targeted toward the users. This is the reason why discord is acceptable for promoting communication skills.

Some researchers have previously conducted studies on the relationship between Discord and communication skills. The first research was established by Anwar and Ekawati (2022) This study examined how students perceived their speaking abilities and attitudes in an online class to find out how using the Discord applications influenced them. The results of the study show that developing online learning techniques based on the Discord app affects students' performance in time management and independent learning and influences students' knowledge and proficiency in English, especially their speaking skills.

Vygotsky in their research found that the use of discord is effective in the teaching and learning process. Teachers and students faced external factors, so the problem did not come from the media but from the students, their devices, and other external factors such as lost connections, running out of internet data, easily getting

bored, low-quality audio, external distraction, and forced closure. Barnad (2021) in his paper provides alternative ways to enhance the effectiveness of the distant learning process and employ Discord software to facilitate productive and successful synchronous conversation in order to create learning outcomes. He found that Discord is very suitable for distance learning.

Since the previous research mentioned above only discusses and uses discord in the teaching and learning process with the EFL learner's level of English knowledge relatively the same, the English skills to be improved by using discord were only speaking, and the lack of research that discusses the EFL learners' perception. Based on the gaps above, the researcher wants to conduct research by using the title "EFL learners' perceive benefits of online community for enhancing communication skill".

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the research question can be drawn from the preceding discussion as follows:

1. How do users perceive the effectiveness of Discord in developing communication skills?
2. What features of Discord contribute most significantly to perceived improvements in users' communication skills, particularly in collaborative and group settings?

C. Research Aim

The aims of this research that indicate what this research attempts to accomplish are as follows:

1. To examine user perceptions of Discord's effectiveness in enhancing communication skills, focusing on both individual and group communication competencies.

2. To identify and analyze the specific features of Discord that users perceive as contributing most significantly to their communication skill development, with an emphasis on features that support collaborative and group interactions.

D. Significance of The Research

This study is expected to benefit academically, especially for students, teachers, and other researchers.

1. EFL Learners

The study aims to improve communications skills through the use of Discord, providing readers with valuable information and expertise. It can be a useful resource for English Department students looking to research sophisticated media and improve their grasp of communication skills in a variety of circumstances.

2. Instructors

English Instructors can use this information as a valuable resource for developing learning fields by integrating online media as a tool to teach learners. Furthermore, its primary goal is to aid instructors in identifying alternate supported tools to accomplish classroom learning objectives, particularly those connected to communication skills. Furthermore, it improves teachers' comprehension (instructors) of teaching breakthroughs that can speed up the teaching and learning process.

3. The Researcher

The researcher anticipates that with the implementation of this study, EFL Learners will be more motivated to develop their communication skills by using Discord for English language acquisition. Furthermore, given the materials, models, or references presented in this study, the researcher expects other researchers to research, adapt, rebuild, or further investigate this study,

as well as conduct additional research on related subjects at various levels and for different purposes.

E. Terminology

There are some terms used in this research that need further description to avoid confusion among readers.

1. Discord

Discord is a social chat app that has been popular among online gamers (Odinokaya et al., 2021). Maintaining "servers," which function as communication hubs and house scaffolded communication affordances called "channels," is made possible by the free program (Odinokaya et al., 2021). Discord is also called an online community because Discord operates through servers, which are like digital communities focused on specific interests, topics, or goals. Within servers, users can join text and voice channels, fostering both asynchronous and real-time communication (Encouraging Community Building, Customization and Accessibility, Enhanced Social Interaction, and Inclusivity Across Interests) (Danjou, 2020). Discord is an instant messaging and voice chat app that is typically used for social, educational, professional, or gaming groups. It is a well-liked gaming platform and a powerful instrument for group facilitation (Lacher & Biehl, 2019).

2. Communication Skills

Communication skills refer to the abilities that enable individuals to convey, interpret, and respond to messages effectively, whether through spoken or written language, body language, listening, or visual cues. These skills are essential for understanding and sharing information clearly, building relationships, and resolving conflicts. Effective communication skills include both verbal and non-verbal components, such as active listening, clear articulation, empathy, and the capacity to adapt one's message to the audience (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

3. Virtual Community of Practice

To analyze this researched learning environment, the general term "*online community*" is insufficient. Therefore, this research adopts the theoretical framework of Virtual Community of Practice (VCOP), a concept adapted from the "Community of Practice" (CoP) theory pioneered by Lave and Wenger (1991). A VCoP is defined not merely as a group of people interacting online, but as a living social learning ecosystem bound by three core components.

The first component is The Domain, which is the reason for the community's existence. In the context of this research, the Domain is the collective commitment of the students to learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). They are united by the shared goal of improving their proficiency and confidence in using the English language. The second component is The Community, which refers to the network of social relationships built among the members within the Discord server. Through routine interaction, these students help each other, share resources, and build a collaborative learning environment, which in turn contributes to the creation of a low-anxiety environment for language practice.

The third component, and the most crucial for this research's analysis, is The Practice. This is the repository or collection of shared activities, knowledge, and methods that are collectively developed, shared, and maintained by the community members. It is this "Practice" that distinguishes a VCoP from a mere group of friends; it is the specific "way of doing things" they create to achieve their Domain's goals. In the context of this Discord server, the "Practice" includes all the specific communicative activities they perform to learn English. This not only includes the resources they share, but also the specific ways in which they use Discord's features. Concrete examples of this 'Practice' include: their unique methods for conducting discussions in voice channels, their ways of giving each other peer correction in text channels, the use of specific slang, emoji, or memes that have become part of their server culture, and how they utilize the share screen feature to explain grammar or

discuss topics visually. Thus, the VCoP framework allows the researcher to analyze how active participation in this virtual community's "Practice" contributes directly to the development of members' communication skill.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in this chapter begins with a quick introduction to Communication skills and Discord as a platform before focusing on the theoretical foundation of the correlation between Discord and communication skills based on previous studies.

A. Perception

1. Definition of Perception

Perception is the process by which we interpret and make sense of sensory information from the world around us. It involves receiving stimuli through our senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell) and then organizing, identifying, and interpreting that input to form meaningful experiences (Goldstein, 2014). Our perceptions are influenced by factors such as attention, past experiences, expectations, and cultural background, which means that two people can perceive the same event or object differently. Essentially, perception shapes how we understand and respond to our environment.

Pickens (2005) further elaborates on the process of perception by noting that when a person is exposed to external stimuli, their acceptance of these stimuli is highly selective. People tend to accept stimuli that suit their immediate needs or interests, while they reject stimuli that may cause discomfort, annoyance, or displeasure. This selective perception is influenced not only by personal preferences and needs but also by the environment in which a person is located. For example, the physical environment, social context, or even a person's mood can significantly affect how they perceive stimuli. Therefore, individuals tend to pay more attention to stimuli that match their current emotional or psychological state, while ignoring other less relevant stimuli. For a Discord user, perception is the "lens" through which they evaluate the

platform's environment; it determines how they filter the vast amount of information within servers to form a coherent judgment regarding the platform's utility and atmosphere.

2. Perception Benefits

The perception of a digital environment is not a monolithic experience; rather, it is a multidimensional evaluation of utility that directly influences a user's subsequent behavioral intentions. In academic literature, this evaluative process is framed as Perceived Value, defined by Zeithaml (1988) as the user's overall assessment of the utility of a product or service based on perceptions of what is received compared to what is sacrificed. According to the PERVAL framework (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) and the foundational Theory of Consumption Values (Sheth et al., 1991), these perceptions are categorized into four distinct dimensions that transform internal cognition into tangible communication outcomes.

a. Functional Benefit

Functional value refers to the utility acquired from an alternative's capacity for functional, utilitarian, or physical performance (Sheth et al., 1991). Within the context of digital interaction, this dimension centers on the technical reliability and the "instrumentality" of the platform. A user perceives high functional value when the environment's features such as audio-visual stability and interface efficiency directly facilitate the mastery of specific tasks. Theoretically, this aligns with Venkatesh et al.'s (2003) concept of performance expectancy, suggesting that individuals are more likely to engage in communicative practice if they perceive the platform as a capable tool for achieving their developmental goals.

b. Emotional Benefit

This dimension refers to the utility derived from the feelings or affective states such as pleasure, enjoyment, or relaxation generated by the use of the platform (Sheth et al., 1991). A positive emotional perception is critical in reducing psychological

barriers, as it fosters an environment where the user feels comfortable and intrinsically motivated to participate.

Emotional value is the utility derived from the feelings or affective states such as pleasure, enjoyment, or relaxation generated by the use of a product or environment (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). In the theoretical realm of skill acquisition, emotional value is inextricably linked to the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). This theory posits that for effective communication and learning to occur, the user must be in a state of low anxiety. When a digital community provides high emotional value, it creates a "psychologically safe" space where the fear of negative evaluation is minimized, thereby increasing the user's Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and encouraging more frequent verbal and interpersonal experimentation.

c. Social Benefit

Social benefit is defined as the utility acquired from an association with one or more specific social groups (Sheth et al., 1991). This dimension focuses on the enhancement of the user's social self-concept and their sense of belonging. Theoretically, this is supported by Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of Communities of Practice, which argues that learning is a social process occurring through participation in a communal environment. When a platform offers high social value, users perceive a greater degree of "Social Presence" the feeling of being connected to others despite the digital medium. This perception motivates users to adopt the linguistic and behavioral norms of the group, thereby refining their pragmatic and interpersonal communication skills.

d. Monetary Benefit

Monetary value is the assessment of utility based on the trade-off between the perceived quality of the experience and the sacrifices such as money, time, and cognitive effort made to access it (Zeithaml, 1988). While many digital communities are financially accessible, the theoretical importance of this dimension lies in the "cost-benefit" ratio. High perceived monetary value suggests that the user views the platform

as an inclusive and efficient solution for their needs. This perceived accessibility ensures sustained engagement over time, providing the long-term consistency necessary for the gradual improvement of complex communication competencies.

B. Online Community

While the term "Online community" is frequently used to describe any digital gathering, in academic research, it represents a distinct social structure defined by sustained interaction and shared identity. Rheingold (1993), a pioneer in the field, conceptualizes online communities as social aggregations that emerge from the internet when enough people carry on public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace. Unlike a static website or a simple database, an online community is characterized by Social Presence the degree to which a person is perceived as a "real person" in mediated communication and a sense of belonging that fosters trust and collaboration among its members (Garrison, 2011).

In the specific context of skill acquisition, such as language learning or communication enhancement, an online community evolves into what Lave and Wenger (1991) term a Community of Practice (CoP). When mediated by digital technology, this framework expands into a Virtual Community of Practice (vCoP). According to Wenger (1998), a vCoP is not merely a group of friends but a structured learning environment defined by three crucial elements: the domain (a shared interest or competence, such as communication skills), the community (where members engage in joint activities and discussions), and the practice (a shared repertoire of resources, experiences, and problem-solving strategies).

This theoretical distinction is vital for understanding how platforms like Discord facilitate learning. Within a vCoP, learning occurs through "Legitimate Peripheral Participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991). New members, or novices, begin by observing the interactions of more experienced users a process often called "lurking" before gradually moving toward the center of the community through active

participation. It is through this social process of observing, imitating, and eventually contributing to the community's "shared repertoire" that students acquire the complex pragmatic and strategic communication skills necessary for mastery.

While the theoretical framework of a Virtual Community of Practice (vCoP) provides the necessary social structure for learning, the technical architecture of the platform itself plays a decisive role in shaping the quality of interaction. Not all digital environments are equally conducive to the "Legitimate Peripheral Participation" described by Lave and Wenger (1991); some interfaces facilitate deep, persistent community building, while others are designed for transient, linear messaging. Therefore, to understand why specific platforms are more effective for cultivating communication skills, it is essential to analyze the "affordances" or the perceived functional properties of current Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) tools and how they either support or constrain the social learning process.

To understand the unique affordances of Discord as a learning environment, it is necessary to distinguish it from other prevalent Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) tools. Recent educational research categorizes these platforms into three distinct types: instant messengers, formal learning management systems (LMS), and persistent community spaces.

1. Discord vs. Instant Messengers (WhatsApp, Telegram) Unlike WhatsApp or Telegram, which rely on linear, temporal message streams, Discord utilizes a channel-based architecture. Nisar and Khanum (2021) note that while WhatsApp is ubiquitous for social connection, its linear format often leads to information overload and "interactional incoherence" in large academic groups. By contrast, Arifianto and Izzudin (2021) found that Discord's ability to segregate discussions into topical channels (e.g., #grammar, #voice-practice) allows for sustained, coherent discourse necessary for complex skill acquisition, preventing the "buried message" effect common in messenger apps.

2. Discord vs. Formal Video Conferencing (Zoom, MS Teams) Distinct from Zoom or Google Meet, which are "episodic" and require scheduled synchronization,

Discord functions as a "persistent" virtual environment. AlGhamdi (2024) argues that Discord serves as a digital "Third Place," where voice channels remain open indefinitely, allowing students to "drop in" for spontaneous peer-to-peer mentoring. This contrasts with Microsoft Teams, which Littler (2024) suggests is often perceived by students as a formal, "surveilled" institutional space that can inhibit the risk-taking behavior required for language practice.

3. Discord vs. Traditional LMS (Moodle, Canvas) While Learning Management Systems like Moodle focus on content delivery, Discord focuses on social presence. A study by Munibi (2024) highlights that while LMS platforms are effective for submitting assignments, they lack the "immediacy" required for social learning. Jiang et al. (2023) support this, finding that the informal, "gaming-adjacent" atmosphere of Discord significantly lowers the Affective Filter, making students more willing to participate in voluntary communication practice compared to the rigid structure of a traditional classroom LMS.

C. Communication Skills

Communication skills are abilities to convey information effectively, ensuring clear understanding between both parties. These skills include verbal, non-verbal, and written forms of expression, the capacity to listen actively, as well as interpret messages accurately, and respond appropriately (Adler & Rodman, 2017). Robbins and Judge (2017) added effective communication skills include both verbal and non-verbal components, such as active listening, clear articulation, empathy, and the capacity to adapt one's message to the audience.

Communication is the foundation of human interaction and is not just the exchange of words, but also involves expressions, gestures, and nuances that influence understanding. Individuals with strong communication skills can interpret feedback more effectively and adjust their responses to ensure mutual understanding. According to Berko et al. (2016), communication skills are essential for creating bridges of understanding between people, and mastering them is crucial in fostering personal and

professional relationships.

1. Type of Communication Skill

According to DeVito (2019), There are a variety of communication skills, and each is vital for productive engagement in a range of situations. These abilities include verbal communication, non-verbal communication, written communication, and listening skills; each serves a distinct purpose and adds to thorough communication.

a. Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is the use of spoken language to convey messages clearly and concisely. This form of communication is essential in both personal and professional settings and requires clarity, articulation, and the ability to customize one's message based on the audience (Adler & Rodman, 2017). Strong verbal communication involves the choice of words and tone used to effectively convey meaning (DeVito, 2019).

b. Non-verbal Communication

According to Guerrero et al. (2017), non-verbal communication includes body language, posture, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures that can convey emotions and attitudes that may not be properly conveyed through words exclusively. Nonverbal cues are essential for understanding the true meaning of a discussion since they frequently confirm or contradict spoken statements. Research suggests that understanding non-verbal signals is essential for building trust and empathy in relationships (Mehrabian, 2019).

c. Written Communication

A written communication is any message that is sent using written means, such as emails, memos, reports, and social media posts. In academic and professional contexts, where clarity and conciseness are crucial to preventing miscommunication, this kind of communication is essential (Guffey & Loewy, 2015). Written communication requires attention to detail, structure, and coherence to effectively convey complex information.

While foundational communication skills are categorized into verbal, non-verbal, and written forms (Adler & Rodman, 2017; DeVito, 2019), interaction within an online community requires a more specialized set of competencies due to the mediation of technology. Beyond basic proficiency, Spitzberg (2006) argues that Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) competence relies on a triad of motivation, knowledge, and specific skills that allow users to navigate the unique constraints of a virtual environment.

In this context, communication competence expands to include high-level sociolinguistic and strategic abilities:

1. Pragmatic and Sociolinguistic Competence

Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use language effectively in a social context to achieve specific goals while maintaining social rapport. In online communities, this involves understanding "Netiquette" the unwritten social codes and behavioral expectations of the group. According to Canale and Swain (1980), sociolinguistic competence allows a communicator to choose the appropriate register ranging from formal technical discourse to informal "netspeak" based on the specific digital channel or audience. Mastery in this area is demonstrated through code-switching, where a user adjusts their linguistic style to signal membership in a "Community of Practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), thereby building solidarity and reducing social distance.

2. Strategic Competence and Interactional Repair

A critical skill in online communities is strategic competence, defined as the ability to compensate for communication breakdowns (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Digital environments are prone to "noise," such as technical latency (lag), text-based ambiguity, or the absence of immediate feedback. Competent communicators employ "repair strategies," such as clarification requests, paraphrasing, or circumlocution, to ensure mutual understanding. This skill is essential for maintaining interactional flow;

without it, misunderstandings in an online space can lead to "flaming" or the total cessation of dialogue.

3. Digital Paralanguage and Non-Verbal Substitution

Because online communities often lack physical presence, users must develop proficiency in paralinguistic digital communication (PDC). As noted by Konrath et al. (2016), this involves the strategic use of emojis, punctuation, capitalization, and multimedia (such as GIFs or stickers) to convey emotion and intent. These digital cues serve as functional substitutes for facial expressions and body language. A skilled communicator in an online community uses these tools to establish Social Presence the degree to which a person is perceived as a "real person" in a mediated environment which is a primary driver of trust and intimacy in virtual groups (Short et al., 1976).

4. Discourse Competence and Cohesion

Discourse competence is the ability to combine language structures into a meaningful, cohesive whole. In online communities, particularly text-heavy ones, this involves managing "threaded" conversations and maintaining continuity across time and space (asynchronous communication). As Herring (1996) observes in Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis, users must be able to link their contributions to previous turns in a conversation despite the "broken" nature of digital chat. This requires high-level cognitive skills in tracking multiple streams of information and synthesizing them into coherent responses.

5. Active Auditory and Interpretive Competence

In voice-based or synchronous online communities, the reliance on audio alone increases the demand for active listening. This competence involves decoding "prosodic cues" such as pitch, tone, tempo, and silence to interpret a speaker's emotional state or certainty without the aid of visual support. Berko et al. (2016) emphasize that effective communication is a transactional process; therefore,

providing relevant "back-channeling" cues (verbal nods like "right," "I see," or "exactly") is a vital skill for signaling engagement and sustaining communal interaction.

D. Instructional Technology

Historically, this field was often conflated with hardware or media delivery systems. However, the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) defines it as "the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources" (Januszewski & Molenda, 2008). This definition emphasizes that technology is not merely a tool for delivering content, but a facilitator of the learning process itself.

The application of instructional technology has evolved significantly alongside the shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 paradigms. In the Web 1.0 era, technology was characterized by content delivery; learners were passive consumers of information, accessing static websites or digitalized documents with little opportunity for engagement. However, the emergence of Web 2.0 marked a fundamental transition toward social interaction and participation. As noted by Dudeney and Hockly (2007), this evolution transformed the learner's role from a passive recipient to an active contributor. Modern instructional technology no longer focuses solely on providing access to materials but prioritizes the creation of collaborative environments where learners can interact in real-time.

Within this modern landscape, instructional technologies are generally categorized into two distinct types: Learning Management Systems (LMS) and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC).

- 1) LMS platforms (e.g., Moodle, Canvas, Google Classroom) are designed primarily for administrative and formal educational purposes.
- 2) CMC tools (e.g., Social Media, Chat Apps) are designed to facilitate human connection and social presence.

Despite the shift toward interaction, many educational institutions rely heavily on Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Canvas, Moodle, or Blackboard. While these platforms are efficient for administrative tasks such as; grading, syllabus distribution, and file submission research suggests they are often insufficient for developing communicative competence. Tricco et al. (2022) argue that the primary architecture of an LMS is often perceived by students as formal and isolating, lacking the "social presence" found in the digital tools they use daily. Kruglyk et al. (2020) further critique this limitation, noting that while LMS platforms provide necessary structure, they fail to replicate the dynamic, real-time exchanges necessary for speaking practice. This leaves a gap between passive knowledge receipt (in the LMS) and active language production (which requires a social platform), driving educators to seek alternatives that offer both organization and spontaneity.

To address this isolation, educators are increasingly turning to CMC tools that foster Social Presence. Garrison (2019) posits that for online learning to be effective, learners must experience "social presence" the ability to identify with the community and project themselves as real people. This need for a hybrid space, one that combines the structure of technology with the social immediacy of a lounge has led to the adoption of platforms like Discord. As noted by Tricco et al. (2022), Discord uniquely bridges the gap between LMS and CMC by integrating synchronous (voice/video) and asynchronous (text) channels in one persistent interface. Munibi et al. (2024) further support this, arguing that such informal architectures lower affective barriers and encourage high-frequency interaction in ways that rigid LMS platforms cannot.

E. Discord

Discord is a social chat app that has been popular among online gamers (Odinokaya et al., 2021). Maintaining "servers," which function as communication hubs and house scaffolded communication affordances called "channels," is made

possible by the free program (Odinokaya et al., 2021). Newton (2020) added Discord is a digital communication network that was first developed in 2015 for gamers, but it has since grown to offer services to a variety of communities, such as those that are interested in social interaction, business, and education. Discord is also called an online community because Discord operates through servers, which are like digital communities focused on specific interests, topics, or goals. Within servers, users can join text and voice channels, fostering both asynchronous and real-time communication (Encouraging Community Building, Customization and Accessibility, Enhanced Social Interaction, and Inclusivity Across Interests) (Danjou, 2020)

Discord offers text and audio chat in an intuitive interface by fusing elements from VoIP, social media, and messaging services. The platform is extremely flexible to various kinds of groups and discussions because it enables "servers," which are configurable communities where users can engage through "channels" for particular subjects or goals (Cullen, 2019).

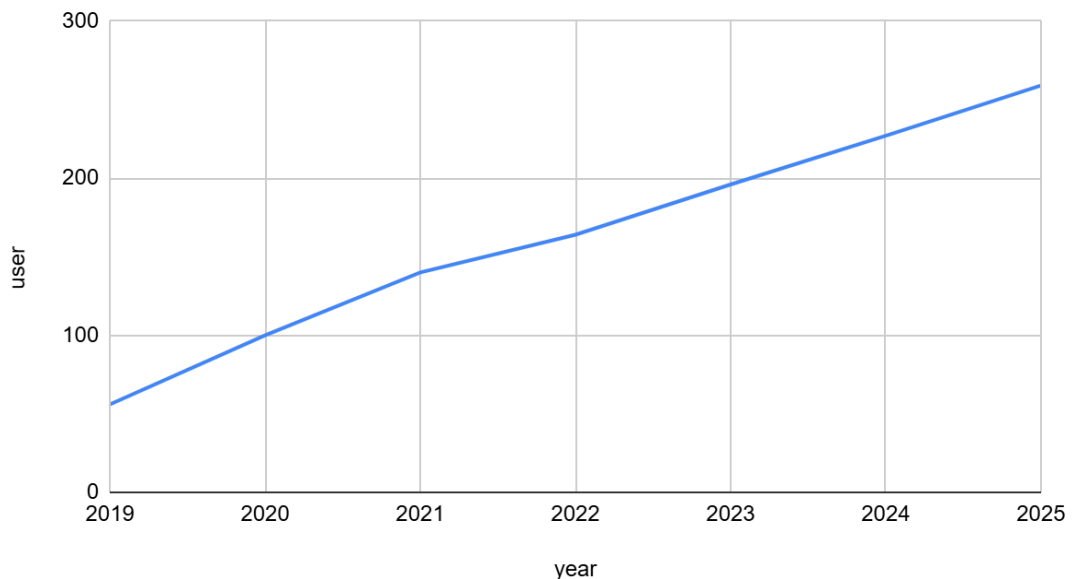
1. Discord's Popularity and Growth

Discord has grown significantly since its 2015 start, going from a specialized gaming communication tool to a comprehensive network that serves a variety of communities across the globe. Discord had more than 140 million monthly active users by 2021, primarily because of its adaptability and user-friendly features. (Robertson, 2021). Users of many ages and backgrounds find Discord appealing since it can be used for a wide range of purposes, from social engagement and gaming to professional and educational purposes. Discord's growth was also boosted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as people resorted to virtual platforms in order to interact, collaborate, and stay connected. Discord's user base increased significantly beyond its initial gaming basis as remote professionals, students, and educators increasingly used it for online meetings, study sessions, and group discussions (Cullen, 2019).

Because Discord is a community-focused platform, users can start or join "servers" where they can engage in voice and text channels. This special feature has

greatly boosted Discord's appeal by enabling more structured communication inside communities. The platform's adaptability is further enhanced by its integration of live streaming and multimedia sharing, which makes it a popular choice for variety of collaborative activities. The use of Discord in contemporary communication highlights the increasing significance of adaptable, online platforms in promoting engagement across international communities (Newton, 2020). Discord is positioned for continued growth as digital environments become more and more important for social and professional interaction because of its versatility and ongoing feature improvements.

Discord growth (monthly active user in million)



1.1 Discord growth's monthly

The quantitative growth of the platform further substantiates its relevance to educational research. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, Discord experienced a 150% increase in monthly active users between 2019 and 2021, a surge directly correlated with the global demand for remote communication tools during the COVID-19 pandemic (Statista, 2024). This concentration of 'digital natives' suggests that Discord is not merely a gaming tool, but a primary communication hub for the generation currently populating higher education institutions."

2. The Role of Discord's Features in Communication Skills Development

In the field of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), a technological framework is perceived not merely as a static repository for content, but as a dynamic ecosystem that influences the manner in which learners engage with and acquire language. This contemporary viewpoint moves beyond the traditional view notion of technology as a merely instrument for repetitive exercises, instead conceptualizing it as a complex environment that offers a multitude of affordances. The concept of affordances understood in recent CALL literature as the potential for action that a technology enables for learners is central to this view (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2016). Within the context of language acquisition, affordances belong not to the autonomous capabilities of technology but rather to what it facilitates for a learner, such as providing avenues for spontaneous dialogue, collaborative writing, or immersion in authentic linguistic contexts.

These affordances are particularly important in informal digital environments where learning is pushed by social interaction rather than a structured curriculum. Discord, with its distinctive array of integrated functionalities, emerges as a perfect illustration of such an environment, offering a comprehensive set of affordances that can be utilized by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners for genuine language practice. Consequently, this section will undertake a meticulous examination of Discord's principal features specifically, its text channels, voice channels, and multimodal capabilities. The following analysis will demonstrate how each feature affords particular opportunities for learners to enhance various aspects of their communicative competence, including grammatical precision and discourse management.

a. Text Channel and Written Communication

The text channels, a foundational feature of Discord, serve as a critical affordance for the development and refinement of written communication skills, particularly concerning grammatical accuracy. Unlike the spontaneous and cognitively demanding nature of oral conversation, the semi-asynchronous format of text channels provides learners with a crucial temporal buffer. This allows them to plan, formulate, and meticulously review their sentences before committing them to the conversation. This process of self-monitoring and editing significantly reduces the cognitive load, enabling learners to allocate more mental resources toward achieving grammatical accuracy, such as correct verb tense usage, subject-verb agreement, and sentence structure (Yip & Lui, 2024). Consequently, the text channel becomes a low-stakes, practical laboratory where learners can experiment with new vocabulary and complex sentences without the immediate pressure of an onlooking conversation partner.

Furthermore, the contribution of text channels extends beyond sentence-level accuracy. By participating in and observing ongoing, archived conversations, learners are immersed in authentic written discourse. They develop their discourse competence by learning how to initiate topics, maintain conversational coherence, and respond relevantly to others' messages. Simultaneously, they enhance their sociolinguistic competence by absorbing the community's specific norms for informal language, slang, humor, and the pragmatic use of emojis and memes to convey tone and emotion (Darics, 2020). The persistent nature of the chat log also allows learners to revisit previous conversations, reflect on their own errors, and model the language used by more proficient speakers. Thus, the text channel is not merely a space for chatting; it is an active learning environment that supports the conscious improvement of precise and socially appropriate written English.

b. Voice Channel and Oral Communication

The simultaneous nature of voice channels on Discord provides the most direct and powerful affordance for the development of oral skills. A significant advantage of this feature lies in its ability to foster a low-anxiety environment, a stark contrast to the

often high pressure context of a formal classroom where learners may fear making mistakes in front of an instructor. The informal, peer-driven, and often anonymous nature of interactions on Discord mitigates this language anxiety, thereby increasing learners' "willingness to communicate" and encouraging them to take linguistic risks (Nocchi, 2023). This supportive social atmosphere is crucial, as it allows learners to move beyond formal practice and engage in spontaneous, authentic spoken production, building fluency and confidence through genuine interaction.

Moreover, voice channels offer invaluable practice in aural comprehension through exposure to authentic, unscripted language. Unlike the carefully curated audio materials found in textbooks, learners on Discord are exposed to a diverse range of accents, speaking speeds, idiomatic expressions, and conversational styles from peers around the globe (Yip & Lui, 2024). This authentic listening practice is vital for developing the ability to understand English as it is spoken in real-world contexts. Inevitably, these fast-paced, unscripted conversations lead to moments of communication breakdown, which in turn afford opportunities for the negotiation of meaning. When learners are forced to ask for clarification or paraphrase their own statements to be understood, they are actively engaging in a process that is fundamental to second language acquisition (Golshan & Naeimi, 2021). Therefore, the voice channel functions as a rich assistant also simultaneously enhancing speaking fluency, improving authentic listening skills, and developing crucial strategic competencies for real-time communication.

c. Multimodal Capabilities and Integrated Skills

Beyond the distinct functions of its text and voice channels, Discord's most significant contribution to communication skill development lies in its powerful multimodal capabilities, which seamlessly integrate various modes of communication text, audio, images, and video into a single, this cohesive experience. As highlighted by Nocchi (2023), this multimodality is crucial as it allows learners to engage in interactions that more closely mimic the richness of real-world, face-to-face

communication. The platform's features are not used to stand alone but are often combined to create a richer and more contextually situated communicative event. For instance, the screen sharing feature serves as a powerful affordance for creating a shared visual context. A learner can display an article for collaborative reading, a visual media to aid in a description also gives a clue, or a complex diagram to ask for clarification. This act of sharing a visual reference point helps to overcome linguistic ambiguities and structures the conversation, allowing learners to practice their speaking and listening skills while simultaneously engaging their reading and interpretive skills.

Furthermore, the option to use video cameras introduces a vital layer of non-verbal communication into the interaction. This allows for the transmission and interpretation of facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact, which are fundamental components of pragmatic competence and are often absent in purely text- or audio-based platforms. This seamless integration of text, voice, and visual media transforms Discord into an immersive communicative ecosystem. In this dynamic environment, learners are not practicing skills in isolation; they are constantly engaged in integrated communication. A typical session might involve a learner speaking about a topic (oral skill), actively listening to a partner's response (aural skill), reading a presented document that is being shared on screen (reading skill), and typing follow-up questions or vocabulary in the text channel for clarification (writing skill), often all within the same conversational exchange. It is this capacity to support fluid, multimodal, and integrated practice that makes Discord a uniquely effective environment for developing well-rounded and authentic communication skills.

3. Pedagogical Benefits of Discord for EFL Learners

While general social media platforms facilitate interaction, Discord offers specific pedagogical affordances properties of the environment that allow for action that are particularly advantageous for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Recent literature identifies three primary mechanisms through which Discord supports

language acquisition: the reduction of affective barriers, the facilitation of informal learning, and the creation of a community of inquiry.

a. Mitigation of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

A recurring theme in recent studies is Discord's capacity to lower the "affective filter," a psychological barrier that impedes language acquisition when anxiety is high. Unlike video-centric platforms like Zoom, which can heighten self-consciousness, Discord's architecture prioritizes audio-only communication in its voice channels. This "faceless" interaction significantly reduces the pressure on students, encouraging those who are typically reticent to participate. Research by Munibi et al. (2024) indicates that this anonymity allows learners to focus entirely on linguistic production without the distraction of visual cues or the fear of being judged on their appearance. By creating a low-stakes environment, Discord fosters a higher Willingness to Communicate (WTC), a prerequisite for oral fluency development (Wijaya, 2023).

b. Facilitating Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE)

Discord acts as a bridge between formal instruction and authentic language use, a concept often referred to in the literature as Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE). In this context, learning becomes incidental byproduct of social interaction rather than the primary goal. Students using Discord for gaming or interest-based discussions are exposed to "unscripted" English, including slang, rapid speech, and turn-taking dynamics that are rarely found in textbooks. A study by Ramadhan and Albaekani (2021) observed that students were motivated to speak more frequently on Discord because the interactions felt natural and purposeful, rather than performative. This exposure to authentic discourse helps learners bridge the gap between "classroom English" and the real-world language used by native speakers.

c. Social Presence and Community Building

Finally, Discord distinguishes itself from traditional Learning Management Systems (LMS) by fostering a strong sense of "social presence" the feeling of being with others. The platform's server-based structure, which allows for persistent text and voice channels, mimics a "virtual lounge" rather than a classroom. Goodyear and Casey

(2019) found that this persistent availability enables the formation of a Community of Inquiry, where learning is socially constructed through peer support and collaboration. Within these communities, students often take on the role of peer tutors, correcting each other's mistakes and sharing resources in a way that is less hierarchical and more collaborative than teacher-led instruction (Aldebarant et al., 2023).

In summary, Discord supports EFL learners not merely by providing a channel for communication, but by fundamentally altering the nature of that communication. It transforms language practice from a high-anxiety, formal task into a low-anxiety, social activity, thereby promoting both fluency and autonomous learning habits.

F. Previous Research Findings

Several studies have emphasized Discord's potential in social and educational contexts where communication is the skill concerned. Even though research on the app specifically for improving communication skills is still in the early stages, Discord's application as a tool for improving communication skills is given below:

1. Educational Settings and Communication Enhancement

According to Cheung et al., 2021, Discord can be a useful tool for education by encouraging formal and informal contact between teachers and students. Through frequent text and voice exchanges, Discord fosters open conversation and collaboration among students, improving their written and verbal communication skills. Discord's casual atmosphere and user-friendliness made students feel more at ease taking part in discussions there than with more conventional learning management systems.

2. Collaboration and Teamwork Skills

According to research by Blanchard et al. (2020), Discord works well for group projects since it offers channels that make team-based communication and task collaboration easier. Through frequent text and voice sessions, Discord helped participants in a study with engineering students improve their cooperation abilities and encourage more active communication. Their capacity to negotiate roles, express

ideas clearly, and provide feedback, all crucial elements of effective communication skills was demonstrated to be enhanced by this continuous conversation.

3. Social Learning and Collaborative Support

In their investigation of Discord's function in collaborative learning, Goodyear and Casey (2019) discovered that its "server" configuration enabled students to create smaller communities or groups where they could exchange resources and have encouraging conversations. This study demonstrated the positive effects of continuous back-and-forth messaging in a relaxed, chat-based setting on the development of conversational and listening skills. Users' interpersonal communication skills inside academic communities improved as they reported feeling more involved and open to peer critique



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Polit and Beck (2004) state that techniques for gathering, arranging, and interpreting data are included in the methodology. The methodology employed is determined by the nature of the research question. The principle of sound scientific judgment applies to research methodologies (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The research design and logical flow of this study are reflected in its methods. The research design, participants, data collection, and analysis procedures are all covered in this chapter.

A. Research Design

An essential method for obtaining a thorough understanding of a given occurrence or topic is qualitative research (Lester et al., 2020). The goal of qualitative research is to understand the importance that people or groups put on a social or human issue. This approach involves posing inquiries, gathering data within the participant's setting analyzing the data to identify patterns or themes, and interpreting the significance of the data (Creswell, 2009). This study aims to understand how EFL learners use Discord as a tool for improving their communication skills. Creswell (2014) stated that qualitative methods can be divided into five groups: ethnography, narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. This research used a case study which can be explanatory, exploratory, or describing an event” (Creswell, 2014, p.33). The main purpose of a case study is to understand and interpret thoroughly the individual cases in their own special context and to find information concerning the changes and the processes. Thus, the qualitative method is the most suitable approach for this research.

The method of study used in this research was qualitative. Since the researcher wanted to find out about students’ perceptions of making small group discussions to improve speaking ability in the learning process, a proper research method had to be

used to investigate the results. According to Sugiyono (2013), a qualitative method is an approach that analyzes the phenomenon that happened in the location of interest.

Creswell (2014) stated that qualitative research methods can be categorized into five major approaches: ethnography, narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. This study employed a case study design, which involves an in-depth exploration using multiple data sources. According to Creswell (2014), case studies can be explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive, and help gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon within its real-life context. The primary goal of a case study is to thoroughly interpret individual cases and identify relevant processes and changes within their unique settings. Therefore, the qualitative method was deemed the most appropriate approach for this research.

B. Population and Sample

1. Population

The term "population" describes the whole set of people who are relevant to the subject of the study. It would be all active Discord users in this case, who use the platform for a variety of communication purposes. The population in this research consists of 202 students of the English Language Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, batch 2023. The study focused on students enrolled in 2023 as they are in their third year, which is the most active batch in the online community.

2. Sample

Sample sizes for qualitative research are usually smaller in order to facilitate comprehensive data collection. This study used purposive sampling to select the research participants. Johnson and Christensen (2012) explained that purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique that requires researchers to determine their own research participants based on specific criteria that have been designed. According to Creswell (2018), a sample size of ten to fifteen individuals is ideal for phenomenology or case studies where in-depth investigation is the aim. To identify

students who meet the criteria, the researcher first distributed a screening questionnaire to the entire population (202 students). This screening questionnaire aims to find the "target population" that meets the following criteria: 1. An active student of the PBI 2023 batch, 2. An active Discord user (logs in at least 1-2 times per week). 3. Consciously uses Discord for the purpose of practicing or learning English.

After the screening questionnaires are collected, the researcher obtained a pool of students who meet all the above criteria. From this pool of eligible students, the researcher then selected the final sample. The researcher sets an initial target sample of approximately 15 participants, in accordance with the recommendation from Creswell (2018). If the number of eligible students is more than 15, the researcher used purposive sampling to select the 15 most representative participants. This selection is based on maximum variation sampling to obtain rich data, such as selecting a mix of highly active and moderately active participants, participants from different backgrounds, etc. This number of 15 participants is an estimation. The final number of participants is determined by the principle of data saturation.

C. Data Collection

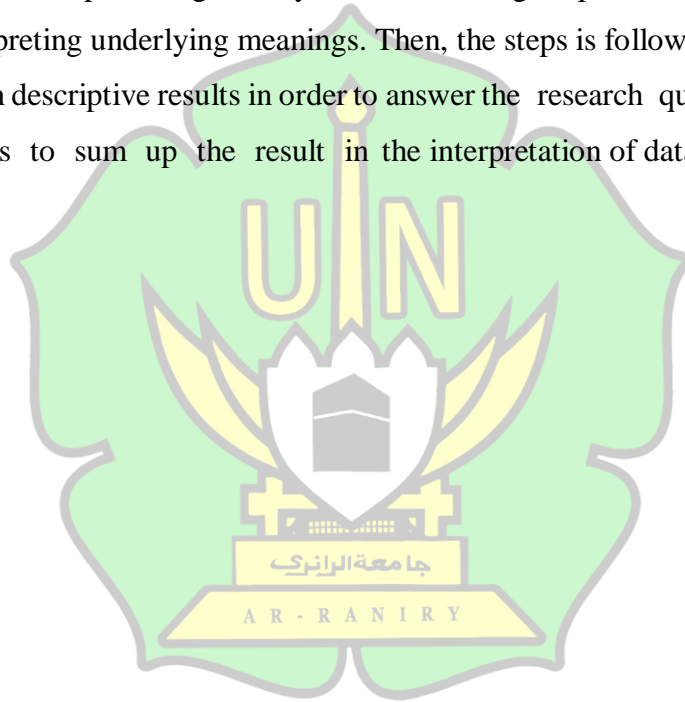
In collecting data in this study, the researcher used a written interview (also known as an asynchronous text-based interview). A written interview is a qualitative data collection method where the researcher sends a set of questions to participants, who then respond in writing at their own convenience. Unlike traditional face-to-face interviews, written interviews allow respondents time to reflect on their answers before submitting them. This method is particularly effective in qualitative research because it allows participants to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in their own words without the pressure of immediate response (Meho, 2006).

The researcher utilized a semi-structured format involving open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow participants to contribute as much or as little detail as they like. This style of inquiry invites responses that will provide insights, opinions, and underlying motivations. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), written

qualitative data can provide rich and complex data of participants' experiences, particularly when addressing sensitive or personal topics.

D. Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data to interpret the meaning of the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research employs Braun and Clarke's (2013) thematic analysis to analyze the data. The researcher identifies and categorizes recurring themes or patterns within the data. This process generally involves coding responses, grouping similar ideas, and interpreting underlying meanings. Then, the steps is followed by organizing the data through descriptive results in order to answer the research questions. Finally, the last step is to sum up the result in the interpretation of data.



CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into two main sections: research findings and discussion. The research findings discuss and explain the two research questions, while the discussion relates these findings to existing literature and previous research.

A. Finding

The finding of this study is shown based on established research question. This study explored students' perceptions of an online group in discord as a platform for enhancing their communication skills. Specifically, the study investigated two main objectives: (1) To examine user perceptions of Discord's effectiveness in enhancing communication skills, focusing on both individual and group communication competencies. (2) To identify and analyze the specific features of Discord that users perceive as contributing most significantly to their communication skill development.

The data for this study were gathered through written interview administered to students from the 2023 academic year of the English Language Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. While a total of 15 respondents initially participated in the survey, data reduction was employed to ensure the quality and relevance of the findings. Consequently, four participants were excluded from the final analysis as their responses did not meet the established criteria. Specifically, regarding active engagement levels and the depth of reflection required for thematic analysis. Therefore, the final dataset comprises 11 participants. To maintain research ethics and participant confidentiality, all names have been anonymized and replaced with alphanumeric codes ranging from P1 to P11. The following section presents a thematic analysis of these findings, focusing on the perceived effectiveness of Discord and the feature that gives significant benefits in enhancing communication skills."

1. Students' Perceptions of the Benefits of Discord in Enhancing Communication skills

Thematic analysis of the collected data revealed several interconnected and meaningful themes that offer a comprehensive understanding of how students perceive the effectiveness of using Discord to improve their English communication skills. These themes highlighted not only students' recognition of the effectiveness that the platform offers but also provided insight into the various ways in which these collaborative learning experiences contribute to their language development. Through participant responses, it became clear that Discord served as a valuable platform for enhancing communication skills in a supportive and interactive environment. Furthermore, the themes highlighted specific aspects of communication competencies that students felt were positively impacted, such as increased confidence and authentic language.

a) Psychological Safety and Anonymity

Participants consistently reported that discord played a significant role in building their confidence in communication skill. They emphasized that the more intimate setting made the experience less intimidating than speaking in front off the class. This more relaxed atmosphere allowed them to take risks in using English without the constant fear of being judged or laughed at for making mistakes. For example, participant (P1) shared,

"...at the same time discord can be much safer for me, especially when I don't want to show my face and that is why I have a confidence to speak with native speaker in discord..."

P1 identifies visual anonymity as a primary factor in creating a psychologically safe environment. This reduces the cognitive load and social anxiety associated with

face to face interactions, allowing the user to focus solely on verbal production. Similarly, participant (P4) also indicated,

“...Honestly discord is good for me when i don't want anyone to see my face, because I am too shy to people that why I rather stay anonymous in discord”

P4 emphasized that anonymity creates a psychologically safe environment, enabling users to engage in social interaction without feeling high pressure or anxiety that often found in face-to-face settings. Participant 7 (P7) added,

“... It's way more relaxed than classroom. In class, I feel pressured if I make mistakes.”

“... But here in discord I can speak about any topic without any hesitation.”

Participant 7 (P7) explicitly distinguishes the relaxed atmosphere of Discord from the pressured environment of the classroom, where the fear of making mistakes acts as a barrier. Discord mitigates this evaluative pressure by lowering the participant's inhibition, thereby creating a psychologically safe space where they feel free to speak about any topic without the anxiety of formal judgment.

Similarly, Participant 11 (P11) highlighted that safety is also a result of community management:

"From my experience, the presence of clear rules, active moderators, and a supportive culture makes a huge difference... people feel safer asking questions and making mistakes."

While Participant 7 (P7) highlights the internal emotional shift (lower inhibition and reduced anxiety) caused by the informal atmosphere, Participant 11 (P11) provides a crucial structural explanation for why this shift occurs. P11 suggests that psychological safety is a byproduct of active community governance. The "clear rules" and "active moderators" mentioned by P11 function as a protective framework that prevents the "fear of being laughed at" mentioned earlier. In a traditional classroom, the teacher is the sole authority figure, which can sometimes create a vertical, high-pressure power dynamic. On Discord, however, the safety is horizontal; it is maintained by a "supportive culture" where peers and moderators co-create a standard of respect.

Ultimately, the findings demonstrate that Discord functions as a secure environment that significantly lowers the barrier to active participation. This sense of safety is primarily derived from the platform's anonymity, which acts as a protective shield against the social anxiety that often occurred in face-to-face interactions. By removing the pressure of visual judgment, students feel empowered to focus on their language output rather than their appearance. Furthermore, the digital environment stands in stark contrast to traditional academic settings; rather than feeling the high-stakes pressure of a classroom where mistakes are often judged, students perceive the platform as a relaxed space where communication is valued over grammatical perfection. This shift in atmosphere effectively reduces hesitation, allowing learners to experiment with English more freely and fearlessly.

b) Authentic Language Acquisition

Besides confidence, participants also viewed Discord as a gateway to "real-world" English, distinct from the formal language taught in schools. Participants noted that the platform exposed them to slang, abbreviations, and cultural nuances. Participant (P3) noted:

"...the nuance it gives is so unique I learn many of slang word and abbreviation".

This suggests that students value the linguistic variety found on the platform. Participant 9 (P9) echoed the benefit of this informal exposure for their own lexicon:

"... caused i can learn so many unknown vocabulary into my own dictionary."

This exposure often led to a deeper understanding of language context. Participant (P7) mentioned learning the history behind the words :

"...I learn many slang word they use and they even tell us the the background story of each slang".

Furthermore, Participant (P10) highlighted the acquisition of pragmatic skills, such as understanding humor and sarcasm, which are rarely covered in traditional curriculums:

“...It feels like real English rather than formal English... Writing in text channel helped me understand the context and nuance, like how to use sarcasms, which is never been taught in the class”.

Adding to this dimension of real-world practice, Participant 6 (P6) emphasized that Discord provided a "perfect speaking environment" because it allowed for immersion in daily activities with foreign peers. P6 noted that the platform helped them move beyond the "formal" constraints of a classroom to acquire contemporary language:

“Beside knowing many other slang and idioms they use in real life practice... I spent much of my time here listening and interacting with my foreign friend.”

P6 also shared a significant instance of incidental learning through feedback. Unlike the formal correction found in academic settings, P6 experienced linguistic adjustment as a necessity for successful social communication:

“I remember I have to repeat my pronunciation of word because my foreign friend ask me to because they misunderstood the context. After I explain to them they correct me... I don't take it personally because I'm so happy in that moment.”

This suggests that for P6, the authentic context of Discord transforms correction from a source of embarrassment into a source of "happiness" and genuine linguistic growth.

These findings collectively indicate that Discord serves as an authentic language resource, bridging the gap between textbook English and the dynamic, informal English used in daily global communication.

2. The Contribution of Specific Features to Communication Competencies

While the general environment of Discord builds confidence, participants identified specific features that contributed to distinct aspects of their communication skills. Thematic analysis reveals that students utilize Text, Voice, and Multimodal

features as different "stages" or "tools" within their learning process, each serving a unique function in their language development.

a) Text Channels as Scaffolding for Vocabulary and Accuracy

Participants perceived text channels not just as a chatting tool, but as a safe entry point for interaction and a vital source for vocabulary acquisition. For students who felt unprepared to speak, text channel provided the necessary "thinking time" to formulate sentences and observe authentic language use. Participant (P1) described the text channel as a "basic entry activity," noting that it serves as an informative space for chatting and sharing. This sentiment was echoed by Participant (P9), who utilized text channels strategically when they lacked the energy to speak, stating:

"Usually, i use the text channel when i feel like don't have energy to talk... of course it could assist my writing skills, caused i can learn so many unknown vocabulary into my own dictionary."

This highlights how text channels function as a low-stakes environment where learners can build their lexical resource before stepping into verbal communication. Furthermore, the text feature facilitated the understanding of pragmatic nuances that is often missed in formal education. Participant (P10) explained that writing in text channels helped them grasp

" context and nuance, like how to use sarcasms, which is never been taught in the class "

Similarly, Participant (P3) noted that the unique nuance of Discord text chats allowed them to learn "much of slang, also many abbreviation". Thus, text channels serve as a scaffolding tool, allowing students to focus on vocabulary expansion and understanding context without the immediate pressure of oral production.

b) Voice Channels for Fluency and Listening

In contrast to text, Voice Channels were perceived as the primary driver for improving speaking fluency and listening skills. Participants noted that the real-time

nature of voice chat often combined with the cognitive distraction of gaming forced them to speak naturally, thereby reducing over-thinking. Participant (P1) highlighted the seamless integration of speaking while performing other activities, stated, *"...voice, is so good for speaking n listening, i used it frequently speaking to my online friend mainly while im playing game."*

This suggests that Voice Channels facilitate incidental learning, where fluency improves as a secondary outcome of social interaction and gaming. Participant (P9) explicitly confirmed the impact of this feature, stating,

" my fluency in English was Really affected by voice channel on discord".

Beyond speaking, the voice channel also played a crucial role in developing listening competence, even for passive participants. Participant (P3) admitted to mostly listening rather than speaking, yet noted,

"my listening skill is gradually getting better because I have to listen to many people from many background/ country".

This indicates that the voice channel provides an immersive environment that exposes students to diverse accents and speaking speeds, contributing significantly to their overall aural comprehension and fluency.

c) Multimodal Features (Share Screen) for Collaborative Clarity

Addressing the collaborative aspect of the research, the "Share Screen" and video features were identified as critical tools for bridging understanding gaps and clarifying complex ideas. When verbal explanation failed or vocabulary was limited, students used visual aids to maintain communication. Participant (P2) explained how this feature supported their cognitive process:

"...cause when i dont understand something, i just share my screen on discord then i ask to my friends what should i do, so its very helpful for me to enrich my idea."

This demonstrates that multimodal features serve as a visual scaffold, allowing students to collaborate on problem-solving even when their linguistic resources are limited. Participant (P4) similarly utilized this feature for academic purposes, stating,

"I use it for learning with my friends. They share their screen and then we discuss the material in the screen".

Furthermore, Participant (P3) shared a specific instance where screen sharing was essential for technical troubleshooting, noting that friends guided them to fix a laptop problem by saying "look at that" and "click that button" while streaming the screen. Additionally, Participant (P10) emphasized the role of video in preventing emotional misunderstanding, stating,

"I prefer turning on my camera... so that people don't misunderstand my intonation".

Collectively, these findings suggest that multimodal features enhance collaborative clarity by providing visual context that supports and extends verbal communication.

This sense of collaborative clarity is best exemplified by the "virtual workshop" environment created through live-streaming. Participant 8 (P8) recalled a significant learning experience where the Share Screen function facilitated direct, real-time peer tutoring:

"One moment when we do sharescreen there's someone in Livestream doing his task, I did ask him several questions and he answer everything I want to get to know. That's why it's so memorable for me."

This interaction demonstrates that the screen-sharing function allows learners to observe a peer's process in real-time and receive immediate, context-specific explanations. By combining the visual input of the stream with the interactive "comment section," students like P8 can engage in multi-layered communication. This process reinforces their understanding through both visual and textual channels, turning a potentially difficult task into a shared, memorable learning moment that effectively bridges the gap between individual confusion and collective understanding.

B. Discussion

The findings regarding the first research question reveal that users perceive Discord as a highly effective environment for developing communication skills, primarily due to its ability to lower anxiety and foster authentic interaction. The data indicates that visual anonymity significantly reduces the fear of judgment, creating a "psychologically safe" space that stands in contrast to the high-pressure environment of traditional classrooms. This observation aligns with Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that lower anxiety levels facilitate better language acquisition. Supporting this, Slamet (2024) found that digital tools like Discord significantly lower Foreign Language Anxiety by offering low-pressured environments where learners feel safer to experiment than in face-to-face settings. Similarly, Wulanjani (2018) noted that the platform transforms student attitudes, fostering greater motivation and interactivity by removing the "stage fright" often associated with formal education.

Beyond anxiety reduction, the study found that Discord effectively bridges the gap between formal instruction and real-world language use. Users consistently reported that the platform exposed them to slang, sarcasm, and cultural nuances that are rarely taught in standard curriculums. This finding strengthens research by Odinkaya et al. (2021), who confirmed that Discord facilitates the acquisition of informal vocabulary and authentic language patterns, enriching the learners' sociolinguistic competence. Furthermore, the supportive atmosphere identified in the study directly influences engagement levels. Pasaribu et al. (2025) argued that such platforms positively influence students' "Willingness to Communicate", encouraging them to persist in speaking practice even when they make mistakes. Finally, the sense of belonging described in the findings supports Ahlquist et al. (2021), whose study indicated that Discord fosters a distinct "sense of community" often stronger than traditional Learning Management Systems, leading to higher engagement and peer-to-peer learning.

Regarding the second research question, the findings identify specific features Voice Channels, Text Channels, and Screen Sharing as critical contributors to distinct aspects of communication competence. Voice Channels were identified as the primary drivers for improving fluency and listening skills. This supports the conclusions of Ramadhan and Albaekani (2021), who stated that Discord's voice chat capabilities provide practical, lightweight, and real-time conversation practice that effectively simulates natural dialogue. This perception of improvement is further validated by Septian (2024), who used quantitative research found statistically significant improvements in students' speaking performance after consistent use of Discord's voice features, mirroring the progress observed in this study.

This reliance on text-based interaction highlights a critical distinction in how the platform is used. While voice channels facilitate fluency a finding supported by Muluk et al. (2025), who noted that synchronous virtual environments provide the necessary real-time interaction to enhance speaking skills Text Channels were found to serve a crucial cognitive function as a 'scaffolding' tool. The findings suggest that text channels provide necessary 'thinking time' and allow learners to check vocabulary before communicating. This aligns with Lacher and Biehl (2019), who found that text-based communication on Discord supports learners by allowing for asynchronous processing, enabling them to compose thoughts without the immediate pressure of speech.

Additionally, the study highlighted the utility of multimodal features like Screen Sharing for clarifying meaning and bridging understanding gaps. Munibi (2024) supports this, finding that Discord's multimedia integration enhances collaboration through 'dual coding,' where visual and verbal information combine to aid comprehension.

Finally, the context in which these features are used often during gaming or informal interaction supports Arifianto and Izzudin (2021), who highlighted that the

'perceived ease of use' and fun nature of Discord make it a more effective educational platform than rigid academic tools, facilitating incidental learning.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents conclusions drawn from the research findings and offers recommendations for educators, learners, and future research. The chapter begins by reviewing the purpose of the study and summarizing the main findings, followed by practical suggestions and directions for future research.

A. Conclusion

Having done a research on students' perceptions of Discord as a digital learning platform, this study collected data from eleven participants through interviews and analyzed the findings using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. It explored students' views on Discord as a tool to develop English communication skills, as well as the challenges they faced during its usage.

The results revealed that students generally viewed Discord as beneficial for several reasons. First, the platform significantly reduced speaking anxiety and increased self-confidence. Students reported feeling safer and more willing to speak when they could remain anonymous (hiding their face), as this removed the fear of visual judgment common in traditional classrooms. Second, the informal nature of Voice Channels often used simultaneously with gaming provided a natural environment for fluency development. Participants appreciated the "low-pressure" practice space where they could focus on message delivery rather than grammatical perfection. Third, interaction in Text Channels allowed students to acquire authentic vocabulary and colloquialisms. Exposure to slang, idioms, and sarcasm provided learners with pragmatic knowledge that is rarely taught in formal schooling. Fourth, the multimodal features (such as Screen Sharing and Video) served as critical scaffolding tools. Students noted that being able to visualize the topic or share their screen helped bridge communication gaps when their vocabulary was insufficient. Overall, the results of the study suggest that Discord provides a psychologically safe

and resource-rich environment for communicative language practice, especially for students who feel intimidated by rigid academic settings.

However, the study also identified several challenges that limited students' full participation in Discord. The main barriers were technical complexities, particularly for new users who found the interface and varied features overwhelming to navigate initially. In addition, linguistic barriers such as the fast speaking speed and unfamiliar accents of native speakers made it difficult for some participants to keep up with voice conversations. Social dynamics also posed challenges; some students reported encountering toxic behavior or misunderstandings in text chats due to the lack of non-verbal cues, which occasionally created a tense or unfriendly environment. Furthermore, the open nature of the platform sometimes led to miscommunication during heated debates, requiring a level of emotional regulation that some learners found difficult. These challenges highlight that while technology offers freedom, the interplay of technical, linguistic, and social factors remains a critical determinant of a learner's success in digital communities.

B. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed for language educators, learners, and future researchers to improve the effectiveness of small group discussions in English language learning.

1. For Language Educators

Teachers are encouraged to integrate Discord not as a replacement for the traditional classroom, but as a supplementary "Third Place" for informal practice. Since findings indicate that students feel safer and less anxious on the platform, educators should leverage this by assigning low-stakes, collaborative tasks such as discussing a game stream or analyzing slang in text channels rather than formal graded assessments. Additionally, given the report that Discord can be "technical and hard for new users", educators must provide a preliminary tutorial or "onboarding session" to help students

navigate the interface, ensuring that technical barriers do not hinder language practice. Finally, teachers should act as moderators or establish clear community guidelines to prevent the "toxicity" and "misunderstandings" that some participants encountered in open servers.

2. For EFL Learner

Learners should strategically utilize Discord's features to scaffold their own progress. Students who are "too shy" to speak immediately are recommended to start with Text Channels, using them to build vocabulary and observe authentic interaction before transitioning to voice. Learners are also encouraged to utilize Multimodal Features (such as Screen Sharing) to bridge communication gaps; when vocabulary fails, visual aids can help sustain the conversation. However, learners must be selective in choosing communities; it is advisable to join moderated "English Learning" servers or private peer groups to avoid the "toxic" interactions found in some public gaming servers.

3. For Future Research

This study primarily explored the qualitative perceptions of students. Future researchers are recommended to conduct quantitative or mixed-method studies to measure the actual improvement in speaking proficiency (e.g., through pre-test and post-test scores) after prolonged Discord usage. Furthermore, since this study highlighted the unique role of "gaming" and "streaming" in reducing anxiety, further research could specifically investigate the impact of Gamified Learning within Discord on specific language skills, such as pronunciation or pragmatic competence. Finally, a longitudinal study could be beneficial to observe whether the confidence gained in the anonymous digital space effectively transfers to face-to-face classroom interactions over time.

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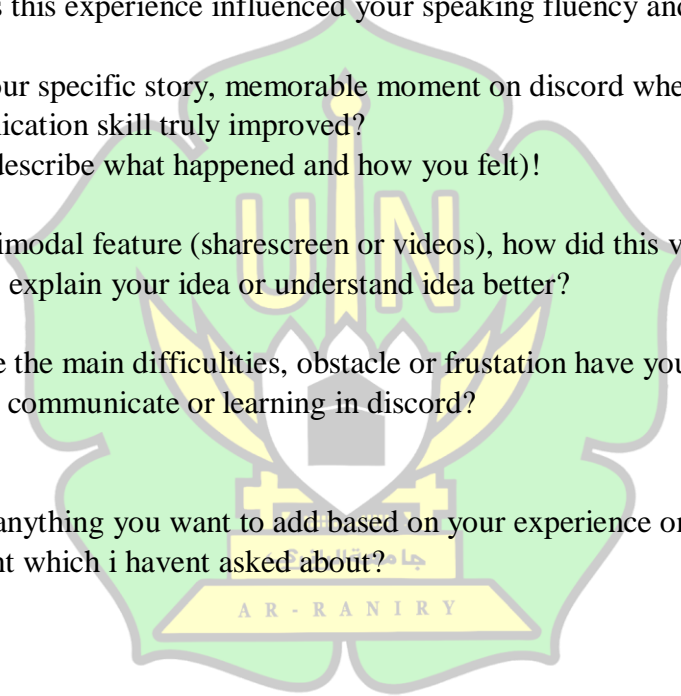
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. *Written Interview*

1. Please describe your experience using discord as a platform for practicing your english commuciation skill!
How does it compares to traditional setting?
2. On text channel, how do you use them to communicate?
Describe how this feature has influenced writing skill and grammatical structure?
3. On voice channel, describe what it feels like to speak english in the channel!
How has this experience influenced your speaking fluency and confidence?
4. Share your specific story, memorable moment on discord where you felt your communication skill truly improved?
(please describe what happened and how you felt)!
5. On multimodal feature (sharescreen or videos), how did this visual feature help you explain your idea or understand idea better?
6. What are the main difficulties, obstacle or frustation have you faced when trying to communicate or learning in discord?
7. Is there anything you want to add based on your experience on discord that is important which i havent asked about? جاہ



Appendix 2. *Transcripts of Interview.*

Participant 1 (P1)

1. I think discord is a good place to spend time practicing English. Although discord is not structured for learning only like in a classroom, at the same time discord can be much safer for me, especially when I don't want to show my face and that is why I have a confidence to speak with native speaker in discord. Moreover, I can get many friends outside of my country.
2. text channel is so informative, I used it for chatting, discussing and sharing. i use it for chatting personally, group and greeting with another speaker, i think the nuance is still the same from another platform what make it better is many good speaker use this platform so that is why i think is better.
3. for me discord is so seamless for activity such as voice, it is so good for speaking n listening, I use it frequently speaking to my online friend mainly while im playing game.
4. My skill in speaking is not improved significantly but I just happy to listen to many of native speaker inside discord. few of times, I was able to speak with native speaker but not too often. Despite of all that I still feel happy of all experienced I gain in discord. Also the discussion in speaking channel has many of variety or genre.
5. Many of friend online use this feature (sharescreen) when we try to share any ideas. I personally love this feature most because it is so perfect when we try to give/share an idea and learn something from someone. I think discord feature is better than many other platform, only youtube could stays equal mainly when it comes streaming since we want the video is saved so that we can rewatch it in a good resolution.
6. From my experience discord is kind of hard if you are new to discord, because i have experience trying to persuade a friend to begin using discord n mid way he just gave up, it takes time sometime for people to really get used to it. since the feature is just kind of different than any other platform. but once they spend time try to get used to it, i think next will get easier.
7. discord is so variative, it included many other app extension such as game etc, many of user is well adapted to the feature so that is that can make discord better than any other competitor, most of the user is gamer they used the as a communicative tool while playing game. Ive also met many Indonesian friend

and many of them are capable of speaking English because of their experience of meeting many foreign speaker.

Participant 2 (P2)

1. I think in discord u can get better communication skill because u can express ur feelings easily, while you are doing the other thing, like u can talk while doing your homework, u can also meet a lot of people online in one group, then u can talk each other there.
2. first i open the text channel, then we start to chat each other, u can also chatting bout related to learning proses there, and in discord u can tagging ur friends for asking him to chat on text channel by just using hastag@
3. i think its feel good when u can speak while doing something, like u can discuss about homework to your friend while you are doing ur homework at home, so u dont need to meet them, just join discord, go to voice channel then discuss what u want there
4. its when i met foreigner, i tried to speak in english with him, it made me feel like im good at english tho
5. so discord has a feature that u can share screen or doing a video call there, this feature make things really easy for me to increase my idea, cause when i dont understand something, i just share my screen on discord then i ask to my friends what should i do, so its very helpful for me to enrich my idea
6. i think the obstacle is the internet connection, cause if u have a bad connection, u cant communicate on discord effectively.
7. i do, in discord, we can make our group there, so its mean like when u want to join a listening group, u go to listening group, also when u want to do a discussion u can join to the discussion group. Discord is very comfortable to begins with the talking experience with the native speaker

Participant 3 (P3)

1. Discord is another next level of app for communicating, mainly because it has a bunch of features. Of course, traditional way has it own advantage such as more interactive because it meets people directly opposite to discord
It's more relaxed in discord because we make our own rules
2. I use it for communicating same way as I do in WhatsApp, But the nuance it gives is so unique I learn many of slang word, also many abbreviation.

3. I mostly just listening in voice channel and sometime I have to speak when they asked me to. Although I don't practice speaking so much but my listening skill is gradually getting better because I have to listen to many people from many background/ country
4. There's a moment when I have to text something but the people in the group misunderstood my typing then try to correcting my writing in text channel and also encourage me to never shy making mistake. I think that is so thoughtful that is why I still remember that moment
5. On time I used to have a problem with my laptop then they ask me to stream my laptop using share screen so they could guide me to fix the problem but my English is still bad back then, although we try to find a simple vocabulary like " look at that " click that button
6. There is many toxic people in the chat group spamming sticker etc Making the environment inside the group is less friendly
7. I think that is enough

Participants 4 (P4)

1. Honestly discord is good for me when i don't want anyone to see my face , because I am too shy to people that why I rather stay anonymous in discord
2. I like text channel, the people in text channel is so funny they like sending sticker, emojis and other it doesn't help much to my writing skill but I don't have a fear to write anything in discord
3. I'm too shy to use this feature in public voice channel, but I like listening to some foreign people speaking even though sometime I didn't understand the words they say because of their accent and speed of speaking
4. I used to have share screen with my friends learning material of studies. It really help me a lot and I love it. This is reason mostly why I use discord when I can't meet my friend in real life
5. I use it for learning with my friends. They share their screen and then we discuss the material in the screen. I love this feature it help me so much
6. Some native speaker speak so fast that I can't understand their context communication (word , vocabulary etc) Even their accent
7. I think that is enough

Participants 5 (P5)

1. I love discord because I used it when I play game its good for communicating I can speak without shy in discord. it's different than in the classroom
2. I can write anything I want in discord channel. we play many game in text channel.
3. This is my favorite channel, I use it while I'm playing a game with strangers in discord. They teach me many things while we play game. I am just having fun while speaking with strangers
4. There's a moment when I was shocked to myself because when I realized it I understand what my friend talk while playing game
5. I never use it for learning but we're watching someone gameplay
6. I still have many frustration moment when I have to use discord because is so difficult in technical using
7. No

Participant 6 (P6)

1. I use discord as daily activity for communicating with my friends discuss about anime and game. Classroom is too formal
But in discord we can do anything we want
1. I usually don't write so fast before meeting friend in discord
After sometime communicate with this foreign people, my writing is improved beside knowing many other slang, and any other idiom they use in real life practice
2. I spent much of my time here listening and interacting with my foreign friend
It's so perfect speaking environment for me
3. I remember I have to repeat my pronunciation of word because my foreign friend ask me to because they misunderstood the context. After I explain to them they correct me although they sometime bully me for that moment but I don't take it personally because I'm so happy in that moment
4. I use this feature when we have to stream anime together. I sometime involved in discussion, I think it's very good spending time together with friends
5. Because we live in different timezone, some lives in Europe or USA so I have to stayed up too late at night.
6. I feel so comfortable in discord
And I think there's no place better than this compare to any other application

Participant 7 (P7)

1. Sometimes I use when I want to chat with my friends. I get many abroad friend from this platform. It's way more relaxed than class. In class, I feel pressured if I make mistakes. But here in discord I can speak about any topic without any hesitation. And I can speak with the target language people.
2. I use text channel for communicating with my friend some Indonesia friend and abroad friend, to be honest, I learn many new word or vocab in here And I learn many slang word they use and they even tell us the the background story of each slang. I think my writing skill is improving a little bit in informal language
3. Im not too good at speaking, but sometimes I try to speak in voice channel to practice or get to know each other but I don't actually active mainly I just listening to them. But each day I kinda feel I'm improved in listening but not in speaking because I'm still afraid to practice.
4. I think I just have to spend more time and try not afraid when it come to speaking
5. I rarely use this feature
6. They speak with their accent that sometimes it gets me confused that is why I don't like interacting in speaking especially with them
- 7.

Participant 8 (P8)

1. usually use discord for my daily activities
Most of material learning I can get from discord because I made a lot of friend there. When it compares to traditional classroom discord is so much comfort place to have interaction between one another, Although we don't get to know someone actual name or still staying with nickname.
2. Most of my interaction is happen with chatting in text channel. I usually read their interaction and try to understand every context of their writing, mostly I only try to if the discussion is worth reading, Actually I did join many channel with different topic.
3. I rarely contribute in speaking but I do speak sometime if I had to, I use many platform for speaking so I don't really recall which one give a significant improvement in my speaking. But I'm planing to speak if I have someone worth interacting.
4. There's many moment ,One moment when we do sharescreen there's someone in Livestream doing his task I did ask him several questions and he answer everything I want to get to know .That's why it's so memorable for me.

5. For material learning or any other event that I attended in discord sometime use bahasa or English, I can say this feature is really helpful to put everyone together learning, watching, streaming In sharescreen feature we can also interacting by chatting in comment section. Many of them has vary of joke that's why it's memorable for me actually
6. Discord is not friendly for new user. So it takes time to adapt to new kind of platform .That's my experience when I first use discord
7. Discord is such an underated platform for any occasion
It offers comfort for someone who want to stay anonymous or introvert
We can also find many foreigner from many across country

Participant 9 (9)

1. I experienced discord as the effective platform helping me practice my communication skill and also to build my confidence. And its way better and practical than to the traditional setting like A group meeting in person.
2. Usually, i use the text channel when i feel like don't have energy to talk or when i in the places surrounded by many people. By using this feature, of course it could assist my writing skills, caused i can learn so many unknown vocabulary into my own dictionary. Even though i feel the grammar of mine not really that influenced by this feature since all the members are sending short messages rather than the long one.
3. My very first time involved in voice channel was an cringe moment. I dont have such an confidence at first to actually speak with others in English. But time goes by, i gained my confidence to speak and also my fluency in English was Really affected by voice channel on discord.
4. I got a friend on discord, i forgot his name, but i remember that he was vietnamese. We were communicate and spoke so often. And there was a moment after a couple months after our first knowing each other, he was complimenting my English speaking skill. And by the time i realize that my speaking skill was truly improved.
5. I rarely use this feature, so i cant really say that this feature help me in serving or understand a certain ideas, but im pretty sure this must be so beneficial feature in conversations or discussions with share screen or videos.
6. My main difficulties were to find the right discussions group to join with and to find the person who welcoming you without any judgement.
7. No, i think already mentioned all the important things about discord

Participant 10 (P10)

1. It's way more relaxed than class. In classroom, I'm afraid the lecture will judge my grammar. On discord, nobody cares as long as they understand the context of meaning. It feels like real English rather than formal English.
2. I learned how to joke in English. Writing in text channel helped me understand the context and nuance, like how to use sarcasms, which is never been taught in the class
3. I used to stutter compares to my experience in classroom. But when it comes to discord my confidence is improving and it got me shock to realize that I have improved in speaking as it was different when I have to speak in front off the class
4. I remember when I've been involved in discussion. My friend says " I'm boring" But then I correct him to " I'm bored " after asking clarification for the context.
5. I prefer turning on my camera when joining sharescreen so that people don't misunderstood my intonation because sometimes people might think I'm angry but when they see my face they know I smile so they know I'm friendly. It does help me to show my emotion not only dependent on my intonation.
6. Theres a lot of misunderstanding situation that's happened in my experience talking with the native speaker and that is reason to my lack fluency in English in listening or speaking. That's why sometimes I have to pick which one of discussion I should join or not so related to level
- 7.

Participant 11 (P11)


1. For many learners, discord feels like a low-pressure, real-world practice space. You can join servers focused on English learning, gaming, hobbies, or just casual chat, and then practice It.
2. In text channels, communication happens through short written messages. Users type responses in real time to ask questions, share opinions, react to others, or continue ongoing conversations. Messages are usually informal and quick, similar to chatting with friends
3. Speaking English in a voice channel often feels nervous at first, especially when talking to native speakers or people with different accents. There is little time to prepare sentences, so speakers must think and respond quickly.
4. I remember a moment during a late night discussion in a discord study server. The topic was surprisingly heated people were debating whether AI tools help or harm learning. At first, I jumped in the way I usually did: typing fast,

defending my opinion, and reacting emotionally when someone disagreed. Almost immediately, the conversation felt tense, and one person replied sharply to me.

5. Using multimodal features like screen sharing and videos helped me communicate my ideas more clearly and understand others better, especially during complex discussions.
6. One of the main difficulties I faced when communicating and learning on Discord was miscommunication, especially in text-based channels. Without facial expressions or tone, messages were sometimes misunderstood, which could lead to unnecessary tension or confusion.
7. From my experience, the presence of clear rules, active moderators, and a supportive culture makes a huge difference. In servers where guidelines are clear and respectful behavior is encouraged, people feel safer asking questions, sharing ideas, and making mistakes.



Appendix 3. Decree



KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
NOMOR : 931 TAHUN 2025

TENTANG:
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA

DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

Menimbang :

- a. bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk Pembimbing skripsi;
- b. bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai Pembimbing skripsi Mahasiswa;
- c. bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

Mengingat :

1. Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
2. Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
3. Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
4. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
5. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
6. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institusi Agama Islam negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
7. Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi & Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
8. Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
9. Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
10. Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Km.05/2011, tentang penetapan institusi agama Islam Negeri UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
11. Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

MEMUTUSKAN

Menetapkan : Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa

KESATU : Mencabut Keputusan Dekan FTK UIN Ar-Raniry No: 728/12/ TAHUN 2024

KEDUA : Menunjuk Saudara:
Prof. Safrul Muluk S.Ag., M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D

Untuk membimbing Skripsi

Nama : **Salman Ihsan**

NIM : **190203112**

Program Studi : **Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris**

Judul Skripsi : **EFL Learners Perceive Benefits of an Online Community for Enhancing Communication Skill**


KETIGA : Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;



KEEMPAT : Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2024 Tanggal 24 November 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025;

KELIMA : Surat Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak ditetapkan;

KEENAM : Surat Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan diubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : **Banda Aceh**
Pada tanggal : **01 Juli 2025**
Dekan,



Safrul Muluk

Tembusan

1. Sekjen Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
2. Dirjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
3. Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
4. Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
5. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry di Banda Aceh
6. Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Akuntansi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
7. Yang bersangkutan;
8. Arsip.

Appendix 4. Research Permit


KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
FAKULTAS TARBİYAH DAN KEGURUAN
 Jl. Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh Telp/Fax. : 0651-752921


Nomor : B-8926/Un.08/FTK.1/TL.00/11/2025
 Lamp : -
 Hal : **Penelitian Ilmiah Mahasiswa**

Kepada Yth,
 Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh ;
 Mahasiswa Prodi Bahasa Inggris 2023
 Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.
 Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dengan ini menerangkan bahwa:

NIM : 190203112
 Nama : salman ihsan
 Program Studi/Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
 Alamat : jalan : leubok seuneulop gampong : lam ue

Saudara yang tersebut namanya diatas benar mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan bermaksud melakukan penelitian ilmiah di lembaga yang Bapak/Ibu pimpin dalam rangka penulisan Skripsi dengan judul **EFL LEARNERS PERCEIVE THE BENEFITS OF AN ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Banda Aceh, 10 November 2025
 An. Dekan
 Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik dan Kelembagaan



Prof. Dr. Buhori Muslim, M.Ag.
 NIP. 197508152001121002

Berlaku sampai : 31 Desember 2025



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
 UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY
FAKULTAS TARBİYAH DAN KEGURUAN
PRODI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS
 Jln Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh
 Email : pbi.ftk@ar-raniry.ac.id. Website : <https://ar-raniry.ac.id>

SURAT KETERANGAN

Nomor: B-09/Un.08/PBI/Kp.01.2/1/2026

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Darussalam Banda Aceh menerangkan bahwa yang nama tersebut di bawah ini:

Nama : Salman ihsan
 NIM : 190203112
 Prodi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
 Alamat : Jl.Leubok seuneulop kec. Ingin jaya . Lam ue

Benar telah melakukan pengumpulan data untuk penelitian pada Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh dalam rangka penyusunan Skripsi yang berjudul:

"EFL LEARNERS PERCEIVE THE BENEFITS OF AN ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILL"

Demikianlah Surat Keterangan ini kami buat agar dapat dipergunakan seperlunya.

Banda Aceh, 07 Januari 2026
 Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,

 Syarifah Dahlia

Appendix 6. Autobiography**AUTOBIOGRAPHY****PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Name : Salman Ihsan
 Gender : Male
 Place / Date of Birth : bireun / 02 of February 1999
 Address : jl. Leubok seuneulop kec.ingin jaya, Aceh Besar
 Nationality : Indonesia
 Religion : Islam
 Status : student of university
 Faculty / Department : Tarbiyah and Teacher Training / English
 Language Education
 Email : 190203112@student.ar-raniry.ac.id
 Phone No. : 0895612379303

Educational Background

Elementary School (Year) : SD 04 kuta alam, banda aceh
 Junior High School (Year) : MTSS GONTOR 10 seulimeum, aceh besar
 Senior High School (Year) : MAS GONTOR 2 madusari, jawa timur

Parental Information

Father's Name : Syardan djalil
 Father's Occupation : -
 Mother's Name : Nurlaina
 Mother's Occupation : -
 Address : Ingin jaya, Aceh Besar

Appendix 7. Discord Interface

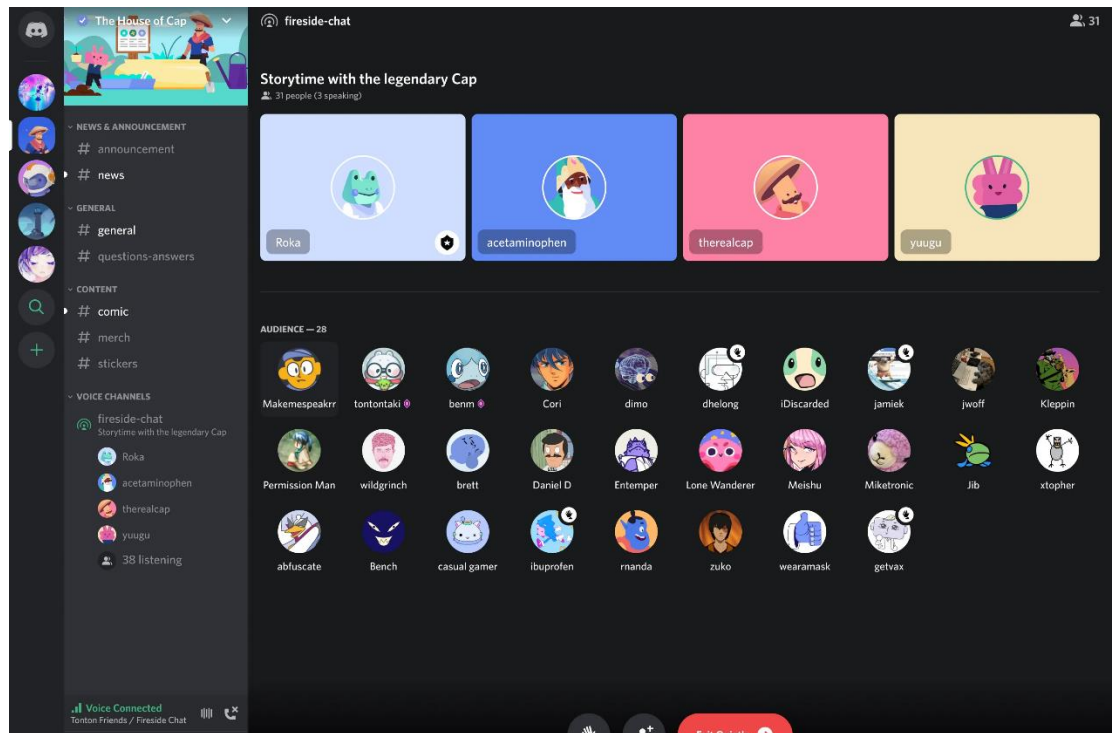
7.1 Channel Types



7.2 Text Channel Example



7.3 Voice Channel



7.4 Multimodal Channel (sharescreen)

