



UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN USING DISCORD APPLICATION TO MASTER ENGLISH VOCABULARY



ADELIA SYAFITRI NURAENI

SN. 20522020

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A THESIS

*Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education*



By:

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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LEMBAR PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN KARYA

Yang bertandatangan dibawah ini:

Nama : Adelia Syafitri Nuraeni

NIM 20522020

Fakultas : Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan

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Pekalongan, 13 Juli 2026
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Adelia Syafitri Nuraeni
SN 20522020

Fachri Ali, M Pd
Kajen, Pekalongan

NOTA PEMBIMBING

Lamp : 3 (Tiga) Eksemplar

Hal : Naskah Skripsi

Sdr, Adelia Syafitri Nuraeni

Kepada

Yth. Dekan FTIK UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan

c.q. Ketua Jurusan TBIG

di Pekalongan

Assalamu 'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Setelah diadakan penelitian dan perbaikan, maka bersama ini saya kirimkan naskah Skripsi:

Nama : Adelia Syafitri Nuraeni

NIM : 20522020

Jurusan : FTIK/Tadris Bahasa Inggris

Judul : **"UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN
USING DISCORD APPLICATION TO MASTER ENGLISH
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Dengan ini mohon agar skripsi tersebut segera dimunaqosahkan.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatian bapak/Ibu, saya sampaikan terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Pekalongan, 25 Juni 2026
Pembimbing



Fachri Ali, M. Pd
NIP. 19890101 202012 1 013



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN ILMU KEGURUAN
Jl. Pahlawan KM 5 Rowolaku Kajen Kab. Pekalongan Kode Pos 51161
Website: fik.uiningsdur.ac.id | Email : fik@uiningsdur.ac.id

APPROVAL SHEET

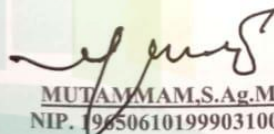
The Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, approved this thesis by :

Name : Adelia Syafitri Nuraeni
NIM : 20522020
Title : UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN USING
DISCORD APPLICATION TO MASTER ENGLISH
VOCABULARY

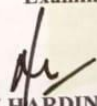
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The Examiners

Examiner I


MUTAMAM, S.Ag. M.Ed
NIP. 196506101999031003

Examiner II


ISRIANI HARDINI, M.A., Ph.D
NIP. 198105302009012007

Pekalongan, 12 July 2026
Assigned by
The Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training



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MOTTO

“Indeed, with hardship comes ease.”

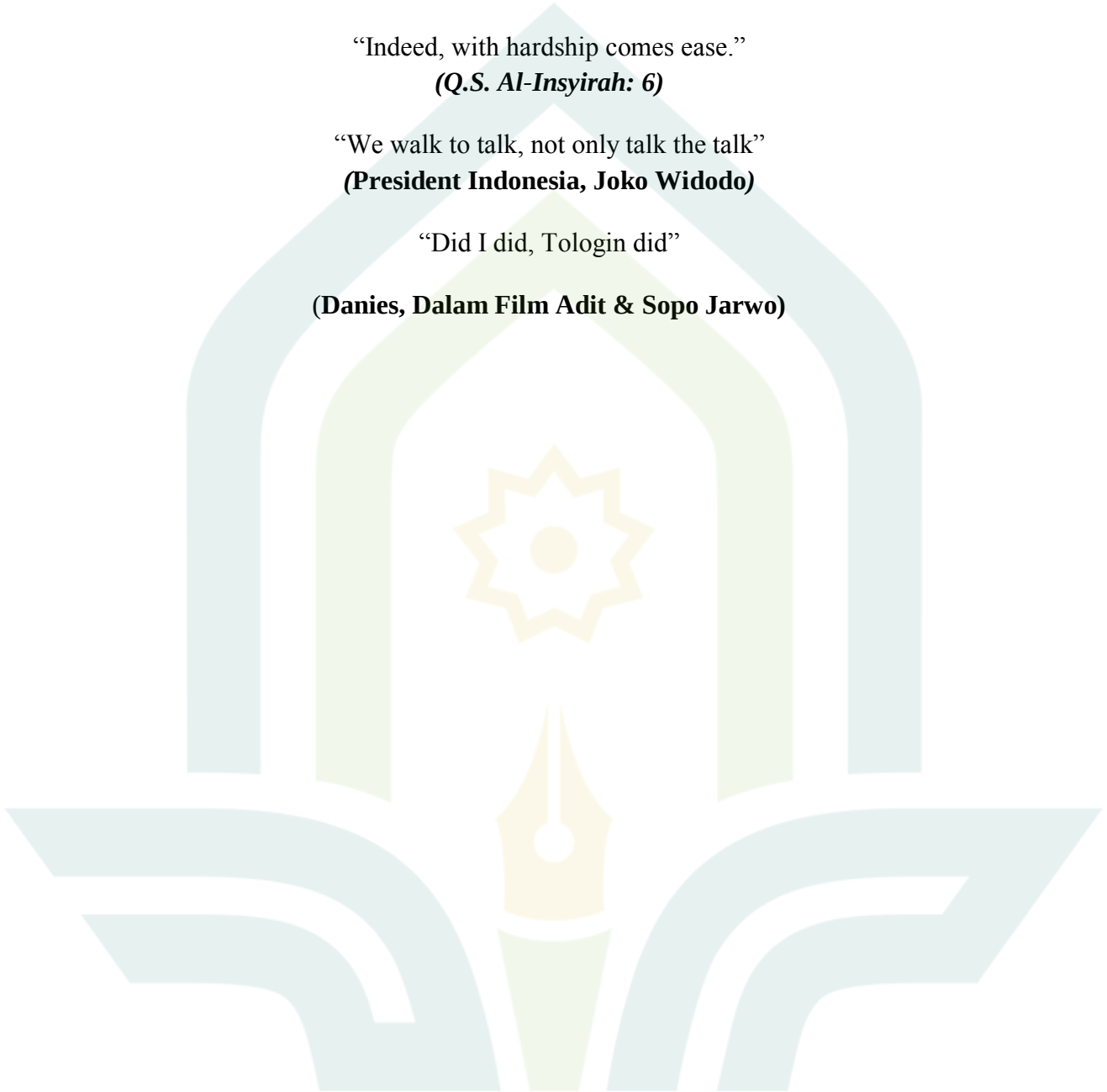
(Q.S. Al-Insyirah: 6)

“We walk to talk, not only talk the talk”

(President Indonesia, Joko Widodo)

“Did I did, Tologin did”

(Danies, Dalam Film Adit & Sopo Jarwo)



ABSTRAK

Penguasaan kosakata masih menjadi tantangan yang signifikan bagi mahasiswa dalam konteks English as a Foreign Language (EFL) karena mereka sering kali memiliki kesempatan yang terbatas untuk mempraktikkan kosakata dalam komunikasi yang autentik. Meskipun platform digital semakin banyak diintegrasikan ke dalam pembelajaran bahasa, penelitian yang berfokus pada pengalaman mahasiswa dalam menggunakan aplikasi Discord untuk mendukung pengembangan kosakata bahasa Inggris masih terbatas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman mahasiswa dalam menggunakan aplikasi Discord untuk menguasai kosakata bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain narrative inquiry dengan pendekatan kualitatif yang melibatkan empat mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang aktif menggunakan Discord sebagai media pembelajaran kosakata. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Discord memberikan kesempatan kepada mahasiswa untuk mempelajari kosakata melalui komunikasi, mengembangkan strategi belajar secara mandiri, memahami kosakata dalam konteks yang bermakna, serta memperkuat penguasaan kosakata melalui paparan yang berulang dalam percakapan dan diskusi. Namun, mahasiswa juga mengalami tantangan dalam memilih kosakata yang tepat selama komunikasi secara real-time serta mempertahankan fokus belajar karena beragam topik diskusi yang tersedia di platform tersebut. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Discord dapat berfungsi sebagai media pembelajaran pendukung yang efektif untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata melalui interaksi yang autentik, keterlibatan aktif mahasiswa, dan praktik penggunaan kosakata yang bermakna di lingkungan pendidikan tinggi.

Kata kunci: aplikasi Discord, kosakata bahasa Inggris, mahasiswa, pembelajaran kosakata, pengalaman mahasiswa.

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary mastery remains a significant challenge for university students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts because they often have limited opportunities to practice vocabulary in authentic communication. Although digital platforms have increasingly been integrated into language learning, studies focusing on university students' experiences in using Discord to support English vocabulary development remain limited. Therefore, this study aimed to explore university students' experiences in using the Discord application to master English vocabulary. This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry design involving four English Education students who actively used Discord for vocabulary learning. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that Discord provided opportunities for students to learn vocabulary through communication, develop personal learning strategies, understand vocabulary in meaningful contexts, and strengthen vocabulary retention through repeated exposure. However, students also experienced challenges in selecting appropriate vocabulary during real-time communication and maintaining learning focus due to various discussion topics on the platform. These findings suggest that Discord can serve as a valuable supplementary learning platform that supports vocabulary development by promoting authentic interaction, learner engagement, and meaningful vocabulary practice in higher education.

Keywords: Discord application, English vocabulary, university students, vocabulary learning, students' experiences.

PREFACE

All praise and gratitude are devoted to Allah SWT, who has bestowed upon me countless blessings, guidance, health, and patience, enabling me to complete this thesis entitled “University Students Experiences In Using Discord Application To Master English Vocabulary.” This thesis is submitted to the English Education Department of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd.) in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. I realize that this thesis is far from perfect. Therefore, any suggestions and constructive criticisms are highly appreciated to improve the quality of this work. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to:

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

English vocabulary plays a crucial role in mastering the language because it serves as the foundation for developing speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills (Nation, 2013). Without adequate vocabulary knowledge, learners may experience difficulties in understanding information and expressing their ideas effectively in English. For university students, vocabulary mastery is particularly important because it supports academic literacy and effective communication in higher education. Students with sufficient vocabulary knowledge are better able to comprehend academic texts, participate actively in classroom discussions, present their ideas clearly, and produce well-organized academic writing. In addition, vocabulary knowledge enables students to understand discipline-specific terminology that frequently appears in academic materials and research articles. Recent studies have also highlighted that English vocabulary mastery is one of the most essential aspects of language learning because it provides the lexical knowledge needed for effective communication and language development (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2008). Therefore, developing a broad and appropriate vocabulary is considered one of the essential aspects of English learning for university students and plays a fundamental role in supporting their academic success throughout their university studies.

Despite its importance, many university students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts continue to experience difficulties in mastering English vocabulary. Students often struggle with understanding word meanings, recognizing appropriate word forms, selecting suitable vocabulary, and applying words accurately in different communicative contexts (Teng & Qin, 2021). In addition, limited exposure to authentic English communication and the use of traditional learning methods often reduce students'

opportunities to practice vocabulary meaningfully. Many students still rely on memorization strategies that focus only on remembering word meanings without understanding how the words are actually used in communication. As a result, vocabulary is easily forgotten and difficult to apply when students need to communicate in English. Furthermore, limited opportunities to interact with English speakers or participate in authentic communication also contribute to slow vocabulary development. These challenges indicate that university students need learning environments that provide authentic interaction, repeated exposure, and continuous opportunities to practice vocabulary in meaningful contexts so that vocabulary learning becomes more effective and sustainable (Schmitt, 2008).

To address these challenges, digital learning platforms have increasingly been integrated into English vocabulary learning. The development of educational technology has created new opportunities for students to learn vocabulary through communication, collaboration, and interaction beyond the traditional classroom environment. Among various online platforms, Discord has emerged as a unique communication platform that supports interactive and collaborative learning. Although originally developed for gaming communities, Discord has evolved into an educational platform that offers various features such as text channels, voice channels, screen sharing, file sharing, and community-based discussion spaces. These features allow students to communicate with peers, discuss learning materials, exchange ideas, and practice English vocabulary in authentic situations. Research conducted by Andriani et al. (2022) showed that Discord creates opportunities for collaborative learning and meaningful interaction through its communication features, enabling students to encounter, practice, and reinforce vocabulary continuously during discussions and conversations. Through these activities, students are exposed to vocabulary in real communication rather than through isolated memorization. In addition to supporting communication, Discord provides a flexible learning environment

where university students can actively participate in vocabulary learning activities beyond the classroom. Students are able to join discussion groups, participate in voice conversations, exchange ideas, ask questions, and practice newly learned vocabulary with their peers through both text and voice interactions. Unlike conventional classroom learning, Discord allows students to access learning materials, participate in discussions, and communicate with other learners anytime and anywhere according to their own learning needs. The availability of multiple discussion channels also enables students to revisit previous conversations and review vocabulary that has been discussed earlier. Continuous interaction through the platform allows students to encounter vocabulary repeatedly in authentic contexts, which may strengthen vocabulary retention, improve vocabulary understanding, and encourage more active participation in English communication. Consequently, Discord offers opportunities for students to develop vocabulary through authentic communication experiences that occur naturally within an online learning community.

Despite the increasing use of Discord in educational settings, studies investigating its role in English vocabulary learning remain limited. Most previous studies have focused on students' engagement, collaborative learning, online interaction, or general English learning through Discord, while only a few have specifically explored university students' experiences in using Discord to master English vocabulary. Furthermore, existing studies have primarily emphasized the effectiveness of Discord in improving learning outcomes rather than examining how students personally experience vocabulary learning, develop their own learning strategies, and overcome challenges while using the platform. In addition, relatively little attention has been given to understanding how students perceive vocabulary learning through authentic communication on Discord and how these experiences influence their vocabulary development. Understanding these experiences is important because vocabulary acquisition is influenced not only by instructional methods but also by learners' interaction, participation,

repeated exposure, and engagement in meaningful communication. Therefore, further research is needed to provide a deeper understanding of university students' experiences in using Discord to support English vocabulary mastery and to fill the gap in previous studies.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore university students' experiences in using the Discord application to master English vocabulary. Specifically, the study investigates how students experience vocabulary learning through communication and interaction on Discord, the learning strategies they develop while using the platform, and the challenges they encounter during the vocabulary learning process. By exploring students' experiences directly, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Discord facilitates vocabulary learning in higher education. The findings are expected to provide useful insights for lecturers, students, and future researchers regarding the integration of Discord into English vocabulary learning. Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to the development of more interactive, meaningful, and student-centered vocabulary learning practices by demonstrating how digital communication platforms can support vocabulary mastery through authentic learning experiences. Recent developments in digital language learning have further emphasized the importance of communication-based platforms in supporting English vocabulary acquisition. Recent studies have shown that online learning environments that promote authentic interaction, collaborative discussion, and learner autonomy provide greater opportunities for vocabulary development than traditional teacher-centered instruction. Through continuous participation in online communities, learners are exposed to new vocabulary repeatedly, receive immediate feedback from peers, and practice using vocabulary in meaningful communicative contexts, which contribute to vocabulary retention and language development (Teng & Zhang, 2023; Lai & Li, 2024). In higher education, students are also increasingly expected to develop independent learning strategies by utilizing digital platforms that support flexible and

collaborative learning beyond classroom boundaries. These recent trends suggest that investigating students' experiences in using communication platforms such as Discord is both relevant and necessary to better understand how digital learning environments facilitate English vocabulary mastery.

1.2 Formulations of the problem

Based on the above research background there will be one question. How do university students experience using the Discord application for mastering English vocabulary? With the question, the researcher hoped to understand more about the experiences of students in using the Discord application to master English vocabulary.

1.3 Aim of the Study

This study aims to report on students' experiences using the discord application for media for mastering English vocabulary by tools.

1.4 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding the terms contained in this study, the researcher provides several definitions related to research conducted by the researcher as follows

1.4.1 English Vocabulary : English vocabulary refers to the collection of words and phrases used in the English language that learners must acquire to develop their language skills. It includes not only the meaning of words but also their usage in context, pronunciation, and form. Vocabulary acquisition is essential in second language learning as it supports reading comprehension, speaking fluency, and overall communication (Nation, 2013)

1.4.2 Discord Application : Discord is a free digital communication platform that allows users to create servers with multiple text and voice channels. Initially popular among gamers, Discord has been adapted for educational use due to its interactive features, such as real-time messaging, file sharing, screen sharing, and voice/video calls. It provides

a flexible, student-centered environment that can enhance collaborative learning and language practice (Wright, 2021).

1.4.3 Experience : Experience refers to the students' direct involvement and interaction within the Discord platform that facilitates vocabulary learning through a cyclical process of practice, reflection, and application. It is operationalized as students' engagement in activities such as encountering new words in text or voice channels (concrete experience), observing and reflecting on word usage and context (reflective observation), formulating understanding through dictionaries or peer explanations (abstract conceptualization), and actively experimenting by using the words in their own messages or conversations (active experimentation) experiential learning model (Kolb's 1984)

1.5 Significances of the study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to contribute to the theoretical understanding of vocabulary acquisition in digital learning environments. It can enrich the body of knowledge related to language learning using online platforms, especially regarding the integration of Discord in vocabulary development.

1.5.2 Empirical Significance

This study provides empirical evidence regarding students' actual experiences and engagement with the Discord application in learning English vocabulary. The findings may serve as a reference for future researchers who wish to investigate similar topics or develop further studies related to vocabulary learning through digital tools.

1.5.3 Practical Significance

The results of this research may offer insights for teachers, students, and educational institutions in integrating technology, specifically Discord into vocabulary learning. It can help educators design more

interactive and effective vocabulary teaching strategies using familiar and accessible digital platforms.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

This study explored university students' experiences in using the Discord application to increase English vocabulary mastery through the framework of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. The findings showed that students experienced vocabulary learning through Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation. In terms of concrete experience, students acquired new vocabulary through direct participation in chats, discussions, voice channels, and interactions with other users on Discord. Meanwhile, reflective observation was demonstrated through students' efforts to review previous conversations, save useful vocabulary, take notes, and reflect on the language they encountered during communication. These experiences enabled students to learn vocabulary in authentic contexts and develop greater awareness of their learning processes. This study contributes to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning by highlighting how Discord facilitates experiential vocabulary learning through authentic interaction and reflective learning practices.

The findings also revealed that students engaged in Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation during their vocabulary learning journey. Through abstract conceptualization, students developed personal understandings of vocabulary usage, identified language patterns, and connected newly learned words with existing knowledge. Through active experimentation, students applied newly acquired vocabulary in conversations, discussions, and various communication activities on Discord, allowing them to test and refine their language skills in real situations. These processes encouraged students to become more confident, independent, and active language learners. Therefore, this study contributes to the understanding of how Discord can support the complete experiential learning cycle, providing an effective digital

environment for vocabulary development and promoting learner autonomy in English language learning.

5.2 Suggestions

5.2.1 Suggestions for University Students

Students are encouraged to make use of Discord as a medium for vocabulary learning by actively participating in discussions, conversations, and other interactive activities. To maximize learning outcomes, students should consistently practice newly acquired vocabulary in authentic communication and develop personal learning strategies, such as reviewing previous chats, taking notes, or keeping records of unfamiliar words. In addition, students need to manage distractions and maintain focus on learning objectives while using Discord, as the platform also contains various non-academic discussions that may reduce learning effectiveness.

5.2.2 Suggestions for Lecturers and Material Developers

Lecturers are encouraged to integrate Discord into vocabulary learning activities by designing interactive tasks that promote communication, collaboration, and vocabulary practice. The findings of this study suggest that vocabulary learning becomes more meaningful when students are given opportunities to use language in authentic contexts. Therefore, lecturers and material developers may utilize Discord's features, such as text channels, voice channels, and discussion forums, to create engaging learning environments that support vocabulary development while maintaining clear learning objectives and guidance.

5.2.3 Suggestions for Future Researchers

Future researchers are recommended to investigate the use of Discord in different language learning contexts, involving larger numbers of participants and various educational levels. Further studies may also explore the effectiveness of specific Discord features in supporting

vocabulary acquisition or examine students' experiences over a longer period of time. Such investigations may provide a broader understanding of how digital communication platforms contribute to language learning and vocabulary development in diverse educational settings.



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