

Using Discord to Facilitate Students in Teaching Learning Process during COVID-19 Outbreak

Tri Yuli Ardiyansah

English Education Department, University of Muhammadiyah Gresik, East Java, Indonesia

E-mail: ardi13@umg.ac.id

Riska Widiyanita Batubara

English Education Department, University of Muhammadiyah Gresik, East Java, Indonesia

E-mail: riskabatubara@umg.ac.id

Prativi Khilyatul Auliya

English Education Department, University of Muhammadiyah Gresik, East Java, Indonesia

E-mail: prativi.auliya@umg.ac.id

Received: 10 January,2021

Accepted: 17 January, 2021

Published: 9 February,2021

Abstract

During the COVID-19 outbreak declared by WHO in the end of 2019, classroom activity has been changed into online learning. University has become the institution that is capable of performing online learning for teaching-learning process. In University of Muhammadiyah Gresik, online learning has been performed by its official online learning platform called SPADA UMG. However, students sometimes experience technical issues in using the platform. Therefore, the university allows lecturers to use other kinds of online platforms during the situation of COVID-19 outbreak to make the teaching-learning process more effective. One of the platforms used in online process is Discord. This research focused on analyzing online learning activity by using “Discord” application to facilitate students in online learning process. The writer applied qualitative research design and used questionnaire and interview techniques. The result showed the advantages of using Discord in online learning process provided students with meaningful learning experience. Students were satisfied with the use of Discord in online learning process. It was described into 6 indicators; (1) contents or features, (2) interface, (3) feedback & interaction, (4) students’ performance, (5) communication process, and (6) interactivity. In the other hand, few students also reported disadvantages in using Discord concerning the unstable internet connection and low-end device capability.

Keywords: *Online Learning; Discord*

1. Introduction

In the end of 2019, WHO has declared a pandemic called COVID-19 outbreak. This pandemic has affected many activities requiring interaction to be stopped especially for teaching-learning activity. Therefore, schools and university have changed their classroom activity into online learning. Anderson (1996) states that online learning has great potential to provide students with meaningful learning. University has become the institution that performs online learning for teaching-learning process. To perform online learning activity, kinds of technologies need to be provided such as computers, software applications, internet, and it also needs technical skills. Chan (2007) states that online learning includes computer-enhanced learning or training which is usually delivered via a personal computer. However, online learning also gives a challenge to the teachers because they need to improve their skills in information technology. Ellis and Phelps (1999) state that online learning gives teachers experiences to other methods of education. Therefore, teachers need to obtain the skills of online facilitation and keep update to the development of technology.

In University of Muhammadiyah Gresik, online learning has been performed by using its online learning platform called “SPADA UMG”. However, students sometimes experience technical issues in using SPADA UMG.



Therefore, the university allows lecturers to use other kinds of online platforms during the situation of COVID-19 outbreak to make the teaching-learning process more effective. As to be noted, the writer previously has also done research related to the use of SPADA resulting in students' perspective toward the online learning platform. The result showed SPADA UMG provided advantages such as its efficiency that granted students efficient learning experience and convenience operating system. On the other hand, SPADA UMG also provided disadvantages such as problems to access the site and some error features (Ardiyansah, 2019).

In the process of online learning at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik during COVID-19 outbreak, lots of problems emerge constantly. Most of them are because of the slow internet connection to the students who live in villages. Some platforms have been used by lecturers such as Zoom Cloud Meetings or Google Meets. However, since most online learning platforms require high-speed internet connection and consume lots of internet data due to its video call feature. Students who live in certain areas with slow internet connection experience difficulties in understanding the learning material especially in the discussion section. Moreover, the applications also consume lots of internet data that cause students to spend more money to fill their internet package. Therefore, the writer is interested to execute a research regarding online learning activity by using "Discord" application to facilitate students in online learning process. Discord itself is a platform or software application used on personal computers and smartphones. The function of Discord is to provide communication between users in a chat channel.

Online Learning

Online learning has been used widely by schools and universities, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak. It is used to prevent the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. Online learning has lots of benefits, one of them is that it can overcome distance problems and make learning activity more interactive. Worton (2005) also states that online learning may assist students to become lifelong learners.

Online learning does not only give a good impact on the students. Teachers or lecturers applying online learning also receive meaningful experience. Gates (1996) mentions that information technology will empower people of all ages, both inside and outside the classroom, to learn more easily, enjoyably, and successfully than ever before.

To perform a successful online learning process. Some devices such as personal computers and smartphones are required to facilitate the process. Internet is also needed to support the connection of the devices between teachers and students. (Johan, 2013) states that online learning includes web-based training and computer-based training. Online learning uses technology to support interaction process outside the classroom through devices and internet connection. Teachers can also provide some learning media that can be integrated into online learning which can make the teaching-learning process more interactive as Kamil (2009) states that online learning may enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Discord

Discord is a platform or software application that can be used on personal computers and smartphones. It was made by Discord Inc. (Originally Hammer and Chisel, Inc.) and was first released on May 13th, 2015. The function of Discord is to provide communication between users in a chat channel. The concept is actually to provide gamers having a real-time live audio stream with other users while they play their favourite games. Discord has been widely used by users due to its stable connection streaming audio. Therefore, many users/gamers use Discord to be able to communicate with their partners while they enjoy playing their favourite games. Discord also provides many features such as voice chat channel, file sharing, screen sharing, video call, etc.

2. Method

This research applied qualitative research design to identify students' opinions on online learning using "Discord". According to Christensen (2004), qualitative research is defined as the approach to empirical research that relies primarily on the collection of qualitative data.

The subject of this research was the students of English Education Department at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. They were chosen under such criteria as: (1) they have been obtaining courses for 3 semesters; therefore, it was assumed that they have been familiar with the teaching-learning process in University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. (2) They have been taught in online learning process by using "Discord" during the COVID-19 outbreak for the past 3 months. The techniques included questionnaire and interview whereas the instruments consisted of questionnaire template list and interview guide. The writer applied structured questionnaire as the technique to collect the data and Likert questionnaire was used as the template. The writer also chose semi-structured interview as the technique to collect the data.

3. Findings and Discussion

Based on the result of data analysis, the students' responses to their opinion of "Discord" as a platform used in online learning varied. The writer presents 6 indicators received from the result of the questionnaire.

Indicator	T x Pn
-----------	--------



1. Content or Feature	88.06 %
2. Interface	85.11 %
3. Feedback & Interaction	86.2 %
4. Students' Performance	79 %
5. Communication Process	85.56 %
6. Interactivity	83.47 %

The first indicator showed 88.06% of the students totally agreed and responded that the contents or features provided by Discord easily helped students in the activities of online learning. The second indicator showed 85.11% of the students totally agreed and responded that the interface of Discord was quite simple and easy to use in online learning process. The third indicator showed 86.2% of the students totally agreed and responded that they experienced good interaction / communication while using Discord in the process of online learning especially during discussion or presentation so it was helpful for them to give feedback or ask questions during the process of online learning. The fourth indicator showed 79% of the students agreed that they were accommodated with meaningful learning experience while using Discord. It also helped students smoothly do virtual communication with the other students. The fifth indicator showed 85.56% of the students totally agreed and felt that the features provided by Discord made them easily communicate with the other students and share files of the materials. The last indicator showed 83.47% of the students responded that they experienced an interactive learning process that also motivated them to learn.

From the result, it can be concluded that students were satisfied with the process of online learning by using Discord as the platform. However, there were still found some disadvantages in the online learning process by using Discord as the platform. Few students reported that sometimes the internet connection was not stable. This problem can be listed as an extrinsic factor. Another problem was that few students who have a low-end device resulting lagging process while they were using the platform.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research finding, it can be concluded that students were satisfied with the process of online learning by using Discord as the platform. The advantages of using Discord in online learning process provided students with useful content/features, simple interface, interaction process, feedback and communication, and interactive learning experiences. However, few students also experienced disadvantages concerning the unstable internet connection and low-end device capability which can actually be listed as an extrinsic factor.

5. References

- Anderson, T. 1996. *The virtual conference: Extending professional education in cyberspace*. International Journal of Educational Telecommunications.
- Chan Y. F., Ranjit K.S., Jamiah Baba & Eliza Parman. 2007. *Computer Education for Classroom Teaching*. Malaysia: McGraw-Hill.
- Ellis, A & Phelps, R. 1999. *Staff development for online delivery: A collaborative team-based action learning model*. In Winn, J (Ed). *Ascilite 99: Responding to diversity*. Proceedings of the 16th ASCILITE Conference.
- Gates, B. 1996. *The Road Ahead: Revised and Updated*. London, England. Penguin Books.
- Johan, E. D. 2015. *A study on the student's perspective on the effectiveness of using e-learning*. Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences. Selangor. Malaysia.
- Kamil Md. Idris. 2009. *E-learning adoption: the role of relative advantages, trialability and academic specialization*. Campus Wide Information System.

