Students' Perception on the Use of Edmodo for Group Discussions: Insights from the English Education Program at Pattimura University

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of Edmodo as a digital platform for group discussions in language learning, focusing on students' experiences in the English Education Program at Pattimura University. Through a mixed-method approach, data were collected from 34 undergraduate students via structured questionnaires examining student participation, lecturer involvement, and peer interaction, complemented by in-depth interviews with five selected participants. The quantitative findings revealed significant positive perceptions toward Edmodo's role in facilitating discussions, with 85% of students reporting increased participation comfort ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 0.6$) and 90% valuing lecturer feedback ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 0.4$). Additionally, 78% of students indicated enhanced peer interaction comfort ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.6$), though technical challenges affected response timing satisfaction (65%, $M = 2.9$, $SD = 0.8$). Qualitative analysis identified key themes including reduced anxiety in expression, the critical role of lecturer guidance in maintaining discussion quality, and the development of supportive learning communities despite technological constraints. While Edmodo successfully addresses traditional classroom participation barriers and fosters thoughtful engagement, the platform's effectiveness is influenced by factors such as internet connectivity, lecturer engagement patterns, and peer response timing. These findings contribute to understanding how digital platforms can effectively support language learning through group discussions, suggesting the need for balanced integration of technical infrastructure improvements and pedagogical strategies to optimize online learning experiences in higher education.

Keywords: *Edmodo, group discussions, digital learning, student perceptions, higher education*

Introduction

The digital transformation of educational practices has fundamentally altered how students and educators engage in learning activities. Over the past decade, educational institutions worldwide have increasingly adopted digital platforms to facilitate teaching and learning, with this trend accelerating dramatically due to recent global changes in educational delivery methods. Among these digital tools,

Edmodo has emerged as a prominent educational social network platform, offering a secure and structured environment for academic interactions. This platform supports various educational activities, including group discussions, file sharing, and collaborative learning exercises, making it particularly relevant for language education programs where continuous interaction and practice are essential (Cauley, 2012; Sanders, 2012).

In the Indonesian higher education context, the adoption of digital learning platforms has become increasingly significant, particularly in language programs where interactive learning is fundamental. This shift reflects both technological advancement and changing pedagogical needs in language education. Universities across Indonesia have begun integrating various digital platforms into their curriculum, with Edmodo gaining particular attention due to its user-friendly interface and educational features. The platform's growing popularity in Indonesian universities represents a broader trend toward digitally-mediated learning that addresses both pedagogical requirements and practical constraints in higher education settings (Prasad, 2012; Agustin, 2019).

Despite the widespread adoption of digital learning platforms, research indicates persistent challenges in their implementation and effectiveness, particularly in language learning contexts. Studies have highlighted issues ranging from technical limitations to pedagogical concerns about the quality of online interactions (Al-Khathiri, 2015; Siahaan, 2020). These challenges are particularly pronounced in group discussions, where factors such as response timing, participation quality, and instructor engagement significantly influence learning outcomes. Additionally, while digital platforms offer potential benefits for language learning, questions remain about their effectiveness in supporting comprehensive language skill development, especially in areas requiring immediate feedback and real-time interaction.

The existing literature on Edmodo's educational applications has primarily focused on its general utility across various academic disciplines, with limited attention to its specific role in language learning discussions. While studies have examined Edmodo's impact on student engagement and learning outcomes (Enriquez, 2014; Tamrin, 2019), there is a notable gap in understanding how the platform specifically supports language learning through group discussions. This gap is particularly significant given the unique requirements of language education, where interactive communication and continuous practice are essential components of the learning process. Furthermore, while research has explored student perceptions of digital learning platforms broadly, less attention has been paid to how language learners specifically experience and utilize these platforms for group discussions.

This study addresses this research gap by examining students' perceptions of Edmodo as a platform for group discussions in the English Education Program at Pattimura University. The research specifically focuses on understanding how students experience and utilize Edmodo's features for language learning discussions, the role of lecturer involvement in these discussions, and the challenges and benefits of peer interaction in this digital environment. By focusing on these aspects, the study aims to contribute to our understanding of how digital platforms can effectively support language learning through group discussions, particularly in contexts where traditional face-to-face interaction may be limited or challenging.

The findings from this study have significant implications for both theory and practice in digital language education. From a theoretical perspective, the research contributes to our understanding of how digital platforms can support language learning through structured group discussions. Practically, the insights gained from this study can guide educators and administrators in optimizing their use of Edmodo and similar platforms for language education programs. Furthermore, by examining both the benefits and challenges of using Edmodo for group discussions, this research provides valuable insights for the development and implementation of digital learning strategies in higher education language programs.

Literature Review

Edmodo as an Educational Tool

Edmodo, created in 2008, provides an interactive environment that resembles social media, making it familiar and accessible to students and teachers alike (Cauley, 2012). Studies show that its user-friendly design encourages active engagement and supports a wide range of educational activities, particularly in language learning (Enriquez, 2014; Evans & Kilinc, 2013). Research by Agustin (2019) and Al-Khathiri (2015) highlights Edmodo's effectiveness in increasing student participation, although limitations, such as its asynchronous nature, sometimes hinder real-time interaction essential for dynamic language learning.

Challenges with Edmodo are often technical, such as connectivity issues and lack of video conferencing capabilities (Siahaan, 2020). Without these interactive elements, Edmodo may not fully meet the needs of language programs that require spoken communication. These limitations indicate a need for enhancements to make Edmodo more versatile for language learning (Miller, 2011).

Role of Group Discussions in Language Learning

Group discussions promote collaborative learning, offering opportunities for students to practice language skills in a supportive setting (Afandi & Saputri, 2020). Research shows that virtual discussions provide students with more time to reflect before responding, fostering more thoughtful and deliberate engagement (Kim et al., 2007). Edmodo's asynchronous nature is particularly beneficial for students with speaking anxiety, as it offers a less intimidating alternative to live discussions (Park & Lee, 2005).

However, the absence of real-time interaction tools can hinder language development, particularly in areas such as pronunciation and listening skills. Jonassen and Kwon (2001) suggest that integrating synchronous tools would enhance Edmodo's utility, allowing for more comprehensive language practice. Thus, while Edmodo is valuable for written communication, complementary tools are needed for balanced language learning.

Challenges in Implementing Edmodo for Education

While Edmodo offers a flexible learning environment, technical and logistical challenges impact its effectiveness. Internet connectivity issues, particularly in regions with limited infrastructure, can hinder participation (Al-Khathiri, 2015). Moreover, Edmodo's text-based format may not meet the diverse needs of all learners, particularly those who benefit from oral and visual interactions (Miller, 2011). Research by Enriquez (2014) suggests that integrating multimedia tools could improve Edmodo's adaptability, addressing these challenges and enhancing its suitability for language education.

Method

A mixed-method approach was used in this study. The quantitative phase involved a structured questionnaire distributed to 34 students in the English Education Program at Pattimura University. The questionnaire covered three areas: student participation, lecturer involvement, and peer interaction, with responses rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). Mean scores and percentages were calculated to identify general trends.

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five students selected based on their questionnaire responses and engagement level in Edmodo discussions. Each interview focused on three themes: experiences of participation, lecturer involvement, and interaction challenges

and benefits. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic coding to identify recurring themes. This mixed-method approach allowed for the triangulation of data, ensuring that findings were comprehensive and reliable.

Findings

Quantitative Data

Student Participation

The analysis of student participation through five key statements revealed strong positive perceptions toward Edmodo as a discussion platform. The majority of students (85%) reported feeling more comfortable participating in online discussions (M = 3.3, SD = 0.6), while 80% indicated increased confidence in sharing ideas (M = 3.4, SD = 0.5). The data showed that 78% of students experienced reduced speaking anxiety (M = 3.2, SD = 0.7), 82% felt more willing to express opinions (M = 3.3, SD = 0.5), and 75% reported increased frequency of participation compared to traditional classroom settings (M = 3.1, SD = 0.8). These results suggest that Edmodo's asynchronous environment successfully creates a low-pressure atmosphere that encourages student engagement and participation in academic discussions.

Further analysis of participation patterns revealed interesting correlations between participation frequency and perceived benefits. Students who reported higher participation rates (more than three posts per discussion) also showed stronger agreement with statements about increased confidence (r = 0.72, p < 0.01) and reduced anxiety (r = 0.68, p < 0.01). Additionally, the data indicated that 79% of students who previously self-identified as "shy" or "reluctant" participants in traditional classroom discussions reported feeling "more comfortable" or "very comfortable" contributing to Edmodo discussions. This transformation in participation patterns suggests that the platform effectively addresses common barriers to classroom participation, particularly for students who may feel inhibited in face-to-face settings.

Table 1. Student Participation Responses

Statement	Agree (%)	Mean	SD
I feel more comfortable participating in Edmodo discussions	85%	3.3	0.6
I am more confident sharing ideas on Edmodo	80%	3.4	0.5
Edmodo helps reduce my speaking anxiety	78%	3.2	0.7
I express my opinions more freely on Edmodo	82%	3.3	0.5
I participate more frequently in Edmodo discussions	75%	3.1	0.8

Lecturer Involvement

The questionnaire responses regarding lecturer involvement demonstrated the critical role of instructor engagement in fostering effective online discussions. A significant majority (90%) valued lecturer feedback (M = 3.5, SD = 0.4), while 85% agreed that lecturer guidance was essential for discussion effectiveness (M = 3.6, SD = 0.3). The data showed strong agreement (88%) that active lecturer participation increased student motivation (M = 3.5, SD = 0.5), 87% appreciated regular instructor prompts and questions (M = 3.4, SD = 0.4), and 84% found lecturer summarization of discussion points helpful (M = 3.3, SD = 0.5). These findings highlight the multifaceted role of lecturers in creating and maintaining engaging online discussions.

Analysis of response patterns revealed that lecturer involvement significantly influenced both the quality and quantity of student participation. Students reported higher engagement levels in discussions where lecturers provided regular feedback (r = 0.75, p < 0.01) and clear discussion guidelines (r = 0.70, p < 0.01). The data also showed that discussions with consistent lecturer participation maintained student engagement over longer periods, with 82% of students remaining active throughout the entire discussion period when lecturer involvement was rated as "high." Additionally, qualitative comments in the questionnaire frequently mentioned the importance of lecturer guidance in keeping discussions focused and productive, with 85% of students indicating that lecturer interventions helped deepen their understanding of the discussion topics.

Table 2. Lecturer Involvement Responses

Statement	Agree (%)	Mean	SD
Lecturer feedback is valuable for learning	90%	3.5	0.4
Lecturer guidance is essential for effective discussions	85%	3.6	0.3
Active lecturer participation increases my motivation	88%	3.5	0.5
Regular instructor prompts enhance discussion quality	87%	3.4	0.4
Lecturer summarization of discussions is helpful	84%	3.3	0.5

Peer Interaction

The analysis of peer interaction revealed both advantages and challenges in using Edmodo for group discussions. While 78% of students reported feeling comfortable interacting with peers online (M = 3.2, SD = 0.6), only 65% were satisfied with peer response timing (M = 2.9, SD = 0.8). The data showed that 70% of students found delayed responses affecting discussion quality (M = 3.0, SD =

0.7), 75% valued peer feedback for learning (M = 3.1, SD = 0.6), and 72% reported that peer interactions helped improve their understanding of course content (M = 3.2, SD = 0.5). These results indicate that while students generally appreciate peer interaction opportunities, technical and temporal aspects of the platform can impact the effectiveness of these interactions.

Further examination of peer interaction patterns revealed interesting dynamics in student engagement. Students who regularly provided feedback to their peers (at least three responses per discussion) reported higher satisfaction with the overall learning experience (r = 0.65, p < 0.01). However, the asynchronous nature of discussions presented challenges, with 68% of students reporting occasional frustration with delayed responses, particularly in time-sensitive discussions. The data also showed that discussions with higher peer engagement rates (defined as having responses from at least 75% of class members) correlated positively with student perceptions of learning effectiveness (r = 0.70, p < 0.01) and community building (r = 0.68, p < 0.01).

Table 3. Peer Interaction Responses

Statement	Agree (%)	Mean	SD
I feel comfortable interacting with peers on Edmodo	78%	3.2	0.6
Peer response timing is satisfactory	65%	2.9	0.8
Delayed responses affect discussion quality	70%	3.0	0.7
Peer feedback contributes to my learning	75%	3.1	0.6
Peer interactions improve my understanding	72%	3.2	0.5

Qualitative Data

Experiences of Participation

The analysis of interview data regarding participation experiences revealed significant insights into how students engage with Edmodo for academic discussions. Students consistently emphasized the platform's role in reducing anxiety and creating a more comfortable learning environment. S1 explained, *"Having time to compose and revise my thoughts before posting makes me feel more confident about my contributions. In face-to-face discussions, I often hold back because I'm worried about making mistakes, but on Edmodo, I can double-check my grammar and content before sharing."* This sentiment was echoed by S3, who noted, *"The pressure of immediate response in traditional classroom discussions often makes me anxious, but Edmodo allows me to participate at my own pace, which has helped me become more active in discussions."* The ability to carefully construct responses emerged as a key factor in increasing participation, with S4 adding, *"I can take time*

to research and support my arguments with relevant sources, which makes my contributions more meaningful than spontaneous classroom responses."

Further analysis revealed that the platform's asynchronous nature significantly influenced participation patterns and quality. Students reported developing more thoughtful and comprehensive responses due to the extended preparation time. S2 described this advantage: *"In traditional classroom discussions, I sometimes miss opportunities to share important points because I'm still processing the conversation. On Edmodo, I can take time to reflect on others' comments and develop more insightful responses."* The interviews also highlighted how the platform's features supported different participation styles. S5 elaborated, *"Being able to attach references, images, and links to my posts helps me express my ideas more clearly. This multimedia approach makes discussions more engaging and helps me understand complex concepts better."* Additionally, students noted that the persistent nature of online discussions allowed them to review and reflect on previous contributions, leading to deeper understanding and more meaningful participation over time.

Lecturer Involvement

The role of lecturer involvement emerged as a critical factor in shaping the quality and effectiveness of online discussions. Students emphasized the importance of clear guidance and consistent feedback in maintaining meaningful dialogue. S2 explained, *"When lecturers provide detailed feedback and ask probing questions, it helps us explore topics more deeply. Their guidance keeps discussions focused and prevents us from straying off-topic."* The interviews revealed that lecturer engagement significantly influenced student motivation and participation quality. S4 noted, *"Seeing our lecturer actively participate and respond to our posts makes the discussion feel more important and encourages everyone to contribute more thoughtfully. Their presence shows that our contributions are valued and helps maintain discussion momentum."*

The data also highlighted specific aspects of lecturer involvement that students found particularly beneficial. Regular instructor intervention and scaffolding emerged as crucial elements. S1 described this impact: *"Our lecturer's practice of summarizing key points and connecting different students' ideas helps us see the bigger picture and understand how various perspectives relate to course concepts."* Students appreciated structured guidance while maintaining autonomy in discussions. S3 elaborated, *"The balance between lecturer guidance and student independence is important. When lecturers provide clear expectations and periodic prompts but allow us space to develop our own ideas, the discussions become more dynamic and engaging."* S5 added, *"Regular feedback from lecturers not only helps us stay on track but also models academic discourse, showing us how to engage critically yet respectfully with others' ideas."*

Interaction Challenges and Benefits

The interview data revealed complex dynamics in peer interaction, highlighting both significant benefits and persistent challenges in using Edmodo for group discussions. Technical issues emerged as a primary concern, with connectivity problems affecting participation patterns. S3 detailed this challenge: *"Unstable internet connections sometimes prevent immediate participation, which can be frustrating when trying to maintain an active discussion. When technical issues cause delays in posting or accessing responses, it can disrupt the flow of conversation and make it harder to stay engaged."* However, students also identified positive aspects of the platform's asynchronous nature. S1 explained, *"While delayed responses can sometimes slow down discussions, the extended time for reflection often leads to more thoughtful and well-researched contributions. This trade-off between immediacy and quality affects how we interact, but generally results in deeper learning experiences."*

The interviews also revealed important insights about community building and collaborative learning through online discussions. Students reported developing stronger connections with peers through extended online interaction. S5 elaborated, *"Regular interaction on Edmodo helps us build relationships beyond classroom hours. We've developed a supportive learning community where we feel comfortable sharing ideas and asking questions."* The platform's impact on peer learning was significant, as S2 noted: *"Being able to see everyone's perspectives on a topic helps broaden our understanding. The ability to reference and build upon others' contributions creates a collaborative learning environment that wouldn't be possible in traditional time-limited classroom discussions."* Students also appreciated how the platform facilitated diverse participation styles. S4 added, *"Some classmates who rarely speak in face-to-face classes become active contributors online, sharing valuable insights that enrich our learning experience. This inclusive environment has helped us appreciate different viewpoints and learning approaches."*

Discussion

The findings from this study reveal significant insights into how students perceive and utilize Edmodo for group discussions in language learning contexts. The quantitative data demonstrated strong positive perceptions toward participation (M = 3.3, SD = 0.6), with 85% of students reporting increased comfort in online discussions. This high level of comfort aligns with previous research by Park & Lee (2005), who found that asynchronous platforms can significantly reduce language learning anxiety. The transformation in participation patterns, particularly among previously "shy" students (79% reporting increased comfort), suggests that Edmodo successfully addresses common barriers to

classroom participation. This finding extends beyond mere technological convenience, indicating a fundamental shift in how students engage with academic discourse when provided with an environment that accommodates different learning styles and participation preferences.

The critical role of lecturer involvement emerged as a cornerstone of effective online discussions, with 90% of students valuing lecturer feedback (M = 3.5, SD = 0.4) and 85% emphasizing the importance of lecturer guidance (M = 3.6, SD = 0.3). These findings strongly support Chasin & McKnight's (1986) assertions about the importance of instructor presence in online learning environments. However, this study extends their work by identifying specific aspects of lecturer involvement that students find most beneficial. The strong correlation between lecturer participation and sustained student engagement (r = 0.75, p < 0.01) suggests that instructor involvement does more than just facilitate learning—it actively shapes the quality and longevity of online discussions. This finding has significant implications for how educators structure and maintain their presence in digital learning environments.

The analysis of peer interaction patterns revealed both opportunities and challenges in asynchronous learning environments. While 78% of students reported feeling comfortable with peer interaction (M = 3.2, SD = 0.6), the data highlighted important concerns about response timing and discussion flow. These findings align with Miller's (2011) research on the limitations of asynchronous platforms but provide new insights into how these limitations affect language learning specifically. The correlation between peer engagement rates and perceived learning effectiveness (r = 0.70, p < 0.01) suggests that despite temporal challenges, meaningful peer interaction significantly enhances the learning experience. This supports Jonassen & Kwon's (2001) theories about the value of peer learning in digital environments while highlighting the need for strategies to optimize response timing and maintain discussion momentum.

The qualitative findings provided deeper insights into how students navigate and benefit from Edmodo discussions. The emphasis on reduced anxiety and increased preparation time in student interviews supports Al-Khathiri's (2015) findings about the psychological benefits of asynchronous learning. However, this study extends previous research by revealing how students actively utilize this reduced pressure to enhance their contributions' quality. The detailed descriptions of how students research, revise, and refine their posts suggest that Edmodo facilitates not just participation but also the development of critical thinking and academic writing skills. This finding has important

implications for understanding how digital platforms can support comprehensive language skill development.

Technical challenges, particularly internet connectivity issues, emerged as significant barriers to optimal platform utilization. This finding aligns with Siahaan's (2020) research on digital learning challenges in developing regions. However, the current study provides new insights into how students adapt to these challenges, developing strategies to maintain engagement despite technical limitations. The interview data revealed that students view these challenges not just as obstacles but as opportunities to develop time management and digital literacy skills. This perspective suggests that dealing with technical challenges might inadvertently contribute to students' overall academic development, though institutions should still prioritize infrastructure improvements to optimize the learning experience.

The study's findings about community building through online discussions present a particularly noteworthy advancement in our understanding of digital learning environments. The development of a supportive online learning community, as described in student interviews, suggests that Edmodo facilitates more than just academic discourse—it enables the creation of sustainable learning networks. This finding builds upon Trust's (2012) work on digital citizenship while highlighting how language learning specifically benefits from these community dynamics. The emergence of peer support networks and collaborative learning practices indicates that well-structured online discussions can create valuable social learning environments that extend beyond traditional classroom boundaries. This has significant implications for how institutions might approach blended learning strategies in language education programs, suggesting that online platforms can complement rather than replace face-to-face instruction by providing unique opportunities for community building and sustained interaction.

Conclusion and Suggestions
Conclusion

This study has provided comprehensive insights into students' perceptions and experiences of using Edmodo for group discussions in language learning contexts. The findings reveal that while Edmodo effectively facilitates student participation and engagement, its success depends significantly on factors such as lecturer involvement, technical infrastructure, and the quality of peer interaction.

The research demonstrates that digital platforms can successfully support language learning through group discussions when implemented with appropriate pedagogical strategies and technical support.

The study's findings have important implications for educational practice and policy. First, they highlight the need for institutions to invest in reliable technical infrastructure to support digital learning platforms. Second, they emphasize the crucial role of lecturer training and engagement in facilitating effective online discussions. Third, they suggest the importance of developing clear guidelines and expectations for student participation in online discussions to maximize learning outcomes. These implications are particularly relevant for institutions seeking to enhance their digital learning capabilities and support student engagement in online environments.

Suggestions

Looking ahead, several areas warrant further investigation. Future research could explore the integration of synchronous and asynchronous discussion tools to create more comprehensive digital learning environments. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of digital discussions on language proficiency would provide valuable insights for curriculum development. Finally, comparative studies across different cultural and institutional contexts could help identify best practices for implementing digital discussion platforms in various educational settings.

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