



## USING CONVERSATION WEBSITES FOR IMPROVING INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE AND MAINTAIN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN EDUCATION 4.0

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### Abstract

The reality of education 4.0 is undeniably true of contemporary higher education systems. This is demonstrated by technological developments and online-based developments. This phenomenon is a challenge of any kind, particularly for students to adapt to the creation of learning processes. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore the students' improvements in their communication exchange skills and establish interpersonal relationship skills through the use of conversation exchange websites. There were six females and four males of students that has been using conversation exchange from some countries taken as participants. This survey was carried out using the video call feature in the Application tool. The semi-structured interview was used to obtain information from students on the specific theme of fun and easy conversation exchange in foreign language communication as a part of the educational challenge 4.0. By using the structural analysis, ten students have fully agreed to the use of a conversation exchange website to improve foreign language communication skills. All males and females were 90% willing to use the conversation exchange website as a measure of the effects of the use of conversation exchange through semi-structured interviews with three questions. The results show that the students' attitudes have been welcomed by the conversation exchange website to enhance their communication skills in foreign languages. Therefore, the use of

conversation exchange should be widely introduced to increase the ability to communicate in a foreign language.

**Keywords:** *communication skills, conversation exchange, education 4.0, intercultural exchange, personal communication*

### Sari

Realita dalam pendidikan 4.0 tidak dapat dipungkiri bahwa telah mempengaruhi sistem pendidikan tinggi. Hal ini ditunjukkan oleh perkembangan teknologi dan perkembangan pembelajaran berbasis online. Fenomena ini merupakan sebuah tantangan, terutama bagi siswa untuk beradaptasi dalam proses belajar mengajar. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi kesan siswa terhadap penggunaan situs web conversation exchange untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berkomunikasi. Ada enam wanita dan empat pria yang sudah menggunakan Conversation exchange dari beberapa Negara dipilih menjadi partisipan. Survei ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan fitur panggilan video di dalam berbagai Aplikasi. Wawancara semi-terstruktur digunakan untuk memperoleh data dan informasi dari siswa tentang tema khusus penelitian ini yaitu penggunaan conversation exchange yang menyenangkan dan mudah, dalam komunikasi bahasa asing sebagai bagian dari tantangan dalam pendidikan 4.0. Dengan menggunakan analisis struktural, sepuluh siswa telah sepenuhnya menyetujui penggunaan situs conversation exchange untuk meningkatkan keterampilan dalam berkomunikasi bahasa asing. Semua partisipan baik pria dan wanita 90% bersedia menggunakan situs conversation exchange sebagai tolak ukur dari efek penggunaan conversation exchange yang dilakukan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan mengajukan tiga pertanyaan. Pada akhirnya, situs conversation exchange dalam meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi bahasa asing disambut baik oleh siswa. Oleh karena itu, penggunaan situs conversation exchange harus diperkenalkan secara luas untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berkomunikasi dalam bahasa asing.

**Kata Kunci:** *conversation exchange, hubungan interpersonal, pendidikan 4.0, keterampilan berkomunikasi*

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Received 019-12-28  
doi 10.33603/rill.v3i2.3015

accepted 2020-05-30

published 2020-06-01

**APA Citation:** Septiana, D., Nurhadianti, N., Purwanti, D., & Murwantono, D. (2020). Using conversation websites for improving intercultural exchange and maintain interpersonal relationships of university students in education 4.0. *Research and Innovation in Language Learning*, 3(2), 71-84 <http://dx.doi.org/10.33603/rill.v3i2.3015>

### Introduction

The use of the Conversation Exchange website for communication is one of the concrete forms of technology development. The development of technology has a great important role in Education 4.0 enforcement because the roles of technology assist the teaching and learning process in this digital era. One of the developments in Education

4.0 identified by Hussin, (2018) is that learning can take place anywhere at any time. e-Learning resources offer great opportunities for online and self-paced learning. It is also supported by Halili, (2019) information is available in education 4.0, and the teaching and learning have become fluid. In this era, online-based is very widely used and become one of the most frequently used in the education field.

Online-based implementation in education has become a trend among students these days. This trend refers to an intercultural relationship that builds conversations exchange and foreign language communication skill. Conversation exchange refers to the way of practice language we would like to learn with native speakers who their turn to learn the language we speak fluently. According to Ahn, (2016) a conversation exchange or language tandem may be a means for language learners to practice their abilities casually: two folks learning each other's language meet, either face-to-face or online and connected for a united quantity of your time in a language so within the alternative, sometimes with no pre-established information and activities.

Based on Sheth, (2016) a foreign language plays a role as a means to understand other cultures. Furthermore, the communication of foreign language refers to the process of personal development, which means when someone has already been able to speak a foreign language their insight of knowledge will increase broadly. Communication in foreign languages often requires skills like communication and intercultural comprehension. López-Rocha, (2016) argues that people's desire to communicate with people from other countries and culture in their own language. Intercultural communicative competence refers to the level of competence of the person can contrast among the four dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and also the different languages, and the social and cultural context, setting, needs and/or desires of the individual.

Nowadays, one of the main concerns of foreign language learners in communication skill is to have quick and easy access to a wide variety of features which can help them learn a language between teacher and the students, e.g. giving supervision in language class (Misdi, N., Kusriandi, W., & Tambunan, A. R. S. (2020) that Z-generation has

their own learning style (Sari, (2019). Hand-held devices, specifically mobile phones, fit into students' pockets, so they can use them almost everywhere, at any time, and for any kind of learning (Benini and Murray, 2013). In other words, technological devices carried easily by learners to provide ubiquitous learning (Godwin-Jones, 2011). The mobile phone has become so prominent and popular almost all over the world.

With the development of the electronic network, there are many of language learning to communicate applications. Based on Nushi, (2016) there has been evolved by people beyond of the field of second language instruction and their effectiveness cannot and should not be taken for granted. Hence, this review focuses on one mobile language learning application, "Conversation Exchange", to explore the learning possibilities the application offers to foreign language learners.

Conversation Exchange website enables us to connect with other people around the world in learning language, especially English. It allows us to choose people from a country that we want to communicate with (Wang et al., 2016). In conversation exchange, it also presents the profile of every member. We can inform our personal information such as the language we speak, the country we lived in, our interest of language we want to learn, and in which our level of English as the main language to connect with other people inside.

Conversation Exchange work by connecting folks over a text, audio, or video service to facilitate communication. Usually, people can merely connect somebody over a text or email first, so they can both decide the most effective way to continue talking (Cziko, 2013). There is also a searching tool that lets us characterize our perfect language partner. The user will select what language they speak, what language they're learning, their skill level, country, town, kind of exchange, age, gender, and name (Nushi & Makiabadi, 2019).

The explanation above persuades the researchers to conduct research dealing with conversation exchange to support communication skill development of foreign language in this 4.0 era. This analysis measures the extent of participants' communication

exchange skills after using conversation exchange to connect with people all around the world in learning English. This study aims to find out and present the data in qualitative on the extent to which a person's interpersonal relationship and communication exchange skills can develop by using a medium and utilize a website as a language learning aid.

There is a great deal of debate and in-depth analysis of the use and advantages or disadvantages of using an exchange program and tend to challenge (Taopan, (2020). Instead, this research focuses on the investigation of a person's communication exchange skills and how they preserve the interpersonal relationship after using the exchange website. The goal here is to overcome hurdles in action and thus to determine the downside of people who are going to build or start to do a communication exchange by using an exchange website to make well-read choices in the process of implementation.

There were previous studies that examined the use of conversation exchange that mostly in kind of an application. In that language exchange applications have some features that the user has to do the payment first if they want to get the complete features. The application such as *Hellotalk* and *Bilingua* provide some features that have to download and do the additional payment. In contrast, the conversation exchange website is very flexible for people to use because all of the features inside are provide freely. Thus, in this research, we examine the use of this website by asking some peoples that already use it. Therefore, the research questions of this study are stated as follows: 1) How far do participants use conversation exchange? 2) How influential conversations exchange on the participant's communication skills 3) How is the personal opinion of participants regarding the use of conversation exchange in improving communication skills?

### **Research Method**

This research aims to investigate the communication exchange skill and interpersonal relationship of students in analytical research methods with a qualitative approach to determine how to search, collect, process and analyze data from the research results.

This research is employed to assist the researchers to find out how people feel and why they feel as they are doing and as Merriam, (1998) explains in qualitative studies, the key concern understands the phenomenon of interest from the participant's perspective, not the researchers. The qualitative analysis aims to get an entire image relating to a matter according to the human point of view studied. Qualitative analysis expounded on the concepts, perceptions, opinions, or beliefs of the people studied and all of them cannot be measured by numbers.

In this research, the researchers used purposive sampling to determine the sample. Purposive Sampling technique is particularly applied in qualitative research. As stated by Patton, (2012) qualitative methods are, for the most part, intended to achieve a depth of understanding. Purposive sampling techniques place primary emphasis on getting a comprehensive understanding by continued to sample until no new substantive data is acquired (Etikan, 2016). In purposive sampling, subjects are selected regard on study objectives with the assumption that each participant can offer distinctive and made info valuable to the study. That was the reason for researchers used purposive sampling because the entire sample did not have the same criteria as the researchers decided from the beginning. Therefore, the sample had chosen deliberated based on the specific criteria that decided by the researchers to get the representative sample.

There were some criteria of students that became the sample in this research: 1) the students used conversation exchange for more than 5 months, 2) The students used conversation exchange as their communication tool, and 3) the students were university students. Thus, the result was 6 females and 4 males of students as the participants who were the users of web conversation exchange from all over the world.

The data collection of this research was semi-structured interviews conducted in a conversational style using social media features in the form of video calls. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to permit the participant a degree of freedom to clarify their thoughts and to focus on areas of explicit interest and experience that they felt, likewise on enabling certain responses to be questioned in bigger depth, and particularly to bring out and resolve apparent contradictions (Horton et al., 2004).

In analyzing the data, the researchers began with arranging a set of descriptive comments on the interview transcription. A descriptive comment was used to establish the content data being collected. In creating a descriptive comment, there are some underlying keynotes such as description, explanations, and emotional responses (Cooper et al., 2012).

### **Result and Discussion**

Findings are formed by the analysis of the answers given in semi-structured interview type and they are given under the headings. The information of the analysis is summarized in three main headings; the usage, influence and strength and weakness of using conversation exchange in language learning. In these main headings, classes are detailed among the subheadings. Besides, the participants' names were not included but they were only abbreviations, such as FP1 (the female participant 1), MP2 (the male participant 2), and so forth.

#### ***The Usage of Conversation Exchange***

When the participants were asked about the use of conversation exchange websites as their media to communicate in English with foreigners, all those participants have a different experience. The findings show that seven out of ten participants have used conversation exchange for more than 1 year, while the rest have only used it for about three months. Participants stated that using conversation exchange made it easy for them to connect with many people from all over the world. They got more than 50 new friends in a year. Meanwhile, according to participants who have just used this website, they only get about five to ten people who respond to their friend requests. Two participants revealed that they had met directly with their friends from a conversation exchange website, then, they make an appointment and go for a walk together.

"I already use this web site for nearly three months. It started when my friend recommended this conversation exchange to me and now I have a beautiful friend from turkey" (FP5)

"As long as I used conversation exchange, I get more than 50 friends in less than two years. But, so far there is only about 20 people that intensely communicate with me until right now" (MP1)

"Looking for friends to speak English with, in this conversation exchange is relatively easy. I have only used it for more than 5 months and already have 6 friends from Korea, China, and

Thailand” (FP4)

“me and my friends from conversation exchange have very much things to tell each other, so we decided to use an application such as WeChat and skype to communicate to make us easier in our daily conversation. Because we have quite intense communication time which almost every day” (MP4)

The participants' statements above represent that many people around the world have already used conversation exchange to connect with foreigners. They stated that after using this website for more than three months they made new friends and were able to communicate intensely. That means the conversation exchange website has connected many people from various countries in the world. The users begin their connection through room chat of conversation exchange itself. Then, after getting more familiar, they tended to ask each other for personal contacts like WeChat and many other applications. By interacting directly with foreigners whether it's meeting in person or through social media like WeChat, it allowed students to speak in English so they can connect with their friends. Applications like WeChat can facilitate the students to connect with more people to improve communication skills (Wang et al., 2016). To have a friendship relation and become closer, the students come through a long step of communication they have built. The factors such as curious about culture, native language exchange, and personal interest are become the reason they finally got into a long conversation. It takes a very long time when they are doing a conversation, even some of them communicate almost every day.

### ***The Influence of Using Conversation Exchange***

#### ***Communication Skills***

The participant stated that conversation exchange websites helped them in learning a language. Eight out of ten participants felt very significant differences when they had a conversation with others. Most of them discover the confidence increased in communication with foreigners and also more fluent when communicating in English. Furthermore, the improvement felt by two participants that just used conversation exchange for about three months, it occurred in several specific aspects in communication such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and meaning.

“There was so many changes that I feel after using C.E especially in my communication skill I feel like easier to start a conversation with a foreigner, and I do feel that I increased in my daily conversation in English” (MP2)

“It is can't be denied that talking with foreigner can help us got our improvements in



communication skills. It because I felt like more challenged in develop my conversation in English since the topic are very interested to discuss" (FP1)

It indicated that conversation exchange presents positive effects for the participants in increasing English communication skills. The absolute distinction that appears when participants used conversation exchange was the partner of communicating which is an English learning foreigner from all over the world. Participants are more interested and motivated when they communicate in English with a foreigner. In Lin, Shie and Holmes, (2017) findings stated that the students' perceived that the language exchange interaction contributes to them in using English to speak with foreign peers effectively and, at the same time, supported develop their English capability. Nowadays, Students are no longer able to keep depend on school or educators if they want to be proficient in English. They need to found their way, just like using conversation exchange as a medium to build up student communication skills.

Some factors influencing the communication skills of students when they learn language through language exchange approach. The recognition from participants about what made their English improved in language exchange was that frequent communication with interesting topics leads their interactions to be more intense so that it affected their communication skills. As stated by Lavalley and Briesmaster, (2017) during our daily routines, we use oral language in a variety of situations where we have to speak properly to communicate well with each other. For language learners by accessing to conversation exchange websites has great potential for improving communication skills, by finding appropriate language partners with compatible with their interests and tools to connect with each other, (Cziko, 2013). Therefore, language exchange using this website <<https://www.conversationexchange.com/>> allows students to find partners from all over the words.

### *Networking*

The participant claims that the use of conversation exchange is not only for a bridge them in improving their communication skills but also become a media to connect with people around the world and making friends with them.

"I have met Joe twice, he is from Korea and he is a kind person" (FP3)

"Of course I have many friends. Since I was interested in Arabic that's why most of my friends in conversation exchange were from like United Emirates Arab" (MP4)

"Now we going to make some project in her country, this project have been our plan since 2 years ago" (FP2)

This proves that the use of a conversation exchange website does influence friendship and business relations. During the language exchange, students actually build new friends and connections. It will even be useful for people's careers as a result of it's an excellent tool to seek out friends round the world. In order to have real-life connections with people abroad is not difficult. Recently, as long as the students have an internet connection they can reach the world. A language exchange allows its users to make free phone calls for a better and friendlier language learning experience with people all over the world (Nushi & Makiabadi, 2019). Through this feature, students become familiar with casual and informal talk of the target language which is influencing their language acquisition.

### *Expanding Knowledge*

Researchers found answers from participants that conversation exchange has also increased their knowledge. Four of the participants admitted that they had learned a lot about the culture of their friends. In addition, they said that when they found a friend who is a student also or a friend at the same age, mostly they would often exchange information about everything they had learned in college.

"I have a friend from Japan, she is smart, if I ask one thing about my assignment she continuously offers some good recommendation, like when I ask a few good topic for my writing task, then she helps me until my work is completed, that was extremely helped" (MP1)

"I'm so interested in Korean culture, I have seen all about Korea from the movie and variety show I've watched. Korean food is also my favorite, there are so many kinds of spicy food. I can't handle it every time I talked about Korea, it is driving me curious to know more about Korea (FP5)

By actively participating in a very language exchange process with their friends, students not only enhance their learning of a new language however also enrich a general knowledge and learn new things regarding different cultures. It is essential to students' language development due to the cognitive, affective, and activity desires of the language for these students to become academically successful in education (Tai, 2019). In their intense communications, the student can interpret the culture of their

partners, thus it facilitated the development of knowledge for the students about many things come over the world. Furthermore, the utilization of technology to encourage language exchange online might produce that vital area for increasing students' language skills, general knowledge, and intercultural competences (Lin et al., 2017).

### *Sharing Interest*

The use of conversation exchange as media to learn a target language like English, also assign another influence. The participants stated that they can share their interests with others on this website.

“We can choose our friend based on the same interest, and then we can connect to each other while talking about our hobbies” (FP6)

“Most of my friend has the same music genre like me, we like pop-rock music” (MP3)

The feature of the conversation exchange such as the search system to find a friend is very profitable. They can select the criteria of individuals that they want to be a friend with supported their desire. Conversation exchange allows the users to search manually such as options of the country they want, the language, hobby, music genre, movie, sports, etc. This becomes much easier with a language exchange website which provides the possibility to discover a language friend with the same interests.

### *Strength and Weakness*

Almost all of the participants agree that the use of conversation exchange websites extremely helped them in improving their communication skills. However, two participants express their dissatisfaction in using this website.

“In the beginning, it was very difficult to use this conversation exchange; especially there is no notification when a new message comes” (FP2)

The weakness of this website is not very influential in the process of using the website. That is why conversation exchange gives users the option to select several social media that are used frequently throughout the world. Lately, social media like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Twitter are the most popular. So, when a user has found a friend from a conversation exchange and he is likely to be invited to communicate further, they can ask each other for their contacts so that they can connect through social

media. Interacting through social media will make it easier for them to share information and communicate with each other. However, this feature at the same time is the strength of this website because it makes it easy for students to choose the media that appropriate to what is being used.

Another feature of this website is the demonstration of the users' nationality, native language, practicing language, hobby, and interest. Hence, the search system of the conversation exchange allows students to find a friend based on their desire. This feature lets users know whether they are a match to interact. Conversation exchange enables the user to access these tools 24 hours with no limit.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The development of education 4.0 has significantly influenced the language learning process. A language exchange is an appropriate learning method to be applied in language learning especially in communication skills like the use of a conversation exchange website. As our analysis of the participants indicates, conversation exchange presents positive effects for the participants in increasing foreign language communication skills. The findings indicate that the participants seemed to find enjoyment and interest, and therefore motivation, in the use of conversation exchange websites they also found somewhat advantages, which they feel the improvement in their speaking and communication skills. The use of conversation exchange not only influences them in learning the language but also, does other exchanges, such as culture, interest, and knowledge. It can be considered a coincidence that increased the need for knowledge of the foreign language has also provided new resources. Electronically linking distant other languages is an obvious way to improve general knowledge and cultures. Overall, most of the students believe that conversation exchange websites can help them in improving their target language ability. The students that have been interviewed mentions the positive result of using conversation exchange and its found effective. In addition, the conversation exchange website claims to a very flexible and useful in learning a foreign language especially to improve communication skills.

This study has important implications for teachers or lecturers to use some media like

conversation exchange in their teaching models. We recommend that the following researchers can take account of the use of other technology in the teaching-learning process in order to improve students' communication skills. In this sense, we believe that our research has many contributions to the development of technological science in the field of education, especially for young foreign language students. This research is designed systematically where the reader can easily understand the contents and their intentions. Our findings suggest the fact that the exchange website can be an appropriate tool to increase communication exchange skills and intercultural relationships.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

No potential conflict of interest is reported.

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