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The Implementation of WhatsApp Group in An EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This research aims to see the implementation of WhatsApp media in EFL Classroom. Researcher used qualitative descriptive data collection through observation to see the learning process that took place in WhatsApp group, then interviewed students and teacher, and finally documentation. Data analysis techniques in this research are data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. From the research results, it can be seen that the learning process is divided into three stages, namely: 1) Planning, 2) Implementation which is divided into three stages, namely: opening, core and closing activities and 3) evaluation. In this case, students can still participate in the learning process using WhatsApp group and easily accessible, save quota and also have various features that teacher can choose to use in the learning process such as WhatsApp groups, chat messages, document files, videos or photos. In addition, there are still obstacles that faced by teacher and students such as teacher cannot observe directly, learning is not optimal, poor internet network, full cellphone memory or lack of understanding of the material.

Keywords: WhatsApp, EFL Classroom, Pandemic Covid-19

1. Introduction

A learning media is indispensable for obtaining a maximum learning process Mahnun, (2012). In this era, electronic media has become a very important requirement in the learning process. Currently the Covid-19 outbreak has hit almost every country in the world. This has caused major changes to occur in the economics, health and education. To prevent the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak, online learning or study from home (SFH) is stipulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture Salsabila et al (2020). One of the medias commonly used in this case is the WhatsApp application (Manan, 2017).

WhatsApp is an application that is useful for social communication. This media requires the internet to send messages, photos, videos, sound recordings, files and links to web addresses Bouhnik & Deshen (2014). In the WhatsApp application there is also a group feature which can be a place for group learning for students in EFL classroom. This Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Polewali Mandar started using the WhatsApp group in all online learning class since the covid-19 pandemic. Regarding the learning media in the form of WhatsApp which is used in the online learning process at MAN 1 Polewali Mandar, the researcher intend to conduct research to obtain accurate information or data regarding the use of WhatsApp group in learning reading at the school. From the initial finding obtained, the researcher will conduct a review of how the implementation of WhatsApp group in EFL Classroom. The purpose of the

review is to obtain accurate data and information by using the WhatsApp group in EFL Classroom at the school.

Based on the results of previous research, the researcher obtained several previous researches related to research to be conducted. The research conducted by (Fattah, 2015) with the title "Effectiveness of Using WhatsApp Messenger as a Mobile Learning Technique to Develop Students' Writing Skills" is a study that focuses on students' writing skills. The findings are convincing that WhatsApp greatly contributes to the development of students' writing skills in EFL classroom. Gamji & Salman, (2019) with the title "The Use of WhatsApp as a Learning Tool in the Current Generation: Undergraduate Student Studies". "Use of WhatsApp as a Learning Tool in Today's Generation: A Study of Undergraduate Students". This research was conducted by using a questionnaire to collect data, that is descriptive and inferential statistical methods applied in analyzing data collected from the field. This research found that WhatsApp has an important role in increasing student academic activities. This technology is an instant service that is easily accessed by students to share and also discuss material online.

The research conducted by (Ahmed, 2019) under the title "Chat and Learning: Effectiveness of Using WhatsApp as a Pedagogical Tool to Improve Reading and Writing Skills of EFL Learners" involved twenty students of English study program from Radfan Higher Education School- Aden University. The data collected through a pre-test and post-test. In this case it is also stated that WhatsApp has a positive influence as a pedagogical tool so that the learning process can be much more interesting. The results of this study concluded that English study program students from Aden University got many benefits from using the WhatsApp group as their learning tool.

Based on previous research, the researcher found similarities and also differences in this study. The similarities of this study with previous research are that both use WhatsApp as a process of learning English and use descriptive qualitative research methods. The differences are, firstly, this study focuses on analyzing students' reading skills while in previous studies it has focused on writing achievement, students' writing abilities and also students' speaking skills. The second difference is the previous studies it focused on the use of WhatsApp in second language learning while this research focuses on learning English as a foreign language.

1.1 Review of Related Literature

Manan (2017) defines that the word "media" comes from the Latin "medium" which means "intermediary" or "introduction". Learning media is a means of distribution messages or learning information conveyed by message sources to their targets. According to Mahnun, (2012) there are three functions that move together in media existence: the stimulation function which can generate interest in knowing what is on the media more deeply; the mediation function is an intermediary between teachers and students. meaning that the media becomes a bridge or means of communication between students and teachers; the information function is to show the explanation the teacher wants to convey so that with this media students can understand the explanation given by the teacher.

E-learning is the use of information and computer technologies so that various learning experiences can be found. E-Learning is all of things related to the use of electronic media in the learning process Piskurich M George (2003). According to Piskurich M George, (2003) e-learning has several advantages including in terms of institutions such as in international

business (delivery of global business via electronic means), speed of development and delivery (paper-based training and platforms / classes are outdated), flexibility (anyone can use at any time) and also cost savings.

According to Manan (2017) WhatsApp Messenger is a proprietary, cross platform, encrypted instant messaging client for smartphones. WhatsApp Messenger is one of social media that can be used in various activities such as sending texts, pictures, videos, audio messages or even the user's location Gamji & Salman (2019). As one of the commonly used social media, this application needs to use a cellphone number as a cellular standard.

WhatsApp was founded by a former yahoo employee in 2009 and grew rapidly to 250,000 users in just a few months. WhatsApp is owned by Facebook and it was recorded in 2014 that its growth was accelerating and reaching more than one billion users Sri wahyuni (2019). This application is widely chosen to be used as a social communication. The WhatsApp application is also included as one of the trending applications used by the younger generation in this era.

In Indonesia, English is designated as a foreign language but has a major influence on the world of education or the world of work. It is evident that English is a compulsory subject in schools. In the world, English is an international language, while in Indonesia it is a foreign language. With the stipulation of English as a subject taught in schools with a programmed curriculum, the language concerned has officially become a foreign language that must be mastered by students and the wider community. (Dewi Mustikawati& Widyaningrum Lulut, 2018)

2. Method

The type of this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research with procedures that produces descriptive data in the form of writings, utterances, and the behavior of people who are observed through an individual, group, society, or even an organization in a certain context which is studied with a complete perspective Raco (2018). This research uses descriptive qualitative research in which data collection is carried out by observing, interviewing and documenting.

The results of this research are in the form of field notes. Researcher make observations by participating in the learning process. During the learning process, researcher also pay attention to the learning process in group. After the learning was completed, the next researcher made field notes. In the interview process the researcher asks directly the things or questions that have been prepared. These interviews were conducted face-to-face with informants and also virtually using electronic media. The results of the interview process were recorded as important information from the informants. The research documentation data used were photos, notes, and screen shots of documents that occurred during the interview process and also made observations.

3. Results

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 The Process of Implementation WhatsApp group in EFL Classroom

Teacher need to make preparations before using WhatsApp as a learning medium, especially during the current pandemic. After this initial stage, the next is implementation. It is the realization of the plans that have been made. The implementation was carried out based on the results of observations in MAN 1 Polewali Mandar Regency, namely in the EFL class, it

was divided into three stages: first, preliminary activities (opening), second core activities and the last is closing activities.

It was found that at the first meeting the teacher gave material about articles A and The. The teacher carries out the learning process using WhatsApp media by utilizing the existing chat message feature, starting when opening class to ending online class. To see and assess the activity in the WhatsApp group, the teacher makes special rules in the class so that students are encouraged to stay active and respond to the teacher in the group.

In the second meeting, the teacher gave material about SPOOF Text in which students were directed to look for explanations about SPOOF Text on the Web. The results of their search are immediately written down and sent to the group. The feature used in this second meeting is through chat messages in the WhatsApp group.

In the third meeting, the teacher gave material on "Official Letters". At this meeting the teacher directs students to find out about the parts in the official letter and the results are sent directly to the WhatsApp group. Each student worked on and answered the assigned task as evidence that they followed the learning process well.

In the fourth meeting, it was found that the teacher used WhatsApp media by providing material to students via video and also chat messages. The material that the teacher gave at this meeting was about "The Expression of Giving Suggestion". This process cannot be separated from the opening session, the core of the lesson, and ends with a closing by the teacher.

After the researcher conducted observations and interviews, the evaluation system carried out by the teacher was not carried out online as in usual learning meetings. However, the evaluation process is carried out face-to-face or offline. The evaluation process is carried out by asking again or repeating the material that has been studied to see that students have understood the material or not. So, the researcher can conclude that not all learning activities are carried out through WhatsApp media but also carried out offline, namely during the evaluation process.

3.1.2. Strength and Weakness in Using WhatsApp Group in EFL Classroom

There are several strength of WhatsApp usage in an EFL classroom. The first is that easy to access. From the results of interviews conducted by researcher, it was found that students easily access the WhatsApp application, as said by Andi Suci Rahayu with his statement "...*Sangat mudah karena aplikasi WhatsApp ini memang sangat sering saya gunakan sehari-hari...*" ("...Very easy because this WhatsApp application is indeed very often, I use every day...").

The second one is saving internet quota. The English teacher said that "...*dengan menggunakan WhatsApp ini saya tidak boros memakai kuota internet...*") From this statement, it can be concluded that the WhatsApp media application does not drain the quota so much and sometimes its free to use.

The third is availability of various features. As the results of interviews and observations, it was found that WhatsApp media has various features that can be utilized in the learning process in the EFL class. This is in accordance with Dyah Fitriani's expression "*Biasanya kami*

menggunakan fitur pesan chat, video, foto" ("Usually we use the chat, video, photo message feature")

In contrast, there are various weaknesses of WhatsApp-Group usage in an EFL Classroom. They are: teacher cannot observe students directly; less than optimal learning; students do not understand the material; phone Memory Full; and bad or Lost Internet Network. In addition, here are the impression and attitude found in this research: the teacher actively provides lesson material and students actively respond to teacher in WhatsApp group

3.2 Discussion

Accordance with the Minister Nadiem Anwar Makarim's policy by issuing Circular Letter Number 4 of 2020 to Education units through Circular Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 36962/MPK.A/HK/2020 concerning "Online Learning (On the Network) in the context of preventing the spread of Corona Virus Diseases (Covid-19)". This requires teacher and students to continue to carry out the teaching and learning process with the help of online media that can support distance learning, one of which is WhatsApp media.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it is known that the learning process in online classes using WhatsApp media includes 3 stages, namely first, planning where the teacher does not use online lesson plans but still prepares material and absent in the planning process. Ideally, lesson plan needs to be prepared in advance so that the learning implementation system becomes more structured and directed. However, the researcher found that in the planning stage the teacher did not use lesson plan in the online learning process. It is contrary what (Bararah, 2017) said that the lesson plan (RPP) is a lesson plan that will be applied by the teacher in the learning process. Without planning, the learning targets will not be maximized. Therefore, this lesson plan must exist so that the learning process can run well and directed.

Second, the implementation includes preliminary activities in learning that begin with greetings "... *Assalamu'alaikum Wr Wb ...*", "Hi", and students are required to respond within 1-2 minutes. Students also take attendance by filling out a list name is in the form of a chat message to the WhatsApp group. Next is the core activity, the teacher gives certain material then students are directed to understand the material and the teacher will wait for the results of student understanding to be sent to the WhatsApp group. The last step is a closing activity which ends with greetings and thanks " Okay Nanda, we close our meeting, thank you, let's end the lesson, *Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh*". This is in accordance with the opinion (Nursyaidah, 2019) that there are three stages in the learning process, namely planning, implementation and evaluation. The three stages are carried out by teachers and students before, during and after learning.

Third, the evaluation in this case the teacher no longer conducts the evaluation process with WhatsApp media but face-to-face or offline. The evaluation process is carried out by asking again or repeating the material that has been studied to see whether students have understood the material or not. This is in accordance with (Supriyadi, 2011) that evaluation is an activity or process of determining the value of education so that its quality and results can be known.

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted with students in the use of WhatsApp group in the EFL Classroom, it is known that there are several strengths in the process of implementing learning, namely, first, WhatsApp media is easily accessible. This is

in accordance with the statement of several students of class XI IPA 2, Andi Suci Rahayu said that "...It is very easy because this WhatsApp application is indeed very often, I use every day...". From this statement, it is known that WhatsApp media is easy to access during the learning process. This is justified in the statement (Gamji & Salman, 2019) that this WhatsApp technology is an instant service that is easily accessible by students to share and discuss material online. So that researcher can conclude that WhatsApp media is easy to use and access both in formal situations, namely in academic activities and in informal situations.

Second, the strength of WhatsApp media is saving quota. According to Anjani et al., (2018) that WhatsApp is a short message application that can be used to send and receive messages with features available without pulse fees such as SMS or telephone but using internet data packages. Based on the results of an interview the English teacher who stated that "...by using WhatsApp I don't waste internet quota..." The same thing was also stated by a student named Andi Suci Rahayu, namely "...usually there is free so we as students are not so burdened..." So, it can be concluded that WhatsApp media is economical to use. It is contrary to Diana (2020) who said that internet quota is one of the obstacles to enter online classes because the price is relatively expensive.

Third, it has various features, this is in accordance the English teacher during the interview process "For now I only use the chat message feature, send videos, photos and documents. As for the video call feature, I haven't used it so far." The various features that exist in WhatsApp are actually owned according to the statement Indaryani & Sulisworo (2018) that WhatsApp has various features that can be used to communicate with the help of internet services such as: WhatsApp groups that can accommodate up to 256 participants, galleries to add photos or videos, contacts to save contacts, camera to quote pictures, audio to send voice messages, maps to share location or map coordinates, and also documents to insert document files.

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted on class XI IPA 2 students in the use of WhatsApp group in EFL Classroom, it was found that there were several weaknesses in the use of the WhatsApp media: the teacher could not observe students directly, less than optimal learning, do not understand the material, mobile memory is full, the internet network was bad or lost. This is related to the opinion Diana Novita (2020) that the use of online learning applications during the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be separated from various advantages and disadvantages. No matter how great the progress of learning technology is, conventional learning is still needed. In this case face-to-face learning is the best learning experience ever and is difficult to replace by any technological advances. From the statement, the researcher concludes that online learning will remain attached to the various advantages and disadvantages of each online media used. The offline learning system is difficult to replace by any technology.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it is known about student's impressions and attitudes, namely teacher is active providing subject matter and students also active to follow the learning process in WhatsApp Group. This is related to opinion Wahyuni (2019) that WhatsApp group can make it easier for users to increase social interaction, everyone's collaboration, interaction between teachers and students, feedback and is also very supportive of sharing information. With the facilities or features in WhatsApp Group, it will certainly have a big impact on the student learning process. Based on the statement above,

the researcher concludes that WhatsApp media can help in the process of interaction and communication through online media.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of WhatsApp Groups in EFL Class conducted by an English teacher in class XI IPA 2 in one of the Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Polewali Mandar Regency contains a learning process with 1) Planning, 2) Implementation which is divided into three stages, namely: opening, core and closing activities and 3) evaluation. Based on the results of the study, it was also concluded that the teacher remained active in providing material at each meeting through WhatsApp media. In this case, communication and interaction between teachers and students continues to run online through WhatsApp media despite all the advantages and disadvantages that can be found in the online learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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