

WHATSAPP AS A GERMAN LANGUAGE LEARNING MEDIA

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Abstract: This paper describes the idea of the WhatsApp application as a medium of learning German. The WhatsApp application is an application that can be accessed using a smartphone (*das Handy*) for the benefit of learning German. The presentation contains: i) WhatsApp background as a German language learning media, ii) WhatsApp understanding, iii) the benefits of using WhatsApp in learning German for lecturers, students, universities, parents or guardians of students, iv) the weaknesses in using WhatsApp in learning German, v) WhatsApp in learning writing skills (*Schreibfertigkeit*), both writing essays (*der Aufsatz*), writing daily activities (*das Tagebuch schreiben*) or writing personal letters (*der persönliche Brief*), vi) WhatsApp in German vocabulary and grammar learning (*deutsche Vokabeln und deutsche Grammatik*), and vii) the evaluation, reflection and follow-up.

Keywords: *Whatsapp, Learning German*

The internet is a global information network that enables humans to connect with each other around the world through computers (Setiawan, Permana and Permatawati, 2014: 81). Internet users in Indonesia during the year of 2017 are more than 50% or around 143 million people from the total population of Indonesia which currently reaches 263 million more people (Bohang, 2018: 1). Based on the economic level, internet users in Indonesia are dominated by the lower to middle class society 74.62%, while the upper class social economic strata internet users are 7.39%. Internet users aged 13-18 years are 16.68%, aged 19-34 years are 49.52%, in productive aged 35-54 years 29.55%, and aged above 54 years are 4.24 %. More than half of internet users access the internet from tablets or smartphones. Thus the internet is already part of the life of the population in the State of the Republic of Indonesia (Pertiwi, 2018: 1)

Smartphone active users in Indonesia are more than 100 million people (<https://www.kominfo.go.id>, 2018). The use of smartphones among students is to: i) view school schedules, ii) see school announcements, iii) send e-mails, iv) read notes, v) view learning videos, vi) find online library access, vii) access websites to search for subject matter, viii) share notes with classmates and ix) have educational applications related to education (Firmana, 2016: 10). The use of smartphones can increase student activity in learning. Likewise the use of smartphones among students in the context of learning can improve the semester achievement index (Maria, 2013: 658).

One of the many applications that can be accessed using a smartphone is the WhatsApp application. The use of the WhatsApp application in the teaching and learning process (education) seems to have become a necessity today. This paper offers the idea of using WhatsApp as a medium for learning German.

Whatsapp Definition

WhatsApp Inc. was founded on February 24, 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum who had worked as Yahoo employees. Initially, WhatsApp was made for iPhone users, then along with its development, the WhatsApp application was made for BlackBerry, Android and Symbian versions. Until November 2010, WhatsApp was ranked 3rd, the best-selling application downloaded through Nokia's Ovi Store, after the Swype and NHL premium game centers.

WhatsApp is an instant messaging application for smartphones, which has almost the same function as the SMS application; contact recognition system, verification and message delivery is still done through a cellphone number that has been registered beforehand. WhatsApp does not use credit, but internet data (Winarso, 2015: 1). The WhatsApp application does not limit the number

of characters or the length of the words used. There is no limit as long as the internet data (package) is still sufficient.

The WhatsApp application contains features, such as: i) sending text messages, ii) sending photos from galleries or from cameras, iii) sending videos, iv) sending office files or others, v) calling via voice, including sending messages the voice of the smartphone owner / user that can be heard by the recipient at any time, vi) sharing location using GPS and vii) sending contact cards.

WhatsApp benefits are as follows: i) WhatsApp has the feature to send text, images, videos, sounds and GPS locations via GPS or Gmaps hardware. ii) No need to open the SMS application to receive a message. Message notification entered when the cellphone is off will still be delivered, if the cellphone is on. iii) There is a check mark, if the message is sent to the network. Double checkmark if the message has been sent to a chat friend. A red cross appears if the message fails to send. iv) Broadcast to send messages to many users. Group chat to send messages to fellow members of the community. v) Because it is integrated with the system, there is no need to log in and load, so data transactions are more economical. The application can be turned off, active if there is an incoming message, so it can save battery (<https://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/50d3e02b601243c95d00000b/>).

The WhatsApp application can be used as a medium for learning German because almost all students have smartphones that can access the WhatsApp application. The internet is also not a new item for students. Internet users in Indonesia, including students, spend four to seven hours using the internet in a day (Pertiwi, 2018: 1). If the time of four to seven hours per day is used related to learning German, it certainly has a good impact on improving the competence of German students. WhatsApp handles more than 60 billion message exchanges between users worldwide every day. This growth will continue to increase in the future, as internet penetration increases (Bohang, 2018: 1). Thus, WhatsApp can support German language learning.

Benefits of using WhatsApp in learning German

Some of the benefits of using the WhatsApp application in learning German are as follows:

- i) The WhatsApp application allows lecturers and students to hold virtual lectures or blended learning and flipped classroom. Blended learning is a learning method that combines face-to-face meetings with online material in harmony (Noer, 2010: 1). Flipped Classroom is a learning model that "reverses" the traditional method, where the material is usually given in class and students work on assignments at home. In a flipped classroom, the material is first provided through learning videos that students must watch in their homes. Conversely, classroom learning sessions are used for group discussions and doing assignments guided by lecturers (<http://guraru.org/info/flipped-classroom-membalik-model-pembelajaran-truktur/>, 2013).
- ii) Save paper and printer ink. A Medan State University student uses a minimum of 50 sheets of A4-size paper, weighing 70 grams to complete assignments from one subject, such as a beginner writing course (*Schreibfertigkeit für Anfänger*) based on the 2016 IQF curriculum. The tasks of each subject are: routine assignments (TR), critical book report (CBR), critical journal/research report (CJR), engineering ideas (RI), mini research (MR), and project (Public Relations of Medan State University, 2017: 1). By using the WhatsApp application the use of paper and printer ink is reduced. Paper is used only for midterms and semester exams. The work of students from six assignments can be taken anywhere to be corrected, because the assignments are submitted in soft files (Rustriyani, 2018: 1).
- iii) Students do not need to write a sick certificate on paper, just apply for a sick license and attach a medical certificate from the doctor who has been photographed and then sent via WhatsApp.
- iv) Accommodate student difficulties in learning and find solutions. Students who have not mastered a particular material and lecturers who lack time in delivering material can use WhatsApp. If the student is sick but the assignment is complete, students can still send their assignment files via the WhatsApp application from their smartphone.
- v) In carrying out the assignment the students are helped by the availability of German letter content in WhatsApp, so that students do not write the letters ä, ö, ü and ß (Perdamean, 2017:

- 36). Students don't need to carry a thick and heavy dictionary, just file or just open a website that provides a digital dictionary page.
- vi) Academic supervisors (PA) and thesis supervisors (PS) can communicate directly through WhatsApp with their guidance students, even if possible with the parents of students, bridging student study problems related to problems between students and their parents, sending reports to parents, for example if a student is already on the threshold of DO (drop-out), of course with the permission of the head of the study program, head of department, even faculty and university.
 - vii) For parents and student guardians, WhatsApp is also useful. Parents can find out what policies are applied on campus. What is the curriculum content that is being run. What books should students have. What are the student activities that become extra curricular activities. How to fill in the academic calendar. Does his child attend every hour of lecture. When is the formative exam held. What is the student achievement index. All information can be asked by parents by using WhatsApp without having to come to campus. Thus parents can continuously monitor their children's activities.
 - viii) In the 1990s, stamps still played an important role if a student wanted to write a letter in German to native speakers of German for example in Germany, Switzerland or Austria. Now only using internet quota, German-language communication can take place quickly and there is no need to wait for replies for days.
 - ix) Today's business competition demands immediate response, even in seconds. Of course no one wants to risk losing a big business opportunity just because it failed to send or receive messages. Messages from anyone who will be received and how many messages can be received can be arranged and determined, for example a message containing a schedule for uploading PKM proposals and other PKM activities. Messages that are not needed can be deleted automatically.

Weakness of using WhatsApp in learning German

The internet can be used as a learning medium, but there are still few lecturers who use the internet as a learning medium (Harahap, 2017: 614). The era of industrial revolution 4.0 requires all actors in the world of education to use the internet in learning, including using smartphones or smart phones in learning German. Lecturers cannot be replaced with technology, but lecturers must master technology, lecturers who do not understand technology, other lecturers will replace it (Public Relations of Universitas Negeri Medan, 2018).

Cellphone signals are still a problem in communication systems. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology targets telecommunication accessibility evenly in new Indonesia by 2020 (Hutabarat, 2018: 1), however, on various campuses the signal is good enough.

During the UTS and UAS exams the *Schreibfertigkeit für Anfänger* course is that there may be students using a smartphone to search for the meaning of words in a digital dictionary, asking answers or sharing answers to friends. Things like this should be avoided by collecting all smartphones on the lecturer's table and deactivating during the exam.

Indeed, it cannot be monitored whether students do their tasks independently, are honest, do not cheat or other people do the work. To find out honesty, students are asked to present their work in front of the class with or without using an LCD projector. From the results of the student's presentation, the lecturer knows the percentage of students' mastery of their assignments.

WhatsApp in learning to write German (*Schreibfertigkeit*)

The learning achievement of the *Schreibfertigkeit für Anfänger* course is that students are able to write articles/ essays of various themes in German using German grammar (*strukturen*) and the rules of writing (*Rechtschreibung*) that are correct according to A1 level. The course contains essay writing activities (*Aufsatz*) of various themes, including the writing of daily activities (*Tagebuch*) and personal letters (*persönlicher Brief*).

In learning to write the theme letter discussed is vacation and travel (*Ferien und Reise*). After the lecturer explains the theory of writing letters, then the students practice them. Previously students had to find friends to exchange letters via Whatsapp. Initially exchanging letters to

classmates as a first step. After suggestions, comments, input and improvements from the lecturers of writing courses and letters written by students is good, then continue writing letters to German, Austrian or Swiss people.

In the letter also must contain phrases (*Ausdrücke*) in German that have been studied. After the letter was sent and received a reply, then shared letters to all students who took writing courses to be used as lecture material. Learning by using WhatsApp will enliven the learning atmosphere in the classroom. Students participate actively and are not passive just waiting for the material from the lecturer. At the end of the lecture, all letters produced by students are collected and all students are encouraged to have the file.

The activities that will be carried out in the Writing for Beginners (*Schreibfertigkeit für Anfänger*) course are 4 credits, as follows:

Week 1:

Open lecture courses *Schreibfertigkeit für Anfänger*, *Apersepsi*, Discuss lecture contracts, discuss semester lecture plans, discuss six tasks of IQF, discuss assessment systems, sign lecture contracts, collect student telephone numbers, make a WA group subject *Schreibfertigkeit für Anfänger*. Submit lecture contracts and lecture plans to students via WhatsApp.

Week 2 and 3: Write alphabets, words, sentences and paragraphs.

Week 4: Introducing yourself and others in writing.

Week 5: Write down the experience of learning German and a place to live.

Week 6: Discuss CBR results reports on German grammar.

Week 7: Discuss CJR results reports relating to German grammar learning and learning writing skills.

Week 8: UTS

Week 9: Writing activities on the weekend (*am Wochenende*)

Week 10: Writing about holidays and trips (*Ferien und Reise*)

Week 11: Discuss the results of engineering ideas in the form of PKM proposals (student creativity programs).

Week 12, 13: Discuss reports on mini-research about the city of Medan.

Weeks 13, 15: Discuss project results reports and assess products in the form of a diary.

Week 16: UAS, Questionnaire, reflection and follow-up, closes the course lecture *Schreibfertigkeit für Anfänger*.

WhatsApp in learning German grammar (*Strukturen*)

German grammar (*Strukturen*) courses are not included in the IQF curriculum that applies to the German Language Education Study Program, Language and Arts Faculty, Medan State University since 2016. Teaching German grammar is done in an integrated manner and can be done by applying error analysis methods in Writing courses. Through error analysis students are guided to correct grammatical errors (*Strukturen*), improve their own work (self-correction), or improve the work of peer-correction. Lecturers choose one student writing to correct students through WhatsApp. Correction results are sent to the lecturer. In the next meeting the results of student corrections were discussed in class, especially grammatical errors and were given input according to German grammar.

Evaluation, reflection and follow-up

Evaluation of the *Schreibfertigkeit für Anfänger* course is carried out through formative implementation 1-4. Formative 1 contains routine tasks (TR); Formative 2 contains the duties of CBR, CJR and RI; Formative 3 contains the tasks of MR and PR and Formative 4 consists of F4a (UTS) and F4b (UAS). The value of the course (NM) is calculated by the formula $0,1F1 + 0,1F2 + 0,15F3 + 0,65F4$ (Rector SK Universitas Negeri Medan number 065/UN33/Kep/2016).

In addition to the evaluation of lectures there are also rules regarding the values of student character. Students who do plagiarism, either partially or all, the task is canceled and the value of the student concerned repeats the subject plus a suspension for one semester (<https://www.unimed.ac.id>, 2017).

On Sunday 16 lecturers distributed learning questionnaires to students and students did not have to put an identity on their answers. Opinions and suggestions from students should be equipped with an identity, the possibility of constructive suggestions and needs to be followed up. For students who have not passed the writing course, it is recommended to take a German language course during semester breaks and repeat the next semester. For students who get C grades are expected to improve their writing skills.

Suggestion

It is recommended for students, lecturers, PA lecturers, PS lecturers, parents and the university to use the WhatsApps application to communicate indirectly and to support lecture activities. To turn on the classroom atmosphere, the use of the WhatsApp application can be a choice of many media in learning foreign languages, especially in learning German.

Conclusion

By using communication and information technology such as the WhatsApp application, students, parents, lecturers, PA lecturers and universities can communicate well. The internet as a result of information and communication technology can facilitate the teaching and learning process, especially in learning German at present and in the future using the WhatsApp application.

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