

UTILIZING WHATSAPP APPLICATION FOR TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE: WHY AND HOW?

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Abstract: WhatsApp is one of the most popular messaging applications nowadays and it can be accessed by using smart phone, personal computer, and tablet. Most people prefer to use this application for communicating with other. This application also has invaded all aspects of life, especially in education field. However, this application has not been utilized optimally by English teachers in teaching English language, whereas WhatsApp is a potential media to help English teachers in teaching English language. WhatsApp allows users to utilize its features to text, to call, and to send video, audio, links, location, document, pictures. In this article, the writer will explain about why WhatsApp is a potential media tool for teaching English language and how to use WhatsApp in teaching English language. In brief, the writer expects that utilizing WhatsApp can help English teachers and students in teaching and learning English language and can improve students' English ability.

Keywords: *WhatsApp, English language teaching, Mobile Phone Technology*

Technology has invaded all aspects of life nowadays and education system is also developing rapidly. Technology such as computer, mobile phone smart phone, and the internet are considered as effective tools to support teaching and learning process (Ta'amneh, 2017). However, most teachers have not utilized optimally the technology yet in teaching English language. It is supported by Lailiyah and Cahyono (2016) who claim that "some EFL teachers are reluctant to take the opportunity to integrate technology into their classrooms", p. 345. For example, teachers prefer to choose traditional ways to teach English language. It is probably because the teachers are not creative in integrating the internet and mobile phone technology to make the teaching and learning of English language to be attractive and different in the classroom.

The mobile phone technology is the most potential tool to be utilized in teaching English language. EFL teachers can utilize message application through mobile phone and smart phone. The most famous messenger application is WhatsApp. Bensalem (2018) claims that many foreign language teachers have been interested in using WhatsApp to teach certain aspects of foreign language learning. Hamad (2017) states that "using WhatsApp to facilitate and create an avenue for learning and communication as well, as it is the most common App to the students, and they always have their mobile phones and smart phones in their hands, beside it is cheap to activate the App" pp. 74-75. Meanwhile, Susanti and Tarmuji (2016) say that, WhatsApp has flexibility and useful features to text, to call, and to send video, audio, links, location, document, pictures. It means that WhatsApp is the most potential technology to support teaching and learning of English language today that can be accessed by mobile phone.

In addition, teaching and learning English language by using WhatsApp is regarded as the newest innovation of English language teaching strategy. Teachers and students can interact online with others through the features of WhatsApp. WhatsApp can present multimodal media through its features for learning English language. Then, WhatsApp also facilitates students with audio visual. According to Marshal (2002) as cited in Gon and Rawekar (2017), people have ability to remember what they read only 10%, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see and 50% of what they hear and see. The technology that combines images, texts and audio all in one is able to improve people in remembering something more than 50%. Thus, WhatsApp will make the teaching and learning process of English language to be interactive and can create a new atmosphere for both students and teachers.

This article attempts to study the use of WhatsApp as a new technology that can be utilized for teaching and learning English language. The writer will explain about why WhatsApp is a

potential technology for teaching English language and how to use WhatsApp in teaching English language.

Discussion

Mobile Phone Technology

The mobile technology is categorized as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) that can be used by students and teachers for teaching and learning English language. “Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has emerged as a potential tool in the instruction of English as a foreign language” (Taj et. al, 2016, p. 76). MALL is an approach of learning that is able to improve the learning experiences through mobile phones and tablet computers (Lindaman & Nolan, 2015). Mobile phone technology is potential to deliver high quality multimedia stored on internal drives or removable memory cards or that can be accessed over wireless and telecommunication networks (Pim, 2013). The mobile phone technology can help students and teachers easier in teaching and learning English language. It is because mobile learning does not depend on time or place that is in the extremely efficient use of the available time (Fattah, 2015).

The type of mobile phone that can be utilized for teaching English language is smart phone. The smart phone will allow interaction with people, via voice and through the exchange of written messages, still and moving images (Aamri & Suleiman, 2011). The smart phone can be connected to internet through communication provider networks and WiFi. Mobile phones with internet connectivity can search thousands of web pages (Nalliveettil & Alenazi, 2016). Beside the web pages, students and teachers can also access the social media application that is WhatsApp. It is categorized as messaging app social media.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is the most widely social media tool than others such as Facebook, Skype, Snapchat, BBM, Line, Instagram, and Wechat. Speroff (2016) states that, WhatsApp is a cross-platform mobile messaging app which uses the internet to send messages. It will help users easier to communicate with other by saving other users number phone that has verified as their WhatsApp account in their internal telephone memory. This application provides users with useful features that can support teaching and learning English language. then, Alshammari, Parkes, and Adlington (2017) states, WhatsApp allows teachers to take on a greater facilitation role in their teaching. The teachers can facilitate all features to support their English teaching. The features of WhatsApp are as follows:

1. Message

The Message feature in WhatsApp is reliable and simple message. Users can send messages to their friends and their family for free. WhatsApp uses the phone's Internet phone connection to send messages so users can avoid the cost of SMS.

2. Voice call and video WhatsApp

Doing voice call and video call by using WhatsApp is free. The users are free to talk with their friends and family, even if they are in another country. And with free video calls, the users can have face-to-face conversations when voice or text is not enough. WhatsApp voice and video calls use phone's Internet connection instead of cellular calling minutes, so the users do not have to worry about expensive call charges.

3. Photos and Videos

Through photos and videos feature, the users can share their important moments by sending photos and videos on WhatsApp immediately. They can even capture moments that are important to you with a built-in camera. With WhatsApp, photos and videos will be delivered quickly even if the users are in a slow connection.

4. Document

The users can share the documents easily. They can send PDFs, documents, spreadsheets, slideshows and more, without the hassle of using email or file sharing apps. In addition, they can send documents up to 100 MB in size that will make it easier for them to share what they need to share with the people they want.

5. Chat Group

Users can connect with Groups via group chat. They can connect with people who are important to themselves, like family or co-workers. With group chat, users can share messages, photos, and videos of up to 256 people at once. Users can also name groups, mute, or customize notifications, and more.

6. WhatsApp on Web and Desktop

WhatsApp can make Conversations Run with WhatsApp on the web and on desktops. Users can smoothly sync all chat to their computers so they can chat on whatever device is most convenient for them. They can download the desktop app or visit web.whatsapp.com to get started.

7. End-to-end encryption

End-to-end encryption is security by default. Users can share their personal moments in WhatsApp. When encrypted end-to-end, users' messages and users' calls are secured. Only users and people who communicate with users can read messages or hear the call, and no one is in between, even WhatsApp.

8. Voice Message

WhatsApp users can use this feature to say what's in their mind by tapping a tap on a voicemail item in a chat room. They can greet his friend or his family and telling long stories.

The Use of WhatsApp in English Language Teaching: *Why?*

There are many researchers that have been done some research that utilized WhatsApp in English language teaching. They used WhatsApp for teaching English language skills and language component. These researches have proved that WhatsApp is one of the best ICT tools for teaching English language.

The first researcher was done by Ramakrisnan (2017) entitled use of WhatsApp for English language proficiency among B.Ed Trainees. The study was involved among 200 B.Ed. trainees in Madurai district. The result revealed that there was a development of English language proficiency for B.Ed students as expected by the researcher .

The second research was conducted by Kheryadi (2017). Hed conducted his research by implementing of WhatsApp as a media of English language teaching by distributing some question to subject of his research. The result revealed that the students felt confident, independence, enthusiasm, and had a positive attitude to learn English using application.

The third research was conducted by Justina (2016). She used WhatsApp to enhance reading and writing skills at undergraduate college level in Osmania University India. The result of her research shows that the use of WhatsApp is highly essential for language teachers to identify what their learners enjoy doing and utilize it to engage them in language development, especially reading and writing which slow learners find difficult when done in the conventional way.

The fourth researcher was done by Sayan (2016) entitled Affecting higher students learning activity by using WhatsApp. The result shows that WhatsApp use for improvement of achievement of the course goals had a significant support of the teacher candidates.


The last research was done by Fattah and Said (2015) entitled the effectiveness of using WhatsApp Messenger as one of mobile learning techniques to develop students writing skills. The result shows that WhatsApp can give significant effects on students' writing skills of English department at private university in Saudi Arabia.

Based on the explanation above about WhatsApp and its advantages based on the researches have been done by some English teachers in several countries in the world, so tha WhatsApp is very effective tools for teaching English language. This application is interesting because it has several features that can allow the users to send, chat, speak, write, and share many things in chat room easily. Then, WhatsApp has interesting emoticons to represent the users feeling in chatting. The last is WhatsApp is easy to be accessed by the students anytime and anywhere.

The Use of WhatsApp in English Language Teaching: *How?*

A. *Procedure of Utilizing WhatsApp in Teaching English Language*

To use WhatsApp in English language teaching in the classroom, there are some steps that must be followed by teachers. The steps are adapted from Speroff (2016);

 *Step 1. Create a WhatsApp group*

Teachers ask and save their students' WhatsApp numbers in the internal telephone memory. After that, teachers create a group based on their class WhatsApp group.

✚ *Step 2. Set the rules*

Teacher must make a deal with their students about the roles of using WhatsApp. It includes students language must be polite. Then, they might want to add their own rules about whether it is ok for learners to send teachers private messages outside of the group, what kind of information should and should not be shared in the group e.g jokes, and informal chats in English or not?

✚ *Step 3. Set up for class use*

Teachers can set up for class use. For examples, teachers ask their students to bring their earphones or headphones to the class the day before (and then the morning of) class. Sometimes, one or two students who forgot to bring theirs, here teachers can either have students double up and share the earphones or have a few inexpensive headsets on hand to lend to students.

✚ *Step 4. Assign the tasks*

An important stipulation is that WhatsApp is not a teaching tool as such – it is a mean of providing input to students and a way for them to share their output. Both can be done in class to alleviate classroom management issues (e.g. large classrooms where students don't get enough speaking time) and to help learners improve their speaking performance and outside of the class, to provide an additional opportunity for listening and speaking or to assign and collect homework.

b) How can WhatsApp used in teaching English language skills and components?

1. Teaching Listening

There are many activities that can be done by teachers in teaching listening in the classroom or outside the classroom. Teachers can share a recording model in the form of file and short a video into the class WhatsApp group. Then, students listen to recording model, or a short video. The teachers also send file in the form of doc that contains some questions to their students into the class WhatsApp group and its hard copy that is related to the model recording. The students will answer some comprehension questions that the teachers share, and then students also focus on the target language, e.g. the language for agreeing/disagreeing. This can be done by filling in the blanks in the dialogue script or having students tick the phrases they hear.

The advantage of using WhatsApp through mobile phones to teaching listening in class is that it allows students to work at their own pace, listen to the recording as many times as they need to in its entirety or to focus on problem areas. However, this also means that some students will inevitable finish early. To deal with this, teachers can give some extension tasks to the students. For example, the task was for students to listen to a description of a photo and circle the differences on their own photo – have the early finishers write sentences about the differences.

2. Teaching Speaking

Teaching speaking by using WhatsApp is also interesting. Teacher can give a topic for their students. The example of the topic is about sport. Teachers ask their students to make a short presentation that is related to the theme given. The presentation is the form of video recording. To this project, teachers give a deadline two days or more than two days before English class is started. The video is sent to the class WhatsApp group. Teachers listened to them, gave grades and make questions based on learners' recording. When they came to class, they received a list of questions and instructions to listen to all the recordings and answer the questions (e.g. Who talked about winter sports? Which ones? In which sport do people use a stick? etc.).

Another activity is giving a comment about something. The teachers share a short video or a picture to the class WhatsApp group. The teachers ask their students to comment to those video and picture. They give their comments by using voice message. So that, teacher can listen their students comment directly.

3. Teaching Reading

Teaching reading by using WhatsApp can be done by teachers in the classroom as classwork and also in the outside classroom as homework. Teachers can send the reading material to the class WhatsApp group in the form of file. For example, the teachers share a narrative text and some questions in the form of doc file. Then, students can download the file. After that, the students read the text and the questions. They can send their answers to their teachers on WhatsApp. They send

their answer do not in the class WhatsApp group but into their teacher's message. It aims at avoiding their classmates to copy paste their other classmates work.

4. Teaching Writing

Writing is “a process of producing thoughts through several metacognitive processes” (Alharahsheh, 2015: 32). To make the writing to be qualified, students need to read a lot to enrich the information and idea related to the topic of the writing. It is because writing and reading activities go hand-in-hand in such a way that completes each other (Ahor & Zarei, 2016). So, teachers can do vary activity in teaching writing in the school by using WhatsApp. The example of activity in teaching writing by using WhatsApp is as follow;

- Activity 1

Teachers make a group of 2-3 students

- a). Teachers send a picture to the class WhatsApp group that is related to the text. For example, teaching narrative text, teachers send a picture of a monkey and a seller to the class WhatsApp group. It aims at recalling students' background knowledge.
- b). Then, teachers ask their students with some questions that are related to the pictures. “What picture is it?”, have you ever seen this animal before?, Where did you see this animal?. Who the picture is it?”.
- c) After that, teachers send the story “The Monkey and the Seller” to the class WhatsApp group in the form of recording or in the form video. Then students hear or watch that story by using their own earphone.
- d) Next, teachers ask their students to retell the story and submit it into the teachers' message. It can be submitted in the form of file doc that is student type by using Microsoft work in their mobile phone or typing directly in the whatsapp message.

- Activity 2

The other activity that teachers can do is the teachers can send some pictures. The pictures are about the latest issues that latest happen. For example, the picture of flood that often happens in the certain area in their city. Then, teachers ask their students to comment about the picture. The comment is about how to solve the flood. Here, students will explore their ideas. After that, the students can type their comments on WhatsApp. Teachers will give the grade to their students writing.

5. Teaching Vocabulary

Beside WhatsApp is good to teaching and learning of English skills, it is also good to teaching knowledge of English language such as vocabulary. The following are the steps for teaching vocabulary by using Whatsapp. These steps are derived from Jafari and Chalak (2016).

- Firstly, teachers give the instructional materials initially available in the print form are developed and converted into a mobile-based format.
- Secondly, teachers send different related pictures and videos to the students in WhatsApp group which conveyed the meaning of the new words and automatically it help the students to know the correct pronunciations of the words. Definitions, synonyms and antonyms of the new words are also practiced in different sentences by using WhatsApp. They also received different drills to practice the new vocabulary items.
- Teacher asked the students to answer the questions individually and send their answers to the teacher through the Whatsapp.

Conclusion

WhatsApp application is a useful tool for teaching English language. It provides students with: a) opportunities for practicing English language skills and components for free, b) more personal and comprehensive relationship between students and teachers, c) students will be more sociable person and also to be better, and d) staying connected to the learners and making the students available for help and support in their quest to learning English. Then, Students will feel confident, independence, enthusiasm, and had a positive attitude to learn English language. In addition, students do not only access the WhatsApp in the classroom but also outside the classroom. It helps students to learn English in 24 hours. They can read and write the materials times that is given by their teachers more than one time whenever they wants. Students are free to ask their classmates and their teachers through WhatsApp when she/he gets difficulties or there is something not clear enough about the learning material given.

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