

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WHATSAPP GROUP AS ENGLISH WRITING LEARNING MEDIUM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the contributions of WhatsApp group as English writing learning medium for high school students. This research applied a study case method through a qualitative approach. To achieve the research objectives, the data were collected through interview. The participants in this research were eight eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Luwu Timur, who had met the criteria determined by the researchers (purposive sampling). The results show the contributions of WhatsApp group as a medium in learning writing, such as: (1) students found WhatsApp Group as a fun and simple learning medium (2) WhatsApp group keep students active during the learning process (3) WhatsApp group can build a good communications between students and teacher (4) WhatsApp group make it easier for students to get the learning material (5) WhatsApp group help students to study writing via online (6) WhatsApp group can be used as a media to promote individual learning.

Keywords— Contributions, WhatsApp Group, Writing, Learning Medium.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, the COVID-19 virus, which was characterized by symptoms of cough, runny nose, fever, and shortness of breath, was first confirmed in Wuhan, China. Mahase (2020) stated that after the virus spread in various countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the COVID-19 virus as a global pandemic. The number of cases or people affected by the Covid-19 virus which makes the body weak and even takes lives is increasing day by day, making people in various countries worried, including the people of Indonesia.

In Indonesia, the first case of the Covid-19 virus was announced by the government in early March, 2020. Every day the Covid-19 cases were getting higher and higher, which makes the government made several policies to break the Covid-19 virus's chain of transmission, and one

of them is social distancing (Sakkir, Dollah, & Ahmad, 2020). Social distancing requires us to keep a safe distance, avoiding crowds, and limit close socialization with other people. Following the rules to keep a distance, the government also implemented Work from Home (WFH) which requires workers to do their job at home, and Study from Home (SFH) which students and teachers have to do the teaching and learning activity from home.

Study from Home (SFH) program eliminates face-to-face meetings between teachers and students. Following government regulations, all learning activities are conducted from home via e-learning. E-learning is an abbreviation of Electronic Learning. Electronic learning means electronic-based learning or using electronic devices in the teaching and learning process. E-learning is defined by the Ministry of Communication and Technology of New Zealand (2008) as a learning system that is supported by the use of digital tools and content and includes some sort of interactivity, allowing for online interactions between students and teachers or colleagues.

E-learning plays an important role in helping instructors, schools, and universities to facilitate students learning (Amaiah, Al-Khasaweh, & Althunibat, 2020). Students and teachers access the internet and use electronic media to carry out the teaching and learning process. Teachers take advantages of some applications to hold face-to-face meeting indirectly, interact with students, teach and share the materials, collect assignments, carry out test, and even make presentations. WhatsApp is one of the popular social media platforms among teachers and students.

WhatsApp is used by almost every one of all ages. According to Bouhnik and Deshen (2014), WhatsApp is a smartphone application used for instant communication. It is one of the most popular social media platforms for communication nowadays. According to Trevor (2013), WhatsApp, a cross-platform messaging program, continues to rise in popularity, with more than 250 million users. WhatsApp has become one of the potential media to assist English teachers in teaching English because it allows users to text, talk, and send video, audio, links, locations, files, and images (Jasrial, 2019). Educators can use WhatsApp group to share materials, assign homework, as well as provide feedback on students' work.

During the online learning system, WhatsApp group is utilized as a media to teach English language skills, including writing skills. Writing is one of the four fundamental abilities that comprise productive skill. According to Akhiar, Mydin & Kasuma (2017), writing is seen as more complex and difficult than other language abilities because students must master particular

principles and build skills in handwriting, spelling, flow, punctuation, and structuring thoughts into readable writings.

WhatsApp has contributed as a medium in learning English writing. Contribution means participation, involvement, and donation. Ismail (2017) stated that contribution can be material or action. Ahira (2012) stated that contributions can be form in various fields, such as thought, leadership, financial, professionalism, action, and others. In Cambridge Dictionary, contribution means something that you contribute to help making something successful.

Researchers discovered various things connected to the use of WhatsApp Groups as media to learn English writing in previous studies. Ghada Awada (2016) found that using WhatsApp to promote critique writing competence and motivation in learning was more effective than conventional training. According to Wahyuni and Febianti's (2019) research, using WhatsApp can considerably increase writing skills and also generate interest, excitement, and motivation in students. In another study, Sari and Putri (2019) concluded that WhatsApp group chat may aid students in learning to write. Most students had excellent experiences by using WhatsApp Group as a writing learning media. Furthermore, the students fulfilled various goals with the usage of WhatsApp Groups, such as improving communication among group members, cultivating a positive learning environment and a sense of belonging in the writing class, developing a discussion, and sharing and utilizing learning resources.

The previous studies above have found positive results from the use of WhatsApp as a writing learning medium, both in terms of learning outcomes and student motivation. Meanwhile, the difference is that in Ghada Awada's research (2016) comparing the results of learning using e-learning, namely WhatsApp with traditional learning, which results in WhatsApp being more effective, while in Wahyuni and Febianti's (2019) and Sari and Putri (2019) research there is no comparison. In addition, Wahyuni and Febianti's (2019) research discusses how students' interest in learning to write using WhatsApp is discussed, while in Sari and Putri's research (2019), the various goals achieved by students using WhatsApp as an English learning medium are discussed.

The related studies tend to investigate student learning outcomes and students' interest in learning using WhatsApp. Based on the explanation, the researchers are interested in researching how students learning process of writing English through WhatsApp groups as a learning medium. This research aimed to determine the contributions of WhatsApp Group as a medium in learning English writing during Covid-19 pandemic due to its popularity. The

researchers want to determine if learning writing can be done well using the group. Thus, WhatsApp group as English writing learning medium is chosen as the case in this study because it requires further investigation to confirm the truth of previous research. In this research, the researchers want to know contributions of WhatsApp group in learning English writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Definition of Contribution

Contribution means participation, involvement and donation. Contribution, according to Dany H. (2006), is a type of material contribution (money) that might take the form of assistance or donation. In line with this, T. Guritno (2000) stated that contributions are donations made by someone in the hopes of assisting others who have suffered losses or who are in need of assistance. According to Soerjono Soekanto as cited in Ismail (2017), contributions are a form of money or funds, energy, thought, material, and all kinds of assistance that can help the success of activities in a forum, association, and so on. In line with this, Anne Ahira (2012) also stated that contributions can be made in various fields, namely thought, leadership, professionalism, finance, and others.

Material contributions can be made in the form of money, food, clothing, or other items as a means of assisting others for the common good. Contributions, which are acts taken by individuals in the form of behaviors that have a positive or negative impact on others. Contributions in the form of ideas are contributions of knowledge transmission. Contribution of professionalism is the transmission of someone's talent to others who are seen to need that talent in order to be valuable afterwards.

Based on the explanation, it can be inferred that contributions can come in many forms, including financial donations, program contributions, and contributions of ideas, thoughts, information, energy, and actions given to others in order to achieve something better and more effective. Contribution is an engagement that has an impact on an activity or program in an organization, society, and other setting.

2. Definition of E-Learning

E-learning is fundamentally a virtual type of education that can be fully or partially mixed with traditional forms of education in particular conditions (Clark & Mayer, 2016), as mentioned in Kurucova, Z. Medová, J., and Tirpakova, A. (2018). The Ministry of National Education's Education Strategic Plan Conference has e-learning implementation strategy, which is part of

enhancing quality, relevance, and competitiveness. Awada (2016) defines e-learning as "remote education" that utilizes computers, the Internet, and computer networks.

Another word, according to Abidin, et al. (2020), e-learning is online learning or web-based learning. It enables students to study via computer in regions where lectures are physically impossible, and encourages them to engage in both synchronous and non-synchronized activities. It is also Alternatives to traditional education include distance education, e-learning, and other emerging technologies in the fields of information technology and communication (ICT).

3. Types of E-learning

Hrastinski (2008) separated the types of e-learning into two types, those are asynchronous and synchronous.

Asynchronous e-learning, which is frequently enabled by e-mail and discussion boards, promotes collaboration between students and teachers, even if they are not online at the same time to participate in the learning (Hrastinski, 2008). For this reason, many people choose to enroll in asynchronous courses, which allow them to balance schoolwork with work or family responsibilities or any other commitments. This type of e-learning allows students at any time to log on and download documents or send messages to their teachers and peers (Almosa and Almubarak, 2005).

Synchronous e-learning is perceived as more sociable by both learners and teachers, and it helps them avoid frustration by allowing them to ask and answer questions immediately. It has the advantage of immediate feedback, according to Almosa & Almubarak, (2005). Synchronous sessions let e-learners feel like they are part of a group rather than an individual: more contact, especially synchronous contact, and becoming conscious of oneself as members of a community, rather than solitary individuals conversing with a computer, can help to overcome isolation.

4. WhatsApp

WhatsApp appears to be a simple, easy, and entertaining program for many individuals of all ages to use. WhatsApp has been used by a wide range of people, from elementary school students to working adults and even older people. By 2020, the number of monthly active users (MAU) of WhatsApp will have surpassed 2 billion users worldwide, including all circles (WhatsApp Inc., 2020).

WhatsApp is messaging software that can be applied across various platforms such as iOS and Android that is used by the public to communicate with each other online by sending text messages, images, video clips, making voice or video calls, and voice notes (Bere, 2012). According to Ho (2011) as mentioned in Ngaleka & Uys (2013), WhatsApp is a free program for sending and receiving instant messages, both individually and in groups. WhatsApp not only allows individuals to interact, but it also provides a group feature for people to exchange knowledge about academics, news, politics, and other topics.

WhatsApp is a highly useful instrument in the sphere of academics for exchanging information about research and academic events (Mashiah, 2021). WhatsApp group is one feature of WhatsApp that has recently gained popularity in educational settings. Generally, each student has their own WhatsApp group for their batches, classes, departments, and so forth. WhatsApp group allows participants to communicate without the necessity for unity in place or time, which means that participants can access the material posted whenever they want and can watch and comment with other group members about the information uploaded at any time (WhatsApp Inc., 2020).

5. WhatsApp Features

Useful elements in the WhatsApp program enhance teaching and learning. Using this tool, a teacher can take a more active part in the classroom (Alshammari, 2017). In addition, it encourages pupils to participate more actively in class. Following are the list of those features.

- a. Private Messaging (Chats). WhatsApp's message feature is a basic feature that every user is familiar with. Simple and trustworthy, this is the way to go. Users can communicate with their friends and family members for free.
- b. Chat Group. Chat group feature allows users to connect with their critical relationships in contacts, such as family, teammates, and others, more effectively. Users can send chats, photographs, and videos with up to 256 other individuals by organizing groups in group chats. Users can also name the group, mute it, and get receive notifications from the group.
- c. Voice notes. WhatsApp allows users to record their voice in order to respond to chats in the chat room through voice mail. Teachers can better conduct expression or speaking classes with this feature by offering pupils the opportunity to follow an example sentence, give comments, or practice.

- d. Voice and video calls. Voice and video calls features let users to communicate with their relatives with voice. Users can have a face-to-face live conversation through the video call. The most recent version of WhatsApp 2.20.133 allows them to communicate freely with up to eight members.
 - e. Documents sharing. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and PDF documents can be shared without the inconvenience of utilizing email or file-sharing programs. The maximum file size is 100 MB. With this tool, teachers will have an easier time sending materials to students or collaborating on projects.
 - f. Photos and videos. Using WhatsApp, users can send pictures and videos instantly. They have the ability to capture an important moment and send it to their contacts as quickly as possible. In this method, a teacher can encourage pupils to submit or compile their work in the simplest way possible.
 - g. WhatsApp Web. It is possible to sync WhatsApp on a PC or laptop if you don't want to use a smartphone. To get started, they can either download desktop programs or go to web.whatsapp.com. Class management and material delivery are made easier with this functionality.
6. WhatsApp Contributions as a Learning Medium

WhatsApp Groups as a learning medium can contribute to teachers and students in the learning process, including class interaction, giving and receiving learning materials, as well as the assessment. The following are some of WhatsApp Group contributions in learning writing according to previous research.

- a. WhatsApp Group not only provides students with motivation to learn, but it also allows them to practice the target language in a group chat on a regular basis without being constrained by time and classroom meetings (Kheryadi, 2018).
- b. WhatsApp Groups can increase students' interest in writing while shielding them from obstacles that can stymie their learning success, such as being frightened to make a mistake or being embarrassed to practice the target language (Kheryadi, 2018).
- c. Teachers can utilize WhatsApp to help students by building and involving them in autonomous and dependent conversation tips, as well as monitoring the process of online talks by providing appropriate feedback (Kheryadi, 2018).
- d. WhatsApp enables students to react and contribute better in learning process (Rahmawati, 2020)

- e. WhatsApp allows students and teachers to communicate every time and everywhere (Rahmawati, 2020).
- f. WhatsApp enables teacher to provide materials and also enables students to access and preview the providing materials (Rahmawati, 2020).

7. Definition of Writing

One of the English language abilities that students must learn is writing. Writing is a kind of human communication in which people use signs or symbols to communicate their thoughts and feelings (Anjani, 2021). Writing is a productive talent in the sense that it is a process of generating rather than receiving writing (Spratt, et al, 2005).

Nunan (2003) defines writing as a technique for expressing oneself and impressing others. Because the author creates items in order to express himself, the product may be said to be utilized to convey or transmit specific meanings. Furthermore, the author creates the written output in order to make an impact on the reader.

Writing is also characterized as a process and a result. In keeping with this, writing is a product that has gone through a number of procedures or earlier learning phases. There are various phases to consider when writing, including planning, drafting, editing, rewriting, and the finished work (Wallace, et al, 2004).

According to Byrnen (2003), writing is the second most common mode of communication after speaking. As a result, we recognize that writing is a unique skill in communication, particularly in the production of writing. Writing is a type of communication between two or more people that use linguistic symbols. According to Anjani (2021), there are multiple components in written communication, such as: the writer as the sender of the message; the message as the substance of the expression of thoughts; media as a tool for transmitting messages; and the reader as the message's recipient.

METHODS

1. Research Design

This research uses qualitative methods with a case study approach. Qualitative research deals with certain elements of social life in which the data is generally analyzed and explained through words rather than numbers (Michael Patton and Michael Cochran, 2002: 3). It refers to comprehending some aspects of social life via the use of words rather than figures. Furthermore, according to Zuriah (2007:82), qualitative data is qualitative in character. It is also

known as naturalistic research from the fact that it takes place in a natural environment. Furthermore, in accordance with the usage of qualitative research, the analysis strategy of this research is based on the case study, which allows the writer to study specific students in order to comprehend the case of contribution.

2. Participants

This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Luwu Timur that is located in Montolalu Street, Malili, Luwu Timur. The researchers used purposive sampling techniques to determine the participants of this study. Purposive sampling, according to Creswell (2007), is intended to learn or understand the fundamental phenomenon by actively picking individuals. The participants are selected according to the criteria and research objectives. The criteria for participants in this study are:

- a) Eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Luwu Timur in academic year 2021/2022 who have learned writing through WhatsApp Group.
- b) Students who are actively present during the learning process as evidence by their attendance list.
- c) Students who agree that they are willing to participate in this research.

Creswell (2007) stated that the number of participants in qualitative research is usually 5 to 10 people, but it can be increase if the saturation of the data is not reached. In this study, the researchers chose 8 students of class XI IPS 3 as participants.

3. Procedure of Collecting Data

Interviews, observation, and document archives are common data collecting methods used by Case Study researchers. To get the data in this research, the researchers employed interview. An interview is a data gathering technique in which a respondent is selected and interviewed. It is also a direct face-to-face endeavor to acquire trustworthy and valid measures from one or more respondents in the form of verbal responses. The researchers used semi-structured interview as research instrument, which means the researchers used a set of questions which are developed to gain the specific information.

4. Data Analysis

In processing the interview data, researchers used thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is one method of analyzing data with the goal of uncovering patterns or finding themes in data gathered by researchers. In this case, the

researchers started by understanding the interview data that have been noted and recorded, compiling the code (coding), then looking for the themes to discussed in the findings.

FINDINGS

The findings show the result of the interview to answer the research questions. In this research, researchers tried to know the contributions of WhatsApp Group as English writing medium in accordance with the experiences of 11 IPS 3 students at SMA Negeri 1 Luwu Timur who have been used WhatsApp group as a medium to learn English writing. The researchers found six themes, namely feedback, promote individual learning, class interactions, materials, assessment, and contentment. Thus, the researchers describe the six themes as the results of the research conducted through interviews.

1. Feedback. Students say that teachers are always active in answering their questions about the materials. This is evidenced by the results of interviews with students below.

(Student 1, 14/02/2022/No. 5)

...I used to ask if there was anything that I did not understand, and the teacher also responded to my questions.

2. Promote independent learning. In this study, the teacher utilized the WhatsApp group to send English writing materials in the form of learning video links that can be accessed and learned by students, which makes students learn independently.

(Student 5, 16/02/2022/No. 3)

...WhatsApp helped me in learning writing because the links of the learning materials were shared through WhatsApp group.

3. Classroom interaction. In this study, the students said that both students and teacher are active during the class which makes the interaction between teachers and students using WhatsApp groups went well. This is evidenced by the results of the following interview.

Extract 1

(Student S3, 14/02/2022/No. 5)

...WhatsApp group supports good communication between teacher and students. Although we do not meet face-to-face, we can still communicate by asking something in the group. Our teacher also answers our questions and provides information in the group.

4. Materials. In this study, teacher provided learning materials by sending video links through WhatsApp group. Some students say that WhatsApp groups help them in receiving learning materials easily and it helps them in learning writing.

(Student 2, 14/02/2022/No. 3 & 4)

...Yes, I personally find it so easy to access the material.

...WhatsApp group helped me in learning writing by watching the learning videos; I learned simple present tense, past tense, and recount text.

5. Assessment. In this study, the assessments that teacher gave to students were less transparent.

(Student 7, 18/02/2022/No. 6)

...The teacher did not specifically tell me how much I gained from the task I did, so I did not know whether my writing tasks are good or still lacking, and whether my writing ability improved or not.

6. Contentment. In this theme, the researchers referred the contentment to students' and teacher's feeling about teaching and learning activities using WhatsApp group as a medium.

(Student 5, 16/02/2022/No. 1)

...Learning to write using WhatsApp is fun because it is simple to use and we can get material in the video files that are more varied to me.

DISCUSSIONS

The discussion of the research detects the given interview, which the researchers collected the data classify the conclusion of the answer of the interview. This study found about the contributions of WhatsApp group as a medium to learn English writing at the eleventh-grade students in SMA Negeri 1 Luwu Timur.

Based on the results of research on the contribution of WhatsApp group as a medium for learning English writing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers stated that WhatsApp's first contribution is a fun learning medium. Students enjoy learning to use WhatsApp group and feel happy to learn using WhatsApp group because the material sent in video form which attracts students' interest in learning. WhatsApp is also an application that is already familiar to students and teacher, where students state that this application is simple and easy to operate. This is in line with research conducted by Aprilia Prabawati (2021) who also found that WhatsApp is an interesting, fun, and relaxing learning medium.

Second, WhatsApp group also make it easier for students to receive and access learning materials, which they say that this also contributes to helping them during the learning process of writing. The video links for learning materials sent by the teacher via WhatsApp groups are easily accessible to students, so from these learning videos students learn about grammar such as the use of simple present tense and simple past tense.

Third, WhatsApp group promotes individual learning. The teacher sends the material then asks the student to understand the material within minutes, and then allows them to ask questions if something is poorly understood. This teacher's instruction certainly makes some students initiative to learn independently by listening to the teacher's explanation in the video shared. This self-study allows students to learn according to their respective ways, so it can also make it easier for them to achieve their learning goals.

Fourth, WhatsApp group contributes to keeping students active during the writing learning process and establish good communication with teachers. Through WhatsApp groups the teacher gives students the opportunity to ask questions about material that is not understood, and opens a quiz or question and answer session with students, which makes students enthusiastic and active in learning activities because of bonus points that students will get if they succeed in answering the questions correctly. With a question-and-answer session that involving students and teachers, communication or reciprocal relationships can be established between teachers and students, so that the roles of teachers and students become balanced. This balanced interaction supports the establishment of good communication between teachers and students.

Fifth, WhatsApp is an online learning media that is more efficient than other media such as Google Classroom and Zoom. WhatsApp is more efficient in internet data usage compared to other applications that require us to interact via video conferencing which obviously consumes a lot of internet data.

Finally, WhatsApp group also contribute to providing feedback from teachers to students. Through the WhatsApp group students can ask the teacher and the teacher responds to the question. However, there is no feedback from the teacher on student assignments so it is quite difficult to know whether students' abilities have improved or not because the scores of their assignments are not specifically announced.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussion of the previous chapter, the researchers conclude that WhatsApp group as learning medium has some contributions on the students learning process regarding writing. Eight participants who are eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Luwu Timur admitted that WhatsApp group contributes as a pleasant learning medium with various features that can support them in learning writing. Besides, WhatsApp group contributes to keep students active during learning process by question-and-answer activities which also contributes to build a good communication between students and teacher. WhatsApp group also help students to get the learning material easily, promote individual learning, and help students in learning English writing via online by access and listen to the learning video that sent to the WhatsApp group.

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