# Whatsapp Messenger as a Mobile Media to Learn Writing for EFL Students

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**Abstract**

*The objective of this research is to find out the use of Whatsapp Messenger as a mobile media to learn writing in EFL classes.Several researchers have attempted to prove applicability of mobile learning as modern ways of teaching and learning (Naismith, 2004:115). Moreover, applying portable technologies have been demanded by most of the modern learners who oftentimes are forced to study anywhere, and anytime, for example, at work, in the bus or at weekends (Evans, 2008:115).The research was motivated by the students' difficulties in writing. The sample of this research was three classes of first grade students of English Department of Unswagati. The instrument of this research was questionnaire sheet. Data from questionnaire sheet was analyzed based on the frequency students' answers and then was calculated and interpreted into percentages. The result shows WhatsApp Messenger attracts the students interest and also the students have positive responses towards the using ofWhatsAppMessenger. In applying WhatsApp group, the writer concluded that, learning using WhatsApp group has effective to develop their creativity in writing skill. On the other hand, the result from the questionnaire sheet indicated that almost of students is active in learning to writing recount text. Students can learn out of the classroom. Beside WhatsApp can be used privately, it can be used for students' education. The students can use their gadget positively for their ability in learning English. The students can improve their knowledge in learning ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies).*
*Keyword: WhatsApp Messenger,EFL writing, Instructional Media, ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies).*

**Abstrak**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apa aplikasi pengajaran dan pembelajaran (Naismith, 2004: 115). Selain itu, menerapkan teknologi portabel telah dituntut oleh sebagian besar pelajar modern yang seringkali dipaksa untuk belajar di mana saja, dan kapan saja, misalnya, di tempat kerja, di bus atau di akhir pekan (Evans, 2008: 115). Penelitian ini dimotivasi oleh kesulitan siswa dalam menulis. Sampel penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas pertama dari Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Unswagati. Instrumen penelitian ini adalah lembar kuesioner. Data dari lembar kuesioner dianalisis berdasarkan frekuensi jawaban siswa dan kemudian dihitung dan diinterpretasikan ke dalam persentase. Hasilnya menunjukkan WhatsApp Messenger menarik minat siswa dan juga para siswa memiliki tanggapan positif terhadap penggunaan WhatsAppMessenger. Dalam menerapkan grup WhatsApp, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa, belajar menggunakan grup WhatsApp telah efektif untuk mengembangkan

kreativitas mereka dalam keterampilan menulis. Di sisi lain, hasil dari lembar kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa hampir siswa aktif dalam belajar menulis teks recount. Siswa dapat belajar di luar kelas. Selain WhatsApp dapat digunakan secara pribadi, itu dapat digunakan untuk pendidikan siswa. Para siswa dapat menggunakan gadget mereka secara positif untuk kemampuan mereka dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Para siswa dapat meningkatkan pengetahuan mereka dalam mempelajari TIK (Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi).

**Kata Kunci:** *WhatsApp Messenger, EFL writing, Media Instruksional, TIK (Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi).*

## A.    Introduction

In teaching and learning process, teacher needs strategy or media to make the lesson easier. Learning strategies are necessary in supporting the realization of the whole competence.

Technology has a positive effect on both of the teacher and the learner. Lam and Lawrence (2002) claim that technology provides learners with regulation of their own learning process and easy access to information the teacher may not be able to provide. The wireless portable devices such as IPods, MP3 players, smart phones (Like Blackberry, iPhone), and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) could provide opportunities to respond to the need of this generation. Evans (2008) believes that a distinguishable feature of mobile learning or M-learning is the potential to study when travelling on transport.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) affects greatly in the education world. The use of ICT in education, including language teaching and learning is a positive response to the development of the information and communication technology in the third millennium (Hartoyo, 2009). There has been new trend in the ICT world which is called the social network. Social network has been defined by many and generally viewed as referring to networked tools that allow people to meet, interact and share ideas, artifacts and interest with each other (Anderson. 2010). This social network has opened up new opportunities of interaction and collaboration between teachers and learners.

The use of social network has become a popular in everyday communication. It is even used for collaborative learning especially in language learning. Social network applications such as facebook, twitter, LinkedIn and many others alike have been phenomenally popular in the communication world (Riyanto, 2013). The most recent

popular social network is WhatsApp application. WhatsApp Messenger users can send each other images, video, and audio media messages (Wikipedia. 2013). WhatsApp allows its users to use their Internet connection to send messages to each other. WhatsApp is like a chat program for mobile phones. Smart phones are becoming increasingly popular and WhatsApp is available for almost all Smartphone.

## B. LITERATURE FIELDS

### WhatsApp Messenger in Classroom

Whatsapp is a globally popular instant messaging application for Smartphone. Whatsapp, founded in the year 2009, developed by former Yahoo employees Brian Acton and Jan Koum under the tag line "Simple, Personal, Real time messaging," is a mobile messaging app which facilitates the individuals to sharing messages without any cost to pay for SMS (Wikipedia, 2015).

In the communication study, Whatsapp is part of new media (new media). Understanding new media is a medium of communication, which includes material products as well as cultural information systems of mass distribution that is intended for a wide audience and run based on modern marketing system. (Martin Lister, 2009 in Ri'aeni, 2015)

Whatsapp messenger works with internet connectivity and assists its users to keep on in touch with friends, teachers and relatives in the contact list. It helps users to create groups, send unlimited message, sharing images, video and audio messages, exchanging ideas, thoughts and emotions to any other user. Today Whatsapp is the very popular instant messenger service used by individuals. The WhatsApp supported on most iPhone, Android, BlackBerry windows smart phone and Nokia (Patel, 2014).

WhatsApp is a Smartphone application that operates on nearly all current types of devices and operating systems. The application has been on the market since 2010; the declared purpose of the developers was to replace the existing SMS platform for a system that is free of charge in an ad-free environment. As a means of sending and receiving messages to and from individuals or groups, WhatsApp includes a variety of functions, such as text messages, attached images, audio files, video files, and links to web addresses (Cohavi, 2013:218).

Several researchers have attempted to prove applicability of mobile learning as

modern ways of teaching and learning (Naismith, 2004:115). Moreover, applying portable technologies have been demanded by most of the modern learners who oftentimes are forced to study anywhere, and anytime, for example, at work, in the bus or at weekends (Evans, 2008:115).

Klopfer, Squire, and Jenkins (2002:199) list the following advantages of using mobile devices in education, such as portability, social interactivity, connectivity, and individuality. On the other hand, many researcher, like Kukulska-Hulme and Traxler (2005:199) talk about the disadvantages of the mobile services such as small screen and limited data storage, and that these devices are not designed originally for educational purposes. But the researcher believes that the occasional use of mobile phones for learning English will give its fruit and benefit to the students. Besides, Muhammed (2014:199) investigated the impact of mobile phones on the learners of English as a foreign language, he states that 99% of the participants in his study considered learning English language through the mobile phones so effective.

Meanwhile, previous studies examined different Instant Messaging (IM) service. One study demonstrated how high school students, who received academic support in math via IM service, were able to ask questions during the learning process after school hours. It became clear that a personal connection with the teacher was preferable to the anonymous forum; the teacher came to know the students and could help in a relevant and individually tailored manner (Hrastinski, Edman, Anderson, Kawnine, & Soames, 2014:218). Another study, of university students, communicating during and after the lessons via internal SMS system that the university developed, found that students tend to ask more question and participate via IM system (Scornavacca, Huff, & Marshall, 2009:218).

An examination of the use of WhatsApp in a South African university class registered positive feedback from students who claimed that it was an easier way to communicate with their teachers and the rest of the class, that it was productive of fruitful discourse on relevant issues in an informal environment where students could learn intimately and authentically, and that it was also fun (Bere, 2013:219).

Overall, WhatsApp has become a shared platform that enhances accessibility, encourages cooperation, and intensifies motivation to take an active part in academic assignments (Bere & Chipunza, 2013:219).

Nowadays, WhatsApp as a relatively new tool in education, it has similar positive characteristics as previous technological tools that are implemented, but it seems that WhatsApp has some up-to-date features that encourage teacher and students to use it in order to enhance understanding, this research is conducted among high school teachers, while most the studies mentioned above were conducted among college and university students. Although the characteristics of the different platform and of WhatsApp as a learning tool serve different ages, our research is revealing a unique phenomenon in EFL Classes.

In this research, there are some steps as the procedures of the use of Whatsapp Messenger in class. The lecturer of writing subject gave instruction to the students to make a whatsapp group. Then the lecturer sent the material about writing text in group discussion by using WhatsApp Messenger, then the students discussed together with their group. The lecturer gave the assignment of writing. The students took picture of their writing, then they sent it to the the group discussion on WhatsApp. The lecturer reviewed the students writing and gave score to the students on WhatsApp.

## C. Research Method

This research uses survey method to know the responses of students in using Whatsapp Messenger in learning to write. The sample of this research is three class of student of class at Unswagati English Department, that is 22 students. The research method used is survey method. "Surveys are a method of research using questionnaires as an instrument of data collection. The goal is to obtain information about the number of respondents who are considered to represent a particular population "(Kriyantono, 2008, p.59 in Ardian, 2013).

In survey research, information was collected from respondents by using questionnaires. Generally, the definition of the survey is limited to studies whose data are collected from samples of the population to represent the entire population. Thus the survey study was "a study that sampled from one population and used the questionnaire as a primary data collection tool" (Singarimbun, 2002, p.3 in Ardian, 2013). In this case, the unit of analysis in the survey study is individual. Survey research can be used for descriptive purposes. Descriptive research is intended for careful measurement of

certain social phenomena. (Singarimbun, 2002). The survey method was chosen as a way to map out students' views on the use of whatsapp applications as learning media.

## D.     Comprehension and Result

**The Students' Responses of Using WhatsApp Messenger to Learn Writing in EFL Classes**

This research is purposed to find out the student's responses of Using WhatsApp Messenger to Learn Writing. Based on the result of questionnaire sheet, it can be seen that almost the students have positive responses of using WhatsApp Messenger in learning writing in the classroom.

**Table 1**

**Data Analysis of Questionnaire**

(*Adopted from Louis Cohen:2007*)

| No. | Questions | Answer | | Percentage (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 1. | Does WhatsApp make you difficult to learn? | 1 | 21 | 4,5 | 95,5 |
| 2. | Does WhatsApp make you enthusiastic to learn? | 17 | 5 | 77 | 23 |
| 3. | Is WhatsApp a pleasant media in learning writing? | 21 | 1 | 95,5 | 4,5 |
| 4. | Are you getting bored in learning process? | 4 | 18 | 18 | 82 |
| 5. | Do you like to participate in learning writing using WhatsApp? | 20 | 2 | 91 | 9,0 |
| 6. | Is WhatsApp a good in teaching learning process? | 16 | 6 | 73 | 27 |
| 7. | Does WhatsApp make you active during teaching learning process? | 16 | 6 | 72 | 28 |
| 8. | Does WhatsApp help you to write a text? | 12 | 10 | 54 | 46 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. | Does WhatsApp give an opportunity to study in a group or pairs? | 21 | 1 | 95,5 | 4,5 |
| 10. | Does WhatsApp help you to improve Learning Achievement? | 13 | 9 | 59 | 41 |

Based on the result from percentage of questionnaire above, almost of the students stated that WhatsApp Messenger is easy to learn. The students felt enthusiastic to learn and could help the students to submit the achievements. It is a pleasant and good media in teaching learning process, because that was their first experience to use it, especially in learning process in the classroom. It wasn't a boring media in teaching learning process. The students like to participated in the WhatsApp Messenger because the students can have some opportunities to study in pair or individually and it can improve students' achievement in writing.

In applying WhatsApp group, the writer concluded that, learning using WhatsApp group has effective to develop their creativity in writing skill. On the other hand, the result from the questionnaire sheet indicated that almost of students is active in learning to writing recount text. Students can learn out of the classroom. Beside WhatsApp can be used privately, it can be used for students' education. The students can use their gadget positively for their ability in learning English. The students can improve their knowledge in learning ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies).

## E. Conclusion

The students have positive responses towards using WhatsApp Messenger in teaching writing in the classroom. Using WhatsApp Messenger is easy to learn. It makes the students enthusiasm to learn and could help them to write good text. It is a pleasant and good media in teaching learning process. It is not a boring media. The students like to participate in the WhatsApp Messenger because they can have opportunity to study in pair or individually and it can improve their achievement in writing.

### F. Suggestion

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to tell some suggestions such as: First, using WhatsApp Messenger is good media in teaching writing, besides that WhatsApp Messenger can be used not only in the classroom but also in out of classroom. Then, using WhatsApp Messenger gives chance to the students in working in pairs or individually and giving evaluation to each other. Next, using WhatsApp Messenger is also facilitated the teacher to share the materials and also make the students easy to get some information from the teacher. After that, using WhatsApp Messenger is also facilitated the teacher to give the assignment and also for collected the assignment.

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