

TEACHER PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF WHATSAPP IN TEACHING ENGLISH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to discover teachers' perceptions of the use of WhatsApp in teaching English. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research. The subject of this research was the English teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Poso Pesisir. An interview was used to collect the data. In the qualitative method, the data was analyzed using data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The result shows that the teachers perceived the use of WhatsApp are able to facilitate the learning process during COVID-19 Pandemic, especially for teaching English. Teachers used it as a facilitation tool for managing students' tasks, posting material related to teaching English, organizing WhatsApp, and accommodating students' interaction. In addition, teachers can manage large classes efficiently because technology takes it as an alternative method for teaching during the pandemic. The teacher can access the students' responses anytime in any place, and also, teachers can give feedback directly. WhatsApp provides the chance to learn not only at school but also at home or in any place. However, some factors limit the use of WhatsApp, such as highly consumed data plan, lack of familiarity with the students in adoption of WhatsApp, and submitting assignments behind schedule. Teachers stated that using WhatsApp was very helpful for conducting their virtual classroom.

Keywords: WhatsApp; Teachers' Perception; Technology

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages used as a means of communication in the international relationship and widely used in all branches of knowledge. Brown (2001: 118), furthermore, states that English is not frequently learned as a tool for understanding and teaching US or British cultural values. English, however, has become a tool for international communication in transportation, commerce, banking, tourism, technology, diplomacy, and scientific research. Based on the fact, it is appropriate that English is included in the local content of school-based curriculum in elementary school. Therefore, it is necessary to think system of teaching and learning of English to young learners (secondary school) to gain an optimal result. The teaching and learning of English in elementary school provides the students' English language competencies in the golden age –the age that children can learn anything easily.

Based on the interview with the English teacher in SMPN 3 Poso Pesisir, it showed that the students still had some problems in studying English, especially in speaking. Most of the students were not able to express their feeling, ideas, and opinions in speaking English. They still used their mother tongue or Indonesian language to communicate even though the teacher asked them to speak in English in teaching and learning process. It was because they had lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, less self-confidence, confused with grammar and also they felt afraid if they made mistake in pronouncing the words.

This application (WhatsApp) is ultimately expected to become a learning media that can increase both students' interest and learning outcomes in English Speaking and learning activities. In addition with this application students directed to better utilize their gadgets than they have not only to communicate but also for the education realm.

Pandemic is a global epidemic. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a pandemic is declared when new diseases spread throughout the world beyond the limit. The term pandemic is interpreted as an outbreak that is contagious everywhere covering a wide geographic area. On 31 December 2019, a pneumonia of unknown cause was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) country office in China. This outbreak soon has been recognized as a Public Health Emergency of International concern by WHO on 30 January, 2020. WHO analyzed data, provide advice and manage expert networks to identify the type of virus which resulted the deaths in Wuhan. On 11 February 2020, WHO announced a name of the new coronavirus disease: COVID-19. Many countries have confirmed this corona virus infected their people such as Asian countries like South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and so on, European countries, for instance England, Spain, Germany and many more. America as super power country has also been affected by this outbreak. This Coronavirus has caused many changes to people lives. It hit most aspects of life; economy and commerce, health, tourism, education and many more.

In early March, the first two COVID-19 cases were announced in Indonesia, the country was in panic. In consideration to that, Indonesian governments took several strategies in order to reduce the effect of COVID-19 for examples social distancing and self-quarantine or stay at home, this action

are taken by public health official in order to stop or slow down the spread COVID-19. Indonesian Education and Culture Minister, Mr. Nadiem Anwar Makarim has issued Minister circular letter Number 302/E.E2/KR/2020. It requested students to study from home (SFH), therefore, teaching and learning process at schools and universities are close and replacing them with online learning to break the chain of transmission.

In some regions, elementary schools have included English as among the alternatives local content of their school curriculum, school-based curriculum. The English teachers in elementary school. Therefore, are not only to teach English to young learners (as one of the lessons) but also to become material designers. In accordance with this fact, the English teachers in elementary school need theoretical bases on teaching-learning English to young learners. Having theories on teaching-learning English to young learners, they will be able to design materials, to teach well, and to suggest what approaches, methods, and techniques to be used.

The opinions of experts suggest the use of media in the learning process can attract interest and motivate student learning (Heinich, 1996; Buchanan, 2004; Normore, 2006). According to Heinich (1996) in his book "Instructional Technology and Media for Learning" states that the media is a communication channel tool. Learning media can be said as a messenger technology used for learning purposes.

Buchanan (2004) mentions online learning gives both teachers and students new opportunities to be involved in the learning process. Virtual chat, or synchronous, provides additional media for communication that is attractive to active and global social learners, abstract students. Teachers can increase student motivation in learning by giving criticism and praise comments to students through chat groups that have been made and by a predetermined agenda.

Ajid (2018) sees that students cannot be separated by their cellphones. They do a lot of things on their cellphones like sending text, audio messages, uploading and uploading pictures and videos or just browsing. Collaborative learning uses a collaborative tool by combining student collaboration and the use of mobile applications such as WhatsApp, which can optimize cellphone functions for student learning processes to which greatly help teachers in teaching. It can be said that the integration of WhatsApp into their education will be easy, enjoyable and useful. Students will get positive intentions in learning related to the use of WhatsApp in their learning process. And Mwakapina (2016) also concluded that the use of the WhatsApp Social Networking Tool (WSNT) in the Second English Language learning class (L2) would make the class more interactive. Because teaching large classes, interactively has always been the biggest challenge for a language teacher in many developing countries.

METHOD

To answer the research question, the researcher applied a qualitative method in her research. Fitrah and Luthfiyah (2017:44) state that qualitative research is a research procedure that

uses descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people or actors that can be observed. Furthermore, Walidin (2015:76) states that qualitative research is research that aims to gain a deep understanding of human and social problems, not describing the surface part of reality as quantitative research with positivisme.

According to Fitrah and Luthfiyah (2017:36), descriptive research is research that aims to describe existing phenomena, wick occur now and in the past. This study does not make manipulations or changes to the independent variables but illustrates a condition based on facts. Furthermore, Mulyadi (2011:10) stated that descriptive research is discusion for the exploration and clarification of independent variables on the dependent variable, by describing several indicators relating to the problem and the unit discussed.

This researcher used case study because this research is focused on very special interest, the research look for the detail of interaction with its contexts. In this research, the special interest is the activities if teaching English by using WhatsApp application. The researcher focused to explore the process the way teacher teaching English by using WhatsApp especially in the time of COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of teachers that being studied.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The teacher responses if the interview are the result of this study. There are 11 question of the interview regarding to the use of WhatsApp in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic which is addressed to three English Teacher in SMP Negeri 3 Poso Pesisir. The interviewer is the researcher is the researcher herself.

The question of interview gain deep information of the teachers' perception on the use of WhatsApp in teaching English. It presented the teachers' opinion based on their experience in teaching English, teaching tehcniques, the strenghts and weakness and the effectiveness on the use of WhatsApp. Furthermore, the challenges faced by the teacher in using WhatsApp are presented in order to find out the teachers' perception on the use of WhatsApp in the time of COVID-19 pandemic.

The data of this research are the interview result which is analyzed qualitatively based on the teacher' opinion. The teacher are SR, AT and NKNP The following points are the interview details.

1. Teaching English Using Online Platforms

The use of the online platform method not only provides convenience but also makes English teachers difficult in teaching. The convenience that can be obtained is being able to access the internet anytime and anywhere. However, the difficulty faced is the absence of direct face-to-face in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, English subjects must teach how to pronounce and write correctly. So that the learning process does not run as a whole. Meanwhile, another teacher said that using online platform very helpful in teaching learning English. In this case, the teacher had different opinion about using online platform in teaching learning.

2. The Positive Impact in Online Learning

The positive impact felt by teachers after teaching online, apart from being able to keep their distance during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers also feel more enjoyed when teaching.

3. The Learning can be Implemented Continue or Not?

The teacher believes that online learning depends on the situation. Teachers prefer face-to-face learning can be carried out again.

4. Something that the Teacher can Prepare before Online Class

The things that are done when learning online are the same as when doing face-to-face learning

5. How Students Submit their Homework

The teacher accepts assignments for students who do not have internet access to send assignments to school because teachers still go to school. so, the students can collect the assignments in school. But the health protocol is still being carried out.

6. Strength and Weakness Teaching English by Using WhatsApp

The advantage of this learning method is that teachers and students can keep their distance because they are still in a pandemic. But the drawback is that students who do not have smartphones have to visit their friends who have smartphones to do their assignments. So the appeal to keep a distance is not carried out thoroughly.

7. The Similarities and Differences Experience when Teaching Classroom

The similarity of using this method, the teacher continues to teach according to the teaching material and the difference is that the teacher cannot see directly how the students' expressions and responses are.

8. Challenge in Teaching English Through WhatsApp

The challenges faced by teachers in teaching are usually when students do not do assignments, students who cannot access the internet, and some students who intentionally do not send assignments and forget to fill in the absences.

9. The Teachers Feelings when Explain Material in WhatsApp

When explaining material during online classes it's easier because you don't need a high tone of voice to explain.

10. Another Application in Online Learning Process

In conducting online learning, the school has used the zoom application, but due to too large space storage constraints, it was decided to use the WhatsApp application.

11. The Difficulties when Applying WhatsApp in Teaching Online Learning

Obstacles that make it difficult for teachers are the lack of access for students to take lessons, such as the absence of smartphones and limited internet quota

12. Students Respond when the Teacher Teaching Via WhatsApp

Student responses were varied. From students who enthusiastically answered to those who did not respond at all. But teachers always try to give their best in teaching.

DISCUSSION

In findings of research, the researcher have collected the data from the interview, then process and show in findings. In this section, the researcher tries to explain advantages and disadvantages to relate the findings and the theories for the use of WhatsApp in teaching English.

From the interview, the researcher found that the English teachers used WhatsApp for teaching English as the main platform for communication with the students. Examining the first question based on the teachers' perception, the researcher found that the teachers were positively perceived the use of WhatsApp with various limitation. AT as the English teacher claimed that

WhatsApp was effective to conduct online learning in virtual online class if all of the students can participate through WhatsApp. It is similar to the data findings of Hamad, M. M. (2017). Using WhatsApp to Enhance Students' Learning of English, however there are some students who have limited access to smartphone and do not have suitable data plan for taking a part in online discussion.

WhatsApp is actually designed to facilitate the interaction of teachers with students' cyberspace. WhatsApp are time-saving. Teachers and students can accessed it through their own smartphone without any space and time constraint. It is similar with the data findings from Kuniawan (2013) he states through WhatsApp teacher can conduct the class virtually from anywhere and anytime. Besides, this current findings is in line with the research conducted by Fauziati and Endang (2019) with the result showing WhatsApp can be accessed easily, students can submit their assignment anywhere via handphone. In addition the teacher can upload their materials that were used in the WhatsApp anywhere. Moreover, WhatsApp introduces teachers and students to a higher education system where technology plays a major role. So it can be inferred the use of technological tools in delivering material will help to improve teachers' ability in using technology in teaching and learning process. This statement was proved by Setyawan (2014) who explained that a careful arrangement of content, pedagogy, and technology will hopefully help primary English teachers to manage their technologically literate classroom and in so doing support their 21st century students to critically think as well as to connect, communicate, and collaborate with each other.

The second question is "What are the challenges faced by the teachers' in using WhatsApp especially in the time of COVID-19 pandemic?". This question can be answered based on the interview result. The researcher found that there was some challenges that had to be faced by the teachers. First, the difficulties that the teachers found is some of the students send their assignment at the wrong place. It is similar to the data findings of Azhar & Iqbal (2018), the study shows that teachers highlighted some of the major issues that the students have faced difficulties in adoption of WhatsApp due to lack of familiarity. Since WhatsApp was new for them, the teacher needs to arrange the students to post their assignment in the right place through the Whatsapp message.

The second challenge is to keep students online during teaching and learning process. Some students can not attend online learning through WhatsApp because they having a limit internet quota. This findings align with a study conducted by Abidin and Saputro (2020), poor internet connection made students difficult to access WhatsApp. The limited internet data packages were also an obstacle to the implementation of online learning. Students who do not have smartphones or a data plan for attending online discussion sessions may caused ineffective on the use of WhatsApp. Teachers use low-data consuming learning application due to not all students can afford for high-speed internet data package even some students need to come at school and bring their assignment to the teacher if students can not present their selves in online learning. Finally, it seems some students have lack of motivations in learning because they do not interact directly with their lecturers

who can motivate them, guide them and provide clearer instructions like in face to face conventional classroom.

Since WhatsApp needs an internet connection and well conditioned smartphone to operate the app or computer with minimum specifications of multitasking device on supporting the flow of the learning activity, this also becomes challenge in running online classroom. Dealing with technology has not been easier for some teachers. It is difficult to explore something new which is not familiar before. WhatsApp itself has a lot of beneficial features, however teachers need to explore all the features and learn how to operate first before it is introduced to students. If a student does unable to access to computer, smartphone devices, WhatsApp and also the Internet, they unable to use the tool interface.

CONCLUSION

Teacher perceived the use of WhatsApp are able to facilitate the learning process during COVID-19 Pandemic especially for teaching English, the use of this application is very helpful. However, there are three different perception towards the effectiveness on the use of WhatsApp. The teacher states WhatsApp is good but some of the students cannot attend their virtual online class and less understand about material being taught. Furthermore, third of the teacher faced some challenges related to the internet connection and phone because some of the student doesn't have smartphone or internet connection. In addition, there are students who have limited access to smartphone. Besides, there are also students who do not have a suitable data plan for taking part in online discussion and some student even submit their assignment late beyond expected time.

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