

## Using WhatsApp to Increase Students' Ability in English: Teacher's Creativity

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### Abstract

*During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary for every educational institution to carry out online learning at home. To increase student achievement, the creativity of teachers in the online learning process is needed, especially in the use of the WhatsApp application. Teacher creativity is the competence possessed by teachers in teaching not only mastering the material, but a teacher must also be able to be innovative, creative and combine in the use of media, methods, strategies and a comfortable and unsaturated learning atmosphere. The purpose of this study is to find out how teacher's creativity in using WhatsApp to increase students' ability in English and to know the inhibiting and supporting factors for teacher's creativity to increase students' Ability in English at grade 8-1 of MTs Parmiyatu Wassa'adah. The place of this research is at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta Parmiyatu Wassa'adah. The data collected by the researcher are information that is in line and connected with the formulation of the research problem. There are two sources of data obtained, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. As for the details of the results of the study 1) the authors found that teachers in the field of English studies tried to be as creative as possible in every subject matter taught to improve students' English skills, this was proven by the use of all the features on the WhatsApp application. The features used are Voice notes, Audio/video calls, Text message, WhatsApp status, striker, Gif, photo and video. Each application used is adjusted to the needs of the subject matter. 2) The inhibiting faced by teachers in the field of English studies during learning using the WhatsApp application were caused by two factors, namely internal factors and external factors. 3) Supporting factors to overcome the barriers to creativity of English teachers in using WhatsApp through research, the authors found several supporting factors including providing sanctions, using audio features, video calls and documents, using WhatsApp features, registering students to get free quotas, tolerance, and establish communication with the families of students*

**Keywords:** teacher's creativity; WhatsApp, students, ability.

## INTRODUCTION

English is a foreign language that is taught in Indonesia and also as a compulsory subject in tertiary institutions, or as a subject in elementary and secondary schools with the aim that writing, reading, and speaking skills in English well can be possessed by all generations (Daulay, 2021). At this time English is not only taught in formal educational institutions, but is also often found in non-formal educational institutions such as private, tutoring and so on. Learning English is very important for those of us who live in this millennial era, because English has been used in various countries and in various sectors. So that we can communicate with other people and understand other languages from the objects we know. In addition, by learning a foreign language we can understand the intentions of others when communicating with us to avoid misunderstandings. Then, by learning

English, we can follow and master the developments of the times that currently use English. In this process, learners must master the four basic language skills, speaking, writing, listening and writing.

Based on a circular issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 36962 / MPK.A / HK / 2020 related to Online Learning in order to prevent the spread of Corona Virus Diseases (COVID-19). With the implementation of the above policy, the education sector has an impact where learning process activities are usually carried out in the classroom face-to-face and directly between teachers and students, now turning into online learning using electronic media where teachers and students interact in the learning process. This learning is from their homes so that the learning process can be through well during this covid-19 pandemic (Daulay, 2021). Online learning at home can be used via gadgets or laptops through several portals and online learning applications. The one of the most application which is used by teachers is using of WhatsApp in teaching learning process. based on the observation in the school, it can be found many teachers utilize WhatsApp as their media in assisting them during teaching and learning process. Barhoumi (2020) defines that WhatsApp as a good online learning application when used in an integrated strategy so that learning activities through WhatsApp bring benefits to student achievement of WhatsApp-based learning. But besides that, there are also problems if users can't use WhatsApp optimally, as explained by Wiji Lestari (2021) in his research that he found ineffectiveness in using WhatsApp media, including because the distance learning process of students became less focused in learning at home. Based on the problems above, teacher in the field of English studies must try to be as creative as possible in using WhatsApp media so that learning at home is more memorable, interesting, and easy to understand, this is in order to improve students' English language skills.

### **Teacher's Creativity**

The word "creativity" is basically taken from the word creative which means to make, create, design, write or create something new. According to Fredricka K Reisman (2015) creativity is a skill that assumes personal motivation and good luck, where through creativity can be found several important points, namely creativity must see, observe and analyze things in different ways, creativity makes connections between experiences or observed phenomena, creativity finds hidden patterns from the experience to develop those patterns, and creativity relies on previously accepted rules.

Creativity can define as an energy, a process, a product and a person. Creativity is defined as an energy or strength that exists within a person. This power can encourage someone to do something in many ways in order to produce the best. Creativity is defined as a process, where in creativity many stages are carried out including being able to process information, act and create something new. Creativity is also defined as a product, namely the result of one's creativity can be judged by others. Creativity is a person. In the sense of person, it means that creativity is seen from individuals who have intelligence both in terms of attitudes, habits and actions in creating something new (Sudarma, 2013). There needs to be creativity in every individual, especially teachers, where teachers will educate their students so that they can become creative individuals as well. Teachers should also be aware that technology has changed learning methods, from teacher-centered to

student-centered. Therefore, as facilitators of student learning, teachers should support students in gathering information and using technology wisely to practice their language outside the classroom, for example; via mobile devices, where the WhatsApp application is also operated via mobile devices or handphone (Fithriani et al., 2019). A creative teacher is someone who is professional, who actively imitates their own creative involvement in the classroom and tries to involve it in their students.

Based on the above understanding, it can be concluded that teacher's creativity is the competence possessed by teacher in teaching not only in mastering the material, but teacher must also be able to be innovative, be creative and make combinations in the use of media, methods, strategies and a comfortable, unsaturated learning atmosphere and make it easier to understand lessons.

### **WhatsApp**

The meaning of the word "WhatsApp" comes from the English phrase "What's up?" which means "What's new?". WhatsApp is a communication application created by Jan Koum who is from Ukraine and Brian Acton who is a partner of Yahoo in 2009. At the beginning of the creation of WhatsApp there were only a few users and the application often crashed which made this very difficult for Jan Koum. However, with Apple's push notifications, the launch of WhatsApp became an increasing success. In addition, the app offers a unique type of instant messaging that allows users to log in with their phone number. For this reason, applications are growing exponentially. In February 2014, Koum sold WhatsApp to Facebook for \$19 million. WhatsApp is an instant messaging application that provides users, using an Internet connection, with access to exchange images, videos, and audio, or text messages (Awada, 2016). Ennoch Sindang in Jumiatmoko (2016) define that WhatsApp is an internet-based application that makes it easy for users to share various kinds of content according to its supporting features and can also be used to communicate with the help of internet services.

Barhoumi (2020) also define WhatsApp as a good online learning application when used in an integrated strategy so that learning activities through WhatsApp bring benefits to student achievement in WhatsApp-based learning. While Bouhnik and Deshen (2014) define that WhatsApp as a smartphone application that is used to send messages instantly. New the most important benefit of the WhatsApp application is its ability to improve communication to a group of people or groups. WhatsApp communication improves interaction between teachers and high school students. Bouhnik and Deshen (2014) also emphasized that WhatsApp groups used by teachers and students can increase interaction between fellow members in the classroom, promote a social atmosphere, foster dialogue, increase sharing among students and create an atmosphere of fun and deep collaboration with their peers. Based on the above understanding, it can be concluded that the WhatsApp application is an application that uses the internet with 3G/4G and Wi-Fi connections, to make it easier for a person or group of people to communicate or exchange information, whether text messages, images, videos, video calls, documents and others.

### **METHOD**

The researcher uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive

approach. Qualitative research methods are carried out seriously, both in the process of recording findings in the field, things that occur during the analysis of document findings, so that an accountable and detailed research report is produced.

### **Collecting data**

The data collected by the researcher is information that is in line and connected with the formulation of the research problem. There are two sources of data obtained, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources.

1. Primary data sources. Primary data sources are often referred to as primary data sources. The main data source is obtained from data directly obtained from data collectors through interviews and observations.
  - a. Headmaster of MTsS Parmiyatu Wassa'adah
  - b. English teacher of MTsS Parmiyatu Wassa'adah
  - c. Students of MTsS Parmiyatu Wassa'adah in class 8-1
2. Secondary data sources. Secondary data sources are often referred to as additional data sources. As for the additional/ *secondary* data referred to in the form of historical documents of the establishment of schools/madrasahs, student and teacher data, the vision and mission of the education unit, institutional structure and other related data. The use of additional data serves as a complement to the research process.

### **Procedure**

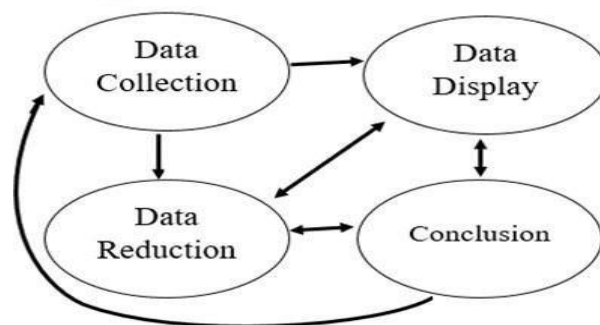
Data collection procedures or techniques are the steps used related to data collection, namely:

1. Interview, interview is one of the procedures for collecting research data, interviews are usually carried out between two or more people with the aim of obtaining information related to research. The steps used in interviews to obtain data directly from sources include:
  - a. Make a grid of interview questions, related to the problem under study.
  - b. Visiting informants related to the problem under study.
  - c. Giving questions either directly or indirectly to the informant.
  - d. Make notes or *recorder* of interview results.
2. Observation, observation is an observation process which is an important part in qualitative research. The purpose of observation is to obtain information on how the state of the research location is captured by the five senses. This observation process was carried out directly by the researcher by attending Madrasah Tsanawiyah Parmiyatu Wassa'adah.
3. Document, document is data obtained from the collection of important file and reports related to research, for example, data on teacher, student, and institution.

### **Technique of the Data Analysis**

The data analysis procedure is a series of processes carried out on the data so that research findings are obtained. Data analysis in this study used the Miles and Huberman model. The Miles and Huberman model can be illustrated in the following chart:

Figure 1. Model Miles and Huberman's Interactive Analysis



The figure above indicates the analysing of the data in conducting of this study. It started from data collection from the participant, then reduction the data, display and make a conclusion based on miles and Huberman's procedure.

1. Process I: Data Reduction

Data reduction is also known as the process of filtering data, both abstract data and rough data which is the result of notes in the field. Data reduction is carried out continuously until the end of the study, besides that notes are compiled into neatly prepared reports.

2. Process II: Data Presentation

The next process is data presentation. Presentation of data is the next stage in the technical analysis of data. By looking at the results of the presentation, we indirectly understand what happened and what actions to take next.

3. Process III: Drawing Conclusions/Verification

The last process is the process of drawing conclusions and verification. Any conclusions drawn at the beginning are still temporary. This conclusion may change if valid evidence is found. On the other hand, if the initial conclusions are found along with valid evidence when the researcher returns to the field to collect data, then the conclusions put forward are reliable conclusions.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

After the writer conducted interview and observation, then collected some of the necessary documents, the authors found the teacher's creativity in using WhatsApp to improve students' English skills and found inhibiting and supporting factors for teacher's creativity in using WhatsApp. In previous study that related with this study, in Wiji Lestari (2021) research, in his research results he explained that the feature teachers often used were photos, videos, documents, WhatsApp groups, and direct calls. But in this study, the authors found that there were more features used, such as stickers, gifs, voice notes, video calls, WhatsApp statuses and paint and writing tools. There are some teacher's creativities in using WhatsApp, in this school the English teacher use so many features that can increase students' ability in English:

### **Sticker and Gif**

Stickers and gifs are features that are usually used for funny things or short information made in the form of stickers and gifs, but in this study the authors found that teachers used these features to convey the subject matter. For example, when learning about the expressions of giving and asking for advice, the teacher has made a sticker that fits the teaching material. Because stickers and gifs are interesting

media, this makes students interested in following the lesson and reduces the level of boredom of students. Sticker is an alternative for learning media. One of the benefits of sticker, sticker can be used as material to remember an event from the writing contained in it. More precisely, sticker can be used as a communication tool, sticker can also be used for learning media (Sari, 2016). Sticker is applications that are very liked by students, this is because the sticker that are served can make students interested in learning. While GIF (Graphics Interchangeable Format) is one of the supporting features on WhatsApp that allows users to send and receive short videos to each other, or it can also be called animated images or animated stickers. English teacher at MTs Parmiyatu Wass'adah has a creative way of using this feature well. Where the teacher makes stickers and gif that are interesting and appropriate to the teaching material, the teacher makes interesting stickers along with a few words that match the teaching material. So that students can use these stickers in their daily activities using WhatsApp. With these stickers, students will read the writing on the sticker and this is used by the teacher to help improve students' reading skills.

### **Voice Note**

WhatsApp has many features /to make it easier for users to communicate with each other, there is one feature owned by WhatsApp that makes it easy for users to communicate instantly with contacts and groups through voice recordings, namely voice notes (Ainun et al, 2021). Voice Note is one of the interesting features in the WhatsApp application, this feature is in the form of voice messages sent to the WhatsApp Messenger Group. In English there are speaking skills, usually the teacher's way to find out and improve students' speaking skills is to have conversations and read texts. Although learning is done online, the English teacher at this school has its own way of dealing with it. If normally voice notes are only used to send and receive voice messages, then in this online class, teachers use voice notes to record their voices and students to carry out learning activities related to speaking skills. The teacher can find out how far the students' abilities are and how they should evaluate their students. Through this feature, the teacher can also correct and tell how to pronounce the correct pronunciation if the student makes a mistake. This voice note will not disappear if it is not deleted, so it can be heard by students and teachers so that it will be better in the future. At MTs Parmiyatu Wass'adah, the English teacher uses a voice note to take student attendance, through this voice note the teacher knows whether the student is present or not. In addition, voice notes are used to conduct questions and answers and conversations, this is very necessary for teachers to know how the development of students' speaking skills in English and is one way for teachers to improve speaking and listening skills in English for students in grade 8-1. The teacher in the field of English studies at MTs Parmiyatu Wass'adah is very creative in using the Voice Note feature, this is clearly seen where the teacher tries to motivate students to practice speaking English starting from student absences, questions and answers, discussions and conversations that require students have to speak. It certainly aims to improve student achievement from the speaking aspect.

### **Audio/Video call**

Audio calls are voice calls on the WhatsApp application that can only be made by fellow WhatsApp application users. While video calls (video calls) this

feature is almost the same as voice calls, what makes the difference is that users can talk face-to-face (Kamaruddin, 2019). An English teacher for grade 8-1 at MTs Parmiyatu Wassa'adah, uses video calls to hold conversations between students. Because schools are not conducted offline, with this online learning process, learning activities such as having conversations between students in pairs can be done via video calls. This is what the English teacher in grade 8-1 does, by using this feature, the teacher can design a learning activity to train students' speaking skills. In addition, this feature also provides an opportunity for students and teachers to be able to meet each other virtually face to face after so many meetings that do not meet face-to-face. This method is also used by the teacher to improve students' speaking skills, because it can be directly practiced to develop the material that has been taught.

### **WhatsApp Status**

When users open the Status feature, they will see updates from friends, friends, family in the user's WhatsApp contacts (Manurung, 2019). The 8-1 grade English teacher besides using Text Messages, he also uses the WhatsApp Status feature to improve the writing and reading skills of grade 8-1 students. In general, WhatsApp Status is used by most people as information, such as announcements, product sales, even to the heart that is poured in written form. The English 8-1 teacher takes advantage of this feature by being given assignments by the teacher related to their subject matter in the form of writing, then completing it using the WhatsApp status feature. Where students will make each other's status along with the caption which will be written by the student and read by other friends, this is the same as Text Messages. Students in grade 8-1 are free to make up what they know about the material and then the English teacher will see the student's status as well as correct any errors in the writing.

### **Paint and Writing Tools**

In WhatsApp want to send photos, videos, and make WhatsApp status, then the people will find several tools there as shown below:

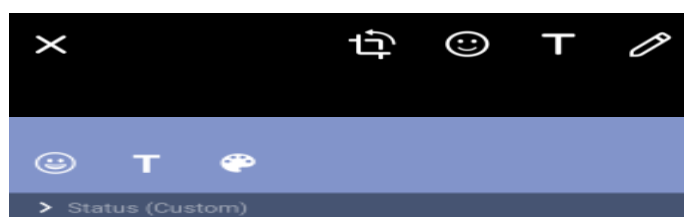


Image 1: Tools in WhatsApp

The author finds that English teachers use these tools to provide an interesting experience for students while learning. By using this tool students do not need to use a lot of notebooks and pens to do assignments and write lessons. The teacher has previously provided an assignment in the form of a picture which the students then answered using the tools provided.

## **Factor of Inhibiting and Supporting**

### ***Factor of Inhibiting***

Based on the results of the study, the inhibiting factors for teachers' creativity in using WhatsApp to improve students' English skills in grade 8-1, including internal and external factor. The internal factors that inhibit teachers' creativity in using WhatsApp to improve the English language skills of 8-1 graders at MTs Parmiyatu Wassa'adah are:

- Lack of Discipline
- Lack of student interest in online learning
- Lack of Student Learning Motivation.

External factors, namely inhibiting factors originating from outside the students who also influence student learning, which include parents, schools, and communities. The external factors that inhibit teachers' creativity in using WhatsApp to improve the English skills of grade 8-1 students at MTs Parmiyatu Wassa'adah are:

- Insufficient Internet Quota
- Signal interference
- Phone Memory Full
- The condition of the student's family and the environment that does not support the student's learning process

### ***Factor of Support***

Based on the results of the study, the factors that support the creativity of teachers in using WhatsApp to improve the English skills of grade 8-1 students at MTs Parmiyatu Wassa'adah are:

- Giving Sanctions
- Use of audio features, video calls and documents
- Using WhatsApp's features
- Registering Students to Get Free Quota
- There is an attitude of tolerance
- Establishing Communication with Students' Families

## **CONCLUSION**

In the online process, it is important for a teacher to have creativity to foster the desire of students to learn. At MTs Parmiyatu Wassa'adah itself requires all teachers to be able to master the WhatsApp application, especially English teachers. From the results of the research that the author did, the authors found that teachers in the field of English studies tried to be as creative as possible in every subject matter taught to improve students' English skills, this was proven by the use of all the features on the WhatsApp application. The features used are Voice notes, Audio/video calls, WhatsApp status, strikers, and Gifs. Each application used is adjusted to the needs of the subject matter.

In the learning process using the WhatsApp application, of course, it is not easy, there must be many obstacles that must be faced. Any obstacles that occur must make the learning process not optimal. The obstacles faced by teachers in the

field of English studies during learning using the WhatsApp application were caused by two factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are related from within students, while the obstacles included in these internal factors are lack of discipline, lack of student interest in online learning, and lack of student learning motivation. External factors related to the environmental factors of students or from outside the students themselves. The obstacles that occur are inadequate internet quota, signal interference, full cell-phone memory, and the condition of students' families and environments that do not support student learning. Supporting factors to overcome the barriers to creativity of English teachers in using WhatsApp after going through the research, the authors found that there are several supporting factors including providing sanctions, using audio features, video calls and documents, using WhatsApp's features, registering students to get free quotas, being tolerant. sense, and establish communication with the students' families

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