

# Addressing EFL Paper-Based Assignment Into WhatsApp

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## ABSTRACT

The development of ICT significantly influences all aspects of living, especially in education, which built research with purposes finding out the effect of WhatsApp in replacing paper-based assignments and students' responses towards the usage of it. Forty-two civil engineering students at the Borneo University of Tarakan were chosen as the sample of this research. The intervention was conducted for four months, two days every single week. A written test, questionnaire, and interview were used in collecting the data. The result presented that the mean difference between both tests was 33.00, where the post-test driven pre-test. It is indicated that the use of WhatsApp assisted the students to grab the material being discussed. Moreover, it not only provides full joy for students in responding to the assignment given but also builds their self-confidence to take apart actively in English class. Even more, they reported that making a mistake is a less threatening experience to be done while they are learning. However, limited internet connection leads them to off mode.

**Keywords:** *WhatsApp, Student's response, EFL Paper-Based assignment*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dealing with the teaching and learning process, learning outcomes could not be detached from the purpose of the learning. They are used as the benchmark for the success of teaching and learning in a course. [1] Learning outcomes are notable aspects in the teaching and learning stage because they grant for classifying and enactment as advancement checker for the student. It shows that having the learning outcomes in the course allows the teacher to plan, conduct, and assess the students' progress. To meet the students' progress, the teacher is essential to provide an assignment to make the students understand and comprehend the material. [2]

Assignment is constructed to assure that students analyze, evaluate, and comprehend the material that has been learned at school. It indicates that assignments are aimed to make students review and learn by themselves at home to enrich their understanding towards the material which will help them to make good progress and achieve the learning outcomes that the teacher or school has made. [3] The quality of the assignment defines the teaching quality that will determine meeting its purpose. [4] Teachers are keeping a tradition up of recognized university teaching that has unnoticed the substantial

perceptivity gained from more recent theory and study into the way people learn. They prefer to use a conventional assignment form which asks the scholars to make and submit the task onto hard copy or paper. Students reported (2017) that they sometimes copy and paste the assignment from the internet to be collected without understanding and comprehending the material. This fact is contrary to the purpose of the assignment, which makes the students to review, develop, and enhance the information of material. Also, [4] teachers are needed to break out away from traditional, teacher-centered approaches in the university and are willing to create an erudition environment where scholars are motivated to learn in relevant and real-world contexts. Teachers have to realize the students' condition and what era they live now on.

The development of technology in this globalization era allows everyone to be familiar with it. It influences people's lives, which makes everything easy to do by placing the finger on a screen, especially in education. [5] [6] The technology utility is assisting the assessment activities more accessible, more secure, and o faster because users can accumulate, store, and examine information more proficiently. Moreover, [7] [8] technology does now not only teach students to appraise era and creatively and innovatively design technological answers, but it also gives genuinely proper motives for engaging students in mastering in every different

curriculum area in this twenty-first century. It will grab the students to take apart in working on an assignment, which gives students some valuables to use and work. The teacher must develop the level of paper assignment to ICT form.

One of the developments of technology that can be used is WhatsApp. [9] [10] People prefer to use WhatsApp principally because it is fun, enjoyable, very entertaining, something more inherent to an entertainment application than to a messaging application. Furthermore, [11] [12] some researchers have found that the use of WhatsApp is substantially assisting the scholars in learning the language better and enhancing their proficiency in using the English language. Those researches applied WhatsApp as the learning media, while this research focused on replacing the traditional assignment form and building the new culture of the learning environment.

Implementing WhatsApp in replacing the paper-based assignment performance, the students are implored to feel free to answer and comment without hesitating to make mistakes. There are some stages should be done as follows:

1. The students are asked to make a group discussion
2. The assignment is given after the class to the next two days
3. The members should be active in commenting and answering the assignment
4. The assignments can be answered and commented both written (text) or orally (voice note)
5. The students incorrectly answering or commenting the assignment will be checked and corrected by the lecturer directly
6. The more students are active in commenting or discussing on the assignment given, the better they will score by providing additional score even though their answers are deficient

## 2. METHOD

This research was intended to find out the implementation of WhatsApp in addressing paper-based assignments and students' perceptions towards it. The use of WhatsApp had been doing for four months from September to December 2018. The lecture material is [13] interchange students' books with audio CD from Unit 1 to 10 which covers the basic English grammar presented in daily use.

Forty-two the first semester of civil engineering students was chosen as the sample. The data was gained by using a pre-test conducted at the first meeting and post-test done on the final test which was presented in the paper-based test and questionnaire in order to get students' feedback. In analyzing the data, the researcher used a paired sample t-test.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Written Test Results

**Table 1.** Descriptive Analysis

| Score Interval | Category  | Pretest |       | Post-test |      |
|----------------|-----------|---------|-------|-----------|------|
|                |           | Freq    | %     | Freq      | %    |
| 86 – 100       | Excellent | 1       | 2.38  | 6         | 14.3 |
| 71 – 85        | Good      | 2       | 4.76  | 25        | 59.5 |
| 56 – 70        | Average   | 8       | 19.05 | 11        | 26.2 |
| 41 – 55        | Poor      | 18      | 42.8  | 0         | 0    |
| < 40           | Failed    | 13      | 30.9  | 0         | 0    |
| <b>Total</b>   |           | 42      | 99.89 | 42        | 100  |

Students' Level Category

Table 1 shows the dissimilar achievement-categories on pretest and post-test scores. Pretest stage filled all the categories with the highest contributor was poor category. Only one student was in an excellent category and the failed category was lower about 27% than the poor category. Average category was 75% higher than the good category, which only gets two students. Surprisingly, post-test phase was merely three out of five categories plugged; none of students was in failed and poor categories. The good category increasingly improved which twenty-five students assembled in it. The average category led the excellent category about 83%. This condition indicates that the posttest period made massive progress, which shows that students had resolved their level category English proficiency.

**Table 2.** Statistical Analysis

| Test      | N  | Score Min. | Score Max. | Mean  | Mean Difference Pre-test & Post-test | T-value and Sig. pre-test & Post-test |
|-----------|----|------------|------------|-------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Pre-test  | 42 | 11.00      | 100.0      | 50.81 | 33.00                                | .000                                  |
| Post-test | 42 | 57.00      | 100.0      | 83.81 |                                      |                                       |

Written test result

Table 2 presents the different student's score between pre-test and post-test. The minimum score was 11, and the maximum score was 100 in the pre-test with the mean score 50.8095. While the post-test score rose by the minimum was 57.00 and maximum was 100 with mean score 83.8095. The mean difference post-test scores were 65% higher than pre-test. It is clear that the use of WhatsApp has significantly improved the students' English achievement by making considerable progress.

### 3.2. Questionnaire Result

**Table 3.** Student’s Response Towards the Use of WhatsApp

| No | Statement  | SD | D | A  | SA |
|----|--|----|---|----|----|
| 1  | Conducting an assignment via WhatsApp is a pleasant idea                                     | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 2  | WhatsApp was easy to be used   | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 3  | WhatsApp favored faster knowledge sharing  | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 4  | Using WhatsApp, it helped me to pass any information discussed easily                        | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 5  | My interaction in WhatsApp messaging was understandable                                      | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 6  | Learning the English language using WhatsApp is convenient for me.                           | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 7  | WhatsApp allows me to engage with peers and lecturers at any time academically and any place | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 8  | I found that WhatsApp is useful in my language learning                                      | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 9  | Using WhatsApp was effectively improved my language learning                                 | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 10 | WhatsApp allowed me to improve my writing skill  | -  | - | 3  | 39 |
| 11 | WhatsApp helped me to improve my English speaking  | -  | - | -  | 42 |
| 12 | Interaction via WhatsApp helped me to become active in a language activity                   | -  | - | 1  | 41 |
| 13 | Interaction via WhatsApp helped me to increase my confidence level in a language activity    | -  | - | 9  | 33 |
| 14 | I will not stop using WhatsApp in my future language learning                                | -  | - | 14 | 28 |

Source: adapted from Mistar & Embi (2016)

Throughout intervention in the use of WhatsApp in completing the assignment, the questionnaire was used to have the students’ view towards it. The result showed that students chose to neither disagree nor strongly disagree. They were all in agree even strongly agree most. Ten out of fourteen statements were chosen *strongly agree* by the students. While 2 statements significantly interested in the researcher, fourteen students only agreed using WhatsApp as media for future language learning, and nine students thought WhatsApp helped them increase their self-confidence level in language learning.

### 3.3. Interview Result

The presented questionnaire result shows there are two statements with significant responses on the agree box, which was interesting to the researcher to find out by interviewing those respondents; the researcher interviewed the students only agreeing.

“Why did you only agree with the two statements?”

- I will not stop using WhatsApp in the future language learning,
- Interaction via WhatsApp helped me to increase my self-confidence level in language activity.

*“I agree on the use of WhatsApp in completing the assignment; it allows me to be active and decrease the producing anxiety while I am learning especially English language. It also does not need cost too much because I do not need to print it out. Even it gives me full of joy in*

*learning; it makes me able to submit the assignment by chatting in a group while I am eating, watching, lying. Also, the members of the group express their idea freely toward the assignment given until we find the correct one. What is more, it allows the member to speak by sending the voice note in discussing the material because we always have no self-confidence to speak English, as we are feared and shamed to speak. Because of always speaking English by using WhatsApp, we brave our self to speak in English class. Sometimes, when we mispronounce the words, the others will laugh, but it makes us neither afraid nor shy of making a mistake; moreover, when we make a mistake in English class, it will only be a joke. The most important thing is we understand and be able to work on the assignment correctly than the paper assignment which we always copy-paste from the internet without understanding the material. Unfortunately, sometimes I have no internet connection to take apart. That is why we only choose to agree.”*

Transforming the assignment form by applying WhatsApp does not only allow the students to upgrade their English skill but also decrease their anxieties in English class. By the time it went by, the students took apart actively and responded without hesitating on the assignment given. This habit makes the students build a positive change in English class. They will not stop to express their opinion, or something is unclear for them, even though their statement sometimes does not define what they are trying to deliver until they find a good understanding. Mispronouncing the words and scramble structure in expressing their opinion are building a new culture of making a mistake that is the process of being master, and sometimes making a mistake makes them enjoy it by laughing at errors made. The other students will correct another when they find something goes

wrong. The changing of the EFL classroom atmosphere requires the students to improve their English skills and anxiety as follows:

- Speaking skill is the most threatening skill in the EFL classroom. The voice note response enables them to speak up in class which always they do and make their speaking skill better, especially for pronunciation and vocabulary
- Anxiety is an uncomfortable zone to take apart grants the students become passive learner that just sits and writes what the educator is delivering. The intervention builds their tendency to express their opinion orally which assists the students to decrease their anxiety level and make them enthusiastically taking apart
- Grammar is a crucial point in EFL, particularly on writing that is one of the prominent students' problems in expressing their idea; their sentences do not meet their intention. Responding by texting formulates the students to convert themselves to be self-corrector as they always do in the class once they find something runs erroneously; they will convey their opinion. This circumstance allocates the students make excellent progress by providing significant improvement in the post-test.

This finding asserts that the WhatsApp assignment form performs better than the paper-based assignment. First is the contradictory impact of the purpose of the assignment itself. The paper-based assignment potentially drives the students to cheat by copy-pasting from the internet without comprehending the material, while WhatsApp form motivates students to discuss the assignment pleasantly because discussing assignments on WhatsApp is alike, they chat to friends. The second one is that paper based offers some inefficient energy and material, the students need allocating a particular time and place to work on the assignment and spending paper and pen or any other tools to submit it. Conversely, WhatsApp form can be done anytime and anywhere to do the assignment and it only needs a mobile and internet connection. Lastly, no hesitating and free opinion giving in WhatsApp discussion construct the learning atmosphere in the classroom. Students become active learners by giving opinion towards the material discussed orally and peer-corrector once another make an error.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The implementation of ICT, WhatsApp is beneficial to replace paper-based assignments. It does not only offer to enrich the students' understanding of the material being discussed but also build their self-confidence to take apart

actively in English class. Addressing paper-based assignment into WhatsApp is an interesting one for students to be involved and active in discussing the material. The use of it helps them in eliciting the assignment given in which the students' achievement score significantly improved.

Moreover, it allows students to practice speaking English by sending a voice note where it is bothersome for them to be done. They also prefer sending a voice note to text since it is easier and faster. Because they always practice, they could decrease the producing anxiety and build self-confidence, which makes them be more active and express their idea towards the material orally. Even though hundreds of researchers found the biggest EFL students' problem is speaking skill, this finding breaks down those findings.

The students headed to WhatsApp gave positive feedback. They found themselves full of joy; they can discuss while they are eating, watching, and lying in discussing the assignment. WhatsApp does not only enable the students to learn while they are doing their daily activities with no burden, but it is also interesting for them to take apart actively in-group discussions. Correspondingly, they argued that group discussion is similar to chatting, which always is done with their friends. Because of full joy learning atmosphere, the students are ably achieving the learning outcomes of its lecture. Also, it constructs the learning atmosphere in the classroom, which converts the students to take apart actively in the class.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of addressing paper-based assignment into WhatsApp also provides hurdles. The internet connection plays a high contribution to make the discussion run well where the limiting internet sometimes drives them to off mode. Another one is the researcher has to spend much time until late at night in responding to the group discussion because the students lost in discussing without recognizing what time it is.

Learning outcomes are made to be achieved in each lecture. More importantly, it is an indicator of the teaching and learning success and allows the teacher to develop the teaching skill. One of the strategies mostly used to meet learning outcomes is giving an assignment to students. The paper-based assignment offers full of burden, which makes them only to submit it without realizing the purpose of it and understanding the material. However, finding an appropriate strategy could subdue the barrier which makes the students actively and pleasantly learn once they meet their preferred-learning experience.

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