

INCREASING STUDENTS' CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION USING *WHATSAPP*

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Abstract

WhatsApp is expected to increase students' active participation in learning English, and this article aims to show the role of it. This research uses collaborative Classroom Action Research using the Kemmis and Mc Taggart model. It was carried out at STIKES Mambaul 'Ulum Surakarta in the D3 Nursing Study Program in the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. The research subjects were 34 students. The object of research is active student participation. This research was conducted in 2 cycles, and each cycle contained 3 meetings, each cycle was conducted in 4 stages, namely planning, action, observation and reflection, while the research instruments were observation sheets and field notes. Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, interviews and documentation. The results of the research show that from pre research to cycle I there is improvement for 10.58%; and from cycle I to cycle 2, the improvement is 24.33%. It means the use of the WhatsApp application in English language learning in the D3 Nursing study program Stikes Mamba'ul 'ulum Surakarta, second semester can increase students' active participation. This is proven by the results of the research showing that in cycle I, there were several students who were less active, in cycle II, there was a significant increase in students' classroom participation,

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INTRODUCTION

According to Petress (2006: 23), research shows that learning is an active process, not a passive one and students learn well when they take an active part in the learning process. Based on some literatures, Rocca (2010: 188) enlists some other importances of classroom participation, such as students are more motivated and better in learning and critical thinking. Moreover, they have self reported that gains in character when they prepare for class and participate in discussions. The more they participate, the less memorization they do, and the more they engage in higher levels of thinking, including interpretation, analysis, and synthesis. Students who participate also show improvement in their communication skills, group interactions, and functioning in a democratic society.

In English language class, Students' Classroom Participation (SCP) becomes more important because the development of their language competence and performance prerequisites their active participation in learning processes. Therefore, SCP is a compulsory and it has to be increased by English language teachers.

Although SCP is very significant, the facts in classrooms are different. Based on the preliminary study by doing observation on April 9th, 2024, about English learning process in the second semester of the D3 Nursing study program, Mamba'ul 'ulum Surakarta Health Sciences College, it can be concluded that in general, there is still quite low students' participation which is proved by the facts that they are passive in learning; a few students asked questions or were

enthusiastic to answer questions. Their participation is less than the expectation. Besides, classroom learning atmosphere is less attractive. It was found that SCP problem comprised 4 cases. They are (1) there are still many students keeping silent and doing nothing, when the teacher giving them a question (2) none of the students asking question during the lesson (3) When there is a student forced to answer the question, no other students trying to respond it (4) Those who draw on paper while the discussion is going on, still many students who doze off during the discussion. They do not contribute to the discussion.

This signifies that the students' classroom participation is still low because no matter how well designed a course is, students will not learn unless they put a reasonable amount of effort into the learning process (Douglas, and Alemanne, 2007: 1).

To discover the problems faced by students in participation in the classroom, I conducted preliminary research in Mamba'ul 'ulum Surakarta Health Sciences College. The research is done to First level of the D3 Nursing study program. Through classroom observation, in pre-research, focusing on four indicators related to students' classroom participation, the pre-research showed that the score of those four is below the expectation; the Asking question was 14 persons, Answer/respond teacher' question was 12 persons, Respond to other students was 16 persons, and Contribution to Discussion was 13 persons.

Based on the problem above, I propose WhatsApp to increase students' classroom participation. Ajani (2021) argues that the implementation of this mode of communication holds the promise of promoting a feeling of fellowship and motivation among students and facilitators alike, while concurrently augmenting the accessibility of academic materials and educational opportunities. In other words, WhatsApp provides security, comfort as well as motivation for students to comment or contribute via WhatsApp media to the public in class. They can submit opinions, volunteer using WhatsApp media. It can be concluded that WhatsApp can provide comfort and motivation for students to contribute actively in class and participate in class.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is optimizing WhatsApp to increase students' classroom participation in learning English in classroom. The study is conducted to in the First level of the D3 Nursing study program, Mamba'ul 'ulum Surakarta Health Sciences College in 2023/2024 academic year. It is located in Jl Ringroad Km 0,3, Tawang Sari, Jebres, Surakarta, Central Java. Besides, the research was conducted in collaboration with the another lecturer and a student from April to July 2024. Furthermore, the research was carried out in two cycles consisting of three meetings in every cycle, and each meeting took about 90 minutes. The research was done through the following stages: pre-research, planning, implementation, observation and reflection. Pre-research was initialized by observing the situation and condition of the setting before any action was implemented. It was aimed to collect the first data of the teaching and learning process. The data were collected through observation in the pre-research, and after that the data were interpreted by the collaborator and me for preparing a lesson plan before doing the action. The planning of the action later was implemented in every meeting in continuous cycles.

The subject of this research is the students of the First level of the D3 Nursing study program, Mamba'ul 'ulum Surakarta Health Sciences College. This class consists of 36 students. This class generally consists of the students who are in the heterogenous academic level.

The research method used is classroom action research. According to Bogdan and Biken's definition, this research is purposed to make a change in the social context. The second definition is from Carr and Kemmis, according to Carr and Kemmis in Burns (1999: 30), action research is simply form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices

and situation in which the practices are carried out. From this Carr and Kemmis’ definition, it is clearly now what it means by *change* in Bordan and Briken’s concept of action research. The *change* is seen as improvement of quality in social practice by Carr and Kemmis. This improvement of quality in social practice can include self-inquiry which of course review problems found in rationality and justice of the practices, the understanding of the practices and situation in which the practices are carried out. The next definition is from Wallace (1998: 4) who gives more specific definition of what action research in the context of ELT bellow.

This strategy is basically a way of reflecting on the researchers’ teaching (teacher-training, or management of an English department). It is done by systematically collecting data on everyday practice and analyzing in order to come to some decisions about what future practice should be. This process is essentially meant by the term *action research*.

The Action Research in this context uses the model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (1999: 32). According to the model, the implementation of the action research includes four steps: 1) Identifying problems and planning the action, 2) Implementing the action and observing or monitoring the action, 3) Reflecting the result of observation, and 4) Revising the plan. The spiral model can be illustrated in figure 1

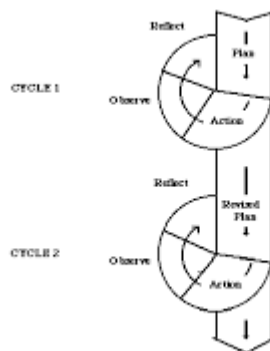


Figure 1. Model of Action Research

The discussion will talk about techniques used in collecting data in this research. According to Burns (1999: 78-151), technique of collecting data in action research can be divided into two categories, namely, observational technique (Observation, field notes) and non-observational technique (recording, interview, document, and test). And bellow are the observational techniques used in this research.

Related to the technique of analysis data in action research, Burns (1999: 156-160) proposes five steps in analysis of qualitative data. Those steps are: 1) Assembling the data; 2) Coding the data; 3) Comparing the data; 4) Building interpretations 5) Reporting the outcomes.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. The Improvement of Students’ Average Scores

Students Participation Indicators	Pre-cycle		Cycle 1		Cycle 2		Increasing	
	NoS	%	NoS	%	NoS	%	NoS	%
Asking question	14.00	26.92	22.33	42.94	43.67	83.98	29.67	57.06
Answer/respond teacher’ question	16.00	30.77	18.00	34.62	49.00	94.23	33.00	63.46
Respond to other students	12.00	23.08	20.00	38.46	44.33	85.25	32.33	62.17
Contribution to Discussion	13.00	25.00	16.67	32.06	37.33	71.79	24.33	46.79

Average	13.75	26.44	19.25	37.02	43.58	83.81	29.83	57.37
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*NoS = Number of Students

Based on table 1, it can be concluded that from pre-research to cycle 1 there was an increase of 10.58%; and from cycle 1 to cycle 2 there was an increase of 24.33%. This increase shows that students experienced a significant increase at the end of learning. This increase is real because the application of WhatsApp in this case can practically attract students' attention, interest, and enthusiasm in contributing and participating in class. They feel that WhatsApp provides more comfort in expressing opinions. This is in line with Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010) who stated that instant messaging is a preferred alternative for both lecturers and students because of its speed and adaptability. Thus, they are sure that students have something to discuss. This directly increases the level of class participation. This confirms that the use of WhatsApp as a learning medium allows teachers to increase student participation in class.

To mention all, the difficulties consist of the following numbers: (1) students feel monotonous enough to continue paying attention to the ongoing WhatsApp; and (2) Students who sit in groups tend to be less focused on the course.

In relation to this, here is the logic. The first thing given to students is the emphasis of the material and motivating students to actively participate. This was later reinforced by the New South Wales Department of Education (2003:45) that students should not be given monotonous activities for more than 30 minutes so that they do not feel tired and bored in doing the activity. Therefore, the next cycle is when the difficulty occurs. The solution is overcome by choosing to optimize the use of WhatsApp in interacting and expressing opinions. This is one of the reasons why WhatsApp was chosen to be carried out in cycle 2. The last help in this study was sitting in groups, which was intended to discuss the material afterwards, actually had a slight negative impact on students. They tend to (a) rely on other group members to contribute in submitting opinions or contributing actively through WhatsApp media and sharing them with them afterwards; while (b) they use their cellphones off-topic with other group members. They think that because they will be having a discussion, they can directly or indirectly find out about the discussion. This is a major weakness of the discussion learning strategy where individual performance can increase or decrease depending on the student's attitude. This is supported by Kayi (2006: 5) that making students learn in groups means that teachers must work harder to control, create, and maintain equal student participation so that no student dominates the group and no one is unfocused. Therefore, teachers must innovate in how to conduct group discussions so that they remain focused on the material being studied and actively participate in the group without trying to dominate or conversely, being marginalized in the group. Dynamic discussions are a must so that the discussion runs well and all students can understand the learning material. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to be able to detect such situations and continue to encourage equal student participation so that the discussion can run well. For those who fail to see this situation, it is possible that students will only rely on other group members while they themselves are busy doing something unnecessary and unrelated to the focus of the discussion. However, this obstacle can be overcome well by carrying out innovative activities; the teacher stops WhatsApp for a moment and gives some questions to the students. This makes them focus and pay attention to the material and contribute through WhatsApp media so that they can answer questions because basically they also feel responsible for knowing the material they are studying.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings and discussion encode some conclusions to be formulated as follows:

1. The use of WhatsApp can improve classroom participation of the eight grade students of D3 Nursing Program of Stikes Mamba'ul 'Ulum Surakarta in 2023/2024 academic year.
2. There are some difficulties in the implementation of teaching learning process using WhatsApp as the teaching media that consist of three major points; (1) the students found it quite monotonous to keep paying attention to the more-than-30-minute WhatsApp continuously; (2) The students, sitting by group, tend to less focus on watching the WhatsApp.

However, how well the method prepared and arranged, but still the teacher is the one who has to be confident about his students and not to give up on them. That teaching media has its significant role in succeeding teaching-learning process is already imparted strongly in today's education. Not to mention, the advance of technology should also be credited. Nowadays, students are probably even better than teacher in terms of mastering technology. WhatsApp as one of the technology products should be taken into benefit to be teaching media as it is evident that its role is helpful in improving students' classroom participation. Not only that, WhatsApp as the teaching media is actually also able to make students comprehend the learning material because they learn not only through audio medium but also visual one. Audiovisual media can facilitate students' needs of entertainment also on the other hand. As students feel probably bored of the conventional learning media, watching WhatsApp is surely alternative. Teacher should use this opportunity to improve their achievement overall.

Furthermore, learning is viewed as something monotonous for many students. This is caused for many reasons. One of the reasons is that the students do not feel attracted to learn. In enhancing students' classroom participation, WhatsApp is already tested and evidently able to do so. Accordingly, students should be able to optimize this joyful learning opportunity to mater the learning material given by the teacher. Students should not just simply focus on the WhatsApp. Further than that, the students should be able to take the lessons both implicitly or explicitly both contained and delivered by the WhatsApp. This is very good and beneficial for them because not only will they obtain new insight but also will they feel entertained. Joyful learning is, in short, able to obtain by using WhatsApp as the teaching media.

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