

## Whatsapp: Learning on the Go

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Received: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Revised: 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Published: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

### Abstract

Mobile learning as one of digital teaching learning media has given beneficial impact to language learning. It said that mobile learning can facilitate students to learn everywhere in anytime. Learning using smartphone is one of the issues that can help the students to improve their English whenever they want and wherever they are. Whatsapp as one of the most accessed application, which can be installed in any smartphone is used in this research. The objective of the study is to find out what are the impact of using Whatsapp by exploring, describing and analyzing students opinion in learning English through Whatsapp. This research was conducted in the academic year 2017 / 2018 in the Second Year Class of the Department of Business Administration of Politeknik Sawunggalih Aji. There are 10 students in the classroom. The descriptive qualitative method is used in this research. The result of this research proved some activities done by the students via Whatsapp is showing language learning activities, such as vocabulary learning and combining words to sentence.

**Keywords:** Whatsapp, mobile learning, ESP, language learning

### Introduction

Becoming fourth highest numbers in smartphone users in the world, Indonesia has more than one million smartphone users (Rahmayani, 2015). Having smartphone means open access to the world. Technology is nowadays available in most places, even in the remote areas. TechinAsia.com noted that more than 60% of the smartphone users are around 13 – 23 years old, which can be considered students or learners. This situation also changes the use of media in teaching and learning process from paper based into digital one. Mobile learning as one of the digital teaching learning media has given beneficial impact to language learning. It said that mobile learning can facilitate students to learn everywhere in anytime. Learning using smartphone is one of the issues that can help the students to improve their English whenever they want and wherever they are.

Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is a burgeoning subdivision of computer-assisted language learning in general. As mobile technologies has evolved, so have their advanced applications developed for language education (Yang, 2013). Bachore (2015) explained mobile learning as creating an interactive learning environment with multiple contexts using different kinds of applications which are available in the apparatus (mobile).



Another clear explanation about mobile learning and Information Communication Technology of mobile learning has been stated by Ashiyan & Salehi (2016), that Information Communication Technology has the new function to initiate new teaching and learning exercise because it can transform the education system. Moreover, it is explained that using technology in teaching second language has been the greatest issues for researchers to investigate, however only small number of the researches related to the effect of cell phone.

Mobile learning refers to the integration of mobile tools and applications to assist and enhance language learning inside or outside classroom (Chinnery 2006; Hazaea & Alzubi, 2016:9). Mobile learning has attracted significant research interest in recent years (Petrova & Li, 2009; Kee & Samsudin, 2014). The topics include the theories underpinned the learning design and factors affect on learners experiences and influencing mobile learning adoption and social interaction.

Related to the use of mobile technology, Whatsapp has been chosen to be one of the most popular among the researchers to investigate the effect of using it. Whatsapp is preferably used for many reasons. Hamad (2017) said that Whatsapp is the most common chatting application to use among the students, students don't need to have computer, it is attainable and it does not cost much. Moreover, Ashiyan & Salehi (2016) also stated that Whatsapp is a tool that can be used for different educational purposes. This is because Whatsapp sends message through Internet connection that can be in the form of text, audio files, pictures, videos as well as one's location.

Many studies found out new ideas on language learning related to the use of Whatsapp. Hamad (2017) claims that Whatsapp can be a solution to the problem of teaching the meaningful and contextualized interaction in teaching communicative competence. The results of his research shows that Whatsapp can help the students to develop their listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, writing skills as well as their vocabulary. Whatsapp was also claimed to help the students to learn from their peers' mistakes, to think in English, and to get immediate feedback from their teacher.

Ghada Awada (2016) in her study "*Effect of Whatsapp on Critique Writing Proficiency and Perceptions Toward Learning*" result showed that it is more effective to use Whatsapp than regular instruction in improving critique writing proficiency of the participants and it can also improve their motivation in learning.

In another study, Castrillo, Martin-Monje & Barcena (2014) entitled "*Mobile-Based Chatting for Meaning Negotiation in Foreign Language Learning*" found out that using Whatsapp for foreign language is an effective strategy as students did noticeably improve their meaning negotiating skills, were able to understand and make themselves understood all the time. Moreover, the use of Whatsapp made students reduce their mistake and made the teacher change her usual roles in the classroom.

This study uses Whatsapp as the application is most common chat application between the students. It can facilitate and create group for learning and communication as well. Whatsapp is also cheap to activate, in fact, it is free to download and use Whatsapp in any smartphone. Starting with creating a group in Whatsapp, the chats between students and the teacher are analyzed. The group is



called Forum Belajar Bikombis (Business Communication English Learning Forum).

The results' study done by Ashiyan & Salehi (2016) entitled "*Impact of Whatsapp on Learning and Retention of Collocation Knowledge among Iranian EFL Learners*" showed the positive result that Whatsapp group students could communicate with their teacher and classmate, transmit data, and assist learners to feel fresh. Whatsapp also built a feeling of belonging and community through Whatsapp group. The students were also able to share information by creating dialogue. The increasing of the accessibility of learning materials and activity has also applied.

In the study entitled "*Language Learning through Mobile Technologies: An Opportunity for Language Learners and Teacher*" showed the result: the created group on Whatsapp between the teacher and the students can be used to answer students' questions and inquiries about the material and the course and to deliver announcement to them especially the teacher can check that students have received and read the messages sent to them (Zayed, 2016).

Those studies above have given perspective that another same theme on Whatsapp is still interesting to be done. Therefore, the interest of this paper is describing and analyzing what can Whatsapp Group Chat does as language learning media.

## Method

There were 10 students in the Business Administration's class and all of them were girls. All students had their own smartphones as the basic requirements for doing this research. In the first meeting, the Whatsapp group was created by the leader of the class. Then the students were allowed to be active in the group by sending messages or picture to communicate with friends in English.

The group was created to enhance the students' activeness in using English in advance. There was no correction in writing or in making sentence done by the teacher. The group was controlled by the students of the class.

This study adopted a qualitative approach to investigate the communication carried out by the students and teacher during the Whatsapp group activity, analyzing the written interaction in the chat sessions. Therefore, the functions and the content of contributions were analyzed in order to investigate the use of Whatsapp in Business Administration class.

## Findings and discussion

Based on previous studies, the use of Whatsapp has positive impact on students' language learning. Therefore, some chatting screenshots are there to describe and analyze. The point in this study is not to correcting the students but to create a forum where the students can be more active in using their English outside the classroom.



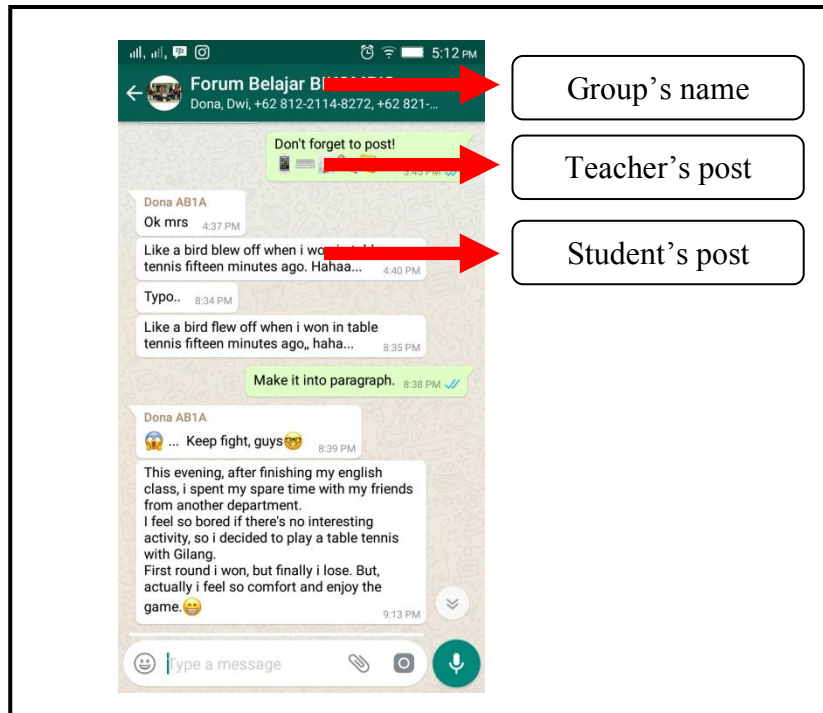


Figure 1. The Group Chat

The figure above is the first post on the group chat. As seen on the figure above, teacher asked the students to post everything that they want as long as they are in English. The first post has many mistakes done by the students in creating a sentence. Without correcting it, the teacher asked student to make it into paragraph, and it works. The underlined thing here is that the student is able to change sentence into paragraph. She knows how to build a paragraph. It is also clear that student understands the command or the teacher's message. Therefore, it is clearly seen that Whatsapp helped students to develop the students' writing skills agreed with Hamad (2017)

The figure above shows that the students effectively used mobile learning as language learning media which guidance is needed as stated by Bachore (2015), learners will need guidance and training to effectively use mobile device as language learning.



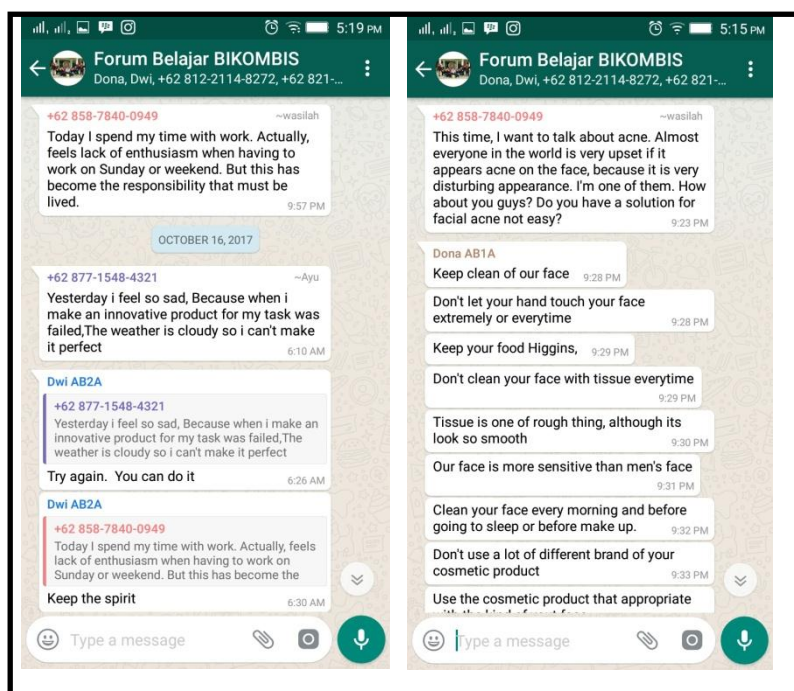


Figure 2. Social Interaction in Students' Negotiating Meaning

As seen in Figure 2, the students are negotiating meaning. Here, the students illustrate an example of social interaction in negotiating meaning. This fact is also supported by the statement from Castrello, Monje and Barcena (2014) that using whatsapp is an effective strategy to improve the students' negotiating skills, and despite of language error, they were able to understand and make themselves understood all the time. As we can see in the above figure, that the students is not only contributing to the chat room group, but also reach the level of socio-affective which is supporting one another and building relationship in the group. When their friend is having trouble, the other gives motivation. Without even realized, here the students are able to use their English unconsciously. They give their friends motivation by using English. In the other screenshot, it is read that when their friend is having a trouble, they can give solution. In fact, the solutions given are very clear that the students wrote them in short sentences. The supporting theory about this finding is that whatsapp is a learning platform used in order to improve the performance of the learning activities (Ashiyan & Salehi, 2016).

The second matter that can be seen is that students reproduced spoken language pattern into chat by sending short consecutive messages sent by one student. Those short messages were actually can be categorized procedure, which the purpose is telling how something should be done. Therefore, agreed with Hamad (2017) that Whatsapp helped students to develop their speaking skills.



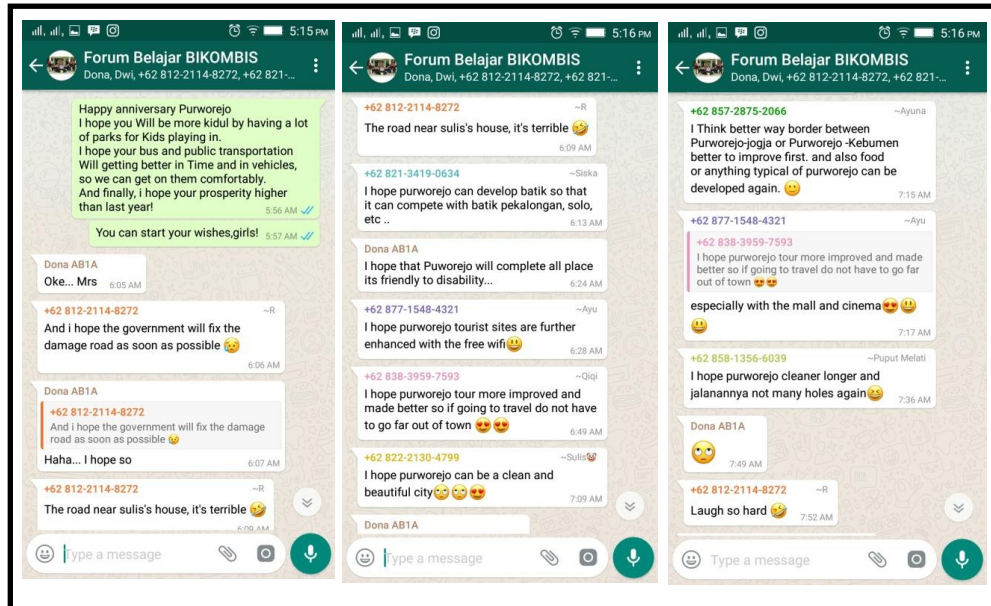


Figure 3. Teachers' Prompt

Figure 3 shows that when the teacher gives prompts, in this case a congratulation sentence or paragraph for the city's anniversary, the students are able to follow the instruction well. Ashiyan & Salehi (2016) stated that by establishing Whatsapp group the students could communicate with their classmates, transmit data and assist learners to feel freshly; moreover, the students were able to share information—when they create dialogue, the students worked as a team. The previous supporting theories are seen in the figure that students used mixed patterns, which combine letters and emoticons. For example in the message “The road near Sulis’ house is terrible (LOL)” or “I hope that Purworejo tourist sites are further enhanced with free Wi-Fi (big open smile)” the emoticons they sent after the sentence means that they think the message has funny or joking meaning, that the interlocutor should not be offended by the messages.

They created sentence using the vocabulary they know. There is also one student who combines Bahasa and English when making sentences. This sentence “I hope Purworejo cleaner longer and jalanannya not many holes again” gives us a view that the student wanted to be participated in a group” though her sentence was not properly built. Knowing this situation there were two students reacted to this. One student showed confused emoticon and the other said “laugh so hard (with LOL emoticon)”. It can be concluded that students began to recognize which sentence is good and not. Hamad (2017) stated that Whatsapp helped students to learn from their colleague mistakes, this is what the finding above agreed with.

The other matter is that students couldn't differentiate which diction should be use in creating proper meaningful sentence. They chose words or diction that they know the real meaning, not to choose which one is proper or contextual. Only some students who were able to create meaningful yet grammatically correct sentences.



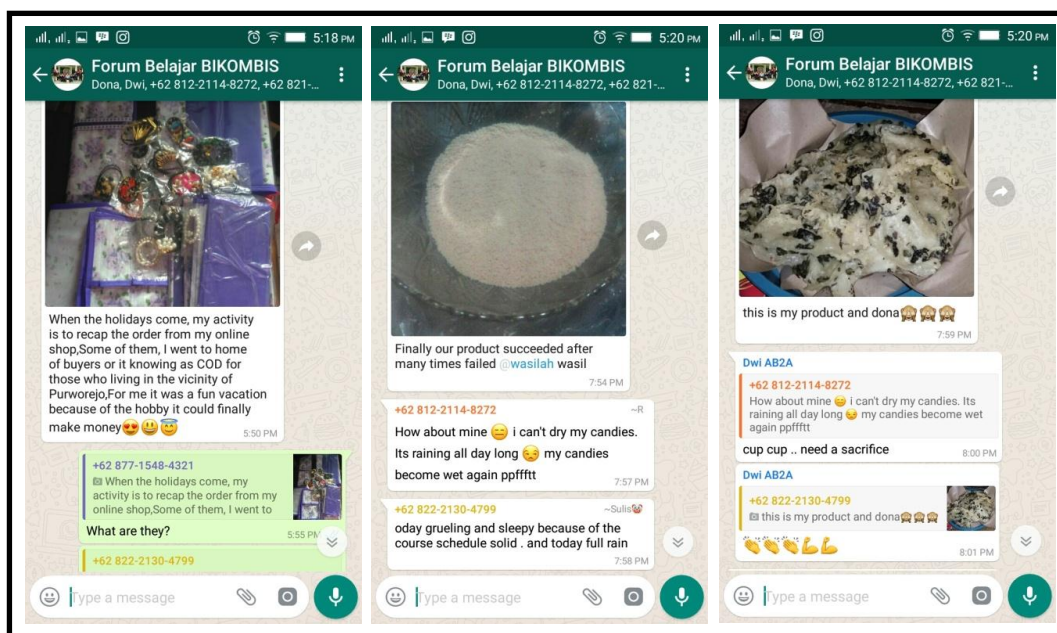


Figure 4. Social Atmosphere in Whatsapp Group

To create a positive social atmosphere in order to build a feeling of belonging and community through Whatsapp is one of the factors of creating Whatsapp group as stated by Ashiyan & Salehi (2016). The fact that students have groomed the positive social atmosphere is with the feature in Whatsapp for sending picture. It made students use it a lot. They use it as they told story for what they were doing; as they wanted to share their succeeded and; they wanted to show their capability. The screenshots on Figure 4 show that the students sent the picture for different purposes. They wanted to confirm their friends with the attached pictures. In the first screenshot we can see that the student wrote her activity that day with the picture attached.

As additional information, that the English class for the group is only once per week—therefore students has much more time outside the class to practice their English. The second screenshot and the third screenshot were from the same day from 7:54 PM to 8:01 PM. It means students participated well when they were outside the classroom. They learned by themselves outside the classroom, and it is a good sign of autonomous language learning—in this case, agreed with Santiana, Sulastri and Fatimah (2016). As seen in figure 4, the teacher didn't participate in the chat group at that time, students did it themselves. The teacher gave her thoughts when there was no students gave responses—as bait.

The second screenshot showed that the student was happy because the product was succeeded, and to make their friends believe she also attached a picture. The third screenshot was rather different. With the caption “this is my product and Dona (shy monkey emoticons)”, it means that she also wanted to show their friends the product but she felt shy or unconfident. It is seen that the other students also gave responses to the picture that was sent. To be concluded, whatsapp feature really helps when students need picture to confirm action. This



fact is agreed with the Hamad's Statement (2017) that whatsapp helps the students to believe in their abilities and to have confidence.

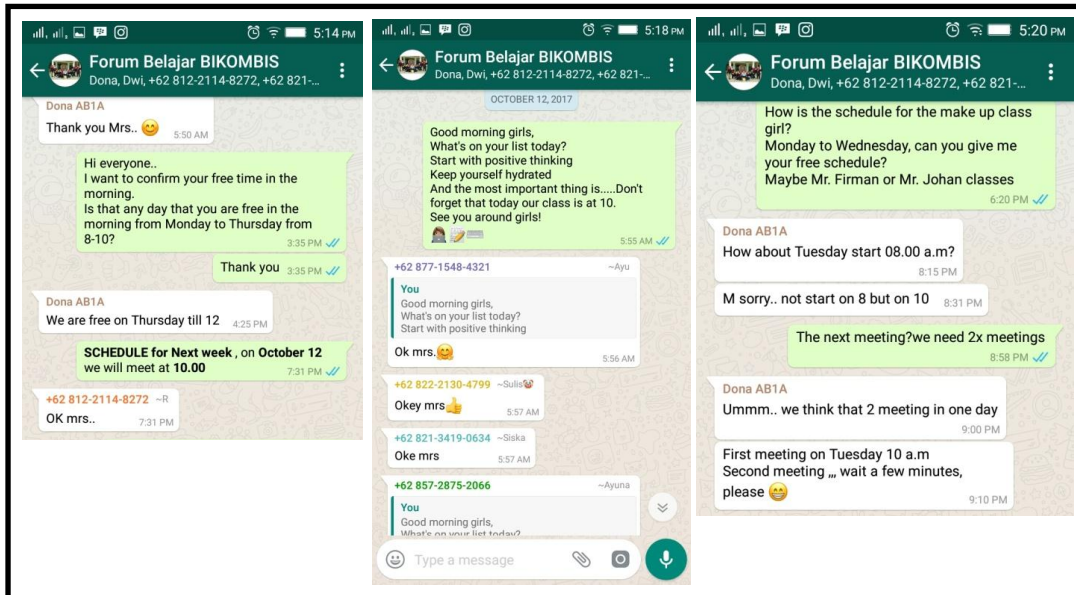


Figure 5. Communication between Students and Instructor

Agreed with Hamad (2016) and Ashiyan & Salehi (2016) that using Whatsapp helped the students to communicate with the instructor, the finding below has stated the same thought about how the students and the instructor can communicate better using Whatsapp Group.

As seen in the first screenshot that teacher confirmed the schedule through Whatsapp to get all students in the group to be notified. The leader of the group responded with their confirmation, then the teacher notified all students in the group that their meetings were on that day. The student—not the leader—responded it as fast as she could, not even a minute. Due to their make up class was only done once, the second screenshot showed that the teacher wanted to remind the students about the make up class. The teacher also gave positive reinforcements by giving students good morning greeting and motivating the students. The students responded quickly. There are four students who replied immediately to the teacher's post.

The third screenshot showed that the teacher and the leader of the class were discussing the make up classes. This discussion was done in the group because the teacher wanted to notify all students, not only the leader. Therefore, when the member of the group read the message in the group, they can deliver the message to the other that have not read the message yet. This is effective, that the make up class were always full of students, no students were left notified.





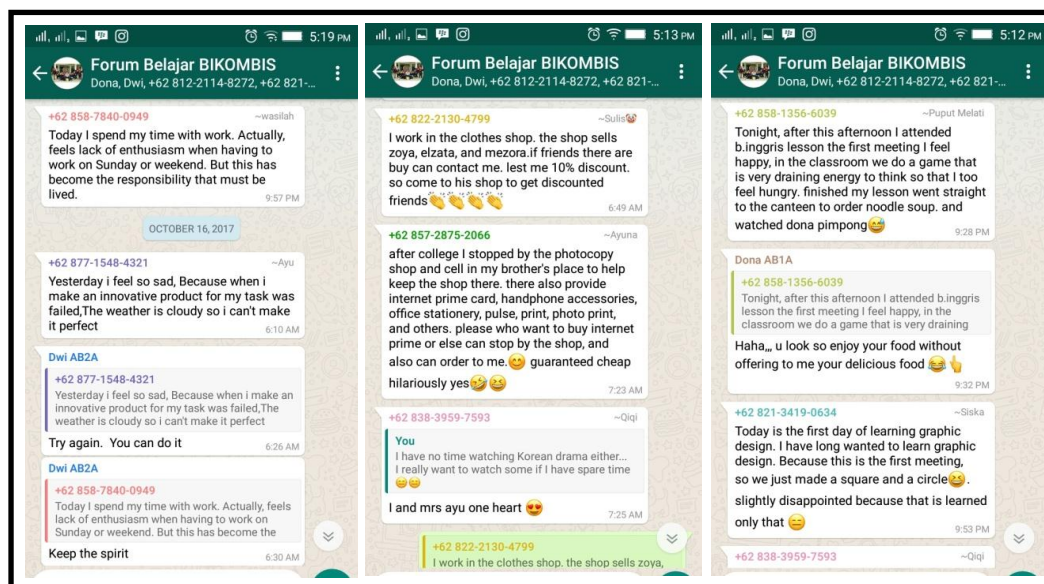


Figure 6. Students' Sharing

The real-time feature in Whatsapp made the students tend to share their social or daily life experience in Whatsapp. As seen in Figure 6, the students shared their social life and daily experience in Whatsapp group. Agreed with the statement of Abdul Fattah (2015) that Whatsapp can enhance the active participation in the EFL classroom as it is an opportunity for students to relate their opinions to those of others.

In fact, Whatsapp really can develop the students' writing skills agreed with Hamad (2017) it is when writing about experience, recount text should be used. The students had also recognized the pattern for recount text—which is past tense. The student wrote “*After college, I stopped.....*”; instead of stop the student wrote stopped which is in the past tense form. The other student also wrote “*....after the afternoon lesson, I attended.....*” instead of attend, she wrote attended to show that it is past.

The recount text has the feature of time order, when the time should be told consecutively in order. Here the students have started recognizing the feature. It can be seen that students wrote: “*....after college....*”; “*after lesson.....*”. In conclusion, students shared their social life and daily life through Whatsapp group using the feature of recount text.

## Conclusion

This study has presented an analysis of the results of Whatsapp group interaction done by the teacher and the students of Business Administration class. With the use of Whatsapp features, the member of the group shared important matters. The students also showed good communication skills. They also created stories and created comment that was beyond the expectation. There are also some mistakes done by the students in writing the messages in English, but the meaning is still well delivered.



As the Analyzing done, the followings are the conclusion:

- a. Students are able to change sentences to paragraph with the little help of the teacher
- b. There are many social interactions done by the students
- c. The students reproduce spoken language patterns into chats
- d. Prompt from the teacher leads to great responses
- e. Mixed patterns are mainly used—students combined letters and emoticons
- f. Students began to analyze friend's mistake
- g. The diction used by the students is sometimes not properly contextual.
- h. Students send pictures—pictures that confirm action
- i. Flexible time to learn language outside the classroom
- j. Scheduling time is easier
- k. One trending topic or interesting topic leads to surprising comments
- l. Students shared their social or daily life in Whatsapp group.

Based on the conclusion above, the study would recommend that Whatsapp can be used as one of the media to teach English. The use of Whatsapp makes the students more open to the teacher. The students also are able to learn outside the classroom whenever and wherever they want. Further research could be conducted on the discourse analysis of students' messages in Whatsapp group. The research on the impact of using Whatsapp group for autonomous learning is also can be done for further study.

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