

STUDENTS' RESPONSE TO THE USE OF TELEGRAM IN ENGLISH CLASS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By

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Received: February 12, 2021

Reviewed1: February 15, 2021

Accepted: April 17, 2021

Sent to reviewer: February 13, 2021

Reviewed2: March 6, 2021

Published: April 28, 2021

Abstract:

In the 21st century, due to the advancement of Information and Communication Technology, the importance of English usage has increased. English teachers face considerable challenges in teaching students. Moreover, with the outbreak of COVID-19, the government issued some regulations to prevent COVID-19 transmissions at schools by changing conventional learning methods to e-learning. There are a lot of online learning applications. One popular application is Telegram Messenger. Therefore, the study aimed to determine the students' response to the use of Telegram in English class during COVID-19 pandemic and identify the obstacles they experienced when applying this application. The research respondents were the ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kawunganten. The study was a survey using quantitative method with descriptive statistics to analyze the data. Moreover, the research employed a close-ended questionnaire. The result of students' response to the Telegram usage was 81%, resulting in the "strongly effective" category. This result indicated that Telegram was beneficial for students and very effective in English class. However, students still faced some obstacles with an average of 70%, and it indicated the level of difficulty was high. The highest problem percentage occurred in the students' concentration and motivation to study that decreased during the e-learning.

Keywords: COVID-19, e-learning, Telegram, students' response

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language expected to be used by all people in the world, even more in the globalization era, in which the importance of English usage has increased so that it cannot be separated from globalization (Pardede, 2012). Besides, English becomes the first global language, and it is now the lingua franca of ASEAN (Kirkpatrick, 2002; Pardede, 2012).

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Indonesia is not an exception to the current global trend. Indonesian students should learn English in order to build a relationship with other societies in the world and obtain knowledge of English for their education (Katemba, 2013). Though English is considered one of the important subjects at school, many students still think it is hard and complicated. Therefore, the goal of success in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) also seems hard to achieve (Suwartono, 2019).

Moreover, in the 21st century, there is a rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which makes teachers and students change their paradigm of education (Yunus, 2018). In addition, ICT's core changes in society will affect the system of education concerning how learning takes place and how knowledge develops (Malik, 2018). The digital era creates a more dynamic teaching-learning process and influences the teachers' roles (Suwartono & Anjuranti, 2019). Therefore, English teachers face considerable challenges in teaching their students to master English and live in the current era (Cakrawati, 2017). Besides, they also have to equip their students with the 21st-century skills, which are known as the four Cs (4Cs) of the 21st-century skills in Indonesia, namely critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, because the recent teaching and learning process is focusing more on these essential skills required for higher education and career (Erdoğan, 2019). Thus, students nowadays called "Generation Z" are expected to be familiar with those skills.

However, in 2020, many countries worldwide, including Indonesia, were experiencing a different problem caused by a novel virus called Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). World Health Organization (WHO) states COVID-19 as a disease caused by 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), which was firstly spread in Wuhan, China (Li et al., 2020 as cited in Krishnapatria, 2020). The COVID-19 epidemic has spread quickly and shocked the community. In Indonesia, with the outbreak of this virus, the government has instituted a policy and executed large-scale social restrictions (Krishnapatria, 2020; Robandi et al., 2020). This state of emergency was designed to restrict community transmissions.

The policy has been adjusted to all government departments in Indonesia, including the Ministry of Education and Culture. To prevent the COVID-19 transmission at schools, the Ministry released two circular letters, namely Circular Number 3 of 2020 on Prevention of COVID-19 in the Education Unit and Circular Number 4 of 2020 on the Implementation of

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Education in the COVID-19 Emergency Period, which aim to guarantee that all students receive their right to education while maintaining their health and protecting them from the dangers of COVID-19 (Robandi et al., 2020).

The pandemic situation has undoubtedly affected all social life activities, especially in the teaching and learning process. All learning activities for the students have been being conducted from home using online learning, offline learning, or both of them. However, the teaching and learning process has been mostly carried out online (e-learning). Muslimah (2018) said that e-learning (electronic learning) is a learning process that utilizes electronic technologies to access educational curriculum outside the traditional classroom and refers to learning delivered online. Besides, e-learning means using advanced technology of information and communication in the learning process where the advanced technology includes electronic media (Agarwal & Pandey, 2013). In conclusion, e-learning is a learning process conducted online using advanced technology. It means that the teachers and students need technology and the internet to conduct the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, there are two types of e-learning, namely synchronous and asynchronous. According to Shahabadia & Uplane (2015, as cited in Muslimah, 2018), synchronous is e-learning that is usually scheduled, real-time, and live, whereas asynchronous is e-learning that utilizes Computer Mediation Communication (CMC) to achieve anytime and everywhere learning through online discussion. Both of these types have pros and cons, and the uses can be adjusted to the teachers' and students' needs or conditions and the availability of technology itself.

All of the e-learning activities are intended to make the teaching and learning process more comfortable. Agarwal & Pandey (2013) stated that there are some benefits of e-learning compared with the traditional method. First, e-learning is considered low in cost. It means that it is cheaper than the traditional ones, and it also saves a lot of time. Second, it can be carried out at any place and at any time, so it is more flexible than the traditional ones. Third, in learning, students can obtain their requirement of knowledge.

On the other hand, like the two sides of the coin, apart from having advantages, the use of this technology certainly has obstacles. For example, not all students can smoothly access this technology, and not all students can take advantage of the advancement of technology.

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These make students bored with the atmosphere of learning from home for a long time, so the students' activities in the teaching and learning process during the pandemic have decreased.

However, teachers always try to present some exciting learning materials, even though they cannot meet directly (face to face) with their students. Besides, they always attempt to find a new method to increase students' activities and curiosities. Moreover, with the advancement of ICT, English Language Teaching (ELT) has developed significantly, and the use of various applications, social media, and other digital platforms that facilitate students to improve their language skills has also increased (Abdullah et al., 2020). One of the best ways for the current situation is by delivering the lesson materials through electronic media from computer or mobile devices, such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones. In this case, it means that it needs the internet's role as a medium to connect a device to another. With the advanced technology and internet, the teaching and learning process can be carried out through instant messaging applications, such as Telegram, WhatsApp, Google Chat, and many more. The reconsideration of the selection of technology devices should become a crucial step before it is incorporated into online teaching and learning activities (Nova, 2020). Thus, this study has been focused on the use of Telegram Messenger.

According to Haida & Aviani (2016, as cited in Wiranegara & Hairi, 2020), Telegram is one of the most famous online social media networks that can help the learner in learning a foreign language. It is a messaging application that enables people to send videos, pictures, audio, or other types of files kept on a cloud-based server without making the mobile device full of capacity, and this application has different roles among various fields (Abu-Ayfah, 2020). Based on this definition, it can be concluded that Telegram has some benefits, such as (1) it is a cloud-based messenger that can be accessed from several devices at once, (2) it can share any types of photos, videos, and files, (3) the data can be kept in the cloud, and (4) it can be used in the field of education and other different fields. Therefore, with Telegram, teachers can easily share the lesson materials without worrying that all of those shared materials will make their devices full. They can also discuss the materials with the students freely. Besides, both teachers and students can experience a new teaching and learning process through Telegram.

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In the teaching and learning process, the relationship between teacher and students becomes essential. When the teacher asks questions to the students, they should be able to respond actively and vice-versa. Based on Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, a response means "answer or action done in answer to something" (Oxford University Press, 2012). Furthermore, a response is a behavioral act when someone gives a stimulus in answer, reply, or reaction (Bennett, 1975; Paulina, 2002, as cited in Sumilia, Puspita, & Elfrida, 2019). Since each student is unique and different from one another, he/she indeed has his/her answer, reply, or reaction to a question or condition that the teacher gives in the classroom. In this study, the students' positive response to the use of Telegram is expected to be given to the provided stimulus.

Some previous studies proved how effective Telegram Messenger was in the teaching and learning process. First, Ghaemi & Golshan (2017) recommended the effective use of Telegram as a social network for teaching English vocabulary among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners. Second, Iksan & Saufian (2017) concluded that the use of Telegram became the latest innovation that could solve the problems in the teaching and learning process. Third, Abu-Ayfah (2020) revealed that most EFL students perceived Telegram as a useful tool for English vocabulary learning. Fourth, Wiranegara & Hairi (2020) discussed the significant result of the use of Telegram application to achieve the effective learning process of English language class during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the search and limitation of the research, there is still little research about students' response to the use of Telegram at junior high school. Therefore, the study aims to investigate students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic at junior high school.

The differences between the previous studies with the current study are on the variable, subject of research, and research methodology. Those earlier studies are relevant to this study, so all of them can be used as references. In short, the questions of this research can be formulated as:

- 1) How is students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 2) What are the obstacles that the students experience when applying Telegram Messenger in English class?

METHOD

Design

This study employed a survey procedure since the purposes of this research were to find out the students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the obstacles they experienced when applying this application in English class. The procedure was adopted from Suwartono (2014). Furthermore, this research employs a quantitative approach with descriptive statistics by Sugiyono (2015). Besides, the research data are in the form of numbers, and the analysis uses statistics. Meanwhile, descriptive statistics are statistics used to analyze data by describing the data that have been collected as they are without intending to make general conclusions (Sugiyono, 2015).

Population and Sample

The study was conducted at the beginning of semester 2 in the academic year 2020/2021 (January 2021). Besides intending to answer the research questions, it was also aimed to evaluate the teaching and learning process of semester 1. The population of this research was the ninth grade at SMP Negeri 1 Kawunganten consisting of 217 students. The convenience sampling technique was applied, for it is suitable for this pandemic situation. Suwartono (2014) explained that convenience sampling, which is also called incidental or opportunity sampling, is a sampling technique based on access limitations, and it is included in the probability sampling. In this study, the respondents were 155 students, and the percentage of the respondents was 71% of the total population.

Instrument

A close-ended questionnaire was applied as the instrument in this research to collect the data. As Suwartono (2014) stated, a questionnaire is often used for polls and surveys involving a vast population, and it can serve for description and measurement. The advantages of this close-ended questionnaire are: (1) it is easier in scoring or quantifying, and (2) it facilitates the respondents easier to complete the questionnaire (Suwartono, 2014). The questionnaire used in

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this study was adapted from Muslimah's (2018) research. Moreover, the questionnaire contained 19 items, in which items for number 1 to 15 were used to find out the students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic, while items for number 16 to 19 were used to identify the obstacles they experienced when applying this application in English class.

Data Collecting Technique

In this research, the questionnaire was distributed online through Google Form, and the students were requested to fill in by selecting one of the available options. The research applied some steps to draw up the questionnaire, such as (1) defining the variable before constructing questions or statements and (2) determining the indicators that would be measured. Further, the outline of the questionnaire could be created as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The Outline of Questionnaire

Variable	Indicators	Number of Items	Total
Students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic	1. Ease of access	1-4	4
	2. Perceived usefulness	5-8	4
	3. Communication and interaction	9-12	4
	4. Students' satisfaction	13-16	4
	5. Students' obstacles	17-19	3
Total			19

For the next step, those indicators were developed into questions or statements. The list of questionnaire items is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. List of Questionnaire Items

Indicators	Number of Items	Statements
1. Ease of access	Q1	I was able to install and sign in to Telegram Messenger.
	Q2	I could access the lesson materials.
	Q3	I could receive and send assignments.
	Q4	This application can be used easily and accessed anytime and anywhere.
2. Perceived usefulness	Q5	Telegram can be used to share the lesson materials in the form of pdf, ppt, video files, links to websites, or images.
	Q6	Telegram is an excellent application for social interaction (teacher and students, as well as student and student) in the English learning process.

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Indicators	Number of Items	Statements
3. Communication and interaction	Q7	The learning activities helped me to understand, evaluate, and apply what I had learned.
	Q8	The teacher provided useful feedback in learning.
	Q9	I felt comfortable expressing my opinions through Telegram in the English learning process.
	Q10	The teacher helped the students to keep engaged and participate in the discussion.
	Q11	I felt comfortable interacting with the teacher and other students in the English learning process via Telegram.
4. Students' satisfaction	Q12	The teacher is enthusiastic about teaching and explaining the materials via Telegram.
	Q13	Telegram is my first choice in active learning during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other methods.
	Q14	I would recommend this learning method to be applied to other appropriate subjects.
	Q15	I like learning using Telegram because this application has many advantages.
5. Students' obstacles	Q16	I enjoy learning English via Telegram.
	Q17	I found an internet connection problem in accessing Telegram.
	Q18	I found difficulties in understanding the lesson materials through Telegram.
	Q19	I felt that my concentration and motivation to study decreased during the e-learning.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used in this study was descriptive statistics. It means that the data were statistically analyzed and interpreted descriptively. Thus, after collecting the data, those were counted and analyzed statistically. After that, the data were computed to know the percentage. This study used a five-point Likert scale for the questionnaire because it was recommended to accommodate the response. It can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. The Scoring of Likert Scale

No	Option	Description	Score
1	SA	Strongly Agree	5
2	A	Agree	4
3	N	Neutral	3
4	D	Disagree	2
5	SD	Strongly Disagree	1

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Furthermore, the mean was calculated to know the result of the students' response on whether or not the use of Telegram Messenger was effective and to determine the students' obstacles when applying this application. Here, the data were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel. At the last stage, those data were categorized and concluded based on the criteria shown in Table 4 and Table 5 to describe the research result. For the criteria, since all students should complete the questionnaire, the lowest lower limit value is 1. Therefore, the criteria of the effectiveness level category in using Telegram based on students' response and the category of the obstacles that students experienced are as follows.

Table 4. Effectiveness Level Category in Using Telegram Based on Students' Response

Range	Interpretation
1 - 20%	Strongly not effective
21 - 40%	Not effective
41 - 60%	Not really effective
61 - 80%	Effective
81 - 100%	Strongly effective

Table 5. Category of the Obstacles that Students Experienced

Range	Interpretation
1 - 20%	Very low
21 - 40%	Low
41 - 60%	High enough
61 - 80%	High
81 - 100%	Very high

The whole process of presenting this article and data display were processed by MS Word and Excel. The reference system employed an offline automatic system using Mendeley Desktop (Turmudi, 2020, p. 59)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research aimed to discover the students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic and identify the obstacles they experienced when applying this application. Thus, to get the research result, the data from the questionnaire were calculated to get the percentage and the mean. Here, the research applied the following formula in order to get the result.

$$Mean = \frac{\text{the total scale}}{\text{the total score}} \times 100\%$$

Firstly, the mean of the students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger in English class was calculated as follows.

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$$Mean_1 = \frac{10,074}{12,400} \times 100\% = 81\%$$

From the above total mean, the mean of each indicator of the students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger was identified as follows.

$$Mean_{1.1} = \frac{2,648}{3,100} \times 100\% = 85\%$$

$$Mean_{1.2} = \frac{2,493}{3,100} \times 100\% = 80\%$$

$$Mean_{1.3} = \frac{2,400}{3,100} \times 100\% = 77\%$$

$$Mean_{1.4} = \frac{2,533}{3,100} \times 100\% = 82\%$$

Based on those calculations, the average score of the students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger was 81%. After the result was consulted with Table 4, it shows that the score was in the "strongly effective" category. It means 81% of the students thought that Telegram Messenger was beneficial for the students and very effective to be used in English class, as well as the students felt satisfied with Telegram Messenger. In detail, this research resulted that generally, the ninth-grade students felt accessing Telegram Messenger was easy (85%), Telegram Messenger perceived usefulness (80%), Telegram Messenger made the communication and interaction easier and comfortable (77%), and the students were satisfied with the use of Telegram Messenger (82%).

Furthermore, to know the mean of the students' obstacles, the same formula as the previous calculation was used.

$$Mean_2 = \frac{1,632}{2,325} \times 100\% = 70\%$$

Based on the previous calculation, the average score of the students' obstacles was 70%. Further, the result was consulted with Table 5. It shows that the level of difficulty was "high", which means 70% of the students felt that they still faced some obstacles when applying Telegram Messenger in English class, although they also thought the use of Telegram Messenger was useful and effective.

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In detail, the explanation of each item's percentage for the students' response to the use of Telegram and the obstacles they faced is attached to Table 6.

Table 6. The Percentage of Each Item

Indicators	Number of Items	Percentage	Category
1. Ease of access	Q1	92%	Strongly effective
	Q2	82%	Strongly effective
	Q3	84%	Strongly effective
	Q4	84%	Strongly effective
2. Perceived usefulness	Q5	88%	Strongly effective
	Q6	78%	Effective
	Q7	75%	Effective
	Q8	81%	Strongly effective
3. Communication and interaction	Q9	71%	Effective
	Q10	81%	Strongly effective
	Q11	74%	Effective
	Q12	83%	Strongly effective
4. Students' satisfaction	Q13	84%	Strongly effective
	Q14	79%	Effective
	Q15	85%	Strongly effective
	Q16	78%	Effective
5. Students' obstacles	Q17	70%	High
	Q18	68%	High
	Q19	73%	High

From the above table, the result was visualized using a graphic organizer. Thus, the chart was used to describe each item's percentage, and it can be seen in Figure 1.

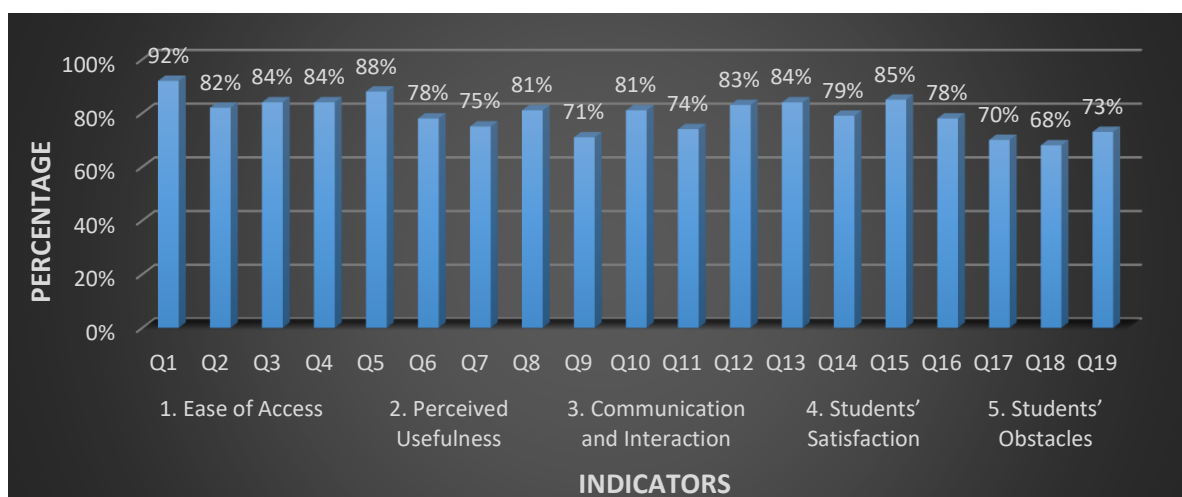


Figure 1. Chart of Each Item's Percentage

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From beginning to end, this study aimed to discover the students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger and identify the obstacles they experienced when applying this application in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic in SMP Negeri 1 Kawunganten. This section presents the research results' overall descriptions in a set of conclusions.

First, the result of the students' response to the use of Telegram Messenger in English class during the COVID-19 pandemic was in the percentage of 81%. It means that Telegram Messenger was beneficial for the students and very effective to be used in English class, as well as they felt satisfied with this application. Further, the highest percentage was in Q1 (92%), which was included in the ease of access indicator. It stated that the students were able to install and sign in to Telegram Messenger easily. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage was in Q9 (71%), which was included in the communication and interaction indicator. It stated that the students felt comfortable expressing their opinions through Telegram Messenger in the English learning process.

Second, the result of the obstacles students experienced when applying Telegram Messenger in English class was 70%. It means that the students still faced some obstacles when using Telegram Messenger in English class, and the percentage indicated that the level of difficulty was high. Moreover, the highest percentage was in Q19 (73%), stating that the students felt their concentration and motivation to study decreased during the e-learning. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage was in Q18 (68%), saying that the students found difficulties in understanding the lesson materials through Telegram.

From those results, the present study recommends the effective use of Telegram Messenger in English class. However, it is suggested for the students to use this application creatively and properly in order to make the learning process better. Meanwhile, for the teachers who want to use this application in their classes, it is suggested to give more attention and help the students so that they will not find some difficulties in understanding the lesson materials through Telegram Messenger. Finally, since the current study was conducted in a relatively

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short time, for other researchers, it is expected to conduct related research better by allocating more plenty of time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, we would like to express our greatest gratitude to Allah SWT, the Almighty, for giving us the blessing and the strength to complete this study. We also thank the principal of SMP Negeri 1 Kawunganten, Aji Hidayat, S.Pd., for providing us the opportunity to conduct the research. Finally, we give great appreciation to the ninth-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Kawunganten who participated in the study.

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