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2021**MEANS OF COMMUNICATION IN THE PANDEMIC: ARABIC LANGUAGE  
LEARNING USING THE WHATSAPP APPLICATION MEDIA****SARANA KOMUNIKASI DI MASA PANDEMI: PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA  
ARAB MENGGUNAKAN MEDIA APLIKASI WHATSAPP**Elya Nur Hana<sup>1</sup>, Muassomah Muassomah<sup>2</sup><sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang  
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Timur 65144\*Corresponding author. Email: [Elyanurhana@gmail.com](mailto:Elyanurhana@gmail.com)**Abstract**

The COVID-19 outbreak raises serious concerns for the global education system. Efforts to contain COVID-19 prompted the unscheduled school closures of more than 100 countries around the world. COVID-19 has broke the education system including disruption of learning, and decreased access to educational facilities, many educators and students are relying on technology to ensure continuous online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aimed at discussing Whatsapp as a means of communication in learning Arabic during the pandemic. This study used a qualitative description method and takes place in class VIII-C of MTs Miftahul Ulum which is located in Singosari. The data was extracted using observation and interviews. The results of the study show that the effects of COVID-19 require WFH based education (*Work From Home*), so it requires a means of communication, one of which is Whatsapp, although there are some obstacles at least learning continues effectively.

**Keyword:** *Arabic Language Learning, Whatsapp Application, Communication, Covid-19*

**Abstrak**

Wabah COVID-19 menimbulkan kekhawatiran serius bagi sistem pendidikan global. Upaya untuk menahan COVID-19 mendorong penutupan sekolah tidak terjadwal lebih dari 100 negara di seluruh dunia. COVID-19 berdampak buruk pada pendidikan termasuk gangguan pembelajaran, dan penurunan akses fasilitas pendidikan, banyak pendidik dan siswa yang mengandalkan teknologi untuk memastikan pembelajaran online yang berkelanjutan selama pandemi COVID-19. Studi ini akan membahas mengenai whatsapp sebagai salah satu sarana komunikasi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa

Arab di masa pandemic. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskripsi kualitatif dan berlangsung dalam kelas VIII-C MTs Miftahul Ulum yang teletak di Singosari. Data digali dengan menggunakan observasi dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa efek COVID-19 mengharuskan pendidikan berbasis WFH (*Work From Home*, sehingga membutuhkan sarana komunikasi, salah satunya adalah whatsapp, walaupun ada beberapa kendala setidaknya pembelajaran tetap berlangsung secara efektif.

**Kata kunci:** Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab, Aplikasi Whatsapp, Komunikasi, Covid-19

### **Introduction**

The Covid-19 pandemic which has spread since early 2020 in the middle of March, (Yuliana, 2020) has had a major impact on human life, starting from religious, economic, social aspects, even the biggest impact is the impact on education aspect. (Siahaan, 2020) The principle of social distancing, which is the basis for implementing learning at home, by utilizing information technology that applies suddenly, (Mastur et al., 2002) results in educators, students, and parents being surprised and unprepared. The shift in the learning system which was originally face-to-face learning, is now all learning done online has caused obstacles (E, 2014) Information Technology is a solution in the implementation of online education. There are many information media used by educators to carry out online learning, including e-learning, Edmodo, EdLink, Moodle, Google Classroom, Google Form, Schoology, Whatsapp, and zoom. (Muslimah, 2020)

Face-to-face classes were suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic, to communicate with each other, of course, we are a means so that perceptions between the two can be received through communication. It is indispensable in all aspects of human activity. Through communication, humans can express thoughts, feelings, hopes, and impressions of each other. Communication also encourages humans to establish social relationships in a social group and allows for *feedback*. (Ismanto, 2013)

Communication is the process of delivering messages carried out by individuals that are conveyed to others using the media, which results in special impacts. (Liliwari, 2009) According to Type and Kelly that communication is a process in which a person (the communicator) provides stimuli (sometimes through symbols of words) intending to improve or build the behavior of others. (Vardiansyah, 2008) Communication activities are communicative and persuasive activities, which means that other people not only understand and know, but other people want to acknowledge other people's opinions, entrust them, and carry out activities or actions, etc. (Morrissan, 2013) Communication methods are used so that communication between individuals is chained effectively. The definition of a method is a technique used to do something. Communication methods, often known as communication techniques, are used to transmit information from

communicators to communicants by utilizing several media. By using this technique, it is hoped that everyone can communicate with each other effectively and use it appropriately. (Mulyana, 2005)

Stanton suggests five goals of individual communication, including 1) persuading others, 2) forming or operating personal relationships, 3) seeking various types of knowledge, 4) helping others, 5) playing or joking. (Liliweri, 2011) For the communication process to run effectively, three absolute elements are needed that must be met in the conditions for the communication process to occur, namely: (Nurjaman, Kadar, 2012) *First, the communicator*: the person who conveys the message to the person who receives the message, can be an individual or a group. *Second, the communicant*: the person who receives the message from the person who delivers the message. *Third, channel/media*: means used by communicators to communicate in sending messages.

Nurjaman and Uman said that each of these elements has a very close relationship and is interdependent in determining the success of communication. Communicating is not easy. This happens due to several things, one of which is the disruption of communication. There are two types of obstacles in communicating according to their nature, namely: (Effendy, 2002) 1) *mechanical interference (mechanical, channel, noise)*, namely obstacles caused by communication channels or physical noise, for example; unclear letters, reversed letters, torn newspaper pages or the sound of the audience when someone leads a meeting, 2) *semantic noise*, namely obstacles that make understanding of communication messages disabled. Semantics is knowledge about the true meaning of words or changes in the meaning of words. Everyone can have different meanings of the same word symbol.

In this context, the reality and reality in online learning Arabic are constrained by several things, including unsupported signal connections, lack of facilities such as cellphones and laptops, increasing expenses, and an unsupportive environment. The application of online learning also makes educators rethink the models and learning methods that will be used. (Riqza & Muassomah, 2020) Initially, a teacher has prepared a learning model that will be used, they must change the learning model. Innovation and creativity of Arabic teachers are always carried out. One of them is by utilizing digital media in learning Arabic. Whatsapp media is one of the digital media that is familiar among students, WhatsApp is also the easiest medium to implement in learning Arabic. (Riqza & Muassomah, 2020)

Learning by utilizing WhatsApp can be classified into multimedia. This is because various functions used in multimedia can be found in the application. Whatsapp is like text, sound, image, and video. Multimedia learning can be defined as the integration of text, images, animation, audio, and video containing learning materials given to students. (Maksudin, 2018) Whatsapp has various features that can be used to communicate with the help of internet services. Whatsapp features include: 1) gallery to add photos, 2) contacts to enter phone numbers, 3) camera for taking photos/pictures, 4)

audio for sending voice messages (*voice notes*), 5) maps for sending various map coordinates, as well as 6) documents to include files in the form of documents. All these files can be directly sent via the Whatsapp application. These kinds of features, certainly add to the ease and pleasure of communicating through online media. (Jumiatmoko, 2016)

Whatsapp is an internet-based application that is one of the most popular developments in information technology. This internet-based application has the potential to be used as a communication medium because it makes it easier for users to communicate and interact with each other without spending a lot of money on its use. After all, WhatsApp does not use credit but uses internet data. (Pranajaya, 2017) Most Whatsapp users say the reason for choosing this application is because it is easy and not paid or free. In addition, if the use of this application is not guided and on the beach, there will be many negative things that will result in lowering the quality of life. (Pranajaya, 2017)

The benefits of using the Whatsapp group application in learning are 1) Whatsapp groups provide online collaborative learning facilities between teachers and students or fellow students both at home or school, 2) Whatsapp groups are free applications that are easy to use, 3) Whatsapp groups can be used to share comments, texts, images, videos, sounds, and documents, 4) Whatsapp groups make it easy to share announcements and publish their work in groups, 5) news and education can be easily accessed and channeled through various features of Whatsapp grub. (Barhomi, 2015)

This research is supported by several previous studies that examine online Arabic learning during a pandemic, including Lulu et al's research show that the applications that are often used are Whatsapp, google form, and google classroom. (Pimada, 2020) He added that the reason for choosing these three forms of application was used during the pandemic because it was easy to implement in learning Arabic. In addition, Makarima shows that the use of WhatsApp in learning activities serves as a means of education, an evaluation tool, and a means of connecting information. (Makarima, 2019) Halimatus Sa`diyah stated that writing skills can be implemented by updating WhatsApp social media status in three stages, including the preparation stage, the implementation stage, and also the closing stage. (Sa`diyah, 2019) This research focuses on Arabic Learning Using Whatsapp Application Media as a Communication Tool in the Pandemic Period. Many studies have been carried out, but there are still things that have not been revealed, so the objectives of this paper are: 1) How is the Implementation of Online Arabic Learning in a Pandemic Period at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari?, 2) What are the Obstacles Faced by Students and Educators in Language Learning Arabic Online in a Pandemic Period at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari?

This paper is based on several arguments. First, the role of the teacher here is only as a giver of initial direction regarding the topic of learning, while the main requirement for the millennial generation to be able to compete and face various challenges in the world during a pandemic, to be

a creative, active, and innovative person, of course, must be possessed in the soul of young people. Second, to find out some of the obstacles faced by students and educators in learning Arabic online during a pandemic at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari.

### Research Method

This paper was prepared using a qualitative descriptive method. This research is a field study conducted in class VIII-C of MTs Miftahul Ulum located in Singosari. The number of participants as many as 23 students enrolled in class VIII-C of MTs Miftahul Ulum can be described as active users of the Whatsapp social media platform. For example, a short survey conducted at the beginning of the lesson showed that all students had a WhatsApp account and were actively logged in. All of them have digital technology devices such as smartphones, so they can access digital information and data using the internet network.

The resource persons in this study were students of class VIII-C of MTs Miftahul Ulum, totaling 23 people, one teacher in Arabic, and one homeroom teacher. Resource persons were selected randomly from gender, as well as students who have the highest ability or who are moderately capable. This research tool includes 1) Observation, used to collect information about the online teaching process contained in MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari 2) Interviews with students and teachers were conducted to explore data related to the form of online learning interactions contained in MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari.

After data collection, data validation was carried out using descriptive analysis techniques. Data analysis techniques can be carried out in three steps, namely: first, *data reduction*, namely categorizing, directing, deleting, and organizing data that is not needed; second, the presentation of data (*data display*), namely making a pattern of meaningful relationships and providing the possibility to conclude; and third, *conclusion drawing/verification*.

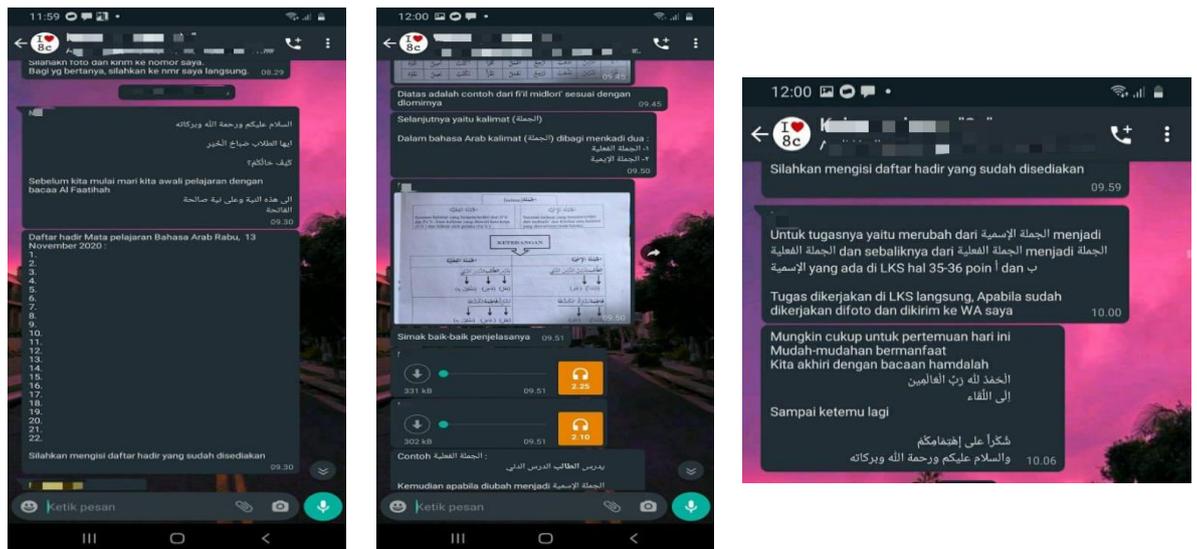
### Results and Discussion

#### a. Implementation of online Arabic learning during a pandemic at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari

Online learning during a pandemic has brought significant changes, because like it or not, students and educators are required to follow WFH rules. So that the learning pattern must be replaced with a distance system. (Rohmah & Aditya, 2020) For the learning process in schools to continue between educators and students, Whatsapp communication facilities are needed, because Whatsapp media is one of the digital media that is familiar among students besides that, Whatsapp is also the easiest medium to implement in learning Arabic. (Sanjaya et al., 2020)

The existence of educators, students, and channels/media can be said to be a condition for the communication process to occur. These three elements have a very close relationship and dependence in determining

the success of communication. In addition, do not forget the teacher's innovation in the learning process, so that it can run effectively and not boring under educational goals. Although learning is based on WFH, it will not break the enthusiasm of students in seeking knowledge. The implementation of online learning at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari uses the Whatshap application media to communicate.



Picture 1 The learning process using Whatsapp application

Initially, students are given handbooks such as LKS, PACKAGES, MODULES regarding the material that will be presented by the teacher to facilitate students' understanding of learning Arabic from the beginning to the end of the program, to facilitate students' understanding. Every week Arabic language material will be given which includes oral learning and is presented through Whatsapp groups, this is very effective and makes students more active in learning because in Whatsapp groups this also hones students' dialogue or communication skills with educators to harmonize one another destination.

Learning materials not only about the question and answer dialogue between students and teachers but also of the ability to memorize or read the Arabic text that can be sent to students via voice (*voice note*) in the group or private chat via Whatsapp sent to educators. This Whatsapp group also makes it easier for educators and students to discuss without any time limit in learning. In the Whatsapp group, there is a question and answer session for questions that will be asked by educators, and any student can have the opportunity to answer them. In addition, educators can control and supervise students in discussions, if there is something that is blocking the educator has an active role as a resource person,

supervisor, and controller, in learning so that an atmosphere of active discussion will be formed during the learning period.

In this learning program, the audio is adapted to the student handbook material, so that it is easier for students to accept the material because listening to the audio that has been presented while opening the handbook will make it easier and strengthen students' understanding in understanding the material. This learning is very time effective because it can be heard and studied wherever and whenever students want to repeat learning. In addition, in this online learning, students are less enthusiastic in learning because they only use applications without face-to-face meetings at school.

b. Obstacles Faced by Students and Educators in Online Arabic Learning during a Pandemic Period at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari

In learning Arabic online at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari, several obstacles occurred including:

*First, the* lack of adequate infrastructure owned by students. This is indicated by a less supportive signal connection. Signal connection is unpredictable, usually, in remote environments, it is difficult to find an adequate signal. As said by one of the students named Nurul:

*“At the turn of the second hour, the lights went out so the wifi at my house also turns off.”*

From its illustration, if the power goes out, the wifi connection will also be disconnected. In addition to the lack of facilities, in everyday life, the way to facilitate someone in meeting educational needs is not the same, maybe something can be said to be fulfilled, or vice versa. Learning Arabic requires an android phone to be able to install the Whatsapp application and support the Arabic writing keyboard. If you only have an old-school cell phone, you can't use it to take Arabic lessons online. Most students do not have their cellphones, many use one cellphone to be together as well as use their parents' cellphones. So that sometimes cellphones are also used by parents which result in learning that cannot be followed optimally. As one of the disciples experienced, they said that,

*“The cellphone that I use in online learning uses my parents' cell phone. Because my parents still feel that I am too small to use a cell phone without their knowledge. So I didn't buy a cell phone with my parents.”*

*Both* expenses are increasing, according to Pinky one of the students (interview on 24 November 2020) that, I got 10GB of internet assistance only once during the pandemic, and I think it's still lacking when used in daily online learning. I have not worked ma'am, so I can't

make my own money and still ask my parents. I bought my data package but used my parents' money. See that, Whatsapp is an application that is not paid but also requires an internet connection. Internet connection is also not cheap. Not to mention the continuous use resulting in the internet running out quickly. Internet assistance from schools in the form of 10GB during the covid pandemic is quite helpful, but still not fully sufficient.

*Third, the environment is not supportive, parents who cannot monitor their children in using digital media can reduce the quality of life of students, so like it or not, parents must also be involved in online learning. In addition, parents must also provide learning directions for their children. Parents should spend a lot of time when their children are studying, although sometimes there are parents who do not help their children in learning because of the busy schedule of parents. As experienced by Ersal (student) that,*

*'Parents are too busy with homework, so every time I can't understand in learning I can't ask him. In addition, my parents also did not understand learning Arabic, so I found it difficult to understand it.'*

*Fourth, the weakness of media literacy. The student said that,*

*'I (student) do not know the google form application, google classroom, e-learning, etc. I've only heard of the app, but I still can't figure out how to use it. Even the school has determined that during online learning we only use Whatsapp because we don't need to learn how to use Whatsapp first.'*

From the above statement, it can be said that many students are not familiar with using digital media, it can be said that knowledge is underdeveloped in the 4.0 era. So it is difficult for educators to provide learning if they are not guided in utilizing digital media. That way the MTs Miftahul Ulum school establishes online learning through Whatsapp media.

*Fifth misunderstanding, A very interesting example is given by the student,*

*'I (students) prefer offline learning because they can meet face to face without online learning. When the teacher explained the lesson I was confused about the task given. so I work with my understanding. And the result of my assignment was wrong, the task should have been asked to complete my question instead of interpreting it. I prefer face-to-face learning because learning goes faster, besides that I can also meet friends at school.'*

From the above it can be concluded, Misunderstanding in communicating can be said to be a natural thing. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, distance is created. So that it results in extra energy in its delivery, the Whatsapp facility is very helpful in delivering learning. However, understanding Arabic can be said to be confusing. Sometimes students do not understand the teacher's orders, for example, students are asked to complete the reading, but interpret the contents of the reading.

*The sixth is passive learning, according to the experience of the Arabic teacher,*

*"In the learning process, students are less enthusiastic, so it is difficult for teachers to review student progress, besides that sometimes some students do not submit assignments promptly so the teacher will provide opportunities for students to rework. This causes the teacher to be delayed in giving grades. Teachers conduct personal chats with students about assignments that have not been done and sometimes teachers also communicate with parents of students so that they can monitor students from a distance."*

Concluded, learning Arabic through Whatsapp can be said to be passive learning because teachers and students cannot meet face to face directly, only observe words/symbols without observing gestures or mimics in delivery. This causes students to feel bored. The teacher will also find it difficult to control the child's progress if the learning is passive. Teachers must make innovations in the use of Whatsapp media so that learning can run effectively.

## **Discussion**

Based on the findings above, some comparisons need to be discussed, including:

*First*, the author found a form of electronic media in learning Arabic during the pandemic at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari, one of which was Whatsapp. The reason for choosing this form of application was used during the pandemic because it was easy to implement in learning Arabic. in line with the opinion of Luluk et al (Pimada, 2020) which shows that the applications that are often used are WhatsApp, Google Form, and Google Classroom. In utilizing the WhatsApp application during a pandemic, it is not easy, some obstacles arise unpredictably, namely: the lack of adequate infrastructure owned by students, increasing expenses, an unsupportive environment, weak media literacy, misunderstandings in communication, and learning passively.

*Second*, the implementation of online Arabic learning during the pandemic at first, the teacher transformed teaching materials to students, there were questions and answers and dialogue between students and educators, in addition to the ability to memorize or read Arabic texts sent via

voice messages. Behind the implementation of online learning through Whatsapp media there is communication between educators and students, between educators and parents of students. This insight is closely related to the findings (Makarima, 2019) which show that the use of Whatsapp in learning activities functions as a means of education, an evaluation tool, and a means of connecting information.

*Third*, Whatsapp can be used in online learning which is not only used for writing skills, such as opinion (Sa'diyah, 2019) which states that writing skills can be implemented with status updates on Whatsapp social media with three stages, including the preparation stage, the implementation stage, and also closing stage. The author focuses his research on Arabic language learning for reading, writing, memorizing vocabulary, and so on.

### **Conclusion**

The process of learning Arabic at MTs Miftahul Ulum Singosari was carried out well, although there were obstacles. It is a natural thing to apply online learning which was originally face-to-face, requiring adaptation in its application. The existence of educators, students, and digital media makes the communication process run effectively, only requires innovation from the teacher so that learning can be carried out following the objectives, and harmonize in one understanding. That way, Whatsapp can be used by educators to communicate during a pandemic. Whatsapp media is one of the digital media that is familiar among students. In addition, Whatsapp is also one of the easiest media to implement in learning Arabic.

Utilizing the Whatsapp application in the world of education is not easy, because of the distance created, besides that it causes unpredictable obstacles. Therefore, teachers should have a lot of innovation in learning so that learning is not monotonous, and teachers should have many plans if the first plan fails. Teachers must be ready to face obstacles with various appropriate solutions so that learning can be achieved as expected.

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