

Integrating WhatsApp LX tasks into vocabulary learning: A pilot study

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Abstract

Research on the use of WhatsApp in vocabulary learning has gained popularity in recent years, however, no study investigated the combination of the app and communication tasks in vocabulary pedagogy. This pilot study explored how WhatsApp additional language (LX) tasks were integrated into vocabulary learning in Indonesian secondary school context. A needs analysis had been carried out prior to the pilot to identify possible tasks through interviewing two English teachers and ten students from two high schools and analysing the English syllabus of grade eleven. In the pilot, an English teacher and thirty-one students from one of the schools were invited to participate. Data were collected through WhatsApp observation, interviews, and teaching and learning journals. The data were analysed using corrective feedback (CF) indicators and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that during WhatsApp interactions, students negotiated meaning and form using some CF indicators such as explicit correction, recast, clarification request, confirmation check, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and self-repair. Other than the indicators, the students also used WhatsApp picture/sticker, emoji/emoticon, and 'mention' and 'quote and reply' features to support the negotiation works. In general, WhatsApp vocabulary tasks were seen as effective, useful, and motivating. The tasks were also deemed as supporting students to be autonomous. Finally, some challenges of utilising WhatsApp vocabulary tasks were related to students' participation, time to carry out task, and understanding of task instruction. Reflection on task design has been made for the future study.

Keywords: additional language (LX); communication tasks; needs analysis; vocabulary learning; WhatsApp