

## The Power of Telegram as a Digital English Learning Media

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### Abstract

To actualize the transforming teaching and learning for the global era, teachers as well as students need to adjust themselves to digital media. It is important because by having digital media in the classroom the teaching and learning will be meaningful, effective and attractive. One way to achieve it is by using Telegram. Telegram is a powerful digital media which can be used anywhere and anytime. This paper is proposed to describe the use and effect of Telegram and why it is very powerful to use in teaching and learning process. The writer also conducted small research to ask the students' opinions when they were using Telegram. The result was almost all students were interested in applying Telegram as an English learning media. It is hoped that this paper will give a new insight for teachers or educators so we can help our students to be independent and autonomous learners.

*Keywords - Telegram, Digital media*

### Introduction

When we talk about the classroom, one does not have to refer to the traditional one, where the teacher stands in front of the students, surrounded by four walls. Classrooms nowadays have extended beyond the former definition. Teachers do not have to see their students face to face in order for the teaching to happen (Akram, Rizwan, Sattar, Hadi, & Meo, 2018). The room has become invisible. The boundaries, broaden. This phenomenon now changes the learning process in the classroom. Teachers are required to be more creative in facilitating students to broaden their knowledge and ways of learning. Moreover with the echoing of industrial revolutions 4.0, unintentionally, students are also forced to adapt themselves to this change. One way to assist students to face this phenomenon is by having online learning (Dexway, 2019) (Arifani, Natchiar, Khaja, Suryanti, & Wardhono, 2019). One of the media that can be used as online learning to help the learner in learning English as a foreign language is Telegram (Heidar & Kaviani, 2016).

Telegram is an online messaging app that works just like popular messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Viber, and Facebook Messenger. According to Heidar & Kaviani (2016), Telegram is now considered as one of the most famous platforms online social networks among students media (Heidar & Kaviani, 2016). Telegram can be used and installed just like other messaging

apps. We can download it from PlayStore. After flipping through the welcome screen, We will be prompted to enter our mobile phone number and then adding our name and display picture if we need it. The next step is to find friends and start a chat (just askgemalto.com, 2018) (Gemalto, 2019). Telegram can run on mobile phones or laptops as desktop applications. According to Wardhono and Spanos (Wardhono & Spanos, 2018) Telegram is the most attractive and supportive mobile application on its features than other mobile applications because Telegram is not only used for a chat but also has capability to send files of any type. Moreover, Telegram also has channels so that we can send our materials without worrying about the students' chat because they can't send anything on it just downloading the file. And the most wonderful thing about using Telegram is that its programmable bots allow for automatic delivery of testable items and feedback to learner responses. With the help of a program called Chatfuel, we programmed a bot to send instructions and testing items to students (Wardhono & Spanos, 2018). For managing the classroom activities we can use a group chat as a group class.

Telegram was launched in 2013 by brothers Nikolai and Pavel Durov, who previously founded the Russian social network VKontakte, but had to leave the company after it was taken over by Mail.ru Group (Abbas, 2017).

The most beneficial feature from telegram is it has cloud storage it means that all our messages, photos, documents, video and media files will be saved on Telegram cloud. we can log out and log in any number of times from any number of devices simultaneously without losing any data, so we don't need to worry about backup and restore as long as we use the same account. Indeed, we can view and review the active sessions and see on which devices are we logged in now. So that we can download any file any time anywhere and the point is our device memory is saved from additional memory to back up our file because the file has already stored in the cloud.

In addition, Telegram is based on the open-source platform and it is completely free service without any payments but has a fast interface. Telegram has gained the popularity status that it becomes the most downloaded messaging apps in the Google Play Store. Telegram has earned the similar most popular social network among free downloaded apps in more than forty countries, including Germany and the United States, beating other social network apps such as Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, and Kik. (Appleapple.top, 2019)

### *Applying Telegram in education*

There are many ways how to apply telegram in the teaching and learning process but here will be described applying this media to the students at State Vocational High School Malang. Here they are the teaching procedure based on the features of Telegram:

#### **1. Group chat**

The first thing that the teacher should do is creating Telegram group as a group class. The function of this group is to manage the students' activity while using Telegram. According to Telegram.org, Telegram groups are a powerful tool for building communities and can support up to 200,000 members each. The students and teacher can use groups to share photos, students' assignment and keep in touch with their teacher. Telegram also has many features that make communication in groups easy no matter their size or purpose. We do not need to save the name of each student because Telegram automatically shows the name of the student as the same as username when the time they log in Telegram, so the teacher should give instruction to the student to type their real full name. By this group, we can also chat with the students privately by clicking the name of the student in the group. It is important and needs to do to give student feedback or give appreciation about his job or other thing. We can see the format of the group class in figure 1 below and also we can access the group through our Telegram or browser at <https://t.me/ximmaaye>.

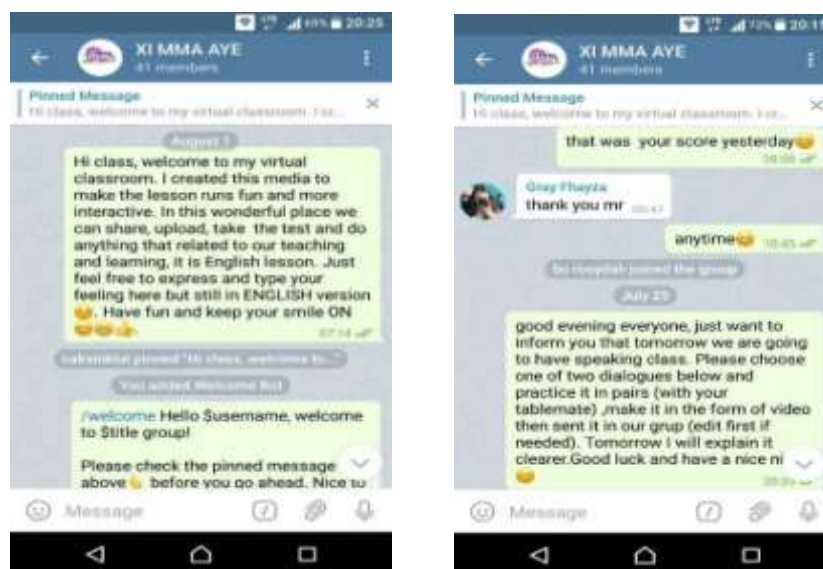


Figure 1. Group class

## 2. Telegraph

To enhance the students' assignment activity, we can use Telegraph. The students can write their writing through this feature and send it the link to the group class. Telegraph is a tool for Telegram that allows us to create richly formatted publications with photos, videos, and other embedded content such as Youtube (Smykalov, 2018) and it is usually called by anonymous blogging. Telegraph publications appear in Telegraph with an Instant View button, allowing readers to open articles with zero page-load time it means Telegraph works instantly without launch the browser first then waiting for everything is loaded. We also can use this to write the material explanation and send it to our Bot.

In addition, Telegraph allows us to use it without requiring registration. Just open <https://telegra.ph> and start typing in a Telegraph interface then click Publish and put the link in the group, Bot or our channel.

By putting the link of Telegraph posts in a group class, Bot or channel, it is easily accessible for teachers and students on a single website and it is automatically synchronized if we edit the content of Telegraph. (Telegramguides.com, 2016).



Figure 2 Using of Telegraph

## 3. Channel

Channel is a tool for broadcasting public messages to large audiences. Channel can have an unlimited number of members (Telegram.org, 2016). New members can see the entire

message history in a channel once they join. We create a channel to upload the materials that the students will download any file they need at any time and anywhere. This channel is like our virtual library on a cloud for storing and besides that we can upload unlimited files in it. The student just can download the material through this channel but can not chat so that the file will not be interrupted with their chat messages. Consider that we have to create the channel in public mode and this channel will have a username so that anyone can find it in Telegram search and join. But if make the channel in private mode, the channel is closed societies and we need to be added by the creator or get an invite link to join.

The teacher as a creator of a channel can broadcast messages, delete any messages, add members, remove members, change the channel's name, profile image, and link, as well as delete the channel completely. The creator can also add and remove administrators to help manage the channel (Telegram.org, 2016). For more explanation, we can see figure 3.

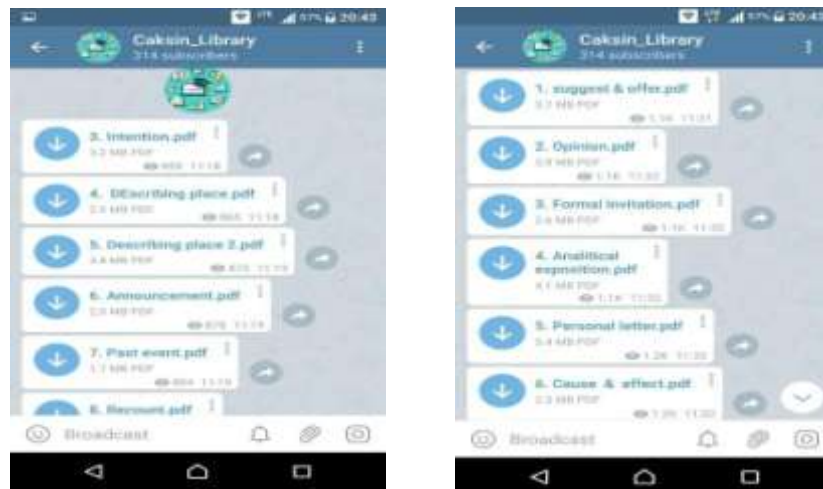


Figure 3. Telegram channel

#### 4. Bot and its function

A Telegram bot is an application hosted on a server that uses Telegram bot API to connect to Telegram Messenger clients (Zaff. H, 2017). If we want to create a bot, it will be guided by the BotFather and we just need to follow a few simple steps. Once we've created a bot and received our authorization token, the BotFather will guide us on what to do next (Wardhono & Spanos, 2018). We can upload photo, sound, video to the bot or

download them from the bot to our computers or mobile phones.

The bot app running on the server can be anything, from a simple conversation app, a powerful search engine, a large multimedia library, a problem-solving machine to anything you can imagine (Zaff. H, 2017) The awesome advantage of Telegram bots is they have zero-install requirements and run seamlessly on all computer platforms where Telegram Messenger but we just click start then we can run it easily.

Telegram bot is like a virtual robot which programmed with a set of instructions and answer or interact with the user. We create bot to make the lesson more interactive because the students can interact with the bot that is like a teacher robot. The students just simply click the material menu that they need and read the material explanation or watch the learning videos that already embedded in it. Moreover, Students also can take the quiz through this bot. The format of this quiz is multiple-choice, simple question and multiple answer question. The example of English education bot are @EnglishForGradeXIbot and @English\_ForGradeX\_bot. These bot contain all material and quiz for a year for Vocational High School. So the students can read and learn the materials through Telegram whenever and wherever they are. See figure 4 below.

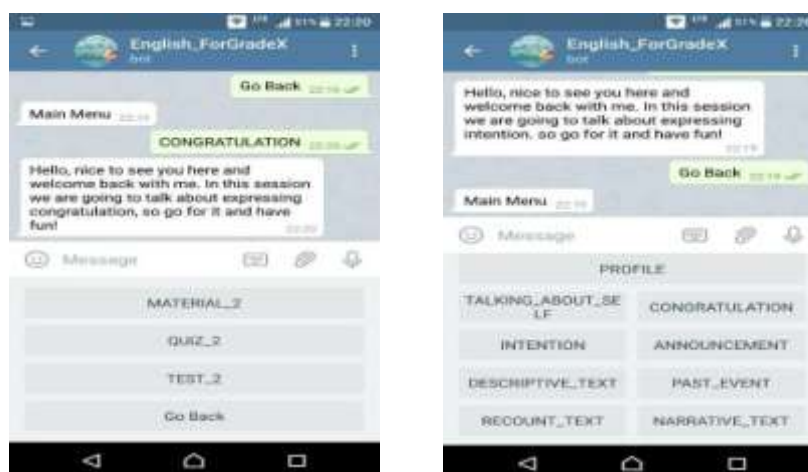


Figure 4. English Telegram bot

### ***Students' Testimony about the use of Telegram***

The use of Telegram as digital English learning media can help students to gain attention and maintain students' interest in the teaching and learning process because the students have already become familiar with their mobile phone and almost the students have their own mobile phone. This media also can build bridges between students' knowledge and the learning objectives of the course because they feel free to operate their mobile phone while learning the topic. It is also

related to their characteristic that they are generation Z who are inseparable from technology, can't live without internet, want to be a part of learning process, prefer hands-on experience to listening to the teachers (Wardhono, 2018). In addition, Using Telegram media engages students, motivates interest in the subject matter and illustrates the relevance of many concepts. This condition can be shown by the students' statement about Telegram as English learning media. Erick Nurcahyono (XI grade of Multimedia Department) said that he likes using Telegram because he can access learning materials faster than other applications. Avril Cahyo R (XI grade of Multimedia Department) also said that the benefit of Telegram is it doesn't need more room in the phone and also doesn't spend much internet data. Moreover, Nanda Widyaningsih (XI grade of Multimedia Department) commented that by using Telegram, learning material can be delivered and accessed individually so that it is easier to be understood.

## Conclusion

Digital learning media allows students to learn in a more efficient and effective way. Language learning is evolving due to the usage of instant messaging applications like Telegram becoming a need for students (Wardhono & Spanos, 2018). From the explanation above it can be concluded that this paper has already explained the function and the benefit of Telegram in the teaching and learning process as a digital media. Moreover, the response from students indicates that globally students like Telegram as one of the teaching and learning media in the current era.

After discussing the power of Telegram as a digital English learning media, it is suggested that the teachers should use Telegram and apply this media in the classroom for teaching and learning English.

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