

**“EXPLORING SELF-REGULATED ENGLISH  
VOCABULARY LEARNING THROUGH WHATSAPP: A  
STUDY OF EFL LEARNERS AT A UNIVERSITY IN  
PEKALONGAN”**

**A THESIS**

Submitted to fulfill one of the Requirement for *Sarjana* Degree  
in English Education Department



By:

Reza Rahman

2519127

**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID  
PEKALONGAN**

**2025**

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PEKALONGAN**

**2025**

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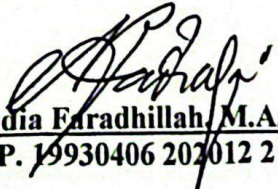
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Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatian bapak/Ibu, saya sampaikan terima kasih.

*Wassalamu'alaikum W.W.*

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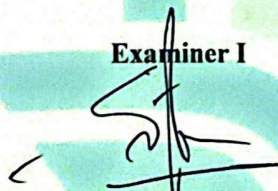
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## MOTTO

*“Lakukan apa yang harus dilakukan, teruslah bergerak, dan  
tetaplah hidup untuk menghidupi.”*

**Reza Rahman**





## ABSTRAK

Meskipun WhatsApp telah banyak diintegrasikan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, penelitian yang mendalam mengenai bagaimana pembelajar EFL mengatur sendiri pembelajaran kosakata masih terbatas di konteks perguruan tinggi di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pola keterlibatan mahasiswa EFL dalam pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris yang diatur secara mandiri melalui WhatsApp, serta mengidentifikasi tantangan yang mereka hadapi. Penelitian ini merujuk pada model pembelajaran yang diatur sendiri (SRL). Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, dengan data dikumpulkan melalui refleksi diri dan wawancara semi terstruktur, dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Partisipan terdiri dari tiga mahasiswa EFL di sebuah universitas di Pekalongan yang menggunakan WhatsApp dalam pembelajaran kosakata secara mandiri. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para pembelajar terlibat aktif dalam seluruh fase SRL, meskipun mereka menghadapi berbagai tantangan baik secara pedagogis maupun psikologis. Penelitian ini memiliki keterbatasan pada jumlah partisipan yang kecil, durasi pengumpulan data yang singkat, dan fokus yang belum mencakup perbandingan jenis kosakata yang dipelajari. Oleh karena itu, disarankan agar penelitian selanjutnya melibatkan partisipan yang lebih beragam, memperpanjang durasi studi, serta mengeksplorasi strategi regulasi diri berdasarkan jenis kosakata yang dipelajari.

***Kata kunci:*** Pembelajaran Regulasi Diri, Kosakata, WhatsApp, Pembelajar EFL

## ABSTRACT

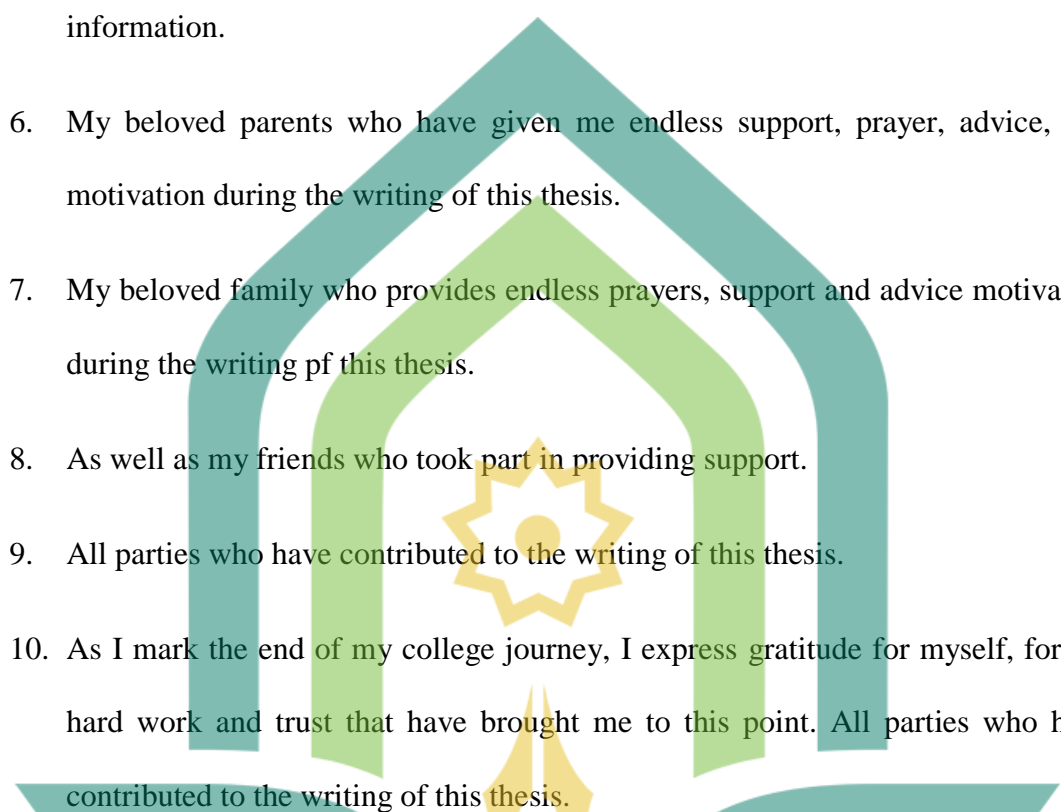
Although WhatsApp has been widely integrated into English language learning, in-depth research on how EFL learners self-regulate vocabulary learning is still limited in the Indonesian higher education context. This study aims to explore the patterns of EFL students' engagement in self-regulated English vocabulary learning through WhatsApp, and identify the challenges they face. This study refers to the self-regulated learning (SRL) model. This study employed a qualitative case study design, with data collected through self-reflection and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Participants consisted of three EFL students at a university in Pekalongan who used WhatsApp in their self-regulated vocabulary learning. The results showed that learners were actively engaged in all phases of SRL, despite facing various challenges both pedagogically and psychologically. This study has limitations in the small number of participants, the relatively short duration of data collection, and the focus that did not include a comparison of the types of vocabulary learned. Therefore, it is recommended that future research involve more diverse participants, extend the duration of the study, and explore self-regulation strategies based on the types of vocabulary learned.

**Keywords:** *Self-Regulated Learning, Vocabulary, WhatsApp, EFL Learners.*

## PREFACE

All praises and gratitude are directed to Allah SWT, who has bestowed upon me His blessings, guidance, health, and patience to complete my thesis, entitled "Exploring Self-Regulated English Vocabulary Learning Through WhatsApp: A Study of EFL Learners at a University in Pekalongan". This thesis is submitted to the English Education Department of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan as one of the requirements for obtaining a Bachelor of Education degree in the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

1. Prof. Dr. H. Zaenal Mustakim, M.Ag. as the Rector of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
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Pekalongan, 12 June 2025



The Researcher

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>A THESIS .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN SKRIPSI .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>NOTA PEMBIMBING .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>APROVAL SHEET .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>MOTTO.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>ABSTRAK .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Background of the Study .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Identification of the Problems .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3 Limitation of the Problems .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.4 Formulation of the Problems.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.5 Aim of the Study .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.6 Operational Definition .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1 Theoretical Background.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1.1 Self-Regulated Learning.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1.2 Dimensions of Vocabulary Knowledge.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.1.3 WhatsApp .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.1.4 Challenges in Self-Regulated Learning.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.2 Previous Studies.....</b>	<b>14</b>



2.3 Conceptual Framework .....	18
<b>CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD .....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Research Design .....	20
3.2 Research Focus .....	20
3.3 Setting and Participants .....	21
3.4 Data Collection .....	22
3.5 Data Analysis .....	23
3.6 Data Trustworthiness .....	24
<b>CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1 Findings .....	25
4.1.1 EFL Learners' Engagement in Self-Regulated English Vocabulary Learning through WhatsApp .....	25
4.1.2 Challenges Faced by EFL Learners in Self-Regulated English Vocabulary Learning via WhatsApp .....	34
4.2 Discussion .....	42
4.2.1 EFL Learners' Engagement in Self-Regulated English Vocabulary Learning through WhatsApp .....	42
4.2.1.1 EFL Learners' Engagement in Forethought Phase .....	42
4.2.2 Challenges Faced by EFL Learners in Self-Regulated English Vocabulary Learning Via WhatsApp .....	49
4.2.2.1 External Distractions and Inconsistencies in Study Routines .....	49
<b>CHAPTER V CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>57</b>
5.1 Conclusion .....	57
5.2 Recommendations .....	58
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>I</b>

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Vocabulary is a very broad and massive aspect for EFL learners. This is because vocabulary not only includes basic words used in everyday life, but also phrases, idioms, and special terminology in various fields of science. Vocabulary learning is not only about knowing the meaning of words but also understanding their usage in different contexts (Nation, 2013). In addition, the number of words in English is very diverse and continues to increase over time. Then, the learning time in class is also limited so that EFL learners need to learn independently in maximizing vocabulary development. Vocabulary acquisition is a gradual process, requiring repeated exposure and practice to solidify word knowledge. Thus, EFL learners need to complement classroom learning with learning activities outside the classroom, such as reading extensively, watching English videos, using language learning applications, and practicing actively (Schmitt, 2000).

WhatsApp is a very familiar and user-friendly application. WhatsApp allows users to send instant messages and its accessibility on mobile devices makes it a preferred platform for communication. WhatsApp allows users to easily send messages, images, videos, and audio clips, making it an attractive

medium for social interaction among younger users (Church & De Oliveira, 2013). This convenience makes WhatsApp suitable for use as a learning tool, where learners can discuss, exchange information, and work on assignments together. WhatsApp facilitates collaborative learning among students, allowing them to improve their language skills through peer interaction and support (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014).

Based on the researcher's experience, seeing and finding that there are EFL learners who are accustomed to using WhatsApp in addition to class groups, sending materials, online class learning between teachers and students, WhatsApp can also be used in self-regulated learning. They use WhatsApp to read extensively in the Channels feature, and use WhatsApp Meta Ai for English learning. Therefore, the researcher chose the research title "Exploring Self-Regulated English Vocabulary Learning Through WhatsApp: A Study of EFL Learners at a University in Pekalongan". It is hoped that this study can contribute to the development of innovative self-regulated English learning strategies that are relevant to the current cultural and technological context, as well as provide a deeper understanding of how EFL learners integrate WhatsApp technology as a tool for self-regulated English vocabulary learning.

## 1.2 Identification of the Problems

The integration of technology, especially mobile apps like WhatsApp, has added variety to self-regulated English vocabulary learning for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. In the context of WhatsApp, EFL learners engage in self-regulated vocabulary learning by using features like Channels and Meta AI to access English learning materials in an informal setting. This platform allows learners to access multimedia resources such as learning texts, images, videos, and audio clips, which can help them understand new vocabulary. Although WhatsApp offers many benefits for vocabulary learning, not all EFL learners are able to manage their learning well. They also face some challenges, such as a lack of motivation and self-discipline, which can lead to procrastination and inconsistent study habits that need to be addressed.

## 1.3 Limitation of the Problems

The scope of this study covers university students in Pekalongan as English language learners who use WhatsApp as a medium for self-regulated learning of English vocabulary. Researcher try to explore in more detail about students' experiences self-regulated English vocabulary learning through WhatsApp.

### 1.4 Formulation of the Problems

1. How does EFL learners engage in self-regulated English vocabulary learning through WhatsApp?
2. What are the challenges faced by the EFL learners in self-regulated English vocabulary learning through WhatsApp?

### 1.5 Aim of the Study

1. Explores how EFL learners engage in self-regulated English vocabulary learning via WhatsApp.
2. Identify the challenges faced by EFL learners when engaging in self-regulated English vocabulary learning via WhatsApp.

### 1.6 Operational Definition

1. Self-Regulated learning : A process in which learners actively manage their own learning by setting goals, monitoring their progress, and adapting their strategies to achieve academic success (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011).
2. Vocabulary : A collection of words known, understood, or used in a language (Nation, 2013).
3. WhatsApp : WhatsApp is an internet-based instant messaging app that allows users to send text



messages, voice notes, images, videos, documents, and make voice or video calls (Bouhnik, D., & Deshen, 2014). It now also includes new features like Channels and Meta AI. The Channels feature lets users follow information updates from individuals or organizations. Meta AI is an artificial intelligence tool built into WhatsApp. It can automatically respond to users' questions.

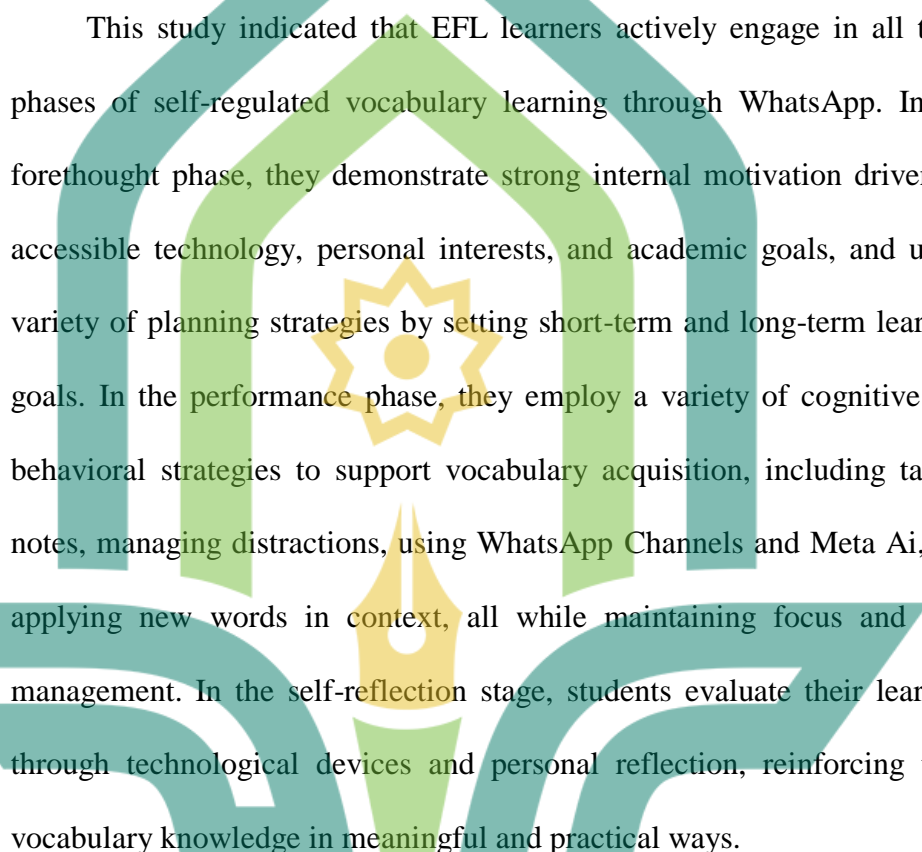
### 1.7 Significances of the Research

1. **Theoretical Significance** : Theoretically, this research is useful for developing previously existing knowledge, so that it can be used as a reference in previous research.
2. **Empirical Significance** : This research provides empirical evidence as additional knowledge in self-regulated English vocabulary learning via WhatsApp.
3. **Practical Significance** : In the future, researcher hope that students will be more enthusiastic about using WhatsApp in exploring its advanced features for self-regulated English vocabulary learning.

## CHAPTER V

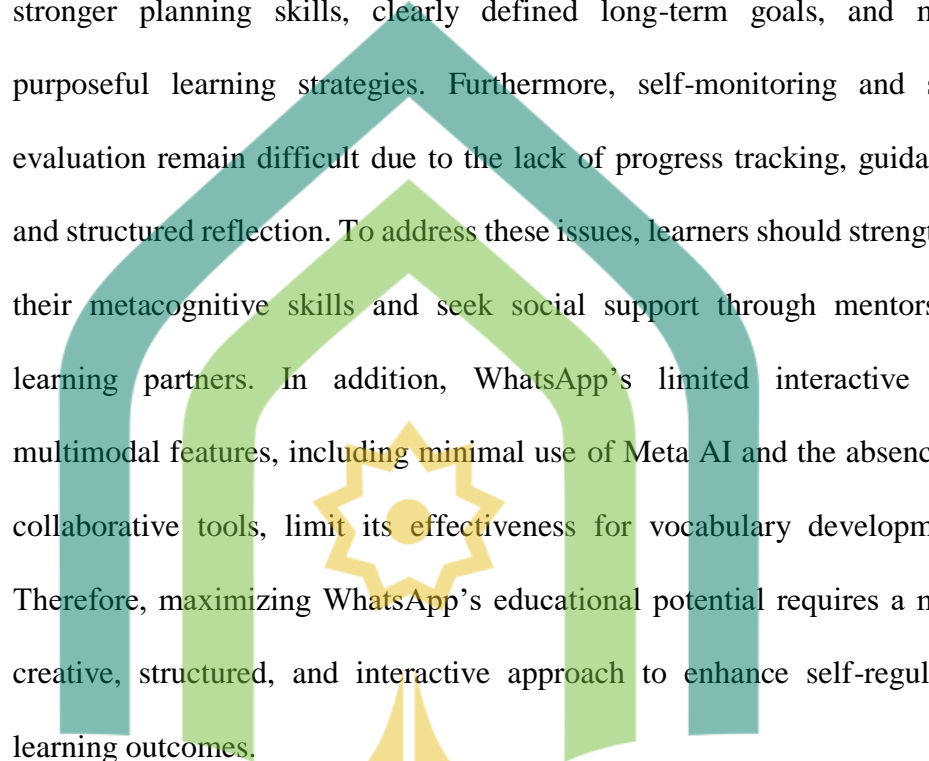
### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Conclusion



This study indicated that EFL learners actively engage in all three phases of self-regulated vocabulary learning through WhatsApp. In the forethought phase, they demonstrate strong internal motivation driven by accessible technology, personal interests, and academic goals, and use a variety of planning strategies by setting short-term and long-term learning goals. In the performance phase, they employ a variety of cognitive and behavioral strategies to support vocabulary acquisition, including taking notes, managing distractions, using WhatsApp Channels and Meta Ai, and applying new words in context, all while maintaining focus and time management. In the self-reflection stage, students evaluate their learning through technological devices and personal reflection, reinforcing their vocabulary knowledge in meaningful and practical ways.

Challenges in self-regulated English vocabulary learning through WhatsApp include several key issues. These include frequent notification interruptions, difficulty maintaining consistent study habits, and unclear learning goals. While WhatsApp provides flexibility, its multi-functional nature often leads to reduced focus and productivity. Difficulty in setting



specific goals and the absence of a structured curriculum often result in passive learning driven by random updates. This highlights the need for stronger planning skills, clearly defined long-term goals, and more purposeful learning strategies. Furthermore, self-monitoring and self-evaluation remain difficult due to the lack of progress tracking, guidance, and structured reflection. To address these issues, learners should strengthen their metacognitive skills and seek social support through mentors or learning partners. In addition, WhatsApp's limited interactive and multimodal features, including minimal use of Meta AI and the absence of collaborative tools, limit its effectiveness for vocabulary development. Therefore, maximizing WhatsApp's educational potential requires a more creative, structured, and interactive approach to enhance self-regulated learning outcomes.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the researcher acknowledges that this study still has certain limitations. Therefore, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of self-regulated English vocabulary learning through WhatsApp and to address the challenges encountered by EFL learners during the learning process. It is hoped that these recommendations can serve as a useful reference for EFL

learners, educators, and future researchers in developing more optimal and sustainable learning strategies.

### 1. EFL Learners

First, for EFL learners, it is recommended to set clear learning goals, maintain consistency, and make use of WhatsApp features such as channels, and integrated tools like Meta AI to support vocabulary acquisition. Learners are also encouraged to develop structured self-monitoring and evaluation routines to track their vocabulary growth over time

### 2. Educators

Second, educators are encouraged to guide students in using WhatsApp not only as a communication platform but also as a learning environment. Teachers can create interactive content, provide regular feedback, and encourage peer collaboration to support learners' self-regulated learning

### 3. Future Researchers

Lastly, for future researchers, it is suggested to conduct further studies with larger and more diverse participant samples. Future research may also explore the long-term effects of self-regulated vocabulary learning through WhatsApp, as well as the role of specific digital tools, such as AI-based chat assistants, in supporting learner autonomy and vocabulary retention.

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