



## M-LEARNING: PRACTICING WHATSAPP IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

*Presently, electronic communication has been the most popular and accessible form adopted by almost all the students across the globe and especially in many developing countries. Today, mobile phone has been turned to be the friendliest tool for all the users. Social networking sites have appeared to be the most widely accessed and practiced medium in forming communication. The mobile phone device has invited larger attention of the second language learners. WhatsApp, being the widely popular social networking site has marked a dynamic state and has also invited attention of the researchers, educationists, and language practitioners to strategically adopt it to make teaching-learning process more flexible and accessible to learn foreign language. Recently studies have proved and underlined the significance of social media related mobile application WhatsApp and its very utility in English language learning classroom. WhatsApp, as the study highlights, appears as a parallel system to a learner in the form of availing foreign language learning conditions. The research paper focuses on how WhatsApp as an m-learning i.e. mobile based feature can prove its unique impression in and outside the classroom. It also appeals the stakeholders the need to explore the impact of the application on the users and thereby apprehend the timely demand to make teaching and learning process more functional and practice oriented.*

**Keywords:** Social networking, WhatsApp, mobile application, m-learning, researchers, educationists, teaching-learning, flexible,

### INTRODUCTION:

In teaching of English language and literature, innovations and experiments in pedagogy have necessarily invited attention of English language teachers. The studies in CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning), and TALL (Technology Assisted Language Learning) have brought in new theories and dimension to

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look at the subject. The change initiated at the pedagogical and methodological approaches in teaching and learning of foreign language to the second language learners made both the teachers and learners get well acquainted with the mobile phone devices particularly for their utility in foreign language learning.

The recently raised techno-centric conditions along with its set challenges and opportunities have necessarily brought out a mobile (phone)-centric revolution in teaching and learning process. The current scenario with advanced tools and devices have directed users to tactfully adopt resourceful strategies in learning advanced and easy steps into grasp foreign language. Hence, the very entrance of techno-centric strategies have provided a big opportunity to imbibe current and newer approaches and thereby adopt globally developing pedagogical techniques and concepts exploring innovative fields in pursuing of learners' current needs in foreign language learning. Therefore, a well-planned strategic change is eventually and urgently expected and invited from all the stakeholders to pay larger attention to the growing demands of the language learners. In adoption of this techno-centric approach in learning English or foreign language, curiosity and caution are to be taken seriously and systematically by both the teacher and the learner.

### **Mobile Phone and WhatsApp:**

Mobile phone, despite of its physical limitations such as small screen, limited storage, and slow processing has become the friendliest tool to all the users. The growing popularity of this device across the world is simply due to its easiest and quickest aspect of communication, i.e. oral and written. However, learners, irrespective of their ages, easily and smartly attain mastery in practicing and surfing on innumerable links associated with knowledge and communication domain. Recently, users' everyday routine starts and ends up with a great deal of personal, social, educational, professional matters especially by use of the social media sites like WhatsApp and Facebook. The impact of WhatsApp in comparison to Facebook is seen more superior in access and feedback. While practicing with these social media apps, the user ultimately comes across English language as is the language set on the device. Through the regular practice on surfing, the users naturally starts responding to the system linguistic corpus and thus naturally find scope to explore, discover, ponder, search, question, answer and receive feedback on any topics. The user slowly and gradually transfers into a learner initially though not careful but as natural respondent to the default system mechanism. Therefore, the application being available on mobile phone, essentially brings the user in close association with the device and makes him/her friendly with it even to learn a foreign language though not systematically but eventually. The learner gets benefitted in various aspects like enjoying the device fearlessly and playfully and feels no risk in committing mistakes. The learner, with regularly and growing access especially with the



application like WhatsApp, gets more comfort in learning and practicing all the necessary skills of a foreign language. The social media application, WhatsApp avails learner a vast exposure to apply all his/her individual talents in accepting, rejecting, deleting, editing, and forwarding any type of text. WhatsApp, being a user friendly application not only connect people but it offers a big opportunity to all the learners-may be slow or advanced, a scope to learn foreign language like English. The learner comprehends experience on WhatsApp in the form of repetitive learning, entertaining, and the time healing through daily interactions. While communicating through WhatsApp, a learner gets an opportunity to read, listen, write (i.e.type), or to watch available resources from the source language (English). The daily habitual visits to the WhatsApp chats, status, notifications, circulated texts, images, audios, videos, etc provide a unique scope to systematically and strategically learn the foreign or English language. The media App avails learner/user tutorials in developing basic language skills- i.e. LSRW. Learners regular practice through social media remove the psychological complex in ESL learning. The biggest advantage one can find is the individualistic learning experience where the conventional classroom fear and complex find no scope. It's completely fearless, repetitive, fun-oriented, individual ability-based learning drilling strategy which definitely proves fruitful to an individual learner. Through social media app, i.e.WhatsApp, the second language learner gets scope to interact with free pace (slow/fast), time (unbound), level of understanding (slow/advanced), capacity(learning/grasping), etc.

### WhatsApp : An M-learning Feature

The social media application,WhatsApp was introduced in 2010 to the users which in short passage of time succeeded in replacing the previously texting application, SMS. For almost past 5 to 6 years, it has gained wider popularity and marked to be the most used and accessed social site related app available with almost every smart phone user. Today, in developing countries, WhatsApp has appeared as the most accessed of all the social media applications than any other apps installed on mobile phones. The rapid accession feature and other technical superiority made it the most installed apps almost in every device. WhatsApp launchers find a big rush of users since it has identified the demands of the users and provided everything at ease including an easy and friendly approach to all the users irrespective of age, locale, and language.

The technical superiority of this application keeps users in direct contact with each other and binds users fall in conversation. The easy typing with predictive text and corpus and quick circulations add users' interest and extend them a scope to exchange messages and develop communicative competence. The smart features of emoticons and smilies in the form of facial expressions, pictures denoting users idea in minimize typing, punctuation marks, default system generated texts, etc catch up the users/ learners interest. It largely provides an easy



way to express feelings in non-verbal way. Interacting through WhatsApp with an individual and group of user/s readily creates user an opportunity to ultimately develop LSRW skills. The messages downloaded and circulated through WhatsApp in all forms avail learners a close experience with the text-based message interaction practice. The text formats available in English make users deal with English language and with its LSRW skills. The users fall in WhatsApp based conversation feature use where they interact with the user from the other end. In short, the user formulates Chats and gets quickly involved in communicating quickly and immediately.

### WhatsApp: Technical Advantages

1. It provides simplicity in operation hence easy to send, receive and retrieve all types of messages.
2. It is a low cost feature so helps in circulating or exchanging unlimited data in all formats.
3. It provides easy and quick response through chats hence immediate feedback.
4. WhatsApp avails possibility of group formation hence useful to form chats, circulate notes, videos, tutorials, audio etc.
5. The video call facility avails face-to-face talk on screen to prepare learner to grasp and understand
6. Backup facility from Google Drive to retrieve data

### WhatsApp: Advantages in Teaching and Learning of English and Foreign Language

1. It creates conducive atmosphere in and outside the class to introduce stress free, interactive, fun oriented, reading experience to form conversational practice.
2. Provides easily an experience in learning material and study resources like texts, poems, stories, plays etc in various forms, i.e. images, audio-video etc.
3. It brings students close in groups and gives a sense of belongingness to the class in learning English or foreign language. The vocabulary and pronunciation practice gets well-developed.
4. Participatory conversational experience in with individual and group members to get support in self progress and development. Regular conversational practice helps in improving reading and writing skills.
5. WhatsApp group chats offer collaborative experience which ultimately motivates in study where help is extended in circulation of data and information eg. problems related to grammar and composition.



6. The failure in class attendance can compensate time through retrieving information from the chats as it naturally links up students by circulating material to the absent students.
7. Teacher and learner get healthy experience being group members as it creates positive influence and makes formal learning situations. To the teacher's directions learners respond adequately to the information circulated and learning related matters.
8. WhatsApp learning experience helps to form interpersonal relationship between teacher and students. The daily conversational practice under the monitoring of teacher directs students use language properly and systematically.
9. WhatsApp removes barriers shy, slow, and reserve learners in teaching-learning process of a foreign language in classroom. It provides them learning at individual level avoiding direct influence of inferiority creating factors.
10. Teacher's presence keeps watch on group practices and it certainly gives students a sense of security. A careful attendance to a WhatsApp group by teacher helps in maintaining discipline in the group. Teacher corrects grammar and vocabulary and thus helps learners.
11. Provides easy and quick transference of resources and links to study materials. Teachers and other group students share and contribute essential knowledge resources which certainly help others in getting exposure to several unknown fields in the subject.
12. This practice enables students form regular and daily communication which they do not get in formal classroom conditions. It is the most useful feature as the conversation formed among group members promotes the cause of learning. The daily habits in forming interactions help almost everyone to state his/her say.

## CONCLUSION:

The application, WhatsApp as an m-learning feature on mobile phone keeps the learners engaged in several knowledge and skills obtaining aspects and becomes a part of m-learning process. Of all the m-learning apps, WhatsApp has recently proved to be the most attractive, effective, efficient, and influencing in the development of foreign or English language learning. WhatsApp if used curiously and cautiously as a resourceful application by the non-native learners, the result shall turn quite positive in developing the four basic skills in English language. The regular practicing and applying drilling strategies grow enough practice and build up confidence among the users. The use of this application if made quite intentionally and thoughtfully, the feedback shall appear quite successfully and it will also encourage the need to plan out effective strategies in teaching and learning of English language. Thus, the growing influence of WhatsApp as an m-learning tool among the non-native learners shall keep its unique influence among the learners of foreign or English.



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