

# LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESS IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH WHATSAPP

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18 Januari 2023

**Abstract**— This study investigates the effectiveness of WhatsApp as a digital learning platform to improve students' speaking skills. Using qualitative methods including observation, interviews, and document analysis, the research reveals that WhatsApp encourages active participation, enhances fluency, and reduces students' speaking anxiety. Features such as voice notes, videos, and chat discussion create a flexible environment for both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Despite challenges like internet instability and distractions, WhatsApp remains an effective and accessible mobile-assisted learning tool when supported by appropriate teaching strategies.

**Keywords**— WhatsApp; mobile-assisted language learning; speaking skill; learning process; teaching strategy; digital learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has significantly influenced the field of education, particularly in language learning. Mobile devices and social media platforms have become essential tools for communication and information exchange, creating new opportunities for teachers to design interactive learning environments. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), these technological developments support students in accessing learning materials anytime and engaging more actively in language practice. One of the most widely used digital platforms among students is WhatsApp, a mobile messaging application that enables voice, video, and text communication in both synchronous and asynchronous modes.

Speaking is a fundamental language skill that often becomes a major challenge for EFL learners. Many students struggle with limited vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, lack of fluency, and anxiety when speaking in front of others. Traditional classroom instruction is often

insufficient for providing enough speaking practice, as class time is limited and students may feel pressured in face-to-face situations. Therefore, teachers need innovative strategies to create supportive environments that encourage learners to practice speaking more frequently and confidently. The use of mobile applications like WhatsApp offers an alternative solution to these challenges.

WhatsApp has gained popularity in educational settings because of its accessibility, familiarity, and user-friendly features. It enables teachers to send voice recordings, video materials, and speaking tasks directly to students, while students can respond using voice notes, text messages, or short videos. This flexibility promotes continuous learning beyond the classroom and allows students to practice speaking at their own pace. Several studies have highlighted the positive impact of WhatsApp on speaking development, reporting improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and student engagement (Ali, 2020; Klimova, 2021; Wang, 2017). These findings suggest that WhatsApp can serve as an effective tool to support speaking instruction.

However, despite the potential benefits, the implementation of WhatsApp in language classrooms is not free from challenges. Issues such as poor internet connectivity, students' limited digital literacy, and distractions from non-academic notifications can hinder the effectiveness of mobile-assisted learning. Teachers also face increased workloads due to the need to listen to numerous voice notes and provide timely feedback. Therefore, understanding how the teaching and learning process is carried out through WhatsApp is essential to identify effective strategies as well as obstacles that must be addressed.

Considering these opportunities and challenges, this study aims to explore the teaching and learning process in improving students' speaking skills through WhatsApp. By examining how teachers design activities, how students respond, and how the platform supports their speaking development, this research provides valuable insights into the role of mobile technology in EFL instruction. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of digital learning strategies that enhance students' speaking performance and support the broader integration of technology in language education.

## **II. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore how the teaching and learning process through WhatsApp contributes to improving students' speaking skills. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to investigate naturally occurring learning activities and understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors

in depth (Creswell, 2012). The descriptive nature of the study enabled the researcher to present a detailed account of the instructional process, including how tasks were implemented, how students responded, and what challenges emerged during the learning activities.

The research was conducted at SMP N 1 Ngariboyo during the 2024/2025 academic year. This school was selected purposively based on its active use of digital platforms, particularly WhatsApp, for instructional communication. The participants consisted of one English teacher and a group of eighth-grade students who were selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was appropriate because the participants possessed relevant experience and knowledge regarding the use of WhatsApp for speaking activities. Their familiarity with the platform provided meaningful insights into its role in supporting language learning.

Data were collected using three main instruments: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to record real-time teaching and learning activities as they took place in the WhatsApp group. The researcher observed how the teacher designed tasks, provided instructions, and delivered feedback, as well as how students participated in speaking activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher and several students to obtain deeper understanding of their perceptions, challenges, and experiences in using WhatsApp for speaking practice. Documentation, including screenshots of conversations, submitted voice notes, written feedback, and instructional materials, was collected to support and validate the observational and interview data.

The data analysis process followed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction phase, the researcher selected, organized, and simplified relevant information from observations, interviews, and documentation. The data display involved arranging the information into clear narrative descriptions to identify patterns, themes, and relationships. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the findings and connecting them with the research objectives and theoretical concepts. To enhance the credibility of the data, triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from different instruments and participants.

Overall, the research method was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how WhatsApp facilitates the learning and teaching process related to speaking skill development. Through systematic data collection and analysis, the study aimed to reveal the effectiveness of WhatsApp, highlight the challenges encountered, and contribute valuable insights for educators seeking to integrate mobile technology into speaking instruction.

### III. ANALYSIS

The analysis of this study focuses on interpreting the findings gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation to understand how the learning and teaching process through WhatsApp contributes to improving students' speaking skills. Based on the data, it was evident that WhatsApp played a significant role as a flexible and accessible platform that enabled continuous interaction between the teacher and students. The teacher utilized WhatsApp features such as voice notes, text messages, and short videos to deliver speaking tasks, model pronunciation, and provide feedback. Students responded actively through voice-note submissions, which allowed them to practice speaking repeatedly at their own pace. This process aligns with the mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) framework, suggesting that mobile tools create supportive conditions for language practice outside the classroom (Klimova, 2021).

The analysis also revealed that students' speaking skills improved in several aspects, particularly fluency and pronunciation. Many students stated during interviews that sending voice notes made them feel less nervous compared to speaking in front of the class, thereby increasing their confidence. They were able to re-record their speech multiple times until they felt satisfied with the outcome, a practice that is rarely possible in conventional classroom settings. This supports Ali's (2020) argument that WhatsApp reduces learners' speaking anxiety by providing a familiar and low-pressure environment. Moreover, the teacher's use of voice models helped students imitate correct pronunciation and intonation, contributing to better speaking accuracy.

However, the analysis also identified several challenges that influenced the effectiveness of the learning process. Some students experienced unstable internet connectivity, which delayed the submission of tasks and disrupted communication. Others admitted that non-academic notifications sometimes distracted them when attempting to focus on speaking assignments. From the teacher's perspective, the large number of voice notes to review created additional workload, especially when detailed feedback was required. These challenges align with previous findings by Wang (2017), who noted that technological barriers and time constraints remain common issues in mobile learning environments.

Despite these limitations, the overall analysis indicates that WhatsApp was effective in supporting speaking skill development when accompanied by structured instructional strategies. The platform allowed for frequent oral practice, increased teacher-student interaction, and provided opportunities for personalized feedback. The combination of these elements fostered a more engaging and learner-centered environment that encouraged students to participate actively in speaking activities. The results of this analysis highlight the importance of integrating digital platforms strategically to maximize their potential in language learning.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The findings of this study conclude that the use of WhatsApp in the teaching and learning process significantly contributes to the improvement of students' speaking skills. Through features such as voice notes, video messages, and group discussions, WhatsApp provides a flexible and supportive environment that enables students to practice speaking more frequently and with less anxiety. Students benefited from the ability to record their speaking multiple times, listen to teacher-provided models, and receive personalized feedback, which enhanced their fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. Despite challenges such as internet limitations, distractions from non-academic notifications, and increased teacher workload in reviewing voice submissions, WhatsApp remains an effective and accessible mobile-assisted learning tool that supports the development of speaking competence when paired with well-organized instructional strategies.

Based on these conclusions, several suggestions are proposed for teachers, students, and future researchers. Teachers are encouraged to design structured and clear speaking tasks, use WhatsApp's features strategically, and provide consistent feedback to maximize students' learning outcomes. Students should engage actively in speaking activities, make use of repeated practice opportunities, and maintain focus by minimizing distractions when learning through mobile devices. Schools are advised to support the continuity of digital learning by ensuring stable internet access and providing training on digital literacy. For future researchers, it is recommended to explore the quantitative impacts of WhatsApp on speaking performance, compare it with other digital platforms, or examine its effectiveness across different proficiency levels to expand the understanding of mobile-assisted language learning.

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