

Students' Opinions on the Functions and Usefulness of Communication on WhatsApp in the EFL Higher Education Context

Khaloud Mohammed Alabasi,

English Language Institute,
King Abdulaziz University,
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
alabsi-kaau@hotmail.com

Fatimah M A Alghamdi,

English Language Institute,
King Abdulaziz University,
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
fmalghamdi@kau.edu.sa

Abstract

In a preparatory English as a foreign language (EFL) context at a Saudi University, the WhatsApp application is observed as being one of the fastest growing social media platforms, and one with a massive potential of being used in communication for academic as well as social purposes. This study seeks to explore students' opinions and perceptions on the usage and functions of WhatsApp communication within the EFL context. Findings from a descriptive survey analysis have shown that WhatsApp is a popular communication platform amongst the students, and therefore possibly has the potential of facilitating language learning in this EFL context. However, WhatsApp is currently mostly utilized as a platform for inquiries and announcements with minimum preset language learning goals. The present study aims to inform feasible recommendations regarding the presence and functionality of the WhatsApp platform, owing to the need to utilize such popular and readily used program in making EFL learning processes efficient and effective.

Keywords: EFL, Higher Education, social media, WhatsApp

Cite as: Alabsi, K. M., & Alghamdi, F.M.A. (2019). Students' Opinions on the Functions and Usefulness of Communication on WhatsApp in the EFL Higher Education Context. *Arab World English Journal, Special Issue 1: Application of Global ELT Practices in Saudi Arabia*. 129- 144
DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/elt1.10>