
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effectiveness of using mobile applications (Whats App and Messenger) on enhancing students' writing skills from the perspective of teachers

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| ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of mobile applications in enhancing students' writing skills from teachers' perspectives at Jazan University. The study seeks to examine the potential use of mobile applications in facilitating the development of writing skills, explore the major writing problems faced by students, and examine the use of WhatsApp and Messenger in improving the student's writing skills. Moreover, this study will adopt a quantitative research design, and distribute questionnaires among 52 English language teachers teaching at Jazan University, and analyze the data through SPSS, and generate descriptive and inferential statistics. The expected findings of the study are to reveal positive teachers' perceptions towards using mobile applications in improving writing skills, along with exploring the students' specific writing problems. This study will contribute a number of messages for improving student's writing skills in higher education through mobile-assisted learning. Introduction Education has become a new presence in the past few years due to the rapid development of mobile technologies, and many new opportunities for teachers and learners have arisen. There are activities motivating active participation as well as autonomous learning in mobile learning – m-learning, providing students' off-campus, anytime-anywhere access to educational resources. Among the various language skills, writing is the hardest one for students to learn, especially for EFL learners. It requires not only accuracy in form, but also coherence, fluency, and originality — very difficult things for many students to do. Students in Jazan University have difficulty in acquiring good writing skills, such as limited vocabulary, weak sentences and lack of practice. Traditional classroom teaching, though important, does not always provide opportunities for regular writing practice or immediate correction. As a result, teachers are increasingly trying out innovative teaching approaches, such as technology, for enhancing students' writing. For college students, the accessibility of such sites as WhatsApp and Messenger on cell phones has also contributed to their popularity as the primary communications method. These sites turn social sites into interactive learning environments, allowing students to post their ideas, communicate in written forms, and receive immediate responses from teachers and peers. Such functions make them in addition conveniently applicable tools to help students write more effectively in informal but supportive learning environments. From the teachers' perspectives, it is crucial to find out to what extent mobile applications are effective in developing students' writing skill. The successful adoption of technology into language teaching and designing outcome-oriented instruction depends primarily on teachers. Therefore, teachers' opinions and practices will shed light on how mobile-assisted learning can be most effectively realized. For teachers' perspectives at Jazan University, this research aims to find out whether the mobile applications are effective or not in developing students' writing skills. And more specifically, it attempts to shed light on how mobile applications influence students' writing skills, state the main difficulties students face while using the applications and examine the usefulness of WhatsApp and Messenger in improving students' writing skills.

| KEYWORDS

Mobile applications; Whats App; Messenger; students' writing skill; teachers

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Introduction

The use of mobile applications has attracted more researchers who are interested in the educational field recently, especially regarding writing and language learning. Many applications like WhatsApp and Messenger have been integrated into education simply because they are free of charge, develop interaction, provide real time communication and shorten the distance from a classroom. Regarding teachers' opinion, these kinds of applications can be used to improve students' writing.

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Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), as other environments, promotes learner-centered activities and provide the possibility for the students to practice writing anytime and everywhere. As Linda and Ri'aéni (2018) explained, the use of WhatsApp to deliver tasks was seen as a powerful medium of instruction and a way to show greater learner-centeredness, thereby motivating students' active learning and creativity during writing activities. Their students also had positive attitudes to using a WhatsApp group, as it may help them share ideas and have the chance to give and get some feedback and work together on paper.

Awada (2016) also showed in this study that with the use of WhatsApp in writing classes, students improved a lot in critique writing than in normal classes. The most interesting result of the study was students' motivation and excitement in class. Almost all the students answered correctly and enthusiastically in class. This paper suggested that mobile applications promoted the kind of learning environment that supports the use of peer collaboration and group work. On the teacher's way, mobile applications allow instructors to continually monitor the learning process and provide quick feedback.

Recent studies also demonstrated that messaging tools are very useful for writing performances. Ebrahimi (2024) found out that there was a notable leap in students' writing performance when WhatsApp was engaged as the platform for their learning. The research highlighted the use of group discussions and uploading writing samples via WhatsApp, which appeared to be beneficial for students' writing performance. Teachers argued that the communicative environment facilitated high motivation toward more writing practice and helped students to improve their vocabulary and grammar.

At the school level, Almadawadeh & Al-Amad (2023) proved that students using WhatsApp activities to learn writing had better achievement than those who were taught by traditional way, and showed that the experimental group had significant gains in L2 writing composition. The use of mobile applications is viewed positively by teachers, who believe that mobile applications are tools to promote out-of-classroom knowledge extension and student-centered instruction.

In addition, social media such as Messenger and WhatsApp can be used to create collaborative communities of learning. Lutviana and Mafulah (2021) reported that when students received peer- and teacher-based feedback via messaging tools, they experienced a positive impact on idea generation, draft revision, and overall writing quality. Teachers also noticed that the informal nature of these social media promoted learner-teacher rapport and increased learner confidence and motivation to write.

However, there are some problems that were experienced as well. For example, a search of literature indicated that some students could lose their engagement, and teachers need to assess and control students' participation for effective teaching (Hartati et al, 2023). Otherwise, the distraction, lack of discipline and unequal access to mobile learning tools may hinder the use of the systems.

According to the surveyed teachers, mobile applications should be used as a supplement to the existing procedures in the classroom. The teachers have to be trained to use targeted tasks, directions and feedback mechanisms to fully exploit the potential of these technological tools. As Khurram et al. (2024) state, teachers should be supported and equipped with training to help them structure activities. Teachers are responsible for task design, interaction design, and assessment.

In final remarks, the literature suggested that messenger apps, including WhatsApp and Messenger, work as important tools to improve students writing skills. They encourage engagement, cooperation and constant practice which are crucial for the learning process to improve speaking skills. Nonetheless, their effectiveness requires careful application and proactive involvement of teachers. Further investigations are suggested in order to understand teachers' perceptions and the use of various messaging apps in the classroom.

Methodology

The primary data for this study were collected using an analytic descriptive approach during the academic year 2025 – 2026 at Jazan University. The methodology involved the following components:

Participants

The sample consisted of 52 male and female English language teachers from the Department of Foreign Languages at JU. This sample size was deemed sufficient to provide a representative overview of faculty perspectives at the university level.

Instrument

A paper-based questionnaire comprising 20 items was distributed to the participants. The instrument utilized a 5-point Likert scale to measure teacher agreement with various propositions regarding mobile apps and writing skills.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Mean scores, standard deviations, and percentages were calculated for each survey item.

Likert scale Interpretation:

While the instrument description initially listed as strongly agree" and 5 as "disagree," the statistical outputs (means and percentages) indicate that the calculation followed the standard format, where 5 represents Strongly Agree and 1 represents Strongly Disagree. For instance, a mean of 4.11 corresponds to a high agreement percentage (83.31%), confirming that higher scores reflect more positive teacher attitudes.

In addition to the primary survey data, this report incorporates insights from a scholarly literature search of 73 unique papers indexed in databases such as SciSpace and GoogleScholar, focusing on the Saudi EFL context and the broader impact of messaging apps on writing performance. The tables below show the details:

Table 1: Using mobile apps to enhance the level of students in writing skills.

Q No	SA	A	N	SDA	DA	Mean	STD	Percentage
1	13	27	7	3	2	3.884615	0.984	77.69%
2	19	25	4	3	1	4.115385	0.921	83.31%
3	17	21	10	4	0	3.980769	0.918	79.62%
4	12	31	5	3	1	3.961538	0.862	79.23%
5	14	25	7	4	2	3.865385	1.029	77.31%

The table results indicate positive trends among the sample individuals towards the studied items, with arithmetic means ranging between 3.865 and 4.115, values that fall within the (agree) category on the five-point Likert scale, indicating a high level of agreement on all items.

Overall, it can be observed that all items received high approval rates exceeding 77%, indicating a general positive trend among the sample members toward the study topic, and the standard deviation values ranging from 0.862 to 1.029 indicate an acceptable level of dispersion in the responses.

Table 2: Investigating the problems that JU students face in writing skills.

Q No	SA	A	N	SDA	DA	Mean	STD	Percentage
1	19	18	11	4	0	4	0.949	80.00%
2	13	22	8	8	1	3.730769	1.069	74.00%
3	14	24	7	6	1	3.846154	1.017	77.00%
4	16	23	6	6	1	3.903846	1.034	78.00%
5	22	18	8	3	1	4.096154	0.995	82.00%

It is evident from the results of the statistical analysis of the questionnaire items that the arithmetic means ranged between (3.73 – 4.10), which fall within the 'Agree' category according to the five-point Likert scale, indicating that the sample members generally tend to agree with the content of the items.

In general, the results indicate that the attitudes of the sample members were positive towards all the paragraphs, as all the arithmetic means exceeded the neutral value of the scale. Additionally, the standard deviation values, ranging between (0.949 – 1.069), indicate an acceptable level of dispersion in the responses of the sample members.

Table 3: Proposing WhatsApp and Messenger as effective tools that help JU students in developing writing skills.

Q No	SA	A	N	SDA	DA	Mean	STD	Percentage
1	16	22	6	7	1	3.865385	1.067	77.31%
2	17	20	9	5	1	3.903846	1.034	78.08%
3	24	22	3	2	1	4.269231	0.89	85.38%
4	16	23	5	8	0	3.903846	1.015	78.08%
5	24	21	5	1	1	4.269231	0.866	85.38%
6	13	18	15	4	2	3.692308	1.058	73.85%
7	11	23	10	6	2	3.673077	1.061	73.46%
8	10	21	9	10	2	3.519231	1.129	70.38%
9	13	25	7	5	2	3.807692	1.049	76.15%

The results from the statistical analysis of the items comprising this axis show that the sample members' means of response (3.73 4.10) within the five-point scale are all at the agreement end of the spectrum, revealing a generally positive attitude on the part of the sample members toward the items encompassed by this axis. Indeed, the range of standard deviations (0.949 1.069), also falls within an acceptable range of variation for the responses of a sample on fieldwork studies using questionnaires. Findings and Comparative Analysis The data have been classified into three clusters according to the survey tables: general effectiveness of mobile applications, the identification of writing problems for students, and the specific utility of social applications, WhatsApp and Messenger. Effectiveness of Mobile Applications on Writing Teachers consistently shows a high level of agreement regarding the potential for mobile applications to improve students' writing. Table 1 shows that the means of response in this category fall between 3.86 and 4.11.

This is consistent with the results of Tang and Hew (2022), which highlighted the positive contribution of mobile phones to communication, ideas, and knowledge.

Improvements to Learning: Teachers are in agreement that mobile phone applications help to elevate students' writing levels. The mean score for this overall statement was 4.11 (83.31% agreement) (see table 1, item 2).

Development of Skills: Participants agree that mobile tools increase students' proficiency in writing vocabulary and in general (Mean 3.98, Item 3).

Motivational Effects: Respondents agree that mobile applications motivate students to write more frequently and with more enthusiasm (Mean 3.96, Item 4).

Reading Difficulties Characterising JU students the survey is designed to establish whether there are relevant writing difficulties observable among JU students that mobile applications might address. Table 2 reveals that teachers are well aware of students' writing inadequacies.

Writing at the Basic Level: Table 2, Item 1 confirms there is agreement on the issue that students face many problems with basic writing tasks, with a mean score of 4.00 (80%agreement).

Structural and Functional Deficits: Teachers acknowledge that students present a great deal of difficulty with regard to building cohesive sentences and the accurate use of grammar in their writing (means 3.84 4.09).

Widespread Consistency: Even the lowest mean of 3.73 (74%agreement) in this category nonetheless shows considerable consistency of difficulty across the samples.

WhatsApp and Messenger as Effective Instructional Media, the utility of WhatsApp and Messenger as instructional media in particular is the focus of Table 3, which shows very positive feedback regarding these applications.

Instructional Efficacy and Usefulness: Both items 3 and 5 received the highest response rate (4.26, 85.38% agreement). Participants agree strongly that these apps offer a useful and rapid method of exchanging writing materials and being able to give quick feedback.

Efficacy: Participants said that utilizing WhatsApp motivates students to write confidently (Mean 3.90, item 2).

Social Dynamics: Other social variables, besides WhatsApp, maintain popular peer correction and collaborative editing of writing (Mean 3.86, Item 1).

Vocabulary Practice and Sentence Structuring: Participants agree that the apps are useful in providing practice for new vocabulary (Mean 3.80, Item 9) as well as grammatical sentence structure (Mean 3.69, Item 6).

Discussion

The results found in Jazan University concur with what has been reported in the literature, although they also highlight some disagreements and contradictions between the teachers' perceptions and their actual digital writing practices.

Performance and Engagement Gains

Self reported high usefulness ratings (up to M= 4.26) in accordance with previously published reports on the use of WhatsApp as a writing tool, in that students achieved improvement of their writing skills, naming mostly grammar, vocabulary and writing "structure" (Fattah, 2015; Hamad, 2017). Mobile learning "anytime anywhere" principle seems to facilitate active student engagement, as teachers claimed this resulted in greater writing (M=3.96). Moreover, good results were achieved in regard to vocabulary and writing as stated in various studies (Alsalem, 2013; Noyan & Goktas, 2019).

The Paradox of Informal Messaging

However, some literature does flag the negative transfer of informal language into formal writing. Mirza & Malik (2022), for instance, reported the use of non-standard grammar and spelling in WhatsApp messages, which echoes JU teachers' anxieties about sentence construction and accuracy. Excessive removal of non-standard language conventions can lead to recurring surface errors of the same kind (Ahmed & Al-Sharafi, 2022; Alsalem, 2013).

Institutional and Technical Barriers

Despite the findings indicating positive perceptions of the use of mobiles, earlier research pointed to negative factors involved in using mobiles such as connectivity problems, limitations of mobiles, additional workload for teachers, and disruption from non-academic messages (Hamad, 2017; Mirza & Malik, 2022), which may hinder the actual practice of using MALE.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to explore both WhatsApp and Messenger usage from teachers' point of view in improving the writing skills of the EFL students. According to the results of the study, the teachers had very positive views and attitudes concerning the use of the above applications to support writing lessons. In the overall three categories of the research questions: general effectiveness, recognition of students' difficulty in writing, and benefit of messaging applications, remarkably high agreement levels (mean 1-5 scale: 3.73-4.26) were obtained.

Mobile apps have been found to be very effective in enhancing the important feature of writing such as vocabulary, accuracy at the grammatical level, coherence and fluency of writing. Teachers also identified students' motivation and confidence enhancement, the use of immediate feedback, interaction among students and the opportunity to practice constantly as advantages of using mobile apps.

Nevertheless, there are still some difficulties in the implementation of mobile learning, namely students' awareness and management of basic writing skills, coherence and formal language grammar. Mobile applications can be of help in some issues of the pedagogical problem, but they cannot solve every problem.

To conclude, WhatsApp and Messenger both are promising additional resources for writing lessons but should be implemented with careful consideration (purpose, rules, feedback). Further studies in this area could look for students' opinion, employ experiments to record writing achievements, and examine mobile-assisted learning effects over time, yet more studies on the latter would be much appreciated.

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