

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
WHATSAPP TO DEVELOP EFL  
VOCABULARY FOR SPEAKING  
PERFORMANCE

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
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## **SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

We hereby declare that We have checked this thesis and in our opinion, this thesis is adequate in terms of scope and quality for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## **STUDENT'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Malaysia Pahang or any other institutions.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my work to my parents, brothers, and sisters for their love and encouragement. I also owe special thanks to my family and three sons for their sacrifices in pursuing this goal.

## ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran kosa kata merupakan satu bahagian yang penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa dan memainkan peranan yang penting dalam kemahiran pertuturan. Kajian ini cuba mengkaji bagaimana pembelajaran kosa kata melalui WhatsApp boleh meningkatkan prestasi pertuturan pelajar. Kajian ini meneliti keberkesanan aplikasi WhatsApp dalam mengembangkan kosa kata pelajar EFL dan prestasi pertuturan pelajar EFL Arab Saudi. Kajian ini juga menerokai sikap pelajar EFL terhadap penggunaan aplikasi WhatsApp untuk pembelajaran kosa kata. Penyelidikan ini mencantumkan pembelajaran kosa kata berbantu M-learning dan kemahiran pertuturan dengan melihat cara bagaimana menguruskan input bagi perkembangan kosa kata. Perspektif secara teori ini merangkumi Hipotesis Input (Krashen, 1989) dan Teori-teori Kognitif dalam Pembelajaran Multimedia (Mayer, 2009). Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kaedah bercampur dengan reka bentuk kuasi bereksperimen dengan pra dan pasca ujian sebagai kaedah utama pengumpulan data. Ujian Pengetahuan Kosa Kata Produktif (PVKT) oleh Laufer dan Nation (1999) serta ujian pertuturan digunakan untuk mengumpul data kuantitatif. Soal selidik sikap pelajar dan temu ramah separa struktur telah digunakan untuk mengkaji penemuan ini dalam tiga aspek. Para peserta kajian ini ialah 60 pelajar EFL dalam Program Tahun Persediaan (PYP) dari satu universiti awam di Arab Saudi. Dua kumpulan yang ditubuhkan terlebih dahulu dari tahap rendah dibahagikan secara rawak dalam kumpulan uji kaji dan kawalan. Bagi analisis data, pakej statistik untuk sains sosial (SPSS) digunakan untuk analisis kuantitatif manakala temu ramah pula tertakluk kepada analisis tematik. Dapatan daripada kajian ini menunjukkan pelajar dalam kumpulan uji kaji ini menunjukkan prestasi yang lebih baik dalam ujian kosa kata dan pertuturan. Hasil dapatan daripada soal selidik dan penyiasatan temu ramah juga menyokong keberkesanan aplikasi WhatsApp sebagai analisis ujian pertuturan dan kosa kata. Perbezaan skor min dalam pra dan pasca ujian bagi kedua-dua kumpulan menunjukkan bahawa para pelajar yang menggunakan aplikasi WhatsApp menunjukkan prestasi yang lebih baik dalam ujian pertuturan dan kosa kata daripada para pelajar yang tidak menggunakan WhatsApp. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa integrasi WhatsApp amat disukai oleh para pelajar dalam penggunaan bahan pembelajaran visual. Berdasarkan penemuan tersebut, kajian ini menyokong penggunaan aplikasi WhatsApp sebagai alat pengajaran yang berguna dalam pembelajaran bahasa.

## ABSTRACT

Vocabulary learning is an imperative part of learning language and it has a key role in speaking skill. The present study attempts to investigate how vocabulary learning through WhatsApp enhances learners' speaking performance. It scrutinises the efficacy of WhatsApp application in developing EFL learners' vocabulary and speaking performance of Saudi EFL learners. It also explores the attitudes of EFL learners on using WhatsApp application for vocabulary learning. The research links Mobile Learning (M-Learning) assisted vocabulary learning to speaking proficiency by looking at how to manage input for vocabulary development. The theoretical perspectives include Krashen (1989) Input Hypothesis and Cognitive Theories of Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2009). The study employed a mixed method approach with a pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design as the main data gathering method. The Productive Vocabulary Knowledge Test (PVKT) by Laufer and Nation (1999) and a speaking test were used to collect the quantitative data. Learner attitude questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to triangulate the findings of the research. The participants of the study were 60 EFL learners of Preparatory Year Program (PYP) of a public university in Saudi Arabia. Two preformed intact groups from the elementary level were randomly assigned into control and experimental groups. As for the analysis of the data, a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was employed for the quantitative analysis whereas the interview was subjected to thematic analysis. The findings of the research showed that the students in the experimental group performed better in both vocabulary and speaking tests. The outcomes of the questionnaire and the interview investigation also supported the efficacy of WhatsApp application as the analysis of the speaking and vocabulary tests. Differences in the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of both groups showed that students who used WhatsApp application performed better in both speaking and vocabulary tests than the learners who did not. The results illustrated that the WhatsApp integration is favourable among learners in utilising visual learning materials. The findings of the study are useful for EFL students, teachers, researcher and curriculum designers to develop vocabulary for speaking proficiency by the implementation of M-learning. On the basis of the findings, the study endorsed WhatsApp application as a useful teaching tool in language learning.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
STEP	Society for Testing English Proficiency
IELTS	The International English Language Testing System
MALL	Mobile Assisted Language Learning
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPS	Scholarship Preparation School
MOE	Ministry of Education
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
IH	Input Hypothesis
LAD	Language Acquisition
M	Mean
SD	Standard Deviation
MMC	Mobile Mediated Communication
PYP	Preparatory Year Program
PVKT	Productive Vocabulary Knowledge Test
SMS	Short Message Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
EL	Learner in the Experimental Group

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