EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING WHATSAPP USE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROFICIENCY DEVELOPMENT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Abstract:*The purpose of this study was to highlight views of university level learners regarding the use of WhatsApp for English language learning proficiency development at university level. Major objectives of the study were: to find out perceptions of university level learners regarding WhatsApp use in English language learning proficiency development (across gender group).Similarly, to find out perceptions of university level learners regarding WhatsApp use in English language learning proficiency development (across discipline). The study was descriptive in nature that is why self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection process from the selected population which the researcher had selected for this present study. After successful collection of data from the respondents the collected data was set,coded and then used SPSS version 24 for its analysis. Different statistics like percentage, mean, standard Deviation, t-test, and one-way ANOVA was used for data analysis. Results of the study clearly indicated the positive role of WhatsApp use in English language learning proficiency development at university level.*

Keywords:*Use of WhatsApp, English Language Learning Proficiency, University Level Learners*

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Introduction

Social Media usage changed the style of teaching learning to greater extent. Now teachers and learners do not communicate in traditional manner face to face communication but rather they use online communication environment for discussion of various topics and sharing of ideas. It is due to this reason the style of modern technological services are clear in their day to day life. Thompson (2007) stated that 85% of college students use Facebook in their daily routine and thus through this way they learn in informal way. There are different sources of social media; some of these sources may be used inside the classroom while some of these sources may be used outside the classroom for English language learning process. Those sources which may be used inside the classroom are online blogs (Thompson, 2007).Karpisek, Baggili, & Breitinger, (2015). Stated that now in this present technological era extensive use of wireless networks like mobile phones have become familiar and its use is common. Whatsapp is also one of the famous important social media sources which is commonly used for social interaction. The importance of whatsapp use in foreign language learning may not be neglected because its aslo facilitate English learners to improve their English language skills easily through whatsapp social networking which is used in mobile phones and tablets (Khan et al, 2017). Knight, (1994). also described the importance of whatsapp use for language learners and described that one of the most important aspect of whatsapp use in language learning is that of vocabulary development through whatsapp use.

Similarly, online Blogs are also included in various forms of social media and play a pivotal role in language learning. A web blog or blog is an online platform used for online expression of thoughts, ideas, and point of views about various issues. These issues may be of different types regarding social, religious, academic, and other things happening in the surrounding. Murray, Liam & Triona Hourigna,(2008) has pointed or described the people use blogs for online expression of issues related to their lives and different viewpoints they may have about various things. Blogs are used for so many diverse purposes and have a lot of topics which are used online blogs as blogging architecture became more user-friendly the popularity of blogs increased. Blogs are used for language learning process also and play a dominant role in EFL learning process, because the main function of blogging is that to comment on other people blogs are to receive comments from other

people on your given idea or views which you have shared on blogs is the key function of blogging (Murray, 2008). This is not a common thing but it is very important because it makes the English language learners creative to write comments on other people ideas or production and also make them to understand the views of others while reading the point of views of other people about any issue or topic. The use of blogs is useful for development of language learning but give them the opportunity to provide a foundation for reflecting on the language that is being written within it. Dieu, Barbara (2004) has described the role of blogs in language learning that blogs increase the learning competences and capabilities of English learners, says that blogs are egalitarian for teaching and learning tools par excellence. It shows that blogs are not something having no value in language learning but blogs are very important tools for language learning. The online web-blogs are mostly improve the writing proficiency of EFL learners, blogging are used to describe views, ideas, and makes the language learners' mind creative when they are using blogs because the language writers compose new comments on various issues and topics which make them

creative, and as a result language learning can be achieved (Murray &Hourigna,2008).

In light of the above researcher point of view it is clear that using blogs are not only develop the language learners writing skills and express their ideas, feelings, and emotions but also make them creative minded in language learning process. There are different online blogs which may be used for variety of purpose in respect of language learning proficiency development. These are helpful for language skills development and facilitate learners (Steven Throne, 2009).Hui-Ju Wu and Pai-Lu Wu (2011) also highlighted the importance of online blogs. Thus the importance of WhatsApp use in English language learning proficiency development may not be neglected rather appreciated because its use is common. There are different groups which may create by English language learners to share their experiences and knowledge for language learning purposes as well as target language fluency development. Yeboah & Ewur, (2014) stated that whatsapp is most commonly used that is why its application is common. Whatsapp users use whatsapp on their smartphones, and computers as well as tablets and users may have different

groups of whatsapp which may be used for information sharing and facilitation that is why language learning is also one of the most important use of whatsapp (khan et al, 2017)

Review of Literature

WhatsApp is also one the most important sources of social media and it also plays a pivotal role in English language learning process because the English learners may use it for sending messages, documents, images, videos and similarly, audio messages. WhatsApp Messenger is a high speed instant messaging which are using by client for smartphones (*Metz, Cade, 2016).* The English language learners use the WhatsApp for sharing of images directly and thus through this way they may get help from this online social media sites to get knowledge and share knowledge in an easy and systematic way. The other important point is that the English learners may directly share even the page of book and ask questions from their teachers and if their confusion in any point then they may share directly the page instead telling to each other about the book reference and page number about any confusions. The other important point is that WhatsApp is used for messaging competition and sharing of messages in the world level. There are millions of active users in the world who are using

WhatsApp for messaging in the world (Al-Shehri, 2011).

Social Media based language learning

Social media sources provide an interactive environment to language learners in which the language learners may get new and fresh information about the various changes in English language. The language learner may share, create, and discuss their experiences with the help and use of Social Media sources for English language learning process. Social Media allows its users to develop their language learning skills and competences. The researcher has pointed out that a certain amount of learning take place beyond the confines of the individual mind (Salomon & Gavriel, 1998).

It is a fact that learning various languages requires the social environment and life style of those people to whom the language learner is going to learn the language. If a language learner is interested in learning of any country language then he/she may need to know about the English native speaker environment and their life in order to learn English within a short span of time and complete interest (Khan et al, 2016). Therefore, to get information about the life style or culture of the target language native speakers then the role of Social Media in this respect is like a day

brightness for language learners because social media enables the language learners to observe the life, uniform language fluency with the help of online social networking sites. It is online sources which enables the English as foreign language learners to do the practice of conversation with various native speakers of English language. The EFL learners have a number of opportunities to listen different audio video programs through various social media sources, which improve their listening proficiency as compare to the traditional classroom practice (Brady et al, 2010).Social media sources may provide the opportunities of social interaction with native speakers of English language and other export teachers of English language that is why those EFL learners who use various sources of social media for language learning purpose may get enough help from native social interaction and experienced teachers of English language. Language learning with the help of video games is a contextual process and plays a dominant role in language learning process. When a gamer playing a a game then there is audio and text form of language for instruction and explanation of various direction and especially about score and game playing instructions. This text form of information which is there on display during the video game and similarly, audio information in the target language enhances the language learning proficiency of the EFL learners. There are some video games in which the text based information and audio form of oral information may be repeated through various commend during the game for the understanding of language learner gamer (DeHaan, Jonathan William, 2005).

Principles of Social Media Based Language Learning

Language learning through social media is based on the three principles which are the following:

i.   The first principle of social media use in language leaning is that social media provides the learners the opportunity of important live and actual communication in the target language, in which there updated contents, comprehensive and production based on social media channels. The interesting point in social media language learning is that there is interaction in the learning process rather than old traditional methods of teaching learning in respect of language learning.

ii.   The second one is that social media language learning is important in

this sense that this type of learning is not only limited to teachers who share their knowledge and ideas during the teaching learning process about any topic or issue, but students are equally involved in teaching learning process to share their experiences and ideas without any hesitation. In this type of learning the students learning experiences play a dominant role in language learning process.

iii.   The third principle of social media based language learning is that social media communication skills also take the same time for example editing, strategy, conceptualization and business insights of language learners at the same time of language learning process. This aspect of social media in language learning is also very important because it not only improve the learning competences of language learners in one way but in multiple ways.

The important point in social media-based language learning is that students learns each and everything through activity based, practice of repetition, pronunciation, and practice of speaking skills inside or outside the classroom. Communication is equally important inside the classroom inside means during teaching learning process and outside which means the discussion in target language in free times and leisure time

both are play significant role in target language leaning. Krashen, (1988) stated vocabulary skills development through online sources for EFL learners. English language vocabulary may be increased through online media because we may listen and read new words and phrases in online channels which becomes a part of our vocabulary with the passage of time. It is quite easy for EFL learners to get help from WhatsApp groups and whatsapp messenger to improve vocabulary (khan et al, 2017).

Characteristics of Media Based Language Learning

1.   Social media provide a large number of information to learners in order to improve the language learning skills and competences through online chatting.

2.   The clear example of social media role in language learning is that when the English learners are doing chatting with friends or teachers then they have eye contact if they are using video call but if they do practice of only text chatting then they have also proper interaction to each other during the chatting.

3.   The other characteristic of online internet based social networking sites is that there is a large amount of information available on internet. The

learners may download those things which are helpful for them.

4.   We can use media for analyzing the text from books, newspapers, or other sources.

5.   We can compare the views of one person or one group of people to another while watching the comments share by other people on Facebook regarding various issues.

6.   The other important point is social media sources engage the English learners in various activities of writing and revision of activities.

7.   We can discuss various points on social media which improve our understanding and help us to make concept about the learning process.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out perceptions of university level learners regarding WhatsApp use in English language learning proficiency development (across gender group).

2. To find out perceptions of university level learners regarding WhatsApp use in English language learning proficiency development (across discipline).

3. To make appropriate recommendations based on the findings of the study

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female learners regarding WhatsApp use in English language learning proficiency development at university level.

2. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of social sciences and pure sciences learners regarding WhatsApp use in English language learning proficiency development at university level.

Methodology

Research methodology is one of the most important part of research article because in this section different steps of the research study is mentioned one by one like target population, accessible population of the study, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and similarly, various data analysis procedure which the researcher used for data analysis in order to make results of the conducted study. In the said study population of the study were university level mature learners. The researcher has used self-developed questionnaire for data collection process and then the collected data was set, coded and used SSPS (version 24) for data analysis. The

results of the said study are mentioned below along with graphs and tables which clearly indicate findings of the study.

Results

Figure 1.1
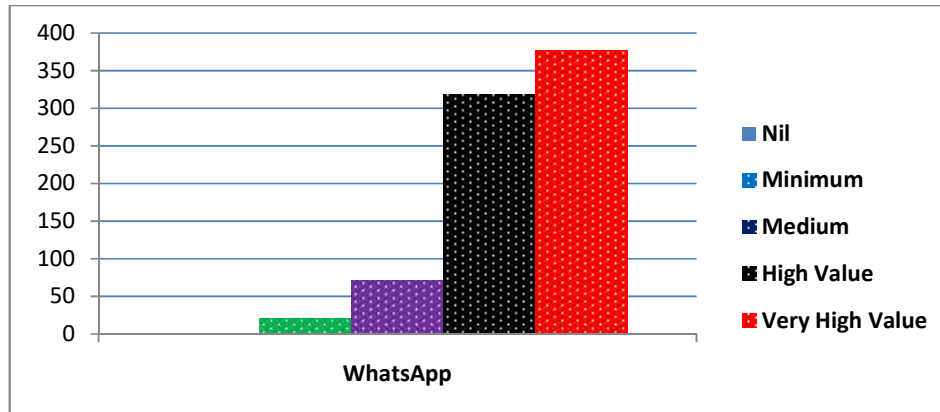
Table 1.1 Views of Learners Regarding WhatsApp's Role in English Language Learning

Scale used	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Nil	---	---	----	----
Minimum	21	2.7	2.7	2.7
Medium	72	9.1	9.1	11.8
High Value	319	40.4	40.4	52.2
Very High Value	377	47.8	47.8	100.0
Total	789	100.0	100.0	

The above table 1.1 revealed the views of learners regarding the role of WhatsApp in English language learners' language learning proficiency at university level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The detail of respondents are mentioned in the above table nil zero responses minimum 20, medium 70, high value 316, and very high value 383. Here also the views of the respondents clearly indicated the role of WhatsApp in English language learning because the total number of responses about high value and very high value are more than nil and minimum.

Table 1.2 Views of Learners Regarding WhatsApp's Role in English Language Learning. (t-test)

Questionnaire Statements	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Use of WhatsApp improve my English language learning proficiency.	Male Students	400	4.4350	.60968	30.306	.000
	Female Students	389	4.2288	.86250		

In the above table 1.2 regarding the views of university level learners clearly indicates the views of learners and the role of WhatsApp in English language learning proficiency development because here the mean score of male respondent is 4.4350, standard deviation is .60968, female respondents mean score 4.2288, standard deviation .86250, F-value 30.306, with sig .000. Thus in light of the above t-test application views male and female learners showed the positive effect of WhatsApp in English language learning proficiency at university level.

Table 1.3 Views of Learners Regarding WhatsApp's Role in English Language Learning. (t-test)

Questionnaire Statements	Discipline	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Use of WhatsApp improve my English language learning proficiency.	Social Sciences	390	4.3128	.66849	12.255	.000
	Pure sciences	389	4.3368	.82936		

The above table 1.3 of t-test application indicated the difference between views of social sciences and pure sciences learners regarding the role of WhatsApp for English language learning at university level. Now here the mean score is 4.3128, standard deviation is .66849, pure sciences respondents mean score 4.3368, standard deviation .82936, F-value 12.255, and P-value .000. Thus in light of the above t-test application views of social sciences and pure sciences learners showed the positive effect of WhatsApp in English language learning proficiency at university level.

Table 1.4 Views of Learners Regarding WhatsApp's Role in English Language Learning(ANOVA)

Questionnaire Statements	Relationship	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Use of WhatsApp improve my English language learning proficiency.	Between Groups	8.386	1	8.386	15.104	.000
	Within Groups	436.948	787	.555		
	Total	445.333	788			

The above table 1.4 of ANOVA application highlighted significance difference between the views of male and female learners regarding the role of WhatsApp in English language learning proficiency development at university level. Here the sum of squares between groups 8.386 and within groups 436.948, df 1, 787, mean squares 8.386, and .555, F-value 15.104, and P-value .000. Thus in light of the above t-test application views of male and female learners showed the positive effect of WhatsApp in English language learning proficiency at university level.

Table1.5 Views of Learners Regarding WhatsApp's Role in English Language Learning(ANOVA)

Questionnaire Statements	Relationship	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Use of WhatsApp improve my English language learning proficiency.	Between Groups	4.613	2	2.307	4.114	.017
	Within Groups	440.720	786	.561		
	Total	445.333	788			
	Within Groups	885.257	786	1.126		
	Total	908.771	788			

The above table 1.5 of ANOVA application showed significance difference between the views of social sciences and pure sciences learners regarding the role of WhatsApp in English language learning proficiency development university level. Now here the sum of squares between groups 4.613 and within groups 440.720, df 2, 786, mean squares 2.307, and .561, F-value 4.114, and P-value .017. Thus in light of the above t-test application views of

social sciences and pure sciences learners showed the positive effect of WhatsApp in English language learning proficiency at university level.

Discussion

Social media sources like Facebook not only develops the learning competencies of the English language but also develops the positive attitudes of the English learners to greater extent as Shih (2011) described "the effects of using a blended teaching approach on the development of ESL students' writing abilities" and at the end of the study concluded that social media sources like Facebook builds the positive attitudes of the learners. The students who use Facebook for English writing proficiency may improve their English language skills and competencies like vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and along with all these the attitudes of the learners also improved through this process. Similarly, Al-Shehri (2011) conducted a study on 33 male university level learners at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. The majority of students were English language learners and finally the findings that study concluded that when the learners at university level use social media sources like Facebook then they are in contact with other friends and relatives and through this way their stay in connection with others and

sharing of various pictures and posts develop their abilities to synthesize ideas and facts from various sources of information. It means that social media sources like Facebook enable the English learners to get main idea from the given text and write the summery of it. In one another study which was conducted by Nader (1996) regarding the difficulties of English learners at university level in English language vocabulary and described that the use of online sources like internet is useful for English language learners to get awareness about the world level cultures through searching on internet is useful for English language learners because it develops the English language learners vocabulary and their knowledge about the English language learning. Thus Meara, (1980) said that learners have very little effort in English language learning process when technology is used during the teaching learning of English language. The learners may improve their skills and competences with little efforts as compare to traditional methods of learning. Campbell (2003) also in his research study highlighted three major types of blogs which are used in English language classrooms like "Tutor blog, Learner's blog, and class blog" and highlighted the value and significance of

blogs in English language learning in a very beautiful manner. This study also shows the use and importance of online sources in English language learning and the use of various blogs in English language learning process inside and outside the classrooms. Likewise, Thurairaj et al., (2012) conducted a study on "Facebook and Twitter do lead to positive language learning" suggested that social media tools like Facebook and Twitter are successfully used as learning tools in English language learning. In light of their study they concluded that Facebook and Twitter are widely used for communication both in oral and written form which are useful for English language learners and facilitate the learners to learn new words and improve their vocabulary of English language along with writing, reading and speaking skills. The study also highlighted that social media sources enables the learners to perform various activities which are helpful for English language learners. Another study which was conducted by Thurairaj and Roy (2012) regarding the role of Facebook and Twitter in English language and finally concluded that teaching materials are helpful and beneficial for English language learners in order to improve their language learning proficiency but the teaching method is not so interested and enjoyable

as that of social media use in English language teaching and learning. The study highlighted that there are a number of English language learners who have proper command over the English language skills and competencies due to the use of Facebook and twitter use for English language learning. Kabilan et al. (2010) suggested that Facebook social media facilitates the English learners in online communication practice and finally concluded in light of their research study that Facebook social media plays an important role in English language skills and competencies development because it is an interested online environment for social interaction and social relations. Therefore, in light of the previous studies conducted by different researchers about various social media tools like Facebook, etc for English language learning proficiency development the said study was conducted to highlight the importance of Whatsapp in English language learning proficiency development because whatsapp is also commonly used among young mature learners.

Conclusion

English is an international language and most commonly used in our education system as a medium of instruction not only in higher education but also at low level as a compulsory subject. It is the

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language of research, science, medicine, business and international relations but on the other hand social media is also most commonly used in our daily routine life. The use of social media sources like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp etc. have become an important part of our life because social media is playing an outstanding role in creating and shaping of public opinions and strengthening of society but here in education social media refers using of various social media sources to enhance the education of learners. It is due to this reason the present study was designed to explore the importance of social media sources application in English language learning. The main purpose of the present study was to highlight the role of social media sources in English language learning, and to explore the views of university level learners regarding the use of social media sources for English language learning proficiency development.

Recommendations/ suggestions

- Findings of the present study clearly indicated the views of English language learners regarding the positive role of WhatsApp in English language learning proficiency development at university level.

- The findings of the study also highlighted that WhatsApp use is quite helpful in English language learning proficiency development because it is free from time and place but at every place the learners may use WhatsApp to chat with other friends, class fellows, and even with teachers to get help from them and improve language learning skills.

Suggestions for future studies

This study was conducted in descriptive survey design therefore the same study may be suggested for future researchers to conduct experimental design and highlight the role of WhatsApp and or any other social media tool like Facebook for English language learning purpose.

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