

# Integration of WhatsApp as a Learning Tool in Development of Listening Skill for ESL learners at Tertiary level.

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## **Abstract:**

*This study investigates the potential of WhatsApp as a digital medium for improving listening skills among tertiary-level learners. Utilizing a quasi-experimental approach, participants were divided into control and experimental groups. The control group followed conventional classroom-based instruction, while the experimental group engaged in listening activities via WhatsApp, including audio recordings, voice messages, and peer interactions. Listening comprehension was evaluated through pre- and post-tests, and student feedback was collected using questionnaires to gauge their perceptions. Results indicated a statistically significant enhancement in listening proficiency within the experimental group compared to the control group. Students also expressed greater motivation and engagement, attributing these outcomes to WhatsApp's flexibility and interactivity. The findings highlight WhatsApp's effectiveness as a mobile-assisted language learning tool and its promising role in improving English language instruction, particularly in resource-limited educational environments.*

**Keywords:** *Language learning, technology, WhatsApp, listening skill, Mobile-assisted language learning.*

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Educators and scholars have long integrated technology into language learning and instruction. As defined by Merriam-Webster, technology involves applying technical processes, methods, or knowledge to achieve a task. In this study's context, technology refers to using such tools to fulfill specific learning or teaching goals. Technological tools used in classrooms have proven just as effective as traditional instruction. Researchers have analysed various studies to understand which technologies have been utilized and how they contribute to language learning outcomes. The fast-paced advancement of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has brought significant changes to education. Today's educators no longer simply advocate for student-centered learning—they emphasize the importance of a blended approach that integrates technology alongside learner autonomy. A key innovation within this shift is podcasting. With the rise of smartphones and portable media players, podcasting offers a flexible alternative to both classroom-based and remote education. Since listening is considered the most commonly used receptive skill in daily life, instructors continuously seek new ways to address the limitations of classroom time and enhance students' communication abilities especially their listening skills.

### **Role of WhatsApp as learning tool:**

WhatsApp is a powerful tool for teaching and learning. It helps teachers send materials talk to students and keep everyone learning together. WhatsApp can be valuable learning tool, offering benefits like accessibility, convenience, collaboration and personalized learning. It can be used for discussion groups, resource sharing, feedback and peer learning. To use WhatsApp effectively in education clear guidelines, organize content and respect boundaries. The integration of technology into education has gained considerable momentum in recent years, with instant messaging platforms like WhatsApp emerging as prominent tools in educational settings. WhatsApp, a multifunctional application, enables users to exchange a wide range of communication formats including text, audio, and video messages, as well as engage in real-time voice and video calls. Its widespread use in everyday life has made its adoption in educational contexts both natural and increasingly prevalent. Academic researchers have shown growing interest in examining how WhatsApp is being utilized for educational purposes—exploring its potential benefits, usage patterns, and the challenges that may arise. This interest is well-founded: WhatsApp has over 2 billion monthly active users globally, establishing it as a dominant force in digital communication

and collaboration across various domains, including education. Given this widespread adoption, it's essential to understand how WhatsApp influences student engagement, motivation, and academic performance. Moreover, as its role in education continues to expand, it becomes increasingly important to address issues related to privacy and data protection, and to develop effective strategies for integrating WhatsApp meaningfully and securely into pedagogical practices.

#### **Review of Literature:**

Technology has emerged as a pivotal and transformative element within educational frameworks, significantly enhancing learning experiences. Tools such as Artificial Intelligence have been recognized for their role in improving English language proficiency (Ahmandi, 2018). As Mercy Gnana Gandhi (2015) highlights, a solid grasp of technological tools is essential for both teachers and learners in today's educational landscape. The increasing integration of technology into educational practices has drawn widespread attention (Gamede, Ajani, & Afolabi, 2022), particularly platforms like WhatsApp, which boasts over 2 billion monthly active users (Bajpai et al., 2022). WhatsApp's multi functionality—including text, voice, and video messaging, as well as real-time communication—makes it an effective tool for educational collaboration (Stevani & Putro, 2000). Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010) emphasize its speed and adaptability, noting its preference among both students and instructors. Despite its rising popularity in academic settings, scholarly exploration of WhatsApp's pedagogical implications remains limited (Ajani, 2021). As Jailobaev et al. (2021) observe, WhatsApp has become a widely used medium for both communication and collaboration across disciplines. Research by Madge et al. (2019) supports its expanding role in education, while Nyasulu and Chawinga (2019) outline advantages such as rapid information sharing, increased interaction among learners and educators, and promotion of collaborative learning. Annamalai (2019) demonstrated its effectiveness in blended learning environments through the use of chat groups. Further studies indicate that WhatsApp strengthens engagement and enhances the rapport between students and facilitators (Ujakpa et al., 2018). Mobile technologies in general have been shown to foster responsiveness and connectivity in both informal and structured learning (Gachago et al., 2015). Cetinkaya (2017) recommends incorporating WhatsApp as a supplementary resource in educational contexts, though comprehensive understanding of its integration—along with the challenges and opportunities involved—is still developing. Recent technological advancements have revolutionized language learning, making it more accessible and effective than traditional methods. Learners benefit from seamless communication across both formal and informal learning environments (Khan et al., 2018; Mohamad & Woollard, 2012; Papadakis & Kalogiannakis, 2017). Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has gained global prominence for its ability to enhance various linguistic skills, including vocabulary acquisition, grammatical proficiency, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and speaking fluency (Hwang et al., 2011; Hwang & Tsai, 2011). Understanding learner and instructor attitudes toward educational technologies is crucial to evaluating the motivation behind their use and measuring the effectiveness of digital integration—while also illuminating its impact, both beneficial and challenging, on learning settings. Furthermore, MALL supports active learner participation and fosters collaborative learning dynamics (Saeidi & Mozaheb, 2012).

#### **Background:**

The integration of mobile devices and applications has become an essential component of modern teaching and learning processes. Mobile apps have simplified education and made learning more engaging and enjoyable for students. This study emphasizes the importance of listening skills in language acquisition and examines how mobile applications can support practice and progress in this area. Technology is now a fundamental part of education, having evolved from a supplementary tool to a core facilitator of learning. In today's digital age, mobile technology has revolutionized communication, interaction, and information access. Among the various platforms, WhatsApp stands out as one of the most widely adopted mobile messaging applications worldwide. With features like real-time communication, multimedia sharing, and group interaction, WhatsApp offers a practical and impactful medium for educational use particularly in developing countries such as India. Listening is a foundational skill in language acquisition and communication. In English language learning, especially at tertiary level listening often receives less emphasis compared to reading and writing. This is particularly evident in technical institutions such as polytechnic colleges, where the focus tends to be more on content delivery

than on language skills. As a result, many students struggle with understanding spoken English, which affects their academic performance and future employability. The integration of Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) tools such as WhatsApp provides a new dimension to language instruction. WhatsApp facilities access to audio content, podcasts, voice notes and interactive discussions outside the classroom environment. Its informal, learner- friendly interface allows students to practice listening at their own pace, in familiar settings and with peer support. The platform also enables teachers to provide timely feedback, share audio resources and encourage collaborative learning. Despite the growing interest in mobile learning, there is limited imperial research on the specific impact of WhatsApp in developing listening skills among tertiary- level learners. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of WhatsApp as supplementary tool in enhancing listening skills, contributing to broader field of technology-enhanced language learning. **Scope:** Listening is a language skill that can be cultivated through regular practice. Strong listening abilities enhance one's capacity to absorb, adapt to, and apply new information, knowledge, and skills. In teaching listening, it is essential to guide students in identifying and implementing effective strategies. When individuals listen actively, they improve their ability to inspire, support, and develop others, while also enriching everyday communication. Furthermore, listening plays a key role in fostering interpersonal and professional relationships. Pre-listening activities help learners determine what to concentrate on and how to interpret the meaning of the content. These exercises encourage students to activate their prior knowledge of the topic, and require the establishment of a clear listening task and objective to guide their focus. Processing of the information that is heard requires mental effort, including both cognitive and affective processing. Teachers can improve students' listening skills by paying close attention to the mental skills and processes required for perceptive listening, such as recall, sense-making, and evaluation. In order to improve understanding and learning effectiveness, listeners adopt metacognitive and socio-affective methods. Because they supervise and control the language acquisition process, Meta cognitive methods are crucial. Cognitive strategies change the information that needs to be learned or use a particular method for listening tasks. Socio-affective tactics are the methods that listeners employ to work with others, confirm understanding, or reduce fear. As the world embraces modernity, the education system is also evolving toward technology-driven methods of teaching. These innovative approaches tend to engage learners more effectively, enabling them to complete tasks with interest while simultaneously fostering learning. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about profound changes in global education, emerging as a pivotal factor in shaping a nation's economic trajectory. This unprecedented situation catalysed a transition from traditional instruction to technology-oriented teaching and learning practices. To navigate this crisis and build a resilient education system for the future, a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy is essential. Rethinking pedagogical approaches and delivery methods—with an emphasis on e-learning platforms—has become imperative to establish a unified and adaptive learning environment. Many educators now believe that digital content will eventually replace conventional textbooks, and even more transformative technologies are anticipated in the years to come.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

This paper highlights the role of online listening apps that helps the students of tertiary level to develop their listening skill. First year of various departments were made to use this application for improving their listening skill. Based on their experimental study and usage of WhatsApp as learning tool, a survey was conducted to the learners. The response of the learners were recorded with the help of questionnaires and their response were marked for their listening skill.

Table: 1 Student's Questionnaire on using WhatsApp as learning tool.

S.NO	QUESTIONNAIRES	Strongly Agree	Disagree
1	WhatsApp helps me understand academic content better.		
2	WhatsApp allows for quick clarification of doubts.		
3	WhatsApp supports collaboration with peers.		
4	WhatsApp improves my access to study material.		
5	WhatsApp helps in maintaining consistent communication with teachers.		
6	WhatsApp motivates me to stay engaged in learning.		
7	WhatsApp is easy to use for academic communication.		
8	Will this app helps in future for upcoming new learners?		
9	Is this tool approachable for everyone to access?		
10	WhatsApp helps improve my English listening skills.		

Around twenty students from two different branches of Polytechnic College were asked to give their views on WhatsApp as learning tool. Quantitative analysis were done and the results were analysed and tabulated.

Table: 2 Result of Students View on using WhatsApp as learning tool. (I year Mechanical)

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Control Group	45%	60%
Experimental	45%	85%

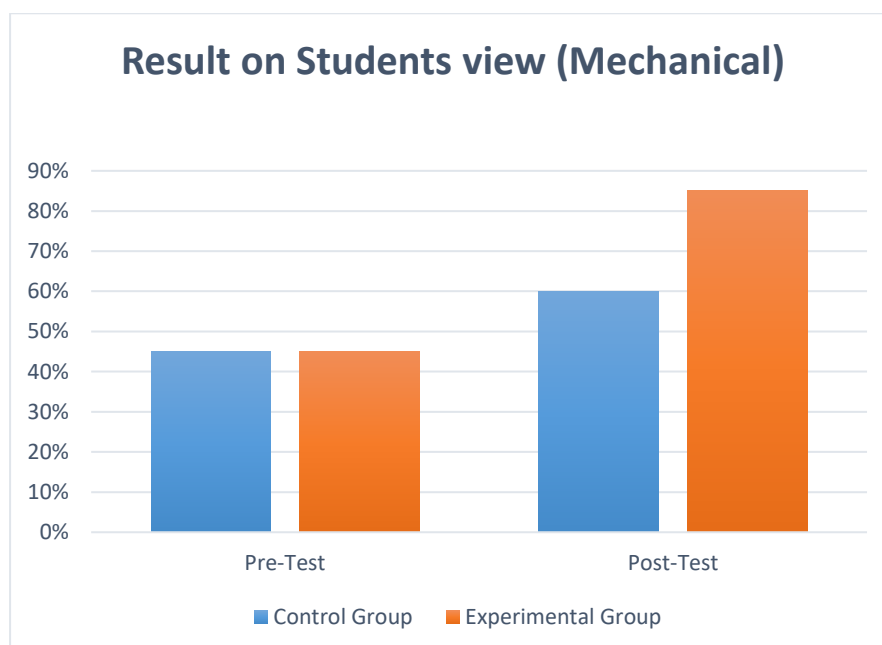


Fig: 1 Result on Students on Using WhatsApp as learning tool. (Mechanical)

Table: 3 Result of Students View on using WhatsApp as learning tool. (I year EEE)

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test

Control Group	40%	65%
Experimental Group	40%	90%

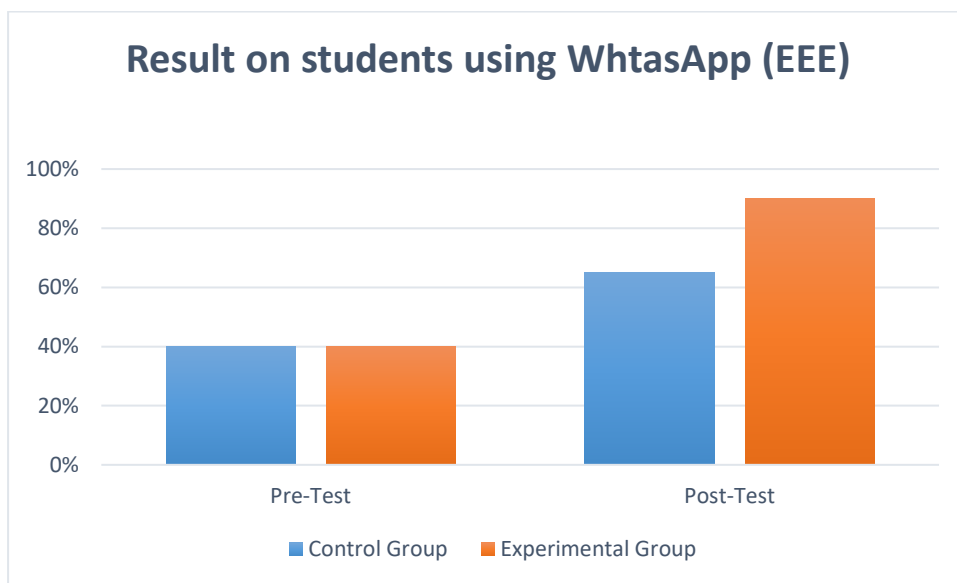


Fig: 2 Result on Students on Using WhatsApp as learning tool. (EEE)

Table: 4 Consolidate Score of Students (in Percentage) using WhatsApp as learning tool.

Branch	Strongly Agree	Disagree
Mechanical	80%	20%
EEE	90%	10%

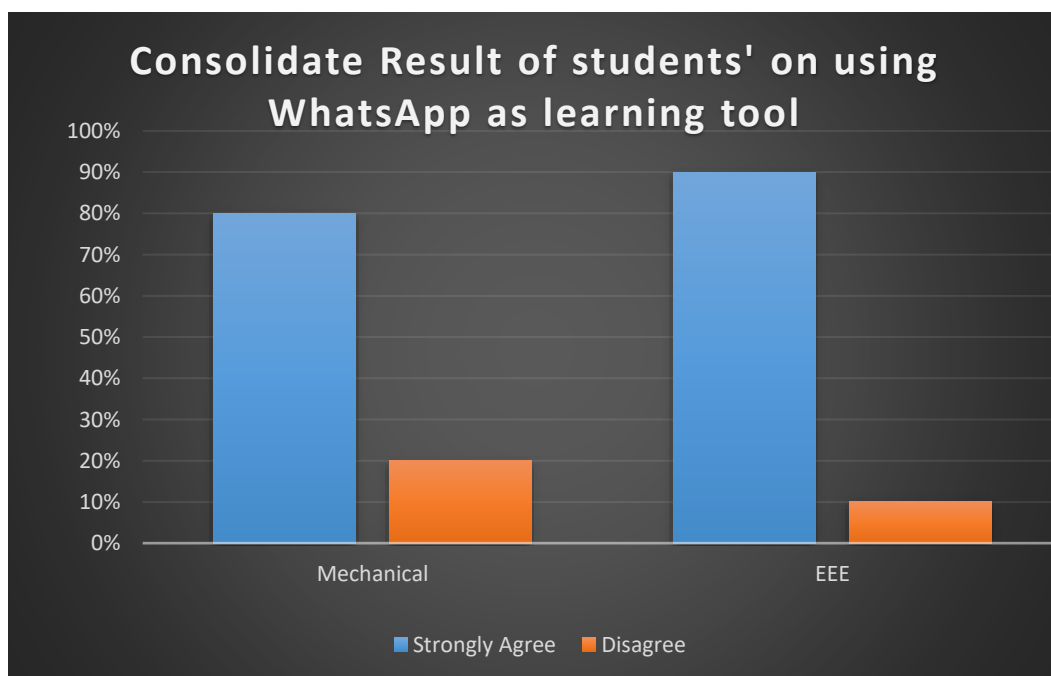


Fig: 3 Consolidate Score of Students (in Percentage) using WhatsApp as learning tool.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

The study aimed to examine the effectiveness of WhatsApp as a learning tool in enhancing listening skill among tertiary-level students. A pre-test and post-test experimental design was employed, involving two

groups control and an experimental group from the two different departments in integrating WhatsApp as learning tool. The experimental group that used WhatsApp showed a statistically significant improvement in listening skill compared to control group. Over 85% of the students in the experimental group reported increased engagement. WhatsApp activities included audio notes, listening tasks, group discussions and peer feedback. Students appreciated the flexibility and informal learning environment. The findings of this study align with prior research indicating that Mobile- assisted language learning (MALL) tools like WhatsApp can significantly enhance language skills, particularly listening comprehension. The integration of WhatsApp into the teaching-learning process significantly contributed to the development of students' listening skill. Its interactive, flexible and students-centred approach created a conducive environment for language acquisition, especially in resource-constrained context like many polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu.

## CONCLUSION:

The study demonstrated that integrating WhatsApp as learning tool significantly enhanced the development of listening skill among tertiary-level students. The experimental group, which received instruction and interactive listening activities via WhatsApp, showed a marked improvement in their listening comprehension compared to the control group. The findings support the view that mobile-based platforms like WhatsApp can offer flexible, engaging and learners-centred environments that extend learning beyond the classroom. Features such as audio sharing, voice notes and real-time peer interaction created meaningful opportunities for students to practice and improve their listening abilities in an informal and supportive setting. Therefore, educators are encouraged to integrate such digital tools into their teaching strategies to promote active language learning and increased learner autonomy, especially in resource-limited settings like polytechnic college.

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