
Increasing Ubiquity in Language Learning using WhatsApp

Ian Wairua^{#1}, Ismail Ateya^{#2}

Formatted: Centered

¹iwairua@strathmore.edu

^{1,2}Strathmore University, Kenya. ¹Tel +254-721-812-613

Abstract

In recent years, web-based e-learning, has received great attention as a possible method to increase efficiency and access to both basic and higher education in Africa. While the performance of institutional e-learning and learner management systems (LMS) continues to face critical scrutiny, the value proposition of e-learning seems to have settled the debate and reduced attention on whether the continent is ready for networked educational technologies. The attention has shifted from infrastructural and cost issues towards mobile technologies or mobile-enhanced e-learning, mainly because of the rapid increase in mobile phone use in the continent, and the persisting problems access and equity.

This study sought to investigate the use of Whatsapp mobile social networking application in enhancing ubiquity of teaching and learning within mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Students were required to use the App to complete group tasks and the times during which these activities were carried out were observed and analysed. The target subjects for the study were university students who are elementary learners of Japanese as a foreign language in an African university. This study combines the findings of the pilot phase of a case study, with on-going background literature review of mobile learning for Africa. The initial results show that Whatsapp enhances ubiquitous learning and provides proof of opportunities for exploiting available mobile Web technologies in an African university setting.

Keywords: *e-learning, m-learning, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), mobile apps*