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**USING WHATSAPP MOBILE APPLICATION
IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the use of the WhatsApp mobile application in the process of learning a foreign language in order to form and improve the communicative language competence of students. This study aims at examining the effectiveness of WhatsApp usage in developing language skills while teaching foreign languages.

The article discusses the advantages and disadvantages of using this resource in the practice of teaching a foreign language as it has become one of the most famous messengers used around the world thanks to its capabilities which should undoubtedly be used to teach certain aspects of learning a foreign language. Work plan for the WhatsApp application usage when learning a foreign language in a student audience is suggested.

The methodology of work on the development of all types of speech activity including language exercises for the development of reading, listening,

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writing and speaking skills by means of the WhatsApp mobile application is proposed.

***Key words:** WhatsApp, teaching a foreign language, development of language skills, mobile learning, mobile application.*

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ МОБИЛЬНОГО ПРИЛОЖЕНИЯ WHATSAPP

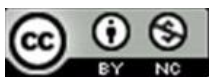
В ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ

РЕЗЮМЕ

Статья посвящена использованию мобильного приложения WhatsApp в процессе преподавания иностранного языка с целью формирования и совершенствования коммуникативной языковой компетенции студентов. Это исследование направлено на изучение эффективности использования WhatsApp для развития языковых навыков при обучении иностранным языкам.

В статье рассматриваются преимущества и недостатки использования этого ресурса в практике преподавания иностранного языка, поскольку он стал одним из самых известных мессенджеров, используемых во всем мире, благодаря своим возможностям, которые, несомненно, следует использовать для обучения определенным аспектам

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изучения иностранного языка. Предлагается план работы по использованию приложения WhatsApp в ходе изучения иностранного языка в студенческой аудитории.

Предложена методика работы по развитию всех видов речевой деятельности, включая языковые упражнения для развития навыков чтения, аудирования, письма и разговорной речи с помощью мобильного приложения WhatsApp.

***Ключевые слова:** WhatsApp, обучение иностранному языку, развитие языковых навыков, мобильное обучение, мобильное приложение.*

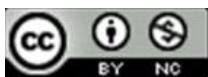
Introduction

Nowadays mobile devices such as smartphones have gained huge popularity due to their versatility and portability, they are widely used in the daily life of any person and especially young people do it. This is justified by the fact that these devices have many advantages: ease of use, portability, versatility, adaptability and the ability to meet individual needs. In the context of the educational and cognitive process, the devices make it possible to overcome the temporal and territorial boundaries of the classroom, since information is not limited to a specific time and place of study.

The introduction of mobile-assisted foreign language learning is becoming a popular theme due to the fact that smartphones have become the most common communication device these days in comparison to computers and laptops. Learning through the mobile phone provides students with a number of opportunities for learning as mobile phones have unique features

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which make them appropriate for different educational objectives, the main one is social interactivity which helps students and teachers to exchange different materials.

In recent years, a new direction in education has been developed: mobile learning (m-learning). Mobile learning is considered as a type of e-learning using mobile devices, both independently and along with other information and communication technologies, for the organization of the educational process regardless of place and time (Odinokay 2016).

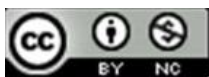
The most active users of mobile technology today are young people, many of whom are receiving education and actively using these devices in educational activities. It should be noted that mobile devices completely modify the learning process: they change the forms of presentation of the material, offer more convenient access to it, contribute to the creation of new forms of cognition.

Various mobile applications are potential technical means that can be used in teaching foreign languages in case of distance learning, since today a mobile phone is a device without which the daily life of a modern person is impossible, and one cannot neglect the advantages that mobile communication means offer us.

According to our own experience of teaching English and Russian as foreign languages using remote technologies, we can note that one of the most famous messengers used around the world is WhatsApp, its capabilities should undoubtedly be used to teach certain aspects of learning a foreign language.

Objectives of the Study

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This study aims at examining WhatsApp as educational tool in developing students' language skills. To achieve this goal, the following objectives should be solved:

- To examine the effectiveness of WhatsApp usage in developing language skills while teaching foreign languages;
- To investigate how students perceive WhatsApp as an educational tool in foreign language learning;
- To examine the effectiveness of different language exercises constructed using WhatsApp application capacities.

Hypothesis of the Study

This study supposes the following hypotheses:

1. WhatsApp can be effectively used as an educational tool for teaching foreign languages.

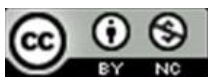
2. With the help of WhatsApp application a lot of different exercises may be constructed to improve motivation of foreign language learners and to develop language skills using modern technologies.

Advantages of using WhatsApp in teaching foreign languages

The use of messengers for didactic purposes is relevant in modern conditions, since social networks act not only as a means of communication with students studying foreign languages by means of modern technologies, but also as an educational environment, as a means of psychological adaptation of students when studying foreign languages. WhatsApp messenger when teaching foreign languages is an opportunity to unite the entire language group with a single goal and idea by creating a group chat, despite the fact that

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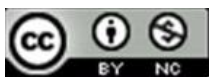
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students of the same group may currently be in different places. In addition, the use of WhatsApp also facilitates communication between the teacher and students in the group, as this application is easily installed on the phone, has flexibility and useful functions for texting, calling and sending videos, audio, links, documents, photos. This means that WhatsApp is the most potential technology to support communication between the teacher and students today in case of distance learning.

A number of studies have been conducted on the use of WhatsApp in teaching foreign languages. Kheryadi has implemented the WhatsApp application as a means of teaching English at the Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin State Islamic University of Banten in Indonesia. Studies have shown that students have demonstrated confidence, independence, increased motivation to learn English using the application. Maria Justina used WhatsApp to develop reading and writing skills among students studying undergraduate programs at Osmania University in India. The results of her research show that using WhatsApp is very important for determining which language exercises are interesting to students, and is useful for developing reading and writing skills in a foreign language. A study conducted by Fattah and Said showed the effectiveness of using WhatsApp messenger as one of the methods of mobile learning for the development of writing skills among students of the English Language Faculty of a Private University in Saudi Arabia.

Based on research conducted by English language teachers in several countries around the world, it can be concluded that the WhatsApp application is a very effective tool for teaching a foreign language. This application is interesting because it has several functions that allow users to communicate,

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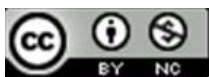
talk, write in a chat, the main advantage of which is that the WhatsApp application is easily accessible to students anytime and anywhere.

WhatsApp may be used as an auxiliary tool, which allows you to bring to automatism the language skills necessary when learning a foreign language. Students perceive the need to write with difficulty at first, and then this skill becomes formed, students gradually get used to the automatic perception of the graphic image of the word. The teacher acts as a participant in the conversation, whose task is not to correct the participants in the communication, but to demonstrate the correct samples using the lexical and grammatical constructions already studied, presented according to the norms of the language to be studied. Moreover, at the initial stage of language learning, it is better for the teacher to use familiar constructions without transforming them, and then gradually introduce new speech patterns using synonymous grammatical and lexical capabilities of the language, thereby developing students' speech-thinking activity in a foreign language.

WhatsApp is sometimes supposed to be just an imitation of the learning process, but in reality, it is communication, which means learning. Work at WhatsApp is communication that is accessible to all members of the group.

When communicating with students in a chat in a specially created group, the teacher should motivate students to communicate only using the language they study, motivating this communication. A teacher can support, prompt, help express a thought correctly as a companion in communication, and not as a teacher-mentor explaining grammar in class. The WhatsApp application has a set of emoticons that can also be useful especially at the initial

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stage of learning to express emotions that students cannot yet express in words. A big plus of chatting is that the student has the opportunity to think about the response, to choose the right word. Communication in an Internet group removes some of the psychological communication problems inherent in working in the audience.

Methods of using WhatsApp in practice of teaching foreign languages

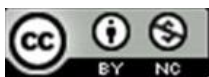
To get students' attention and interest **while studying a foreign language, WhatsApp** is one of the most accessible free applications that may be used as innovative activities. Most of the students have smart phones which make it possible to unite the whole group. WhatsApp is an excellent medium to communicate with students out of class, to share texts, images, videos, audios.

WhatsApp is considered to be a perfect means to organize the group as a teacher can easily get in contact with the students who are missing classes, send assignments. Students in their turn can contact a teacher in the group to clarify misunderstandings. A teacher can remind about deadlines for assignments, competitions and others. These reminders are the quickest and the most effective way to inform students. Moreover, WhatsApp allows to send some interesting information on extra curriculum activities.

However, the main goal of this study to analyse WhatsApp using as an educational tool while teaching foreign languages.

Mobile learning is an effective means for repeating the material already studied in the classroom or online lesson. The consolidation of the material is assigned to the independent work of students, it is aimed at working

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out language and speech material. We offer the following work plan for the WhatsApp application when learning a foreign language in a student audience:

Step 1. To create a WhatsApp group by saving students' phone numbers in the internal memory of the phone.

Step 2. To establish the rules of working in a Whatsapp group: politeness of communication, the impossibility of sending personal messages in a group chat, communication only in a foreign language they study.

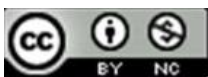
Stage 3. To offer language and speech exercises with clear instructions.

WhatsApp can be used to develop communication skills of students in all types of speech activity. The following are examples of exercises that may be used by teachers of a foreign language in working with the WhatsApp mobile application.

1. Exercises for the development of listening skills.

The formation and development of listening skills using the WhatsApp mobile application can be carried out in any place where there is Internet access: in the classroom, in a hostel, in a cafe or transport. There are many types of activities that can be used when teaching listening using the WhatsApp mobile application. Teachers can share the audio recording as a file in the WhatsApp group. Then students listen to the recording of a short audio file, perform tasks that are sent to them by the teacher in the form of printed text. The advantage of using WhatsApp to teach listening is that it allows

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students to work at their own pace, listen to the recording as many times as they need, and fully focus on problem areas..

Exercises for the development of listening skills can be exclusively in the form of an audio file or an audio file with visual support, presented in the form of printed text or illustration. Exercises aimed at recognizing specific words, structures, and extracting specific information from the sounding text are also used. Examples of such exercises can be the following tasks:

- «Erased message». Students receive a printed text with gaps that must be filled in by listening to an audio file. Students are not limited in the number of auditions, everyone works at their own pace. They send the full text to the teacher for verification.

- «Find differences». Students receive a picture and an audio file in the chat, which is a description of this picture, but contains inconsistencies compared to the illustration. The student's task is to find these inaccuracies by listening to the audio text.

- «Find mistakes». Students receive an audio file (10-12 sentences) in the chat, in which there are 5 factual errors that they must find. For example, Moscow is the capital of France. It is a beautiful and interesting city. Moscow is hot in winter and cold in summer.

2. Exercises for the development of reading skills.

Reading skills can be divided into two groups: reading technique skills and mental processing skills of perceived text units [Shchukin 2011: 257]. In the first weeks of learning a foreign language, reading technique skills

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are formed, which include recognizing letters in the text, combining letters into letter combinations, transcoding letters and letter combinations into sounds. At the initial stage, it is advisable to use the following exercises to develop phonetic skills:

- «Half a word». Students receive a printed text in which only the upper half of the text is visible, the lower half of the letters are closed. The task is to read the text, seeing only the upper part of the letters. A more difficult version of this exercise is when the lower part of the letters is open.

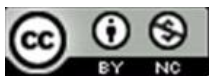
- «Mask». Students receive a printed text and a role-mask, that is, a task on behalf of which hero they should read this text, for example, as a capricious actress, as a small child or as a general. Students record an audio file and send it to the general group. This exercise is of great interest to students and is very effective in developing reading technique skills.

- «Make a dialogue». Students receive a printed text, which is presented in the form of a dialogical speech, but the replicas are mixed. The task facing the students is to collect the dialogue replicas so that a coherent logical text turns out, and then send the dialogue collected in the right order and send it to the teacher by a personal message.

3. Exercises for the development of speaking skills.

- «Video». The main task for independent extracurricular consolidation of the studied material can be shooting your own video on the proposed topic using a smartphone or tablet. Videos dedicated to congratulating classmates on their birthday and other holidays have become

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traditional. In the videos, creativity, a variety of verbal means are always welcome.

- «Virtual excursion». Another effective exercise aimed at developing speaking skills can be called conducting virtual tours of students' favorite places. During the training, there was an experience of conducting virtual excursions in online and offline modes using the WhatsApp application.

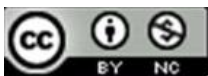
- «Today's news». This format became regular in the group: students took turns recording a video or a written test in which they covered the world news of the day, which they found interesting. Audio or written text should consist of 2-3 sentences, which necessarily indicate the place where this or that event took place, the main characters and what happened to these people.

Conclusion

Mobile learning today is the subject of discussions among foreign language teachers, the expediency of using this approach in the methodology of teaching foreign languages is being discussed. Undoubtedly, this approach has a number of advantages over traditional forms of education, especially in the context of distance learning, and the WhatsApp mobile application seems to be one of the most convenient to use. Among the advantages of extracurricular work with students using the WhatsApp mobile application are the following:

1. Easy and free access to educational resources anywhere and anytime.
2. The ability to use various multimedia features to present the material: illustrations, audio files, video files, quick messaging.

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3. The ability to form and develop skills in all types of speech activity in the presence of only one mobile device, without the involvement of additional technical means.
4. Constant feedback from the teacher and the group.
5. Individual learning pace for each student.
6. Regardless of the location of the students, they can access the same content at the same time. Distance is not an obstacle in mobile learning.

Undoubtedly, mobile learning has a number of disadvantages, as well as any distance learning:

1. Software problems

Software is an application that runs on a device according to the instructions embedded in the software. There are problems related to software compatibility, lack of updates for a new version, regular system failures, etc.

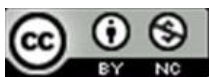
2. Distractions.

Social networks, chat, video games. Such classes take up time that could be used to complete the task.

3. Problems with Internet connection, power outages.

However, the popularity of mobile learning is growing, and today it is already possible to talk about specific forms and methods of introducing mobile technologies into the educational process. Each of the mobile

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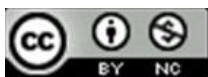
technologies has distinctive didactic properties, didactic and methodological functions that can be used in the educational process. The inclusion in the educational process of working with various mobile applications, in our case with the WhatsApp application, helps to improve the language and speech skills of students in all types of speech activity, as well as increasing motivation to learn foreign languages.

In conclusion, we admit that mobile learning does not replace traditional learning. However, it can be used as an addition to the learning process or as a component of blended learning. The active use of mobile learning using various mobile applications expands and complements the educational environment with interesting and relevant methods that are becoming more and more preferred and accessible to students.

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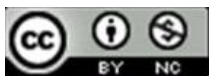
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