

Exploring WhatsApp Meta AI in Self-Directed English Learning: A Critical Analysis Through Activity Theory

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Abstract

Self-directed learning (SDL) serves as a foundation of language acquisition, enabling learners to take ownership of their linguistic development. WhatsApp Meta AI, a versatile digital tool, offers a promising platform for mediating SDL in English education. By examining the interactions among learners, the tool, and the broader learning environment through the framework of Activity Theory, this article explores the potential advantages and limitations of this technology. Although WhatsApp Meta AI supports foundational skill development, including writing assistance, speaking and listening practice, reading comprehension, and test preparation, it also presents challenges, such as overreliance on AI-driven feedback and reduced opportunities for social interaction. Optimizing its impact requires a balanced approach that integrates the tool with complementary learning resources and strategies, fostering a more holistic and effective SDL experience.

Keywords: WhatsApp meta-AI features, self-directed English learning, activity theory, English skills

Self-directed learning (SDL) has been given considerable research focus in language learning, responding to wider education trends towards learner autonomy, personalization, and technology-supported instruction (Hawkins, 2018; Lim et al., 2018). SDL is widely recognized as one strategy for empowering learners to be in control of the pace, direction, and content of their language learning, thus promoting lifelong learning and flexibility. With digital technologies becoming more pervasive in daily life, SDL more and more takes place outside the