

## **APPLICATION OF MOBILE LEARNING IN CLASS DISCUSSION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Teaching is a challenging profession as it demands dynamic and creative ways to manage the learning process. To enhance that management of the learning process, technology has a great role to play in producing dynamic teachers of the present generation. It is expected that contemporary technology, such as mobile devices, will be seen in and integrated into today's classroom. Mobile learning is defined as a learning medium that allows learners to use mobile devices to search and obtain materials anytime, anywhere, (Ozdamli and Cavus ,2013). Mobile learning uses mobile devices such as smartphones and laptops in an educational setting. This study examines gender roles in the use of online interaction or metalinguistic features in WhatsApp group amongst UiTM Melaka students. From these features, gender roles were noticeable, and they emphasize the concept of sex-role identification as an important and major factor in the

development of gender differences. It is important to see how metalinguistic features have evolved today in view of gender roles in the WhatsApp group community to have a better understanding of the users' behavior in building high self-efficacy levels. The aim of this study is to understand how different male and female users use metalinguistic features in weblogs. This is to enable the community to determine if a separate variety of metalinguistic features exists in the online community based on the distinctive form of discourse found within WhatsApp group.

**Keywords:** Online Interaction; Online Name Choice; Avatar Selection; Emotive Features

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a challenging profession as it demands dynamic and creative ways to manage the learning process. To enhance that management of the learning process, technology has a great role to play in producing dynamic teachers of the present generation. It is expected that contemporary technology, such as mobile devices, will be seen in and integrated into today's classroom. Mobile learning is defined as a learning medium that allows learners to use mobile devices to search and obtain materials anytime, anywhere, (Ozdamli and Cavus, 2013). Mobile learning uses mobile devices such as smartphones and laptops in an educational setting. The concept of mobile learning is not exactly new. It refers to the type of learning achieved using mobile computing devices such as smartphones or tablets (Al-Sudani, 2019). It does not have to have a mobility component, but rather the usage of a mobile device. On the other hand, Matzavela (2021) mentioned that adaptive learning incorporates the use of mobile tools to create learning aids and material. This study examines gender roles in the use of online interaction or metalinguistic features in WhatsApp group amongst UiTM Melaka students. From these features, gender roles were noticeable, and they emphasize the concept of sex-role identification as an important and major factor in the development of gender differences. It is important to see how metalinguistic features have evolved today in view of gender roles in the WhatsApp group community to have a better understanding of the users' behavior in building high self-efficacy levels. The aim of this study is to understand how different male and female users use metalinguistic features in weblogs. This is to enable the community to determine if a separate variety of metalinguistic features exists in the online community based on the distinctive form of discourse found within WhatsApp group.

WhatsApp group employs constructions from both spoken and written language. They are used with informal, spoken language constructions and lots of nonsensical words besides fostering threads of conversation through linking that supports a rich social network. The social networking functions can be seen clearly when following a thread of conversation through comments and

trackbacks of a post which note the gender differences and similarities in the community. Although WhatsApp is a form of social communication, a medium is still textually based and as such, maintains the advantages of written communication. WhatsApp are a public space to record thoughts, organize notes and bookmark information for future reference. They can also be considered as self-reflecting journal entries or well-kept daily diaries, recording users' experiences, observations, advice, impressions, opinions, analysis, notes and comments across a whole range of subjects such as news, politics, travel, economics, journalism and computer programming just to name a few, and with a touch of technology, WhatsApp has become sophisticated and advanced compared to the traditional methods.

This study focuses on a group of homogeneous students. They are Malay students and they come from a similar background. They are currently undergoing their Diploma and majoring in Office Management and Technology. Basically, they are adapted at using smart phone besides being very familiar with online interaction such as I Seek You (ICQ), Instant Messaging (Yahoo Messenger) and Facebook. English is not their first language and some of the students were exposed for the first time to WhatsApp as WhatsApp is the newest and the most recent Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) application.

This study adopted a single-case study approach since it was done with a small homogeneous group of students consisting of twelve Office Management and Technology students that have similar background and education level. Direct observation is also used as the instrumentation in this study to monitor as well as record the users' roles of gender in the WhatsApp group. Besides that, group classification is also used to look at the differences and similarities of gender roles in WhatsApp.

Therefore, it is important to know the development of CMC to have a better understanding of a WhatsApp group. This chapter will have further explanations on the notions of CMC and the relation in our lives as well as to the development of WhatsApp group whereby roles of gender are emphasized. Besides that, this chapter sets out the background to the study, identification of the research problem, the research questions, and the purpose of the study. Finally, this study has set the parameters for the findings by stating the definition of key terms.

There are many studies done on CMC and every year, it seems, a new type of CMC enters the scene such as ICQ ('I Seek You'), short-messaging service (SMS), Instant Messaging (IM) and of course WhatsApp group. How have gender roles been embedded in the rapid changes of CMC? More importantly, are gender roles giving rise to new social practices and if so, can metalinguistic features of a homogeneous group define the different gender roles in CMC? Extensive research has been conducted on strategies used for WhatsApp group as an educational tool and how WhatsApp group are able to help students improve their language skills. While these studies have described and developed the construct of WhatsApp group efficacy among students, there is little empirical research on the efficacy of gender roles in metalinguistic

features used in WhatsApp group (Huffaker and Calvert, 2005). Exploring efficacy in gender roles in metalinguistic features might reveal strong patterns of gender differences between males and females, as well as more intricacies into WhatsApp group community in understanding the norms used for males and females in portraying their identity online.

As we know, the areas to look at gender in WhatsApp group are very broad, so the researcher had to narrow down the analysis to the metalinguistic features that the gender had used in their WhatsApp posts.

Therefore, this study focuses on the metalinguistic features to compare the gender differences in describing and organizations patterns of online social interaction and organization among youth WhatsApp users in an educational setting. Besides, the study of gender is also to examine the metalinguistic features that these WhatsApp users used to portray their identity online in the context of social construction. This study also serves the purpose to view the ways a WhatsApp user is expected to interact (norms) based on gender roles in a WhatsApp group.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **i. The Importance of Gender and Communication**

Gender is a product of interaction. Our actions are shaped by the gender system – often subconsciously (Holtler, 1971). All people, regardless of gender, are similar in some ways and different in others, as well as overlapping with each other at different points. Sometimes even when expected similarities and differences are perceived, that expectation may not always be borne out. The members of all societies participate in the construction of gender differences. Rules are taught and there are pressures to adhere to different gendered norms. These rules and norms help to shape and guide our behavior.

### **ii. Principles of Gendered Communication**

According to Hotler (1971), Herring (2000), there are 4 principals of gendered communication that are briefly explained here. These principals are able to differentiate the types of interaction processes and how we could play an effective role in the community based on our gender.

### **iii. Gendered communication is Dynamic**

Gendered communication is a dynamic process due to the fact that the communication between men and women is ongoing or continuous. The norms, rules and roles sanctioned by society change with time thus are unpredictable and in a constant state of flux. That is, every individual exists in a continually changing worlds of experience of which s/he is in the center.

#### **iv. Gendered communication is Systematic**

Gender is relational and the study of gender is impossible without studying the specific persons in interaction in specific situations with specific other persons. It is not possible to understand gender's effect on communication without looking at its context, the people involved, and the culture within which an interaction occurs. Every process relates to other processes and as with all the aspects of our communication with others, interactive and interlinked.

#### **v. Gender communication is Pervasive**

Men and women frequently interact with members of their own sex and with each other thus the likelihood to exchange ideas and feelings with members of own sex and with members of opposite sex is regular. Due to the number of contacts that each has with each other, interest continues to grow on how gender actually affects the process of interaction by focusing on social expectations of masculinity and femininity and by exploring the equality or lack thereof in the opportunities afforded by men and women. Besides that, by acknowledging how multi-layered messages are offered by the media, families, religion and technology, it could also affect our notions of gender, thus the awareness of gender's pervasive impact on psychological, interpersonal and professional lives has increased.

#### **vi. Gendered communication is Learned**

All this time, which gendered behaviours work or not is learned through interaction with others. Existing gendered prescriptions can limit communication effectiveness while others whose standpoint is different can also be learned. Some people so used to think that female with feminist characteristics in the past should not be voicing their opinion in public and that females were supposed to be gentle, obedient, and always keep to themselves even though they were upset over an issue. However, these have long changed with time and these changes come along with experience.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The gendered communication is systematic as this study focuses on a homogeneous group of students. They are all Diploma students and are majoring in Office Management and Technology. The researcher has chosen this group of students based on their similar background and knowledge. There are only 12 of them with a close number of male and female students as mentioned in methodology. The researcher can concentrate on everyone by reading each posted text and comment in the WhatsApp group and found out that they have the same topic to talk about and they are able to interact among themselves comfortably as they know each other well without any pressure to comment on

their peers' posted articles. To ensure the continuity of the interaction besides they are able to portray themselves online with ease thus also ensuring the data the researcher has collected is reliable in showing the comparison of gender roles.

Additionally, the Standpoint Theory by Wood (1993) also plays an important role as it explains the differences and similarities between men and women based on their viewpoints in life.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to Wood (1993), Standpoint Theory suggests that the male-female differences in aptitude and personality traits often reflect traditional gender roles in society. Males are referred to as having agentic goals that stress assertiveness, self-efficacy, and mastery whereas females are guided by communal concerns emphasizing on interpersonal affiliation and harmonious relationships thus showing sensitivity to the concerns of both self and others.

Therefore, gendered behavior learned from interaction of both the male and female users in the WhatsApp group support the gender difference through their point of views appeared in the discussion; however, they can accept each standpoint as well as respect each other's view positively at the end of the discussion. The result is consistent with the research results of Snell and Snell-Siddle (2013), which also showed that student self-efficacy results did not show the mean results as statistically significant, however, with males having higher scores for attitude to technology this appeared to result in higher scores for self-efficacy for males.

The fact that men and women are different is commonly accepted in most societies and this is included in CMC whereby gender differences and similarities can be seen in the weblogs too. In weblogs, male bloggers undertake item-specific processing and female users are engaged in relational processing. Moreover, the results of Liaw (2015) also support that the gender factor influences learners' attitudes towards m-learning. Perceived anxiety is a positively significant predictor for female learners while perceived self-efficacy and perceived self-regulation have more positive contribution for male learners.

Moreover, gendered communication is systematic as this study focuses on a homogeneous group of students. According to Hotler (1971) and Herring (2000) gender is relational, and the study of gender is impossible without studying the specific persons in interaction in specific situations with specific other persons. It is impossible to understand gender's effect on communication without looking at its context, the people involved, and the culture within which an interaction occurs. Every process relates to other processes, and it is the same as all the aspects of our communication with others, are interactive and interlinked.

The findings also revealed that blogs open another whole world of doing things that bring new learning habits with more eager and committed users online, and it has proved to be a useful internet application in the education

setting. It can be used as a communication facility by utilizing the comments or discussion link which is usually placed as the bottom of each posting.

Here, the students post their article, link, concept, idea, and other students who belong to the same class are invited to make specific comments on this. The WhatsApp group functions as an asynchronous communication device that is like a bulletin board or threaded discussion but moderated by the student on whose WhatsApp group the conversation is initiated and managed. The WhatsApp group is a personal property of the individual student, and therefore they have control and ownership over the discussion and direction. This can support the previous research of Uzunboylu and Ozdamli (2011) which indicated that m-learning with handheld devices eradicated geographical borders, enabling co-operative learning environments which have individual and group interaction in the education. In addition, students also used mobile devices as a communication tool for sharing course notes such as presentations, weblinks and photographic images of patients (Khatoon, Hill & Walmsley, 2014).

Additionally, based on the metalinguistic features used in WhatsApp group for this study, the researcher can also conclude that the language of the WhatsApp group is both spaces bound and time bound, to a certain extent. Just as text is bound to the space it is written on, The WhatsApp group is bound to the medium in which the texts are written.

There is no standard size for a web page, and they are user-friendly too. WhatsApp group are also time-bound as there is an accepted range for posting length. Post is present on the front page of a WhatsApp group for a certain length of time and later they will be removed to their permanent home in the archives. Comments by other users to a post is also more a speech-like situation. It takes time to post comments, which are in the form of conversation between users in a written form.

There was no rule specifying a word limit for participants when typing messages on the Whatsapp Group, but when they were asked to comment on suitable lengths of text that would make them read the messages instantly, all admitted that they read any message instantly if they were short and if they were holding their phones when the messages were sent. Most smartphones had notifications on their screen once messages were received. For example, for iPhone users, they could read the messages instantly by just glancing at their phone if the message was very short.

Users can edit as often as needed and they can republish their posts just with a click of a button, but a convention of What sapping ?? is lack of editing. Thus, errors were common in their posts. Other than that, the selection of avatar and online name choice are emphasized in WhatsApp group too as a representation of their own identity while interacting online. Because of the lack of visual contact in weblogs, users cannot rely on context to make their meaning clear, nor is there any immediate feedback leading to users using emotive features to enhance their meanings within the text.

For Thailand context, mobile application is in the rise due to the disruption trend and the country strategic plan underlying Thailand 4.0 Policy

that results into Thailand is ranked globally No.1 for mobile banking users, 2nd for ownership of cryptocurrency, and 3rd in mobile commerce (Global Digital Report 2019 cited in Bangkok Post, 2019). According to this report, Thailand has a population of 69.24 million but the people's mobile subscriptions account for 92.33 million that means Thai people hold an account of mobile device more than 1 device per person. Thai people are also active internet and mobile social media which account respectively for 57 million or 82% and 49 million or 71% of the total population. Also, the top 5 of social media applications popularly used by Thai people are Facebook (93%), YouTube (91%), Line (84%), Facebook Messenger (72%) and Instagram (65%). This survey has been conducted with users aged 16-64 years old and the statistics indicated that Thailand accounts for 50 million Facebook users and 50% of them are female. This clearly means that Facebook is No.1 in Thailand for social media choice and female is the majority population. These statistics agreed to the study of Sittiwong (2015) in the study of Undergraduate Students Opinion towards the Use of Facebook in Graphics Design and Production for Education in Field of Educational Communications and Technology Faculty of Education, Naresuan University, Thailand. The results indicated that students showed their opinion on using Facebook in the instructional media production and designing for educational purposes subject at the high level with the conclusion that they could also share opinions, submitting and sharing documents among their classmates and lecturers via Facebook. This echoes the advantages in utilizing Facebook for instructional purpose as Facebook serves as a mediator and edutainment tool. In addition, the results also suggested other social media applications for classroom instructional media such as Line, Skype, Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram.

In summary, using mobile learning in classroom provides many benefits for learners both in Malaysia and Thailand, however, the teachers need to have a better understanding of the gender perspectives and differences when integrating mobile learning into teaching and learning to provide the chance for students to access, interact, and lead to the successful learning. In addition, it could be seen that there are differences in the use of mobile application in Malaysia and Thailand. For example, Malaysian tended to prefer WhatsApp to other social media platforms while Facebook is Thailand No.1 in the ranking, and female seems to account for the majority population of social media users in Thailand. This, perhaps, due to the population ratio of Thailand in that female population in Thailand is higher than that of the male population (Thailand Population clock (live), 2020). However, the study on gender roles and social media for education purposes in Thailand is still infancy, so it might be an interesting area for further study.

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