

The Role of Meta AI WhatsApp in Enhancing English Reading Skills of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the role of Meta AI WhatsApp as a technological tool for enhancing English reading skills in higher education. A descriptive qualitative research design was employed, utilizing interviews and open-ended questionnaires to gather in-depth data. The research was conducted with students from the English Education Department at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University. Five participants were purposively selected based on their relevant experience and willingness to participate. The findings showed that Meta AI WhatsApp supported reading comprehension through several key features, including automatic translation, grammar correction, and interactive question-and-answer sessions. Additionally, the platform was found to increase students' motivation and engagement with English texts. The study also identified several challenges, including answers that are too general, a lack of voice features, and dependence on internet access. Despite these limitations, the study highlights the potential of Meta AI WhatsApp to serve as an effective supplementary tool in language learning. It is recommended that future developments incorporate features such as adjustable difficulty levels and text-to-speech functionality to further enhance its educational value.

Keywords: *Meta AI WhatsApp, English Reading Skills, Higher Education*

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INTRODUCTION

Reading skills played a fundamental role in the success of learning in higher education (Anwar & Sailuddin, 2022). Developing strong reading skills was essential because reading was closely linked to students' academic performance and overall language development (Ardhian et al., 2020). Without exposure to a wide range of reading materials, it was difficult for students to produce high-quality academic work (Anwar & Sailuddin, 2022). Understanding reading practices and information-seeking behavior helped refine the selection of resources such as textbooks, articles, multimedia content, and both printed and digital reading tools (Castillo-Martínez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2021).

Enhancing English reading skills is particularly crucial in higher education because much of the academic literature, research publications, and instructional materials are available primarily in English (ALNehabi, 2023). A strong command of English reading enables students to access, comprehend, and engage with global academic discourse (Yapp et al., 2023). Furthermore, it supports the development of other essential academic skills such as writing, critical thinking, and research (Teng & Yue, 2023). Proficient reading skills also increase students' competitiveness in both academic and professional settings, particularly in an era of internationalization and digital education (Jawad, 2020).

But in reality, low reading ability remained a common problem among students in both lower and higher education. Most students found it difficult to learn English learning without media or innovative learning (Islam, 2024). Innovative media was a facility that greatly

affected the learning process of students, especially the reading process. (Khaerawati et al., 2023) highlighted that poor reading habits and inadequate school facilities prevented students from developing strong reading skills. This was supported by the statement that students' low reading habits and inadequate school facilities to engage students in reading also contributed to their failure to become successful readers (Beny, 2022). One's capability in reading comprehension was not merely evident through their skill in understanding text but also encompassed additional skills that readers ought to possess, such as the smoothness in articulating a text, which was likely to enhance their reading comprehension experience (Saputri et al., 2021).

Difficulty in comprehending English reading texts affected students' performance and achievement in reading because comprehending reading texts was an important skill. Difficulties in comprehending English reading texts can significantly affect students' learning (Matondang, 2020). According to Prihatini (2020) the difficulties that students usually encountered were incorrect reading and limited understanding, which became an obstacle in learning reading comprehension. The findings of Ibrahim et al. (2024) indicated that they were confused and tired of understanding long sentences in the text because there were so many words that they did not know what they meant. (Putri, 2020) argued that it was found that students had difficulty reading text or long sentences because of a lot of words that they do not understand. Students also had difficulty linking the sentences in the text to understand the information as a whole due to their limited knowledge of words. Students' difficulty in reading comprehension was also related to the use of poor reading strategies (Ibrahim et al., 2024). (Aini et al., 2023) stated in their study that students who did not use effective reading comprehension strategies. The findings of (Ibrahim et al., 2024) revealed that some participants had problems understanding the text and locating the main ideas, and frequently got confused when encountering unfamiliar words.

Technological advancements introduced innovative solutions to educational challenges, including reading difficulties. Technology should give positive impact for students (Islam, 2023a). A notable development was the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which transformed various aspects of life (Rashid & Kausik, 2024). AI significantly contributed to education by enhancing learning processes and personalizing learning experiences (Wang et al., 2024). Additionally, AI facilitated students' composition of research papers and academic reference searches (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024).

These developments also reshaped Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), particularly libraries, with metaverse and Meta AI concepts (Oladokun et al., 2024). For instance, Meta AI integration in WhatsApp enhanced language learning through Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) (Sabiri et al., 2024). This technology offered personalized, interactive learning experiences via exercises, individualized education, and real-time feedback (Jian, 2023). Moreover, Meta AI WhatsApp had the potential to improve students' English reading skills (Khalil, 2024). Meta AI WhatsApp's feature enabled students to enhance their reading skills through engaging and effective methods (Behforouz & Al Ghaithi, 2024). Additionally, Meta AI WhatsApp addressed reading difficulties, such as vocabulary comprehension and sentence structure challenges (Khalil, 2024). Meta AI WhatsApp emerged as a strategic learning tool for improving reading proficiency and achieving academic success (Guan et al., 2024). This statement was supported by research conducted by (Allehyani et al., 2025), which stated that the experimental group using Meta AI integrated with WhatsApp showed a significant improvement in reading skills. This also was supported by research from (Haidari et al., 2020), which noted that platforms such as WhatsApp and Wiki enhanced critical thinking and collaborative learning. Collectively, these studies reinforced the effectiveness of interactive, adaptive, and technology-based tools like Meta AI in improving reading skills, as evidenced by the findings of this research.

Several previous studies have supported the effectiveness of AI-based learning tools in improving reading skills. (Khalil, 2024) found that Meta AI WhatsApp was effective in teaching conjunctions, as it provided personalized, immediate feedback, something that traditional methods often lacked. Students who regularly used the tool demonstrated

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significant improvement in their ability to recognize and use conjunctions accurately. This study used a mixed-method approach, which studied qualitative as well as quantitative research designs together. Chea & Xiao (2024) also highlighted that AI-assisted tools significantly enhanced academic English reading skills. The experimental group that used AI tools alongside traditional methods showed noticeable improvement in reading comprehension compared to the control group that relied solely on conventional methods. This research applied a mixed-methods approach, combining experimental studies, surveys, and semi-structured interviews with students who had or had not used AI for reading learning.

Despite the promising results from previous studies, research on AI-assisted learning tools remained limited, particularly regarding their impact on reading skills. Most existing studies focused on the general benefits of AI without examining the specific features of apps like Meta AI WhatsApp for enhancing reading comprehension. Additionally, limited research explored students' experiences and challenges when using AI-based tools for language learning. To address this gap, this study focused on the use of Meta AI WhatsApp to enhance English reading skills at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University. The university was selected due to its strategic location and strong research support, including access to data, facilities, and respondents.

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of Meta AI WhatsApp in enhancing English reading skills and to explore the challenges of using Meta AI WhatsApp to read English text. This study was important to provide a significant contribution to improving the quality of English language learning in higher education through the use of AI technology and widely recognized communication platforms such as WhatsApp.

METHOD

This study aimed to identify the role of Meta AI WhatsApp in enhancing students' reading skills at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University. A descriptive qualitative research design was employed to explore and describe participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors in a natural setting. This approach was inductive and emphasized personal meaning, the complexity of social situations, and the understanding of individual experiences and perceptions (Creswell John and Creswell David, 2023). Descriptive qualitative research is suitable for investigating a phenomenon in depth, particularly when limited prior research exists on the topic. It seeks to provide rich, detailed descriptions rather than test hypotheses, making it ideal for exploring how Meta AI WhatsApp supports English reading skills from the learners' point of view.

Respondents

In this study, the research subjects were students of the English Education Department who used Meta AI WhatsApp for English language learning, specifically to develop reading skills. Five respondents were purposively selected based on their experience and willingness to participate, with four completing an open-ended questionnaire (R1,R2,R3,R4) and one taking part in an interview (R5).

Instruments

The main research instruments were open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, while documentation served as a supporting instrument. A questionnaire was used to explore the views, attitudes, experiences, or facts of respondents in a structured way (Kuphanga, 2024). The questionnaire applied was an open questionnaire where respondents were allowed to respond freely and in depth. The questionnaire was distributed to four respondents from the TBI students at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University. This respondent was selected to complete the questionnaire via Google Forms due to their location being too far and difficult for the researcher to reach. The respondent was provided with a link containing six questions. After giving questionnaires, the researcher conducted interviews respondents to support the data collection of this study (Islam & Birchok, 2024).

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In this study, interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. At this stage, respondents (R5) were given six questions that were considered more in-depth in providing information, including opinions, reasons, or personal experiences. One respondent was selected for the interview because of their proximity and easy reach for researchers. In addition, It provided more detailed information because the respondents consisted of diligent students.

Documentation was an instrument in the form of notes, archives, or written or visual documents used to support research results. In this research, documentation instruments were used to complement data from questionnaires and interviews.

Procedures

The research procedure began with purposive sampling of English Education students at Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong who had experience using Meta AI WhatsApp. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires, which were distributed via Google Forms to four participants, and a semi-structured interview was conducted with one participant to gain deeper insights. Supporting documentation, such as WhatsApp interaction screenshots, questionnaire responses, and interview transcripts, was also gathered.

Data analysis

The next stage, data analysis, involved stages of data collection, reduction, coding, and theme identification to uncover patterns in students' experiences. Interview data were transcribed verbatim and thematically analyzed, while documentation supported the validity of the findings. All data were examined using triangulation to enhance the study's credibility and provide a comprehensive understanding. Triangulation—by combining interviews, questionnaires, and documentation—strengthened research reliability by minimizing bias and offering a more holistic perspective.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the major findings of the study based on questionnaire and interview responses, categorized into key thematic areas

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Table 1. The results of the answers of 4 respondents in the open-ended questionnaire

No	Questions	R1	R2	R3	R4
1	How often and at what times do you usually use Meta AI WhatsApp for English reading practice?	Using Meta AI when reading English lecture materials, the time depends on the lecture/assignment schedule.	Use Meta AI when lecturers give English readings, especially ahead of exams or group discussions.	Use Meta AI almost every day for English assignments or references, especially afternoon and evening.	Use Meta AI while studying and self-study at night.
2	Which features of Meta AI WhatsApp do you find most helpful in understanding English texts? Why are these features useful to you?	Text summaries - helps to understand the content of the reading quickly.	Grammar correction - helps learn from mistakes.	Question & Answer feature - can ask questions directly if confused by context.	Difficult vocabulary explanations - helpful without having to open a dictionary.
3	After using Meta AI WhatsApp, do you feel that your	Increased vocabulary, better	Easier to understand the structure	Faster understanding text and	Faster understanding of text without

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	ability to read English texts has improved?	understanding sentence structure.	of the reading.	capturing key ideas.	translating word for word.
4	Besides improving your reading skills, have you experienced any other benefits from using Meta AI WhatsApp for learning English?	Be motivated to read and write scientific papers because Meta AI's features help draft research outlines.	Faster correction of grammatical errors in text.	Trained in critical thinking because he often dialogues with AI and becomes more enthusiastic about reading English texts	Finding learning English more fun and not boring.

The table above showed the findings based on the main themes obtained from the data, such as:

Usage Patterns of Meta AI WhatsApp

All participants reported regular use of Meta AI WhatsApp, particularly in the context of reading lecture materials, completing assignments, and preparing for exams. The frequency of use varied, with most students engaging with the application in the afternoon or evening, depending on their academic schedules. Interview data supported these findings as follows:

"I usually use Meta AI 3–4 times a day to read English texts, take notes on new vocabulary, and ask for explanations if something is difficult." (R5)

Respondents said that used Meta AI about 3–4 times a day to learn to read short texts in English. They jotted down new vocabulary and asked for clarification if there were difficult passages. This activity had become a habit, especially when took courses related to English.

Beneficial Features for Reading Support

Respondents identified several features that enhanced their reading comprehension: a text summary that helped students quickly understand the main idea of the text, grammar correction that enabled learning from language errors in context, vocabulary explanations that provided instant understanding of difficult words without the need for a dictionary, and interactive question and answer that supported clarification of confusing text segments. These features collectively contributed to more efficient and autonomous reading. Interview data supported these findings as follows:

"The most helpful feature is Meta AI's ability to explain difficult words or sentences in simple language and summarize long texts." (R5)

Respondent stated that the most useful feature was Meta AI's ability to explain difficult words or sentences in simple language. In addition, the summary feature helped them to quickly understand the content of the text. The feature of giving examples of new sentences was also very helpful in understanding the context in a practical way.

Improvement in Reading Skills

Participants reported a range of improvements in their reading abilities after consistently using Meta AI WhatsApp: increased vocabulary, better understanding of sentence structure, improved reading fluency, and quicker identification of key ideas. Interview data supported these findings as follows:

"Now I understand complex texts more quickly and feel more confident reading English articles outside the app." (R5)

Respondent said that previously had difficulty understanding complex texts, especially those containing idioms or complex structures. However, after frequently using Meta AI, they felt faster and more confident in reading, even for articles outside of the app, such as journals and internet articles.

Benefits of education beyond reading skills

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Respondents reported that the application also supported academic writing, critical thinking, and overall language confidence. The application not only supported linguistic development but also enhanced students' engagement and motivation. Respondents felt more enthusiastic about reading English texts and writing academic papers due to reduced anxiety and increased confidence. Interview data supported these findings as follows:

"My vocabulary has improved because Meta AI always provides meanings, synonyms, and examples. I also feel more motivated and less afraid of making mistakes." (R5)

Respondent stated that every time found a new word, the immediately asked Meta AI, which provided meanings, synonyms, antonyms, and example sentences. This enriched their vocabulary. Furthermore, flexible access and being free from the fear of making mistakes motivated them and built their confidence in using English.

There were differences in the additional interviews, where respondents mentioned a more specific frequency of use – 3–4 times a day – and more structured learning methods such as jotting down new vocabulary and asking for sample sentences. Meanwhile, in the table, respondents emphasized more on academic benefits, such as increased motivation to write scientific papers, improved critical thinking, and a more enjoyable learning experience. The additional interviews also revealed that Meta AI was used not only for reading, but also to build confidence in using English more generally.

Challenges of using Meta AI WhatsApp in improving English reading skills

Table 2. The results of the answers of 4 respondents in the open-ended questionnaire

No	Questions	R1	R2	R3	R4
1	What challenges or difficulties have you faced when using Meta AI WhatsApp to enhance your English reading skills?	Meta AI's answers are too general or not specific.	It can cause laziness if not used properly.	Unable to access the features due to not having a data plan.	The absence of a voice feature makes it difficult to learn pronunciation and vocabulary..
2	What is the best suggestion for improving Meta AI WhatsApp features to make it more effective as a platform for enhancing English reading skills?	Add a reading-level feature to match users' abilities..	Improve existing features to make learning more effective..	Improve the questions and answers so they are easier to understand..	Add a voice feature to help users learn to read correctly.

The table above showed the findings based on the main themes obtained from the data, namely the challenges in using Meta AI WhatsApp. Despite the benefits, several challenges were identified: the answers that were too general from the AI, lack of a voice feature for pronunciation support, dependence on internet access, which limited usage, and risk of passivity, with students potentially becoming too reliant on AI-generated answers. Interview data supported these findings as follows:

"Meta AI's answers are often too general because the chats are short. There's no feature to adjust the reading level, even though it's important for gradual learning." (R5)

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The respondent felt that Meta AI could not provide in-depth answers due to the short chat format. Respondent also believed it was important to have a feature that matched the reading difficulty level with the user's ability to make the learning process more effective.

Suggestions for improvement included adding adjustable reading levels, enhancing contextual depth of responses, and incorporating text-to-speech functionality. Interview data supported these findings as follows:

"Meta AI should offer level options (beginner, intermediate, advanced) with matching reading materials. A voice feature is also important for practicing pronunciation and listening." (R5)

The respondent suggested that Meta AI should provide more structured learning features, including level selections and appropriate materials. The respondent also emphasized the importance of a voice (text-to-speech) feature to help users with correct pronunciation and listening skills.

There were some striking differences. In the interview results, the limitation of context in short interactions on WhatsApp was mentioned as the main challenge, while in the questionnaire, respondents highlighted technical issues such as the lack of data packages, the potential for laziness due to instant features, and the absence of voice support. In addition, the suggestions from the interviews emphasized the need for structured learning features, such as the provision of readings accompanied by comprehension and vocabulary questions, as well as the integration of voice features (text-to-speech) to train pronunciation and listening skills. Meanwhile, in the questionnaire, suggestions were more general, such as improving existing features to make them easier to understand and more effective.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the role of Meta AI WhatsApp in enhancing students' reading skills in higher education and to identify the challenges they face in its application. Based on data analysis obtained from open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the findings of this study indicated that Meta AI WhatsApp made a significant contribution to the development of students' English reading skills in higher education. This contribution was primarily evident in four key areas: improving reading comprehension, expanding vocabulary knowledge, enhancing structural understanding of English texts, and supporting reading motivation. Through features such as text summarization, grammar correction, vocabulary explanation, and real-time question-and-answer interactions, Meta AI WhatsApp provided personalized scaffolding that enabled students to engage with English texts more confidently and effectively.

Specifically, responses from participants showed clear improvements in reading skills after regular use of Meta AI WhatsApp. Students reported that they found it easier to understand sentence structures in English texts, identify main ideas more quickly, and no longer needed to translate word by word to grasp the overall meaning of a passage. Some respondents also stated that their reading speed improved due to the app's summarization and vocabulary features, which helped them extract key information without reading the entire text in detail. These changes reflected improvements in both reading fluency and comprehension.

Vocabulary acquisition was also one of the most significant outcomes. Respondents became accustomed to noting down new vocabulary explained by Meta AI, which not only provided definitions but also synonyms, antonyms, and usage in context. This process reinforced contextual vocabulary learning, in line with Zhai & Wibowo's (2023) theory that exposure to words in varied contexts strengthens retention and application.

In addition to providing cognitive benefits, the use of Meta AI WhatsApp also had a positive emotional impact on students' attitudes toward English texts. Many respondents stated that they felt more confident reading academic articles, journals, or other English sources after using the application. This confidence was supported by improved understanding of text structure, enhanced vocabulary, and real-time assistance. This finding aligned with the motivation theory proposed by Insuasty Cárdenas (2020), which emphasized that autonomy and perceived competence were essential elements in fostering intrinsic

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motivation in learning. Good learning materials included engaging texts and enjoyable activities that stimulated learners' thinking processes (Islam, 2023b). They also provided space and encouraged learners to use and apply their knowledge.

Furthermore, the grammar correction and sentence structure features indirectly supported reading skills, as participants learned how English syntax was organized in real contexts (Taye & Mengesha, 2024). This helped them read more critically, paying closer attention to conjunctions, complex sentence structures, and punctuation—key elements in understanding the logical flow and relationships between ideas in academic reading.

Despite its many benefits, the use of Meta AI WhatsApp also presented several challenges that needed to be addressed for optimal implementation. One major issue expressed by respondents was that the AI's responses were often too general or lacked contextual depth. Some students noted that the app failed to provide in-depth explanations when they asked about complex sentences or specific phrases in academic texts. This limitation was consistent with Wang et al. (2024) findings, which argued that AI technologies still struggled to deliver nuanced, context-aware feedback.

Another obstacle was the dependence on stable internet connectivity. Several students reported that limited data access or poor network signals often hindered their ability to use Meta AI effectively. This issue was particularly relevant in educational institutions located in areas with underdeveloped digital infrastructure. Gordon (2022) highlighted that the digital divide remained a significant barrier to technology integration across different educational levels.

Moreover, the absence of a voice or text-to-speech feature also emerged as a dominant concern. Many participants admitted that they struggled with pronunciation and had no means of hearing how specific words were spoken, as Meta AI lacked audio support. In language learning, phonological aspects such as intonation, stress, and pronunciation play a critical role in supporting reading comprehension (Anum et al., 2024). This limitation reduced the multimodal learning experience that students could benefit from.

Some participants also identified a potential drawback in the form of cognitive passivity. They acknowledged that overreliance on AI-generated instant answers could lead to reduced critical thinking and independent interpretation of texts. This pointed to the need for pedagogical guidance in technology use. As Guan et al. (2024) suggested, educational technology should be accompanied by reflective teaching practices to ensure that cognitive engagement is not replaced by technological convenience.

To address these challenges, participants offered several practical suggestions. These included the addition of reading level features (beginner, intermediate, advanced), improvements in the contextual relevance of AI responses, and the integration of a voice feature to support pronunciation. These suggestions aligned with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) by Gordon (2022), which advocated for flexible and inclusive content delivery to accommodate diverse learner needs.

Considering both the benefits and the challenges, Meta AI WhatsApp could be considered a valuable but still imperfect learning aid. Educators needed to play an active role in guiding students to use this technology critically and responsibly. With proper support and regular usage, students demonstrated clear improvements in fluency, comprehension, and reading strategies. However, optimal outcomes would require not only consistent pedagogical integration but also further development of the application's features to meet the needs of language learners in higher education.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that Meta AI WhatsApp plays a significant role in enhancing English reading skills among higher education students. The main findings indicated that students experienced improvements in vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, sentence structure understanding, and reading motivation. Key features such as text summarization, grammar correction, vocabulary explanation, and interactive question and

answer contributed to more efficient and confident reading. Despite these benefits, several challenges were also identified, including generalized AI responses, absence of voice features for pronunciation, and dependence on internet connectivity. These limitations highlight the need for ongoing development of the tool and critical integration by educators to ensure effective use. Future improvements – such as implementing reading level options and adding text-to-speech functionality – could further increase its effectiveness. Meta AI WhatsApp, when thoughtfully integrated into instruction, has the potential to be a powerful supplementary tool in English language learning at the tertiary level.

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