

# *Research on the Construction of English Campus WeChat Public Platform Based on “Internet+”*

Shi Ying, Lu Ting

*School of Foreign Studies, Xi'an University, Xi'an, China*

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**Abstract:** With the popularization of smart phones and the rapid development of mobile Internet, the adoption of WeChat public platform for learning has become one of the auxiliary functions to promote college English teaching. Through investigation, this study aims to understand students' attitude towards traditional learning mode, ways and approaches of students' autonomous learning, demands and expectations for micro-platforms, and build WeChat public platform for English majors and non-English majors under the Internet environment, so as to promote the improvement of learning effect and teaching effect.

## **1. The Current Situation and Significance of the Study**

With the popularity of smartphones and the rapid development of mobile Internet, Tencent launched WeChat instant messaging software in 2011. WeChat, as a mobile phone chat software that can quickly send text, pictures, voice and video through the Internet, has been gradually recognized and accepted by internet users. The WeChat public platform was officially launched in August 2015. When it first came online, Tencent officially defined it as “a new interactive communication mode for users, media, enterprises, etc., and a free platform to create a new reading mode and experience.” Its related user experience has been perfected; the user's freedom is very high; the user's subscription push function can be chosen independently; but the threshold for its participation is very low. With a large number of users, the WeChat public platform was officially launched on August 23, 2015. Individuals and organizations can establish a WeChat public account to communicate and interact with a specific group through text, pictures and voice.

Teaching methods have always been one of the concerns of the government and the society. However, up to now, many colleges and universities still adopt the traditional teaching methods that have been used for many years, which makes it difficult to provide personalized guidance to students. At present, the rapid rise of various English application softwares, such as Shan Bei, You Dao, Hu Jiang English, etc., is introducing students' learning into fragmented learning, and multi-dimensional teaching. In the meantime, the growth of Internet technology has brought new opportunities and challenges to college English teaching. Learning with WeChat public platform has become one of the indispensable tasks to promote college English teaching. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the use of WeChat public platform for non-English and English majors in the Internet environment. Pushing content through the WeChat public platform brings inspiration for easy English teaching and learning. Based on the survey of college students on the use of WeChat

public platform learning, this paper aims to explore a platform that is really suitable for college students' learning and can improve their learning efficiency, and provide theoretical guidance for college students to start their own business on WeChat public platform.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 The definition of mobile learning**

Paul Harris (2001) described that “mobile Learning is intersection point of mobile computing and E-learning”. It can provide learners with a kind of learning experience anytime and anywhere. He believed that mobile learning should make learners enjoy a education segment anytime and anywhere by mobile phone or PDA. The original word is "enjoy an educational moment". It emphasized that mobile learning was ubiquitous learning with mobile device. Also, O'Malley, et al. (2003) have defined mobile learning as taking place when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. Georgiev (2004) believed that the mobile learning is a subcategory of E-learning. Cui Guangzuo (2001) from Mobile Education Laboratory of Modern Education Technology Center of Peking University said "Mobile learning is based on the current relatively mature wireless Internet, Internet and multimedia technology, students and teachers use mobile devices (e.g. mobile phones) more convenient and flexible implementation of interactive teaching activities”.

### **2.2 Autonomous learning**

In the 1980s, Henri Holec (1981) firstly introduced the term of “autonomous learning” into language teaching, and defined the autonomous learning as following concept: “Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning.” Dickinson described "Autonomy is a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of those decisions." Therefore, autonomous learning is a modern learning method. The students as the main role of learning should not be controlled by the others. Furthermore, they can acquire knowledge by themselves. Based on the theory of autonomous learning, mobile-assisted language learning can help learners to learn anywhere and anytime.

## **3. The Investigation on English Campus WeChat Public Platform**

### **3.1 The investigation designing**

The study selected English majors and non-English majors from eight local undergraduate colleges in Shaanxi Province as research subjects, and conducted questionnaire surveys and interview with them. The participants in the survey and interviews were from Shaanxi Normal University, Yan'an University, Shaanxi University of Technology, Xi'an University, Weinan Normal University, Baoji University of Arts and Sciences, Xianyang Normal University, and Xi'an Fan Yi University. Among them, English majors accounts for 60%. English majors accounts for 40%. A total of 300 questionnaires were sent out, 300 questionnaires were returned, and the effective questionnaire reached 100%. Before the questionnaires were distributed to the students, it was made clear to them that the purpose was to know their attitude of WeChat public platform. The time for doing this survey was unlimited. The survey covers the basic situation of students, the attitude of learning traditional models, the ways and means of students' self-learning, the needs and expectations of micro-platforms. In order to maximize the credibility of the research results, the

participants in the survey are anonymous, representing their true ideas.

### **3.2 Problems to be solved**

This study intends to address the following issues:

- (1) What are the drawbacks of studying the traditional teaching methods.
- (2) Students' attitude towards traditional learning mode, ways and approaches of students' autonomous learning, demands and expectations for micro-platforms.
- (3) How to build a suitable WeChat public platform.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 The advantages and disadvantages of the traditional English learning methods**

It turns out that most of the schools are given priority to with the traditional classroom teaching, while the second classroom is complementary; however, college students are not well integrated into the study. Therefore, we have to investigate what the drawbacks of the traditional learning methods are. Based on this, we will improve our WeChat public platform. English second class learning traditional activities include: English Corner, English Evening, English Salon, English Academic Lecture, various English contests, such as listening contests, English speaking contests, English debates. Although the development of these traditional and popular activities may be distinctive and effective for the English majors, it could not stimulate interest in learning for non-English majors. Nor does it bring about an improvement in English learning. At present, the activities of the traditional mode mainly cover some English reports and English contests that are a little bit boring, which cannot meet the needs of the majority of students. Therefore, a WeChat public platform for English learning should be established based on the results of this survey.

Today's smart phones are becoming more and more popular, which strongly guarantees that every college student can own a smart phone. Because of its universal characteristics, students can download WeChat public platform for mobile learning and self-learning. According to the American ECAR2013 on mobile device usage survey: more than 86% of undergraduates in the long-term study mobile devices, accounted for 67% of the students use frequency of no less than 2 times per week, and 50% students choose mobile devices for autonomous learning, so as to obtain relevant study materials. Because mobile learning is a new way, it is accelerating the pace of entering the field of public awareness with its convenience and portability. That is to say, it is very important to apply the English WeChat public platform to college students.

### **4.2 Students' needs and expectations for WeChat public platforms**

After more than half a year of operation, the Internet users have paid close attention to WeChat public platform. According to iiMedia research, nearly 90% of users have used WeChat in the past six months, accounting for 88.3%; Among them, the users who occasionally use WeChat public platform account for the most, accounting for 42.5%, and the users who often use WeChat public platform account for 24.1%. iiMedia research believes that the WeChat public platform are highly paid attention to by the users, but the actual number of active users is not particularly ideal.

So what do users care about and what is the most attractive to users? The survey found that among WeChat public platforms in 2015, the information public platform was the most concerned by users, accounting for 65.7%, followed by funny/entertainment public platform and science and technology public platform, accounting for 37.1% and 31.4%, respectively. It is understandable that users focus on public platforms for the most direct purpose of obtaining information. With the help

of WeChat platform, the language and culture as the carrier, the diversity of the language and culture will be displayed in a variety of forms, and the language and culture knowledge will be disseminated through the form that students like to see and hear, and the knowledge of students will be broadened to enhance the practical application ability and comprehensive cultural literacy of language lovers on campus.

### **4.3 The design of the English WeChat public platform**

#### **4.3.1 Features**

The WeChat public platform is characterized by convenience and universality. Students are easy to carry and quick to check. Features are as follows:

##### **4.3.1.1 From the perspective of college students**

The WeChat public platform can supply personalized settings. The WeChat public platform makes personalized settings for users themselves, such as favorite movies, cartoons, characters, etc., and captures students' curiosity to arouse their reading interest.

The WeChat public platform can gradually cultivate English learning consciousness. For an instance, the words that have been read regularly appear in front of the user, providing a guarantee for the user to sort out and consolidate in time.

##### **4.3.1.2 From the perspective of the schools**

The advantages of the English WeChat public platform will promote the upgrading of various electronic teaching equipments in the school and promote the transformation of the teaching mode.

##### **4.3.1.3 From the perspective of the teachers**

It helps the transformation of the teaching mode. Teachers and students can express their emotions and thoughts through various means such as words, pictures and videos, and realize an unprecedented interactive experience.

It helps the change of the test mode. Teachers can conduct tests through the English WeChat public platform, such as word dictation or listening comprehension, which saves the test cost to some extent.

##### **4.3.1.4 From perspective of the team**

This project team members are college students majoring in English. This research can improve the ability to discover, analyze, and solve problems in this survey, cultivate teamwork awareness and spirit, and enhance and exercise their abilities in practice.

#### **4.3.2 Categories**

The innovative English WeChat public platform includes four categories: We-testing, We-competition, We-learning, and We-discussion.

We-test: This module is mainly related to English model examinations and the review materials, such as CET-4, CET-6, TEM-4, TEM-8, IELTS, TOEFL, GRE, etc. What's more, some professional certificate examinations, like the teacher qualification certificate examination and the accounting certificate examination, will be presented in Chinese.

We-competition: it not only includes English competition, but also includes the news of various

competitions of different majors. For example, English speech contests, debate contests, physics contests, etc. This module specifically broadcasts the content to the competition category. This module mainly broadcasts English competitions, supplemented by other majors. But all the content is written in English.

We-learning: This module aims to introduce the content of the English-speaking country with the aim of “spread knowledge”, it also contains the introduction of other specialized knowledge.

We-Discussion: This module is mainly composed of English movies, English songs, English drama and English entertainment news. It also includes mouth-to-mouth imitation training and other projects that allow students to improve their English skills in the midst of entertainment.

## 5. Conclusions

In the era of Internet information explosion, the use of English WeChat public platform will provide good supplementary function for the English classroom teaching, which greatly improves the students' interest in English learning, promotes the promotion of teaching and learning effect, enhances the students' ability to learn independently, and reaches the effective teaching of students' active participation. However, due to the limitation of conditions, there are some shortcomings in this research. Firstly, the number of participants is limited. Secondly, the results of the research can only represent ordinary universities. Thus, these deficiencies will guide the direction of study in future.

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