Using WhatsApp to Enhance Students' Learning of English Language "Experience to Share"

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Abstract

Education system has developed rapidly, technology has invaded our life, everyone has smart phone these days, using WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, etc. No one can deny that the generation we teach these days, has become addicted to these applications, for social relationship and fun. In 2012 when I started teaching in KSA, Blackboard has been newly introduced for teaching in King Khalid University, but most of the students were reluctant to use it due to net access problems and unfamiliarity. This study was conducted in College of Science & Arts Majarda King Khalid University, English Department. The population of the study were 36 female students from 1st level who were studying Listening & Speaking 1 course in the 1st semester 2013-2014. The researcher has used the analytical descriptive method to conduct this study in King Khalid University. A students' questionnaire and instructor observation were the tools for collecting the data, results were coded manually and analyzed using SPSS. Almost all study-findings supported using WhatsApp to enhance students learning and enthusiasm, using WhatsApp helped students to develop English skills, enriched their vocabulary and learn from their mates mistakes, although the study laid out some disadvantages of the experience such as preparing the materials and having discipline in the group.

Keywords: WhatsApp, enhance, learning, language, experience

1. Introduction

Going on with the 21st century, we can notice not only is the education system developing rapidly, but also technology has invaded our life, everyone processes smart phone these days, using WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, etc. No one can deny that this generation we teach nowadays is the generation of technology, whatever we do we can't stop them from using technology, mobile phones, ipad, etc.; If we compare education system in the past five decades, when we were students, and the education system now, we will find a huge gap, between what teachers used in the past considering educational aids, teaching methods, motivation strategies, etc., and what we are using now to teach our students. Everything is developed, however, students' attention and motivation to learning is backward compared to the past.

During my teaching experience, I used different methods of motivation, but still all were not satisfying. As I noticed students' attention towards using cell-phones, I decided to turn what has affected my teaching negatively to the opposite side of the coin. As Renata Phelps, Anne Graham said in their book "*conventional wisdom suggests that being in an environment where others are using technology is generally positive for foster learning*". All agreed that the generation of these days, has become addicted to these applications, for social relationship and fun.

In 2012 when I started teaching in KSA, Blackboard has been newly introduced to be used for teaching and to help students in their learning, the problem I faced that many students consider Blackboard as something totally educational, and they wanted to spend time without educational obligation, this beside they were always complaining about net access in their areas. Since that students who learn in our colleges are never from one town or village, and it is difficult to gather them if needed to reinforce some parts of the lesson, I started to think, what to use as a method of enhancement between my students, Facebook? Twitter? WhatsApp? or Text messages? I decided to use WhatsApp as it is the most common App used between the students, it doesn't need to have computer, it is attainable and does not cost much. I thought of using WhatsApp to facilitate and create an avenue for learning and communication as well, as it is the most common App to the students, and they always

have their mobile phones and smart phones in their hands, beside it is cheap to activate the App. After getting the students' approval to use WhatsApp for learning when they are out the class, I created two groups which the students named, "Nothing Impossible" I started opening discussions for the groups, uploading videos, audios, and chart.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study to find out the impact of using WhatsApp in education to enhance students learning of English Language skills by exploring students opinion and observing their progress after using the application to support learning English.

2. Literature Review

Oxford (1991) revealed that communicative competence can be developed through realistic interaction using meaningful and contextualized language, however, time inside the lesson is not enough to practice the four skills, so using WhatsApp can be a solution to this problem.

Hani (2014) in his study: *The Impact of WhatsApp Group's Utilaizition of EFL Students' Vocabulary Writing Amelioration* showed that the findings imply a significant difference between the overall writing scores of the pretest and posttest of the participants who used journaling. Additionally, test of individual item scores shows that there are statistically significant developments in vocabulary choice and voice as two pivotal writing characteristics. The study can promote a favorable educational change by assisting teachers grasp the possible merits of WhatsApp electronic dialogue journaling to develop the vocabulary word choice and voice writing skills of their students.

Maria (2016) in her study: *Use of Whatsapp to Enhance Reading and Writing Skills at Undergraduate College Level* showed that using WhatsApp helps to motivate the learners to improve their writing skills though it is considered the most difficult of the four language skills, and learners respond better when technology, especially the internet, is involved in their language learning. The internet which is available on the mobile phones of almost all the students is a highly motivating tool for L2 learning.

Tze Ying Sim and his colleagues (2014) in their study: *Improving Students Engagement through Social Media: A Case Study of a Private University in Malaysia Using Facebook*, found that the students are positive in using Facebook as an engagement tool. The engagement also encourages their participation in class, and enhances their interest towards the subject content. Features that influenced this engagement are also looked into.

Abraham Gert van der Vyver, and his colleagues (2015) in their study: *Using Social Media as a Managerial Platform for an Educational Development Project* found that: using Whatsapp; which considered unconventional platform; proved to be an excellent anchor for managerial communication on the project.

Andújar-Vaca, Alberto and Cruz-Martínez, Maria-Soledad (2017) in their study: *Mobile Instant Messaging: Whatsapp and its Potential to Develop Oral Skills*, found that: there are significant improvements in term of oral proficiency were observed in the experimental group andnegotiations were the LRE most common throughout the activity. It worth to be mentioned, that Mobile learning offers an environment where learners can ubiquitously negotiate meaning, reflect and evaluate on their own performance through authentic interaction and feedback, constituting a powerful tool for developing second language proficiency.

Ghada Awada (2016) in her study: "*Effect of WhatsApp on Critique Writing Proficiency and Perceptions Toward Learning*" results indicated that: the use of WhatsApp mediation was more effective than the regular instruction in improving the critique writing proficiency of the participants and in increasing their motivation for learning.

Nedal (2014) in his study: "*The Impact of WhatsApp Group's Utilization on EFL Students' Vocabulary Writing Amelioration*", the findings imply a significant difference between the overall writing scores of the pretest and posttest of the participants who used journaling. Additionally, test of individual item scores shows that there are statistically significant developments in vocabulary choice and voice as two pivotal writing characteristics. The study can promote a favorable educational change by assisting teachers grasp the possible merits of WhatsApp electronic dialogue journaling to develop vocabulary, word choice and voice writing skills of their students.

Man (2014) in his paper: *Word's Up with WhatsApp: The Use of Instant Messaging in Consciousness-Raising of Academic Vocabulary*, the findings revealed a large increase in the participants' scores. The interview data also revealed participants' appreciation on the use of IM in helping them to be more aware of academic words. Despite its small sample size, this study has outlined several affordances and constraints of using WhatsApp for consciousness-raising of vocabulary for future replication of similar study in different contexts. Ibtehal

Mahmoud Aburezeqand Fawzi Fayez Ishtaiwa (2013) in their study: "*The Impact of WhatsApp in Interaction an Arabic Language Teaching Course*", revealed WhatsApp platform offers them a space for communicating, expressing ideas and exchanging information anytime and anywhere. However, (a) expenses involved in WhatsApp use, (b) extra work load, (c) distraction to learning, and (d) lack of students' commitment for effective participation were identified as the greatest challenges of effective WhatsApp use for learning purposes.

BasmaIssa Ahmad Alsaleem (2013) in her study: *The Effect of "WhatsApp" Electronic Dialogue Journaling on Improving Writing Vocabulary Word Choice and Voice of EFL Undergraduate Saudi Students*, results indicated a significant difference between the overall writing scores of the pretest and posttest of the students that journaled. In addition, examination of individual item scores reveals that there are statistically significant improvements in vocabulary word choice and voice as two critically important writing factors. The study can raise a positive social change by helping teachers understand the prospective benefits of WhatsApp electronic dialogue journaling to improve the vocabulary word choice and voice writing skills of their students.

Aicha Blehch Amry (2014) in her study: *The Impact of WhatSApp Mobile Social Learning of The achievement and Attitudes of Females Students and Compared with Face to Face Learning in the Classroom*, the experimentation showed that there are real differences, at 0.05 alpha level, in the achievements and attitudes of the experimental group that is based on WhatsApp mobile learning activities compared with the control group that without WhatsApp mobile learning activities and receives only face-to-face learning in the classroom.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

The researcher used the analytical descriptive method to conduct this study.

3.2 Population

The population of this study was thirty six students female-students studying at College of Science & Arts Majarda English Department in the 1st level who were studying listening & Speaking 1 course in the 1st semester 2013-2014.

3.3 Instruments of the Study

The instruments used to collect the data of this study was Students' questionnaire beside the observation to the students' performance and interaction.

3.4 Reliability and Validity for Student Questionnaire

To find the validity of the students' questionnaire, the following formula was applied after finding reliability results using Cronbach's Alpha: Validity=$\sqrt{Reliable}$=.95 which is a high degree that reflects that students questionnaire-validity which indicates that the questionnaire is suitable to be used for the study.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Spearman & Brown
Reliable	0.912	0.889
Validity=$\sqrt{Reliable}$	0.954	0.942

4. Statistics and Results

The students were given a questionnaire to get their opinion about the experience of using WhatsApp as a supplementary method, the questionnaire consists of twelve questions.

4.1 Students' Questionnaire Results
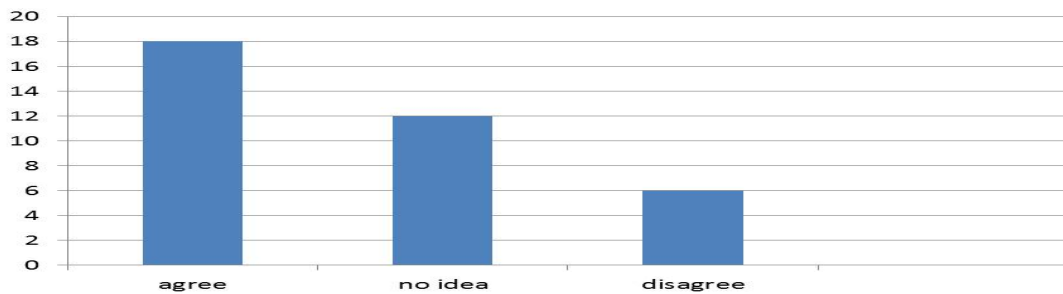
Figures below illustrates questionnaire results.

Q.1 Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my listening skill

Figure 1. Questionnaire statement 1

In the above figure 18 students out of 36 agree that using WhatsApp helped them to develop their listening while 6 students disagree to the statement. Students answer depended on the experience which was done through listening to uploaded videos, audio tracks and recording speech of their mates and instructor.
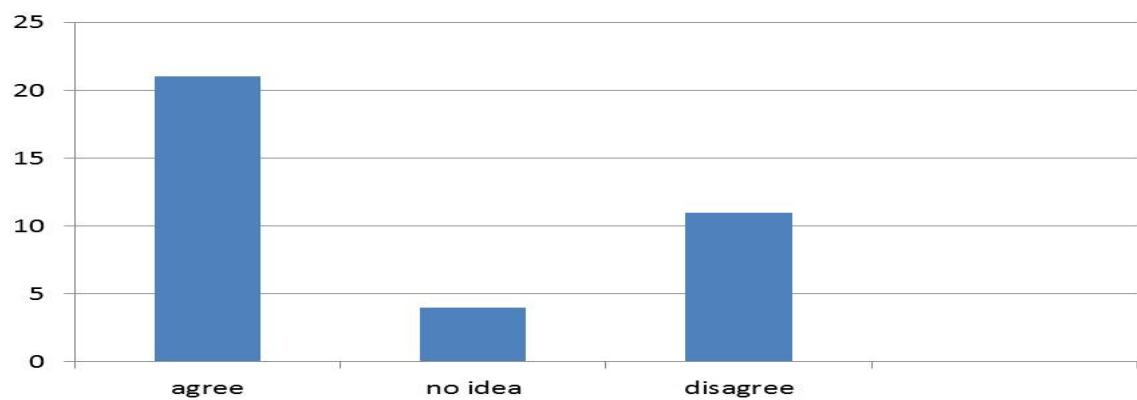
Q.2 Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my speaking skill .

Figure 2. Questionnaire statement 2

Figure 2 show that 21 students agree that WhatsApp develop their speaking skill and 11 students disagree while 4 said they had no idea, those who agree achieved that by sending recording speech to the group.

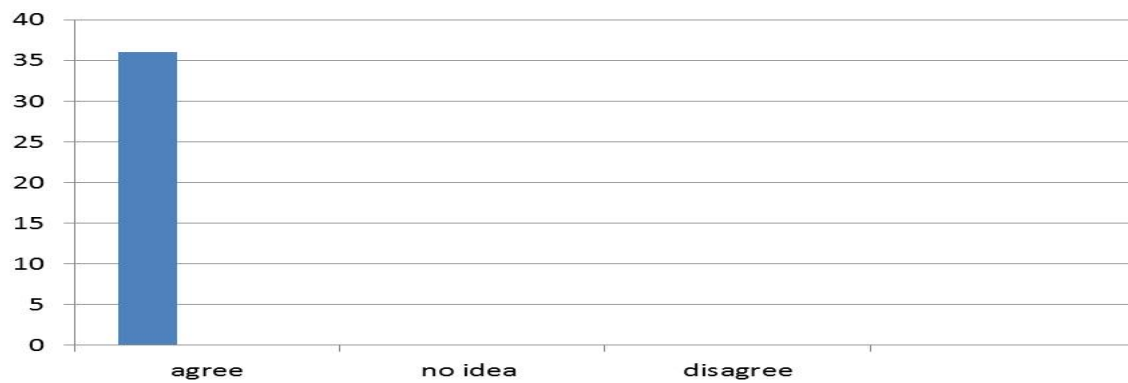## Q3 Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my reading skill

Figure 3. Questionnaire statement 3

The above figure read that all students agreed that WhatsApp helped them to develop their reading skill, this happen by reading their mates comment and responses.

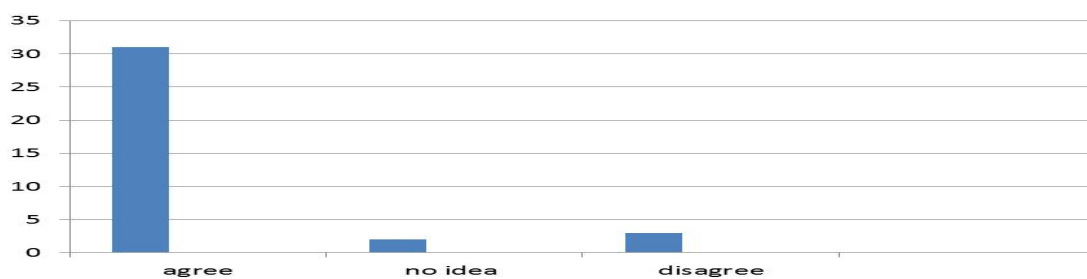## Q4 Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my writing skill

Figure 4. Questionnaire statement 4

The above figure show that the majority of the students agreed that WhatsApp helped them to develop their writing skill, this happen by writing their comment and responses to their mates.
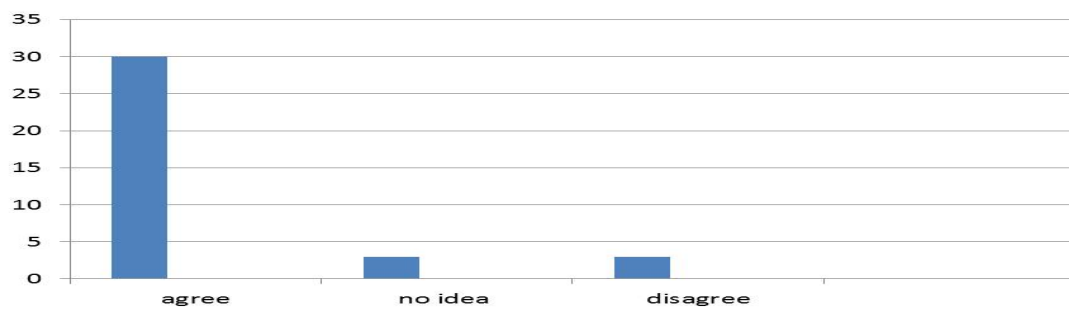
Figure 5. Questionnaire statement 5

The above figure read that most of the students agreed that WhatsApp helped them to enrich their vocabulary by reading their mates comments and responses, and using the vocabulary to convey their messages.
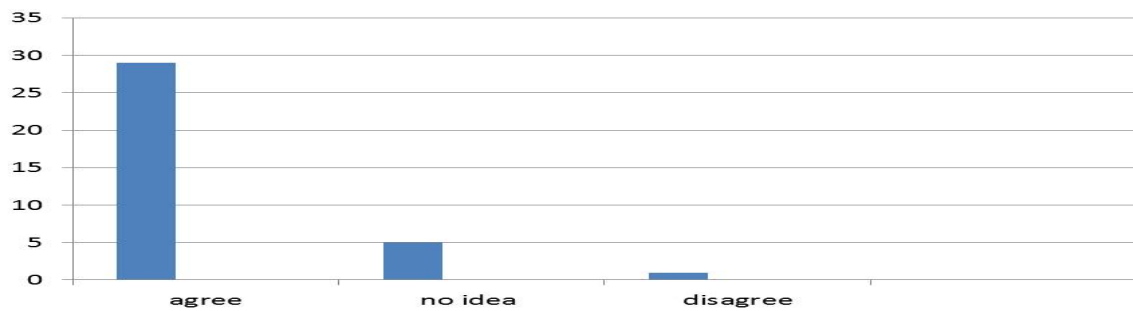

Figure 6. Questionnaire statement 6

The majority of the students in the above figure, agreed that WhatsApp helped them to learn from their colleagues mistakes, and this happen when the instructor correct students posts.
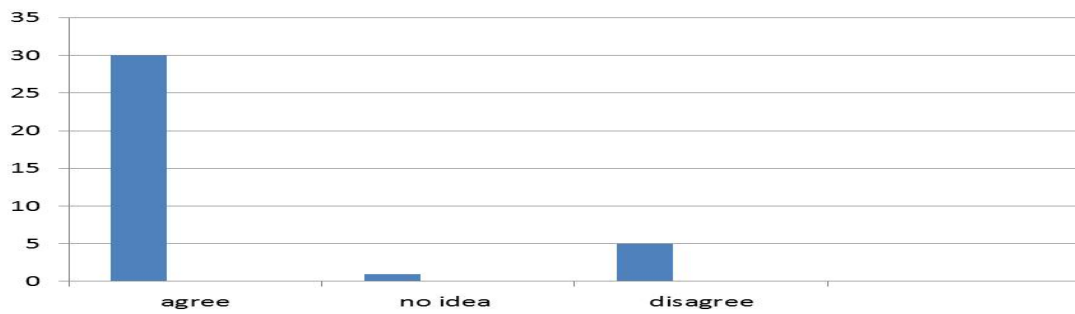
Q7 Using WhatsApp helped me to think in English .

Figure 7. Questionnaire statement 7

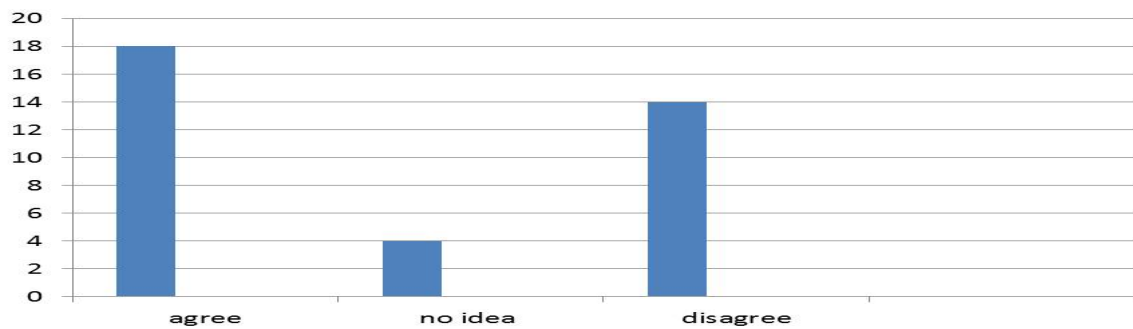The above figure read that almost all of the students agreed that WhatsApp helped them to think in English.

Q.8 Using WhatsApp helped me to overcome me fear to use English language .

Figure 8. Questionnaire statement 8

The above figure read that most of the students agreed that WhatsApp helped them to overcome their fear as they are not in direct contact with their mates and instructor.

Q.9 Using WhatsApp helped me to get immediate feedback from my instructor.
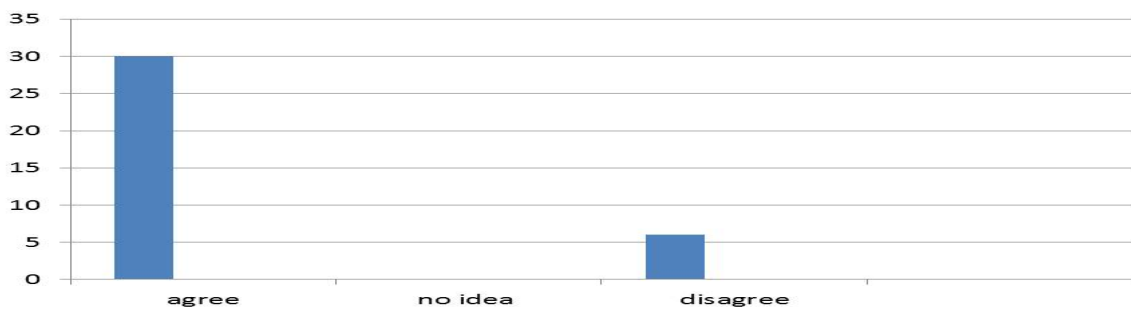

Figure 9. Questionnaire statement 9

The majority of the students in the above figure, agreed that WhatsApp helped them get immediate feedback from their instructor.

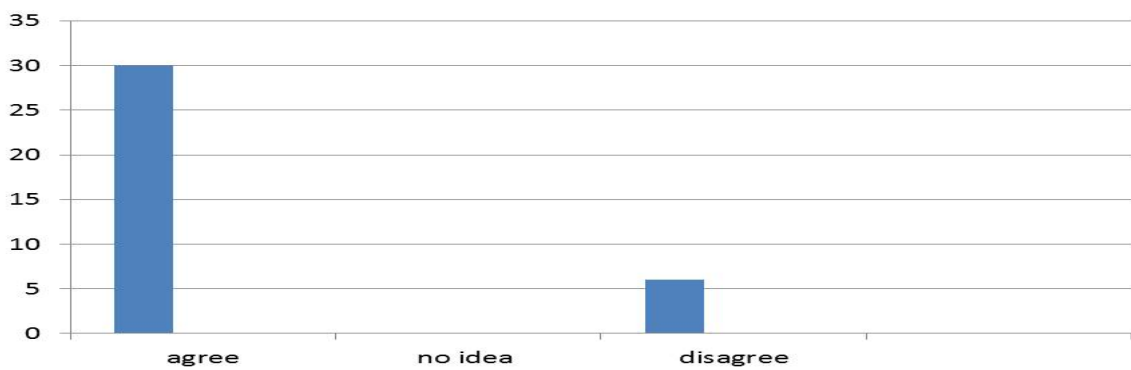**Q.10** It is easy to download WhatsApp in my cell-phone.

Figure 10. Questionnaire statement 10

The majority of the students in the above figure, agreed that downloading the App of WhatsApp is easy and free.

Q.11 It is easier to contact my instructor through whatsApp than other application.
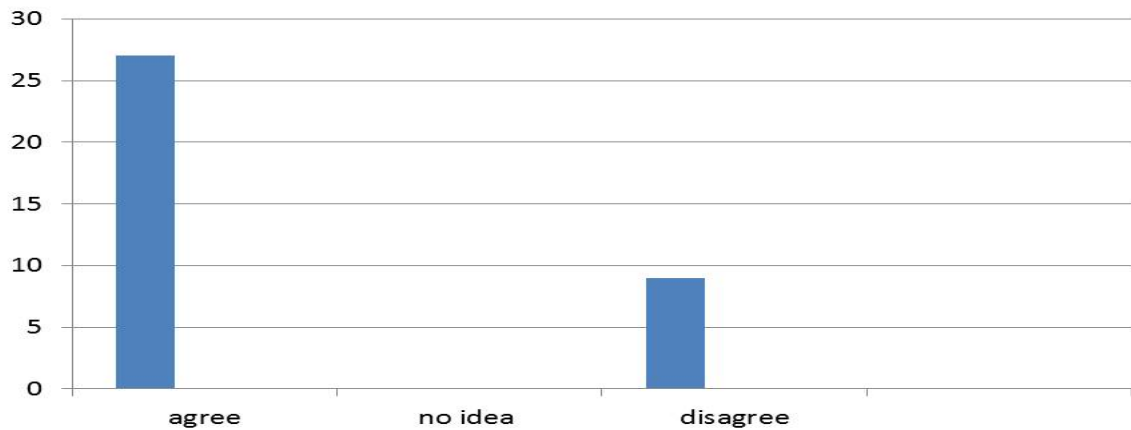
Figure 11. Questionnaire statement 11

In the above figure, 27 students agreed that it is easier to contact their instructor through WhatsApp than other applications.

Q.12 Using WhatsApp motivate me to learn English.
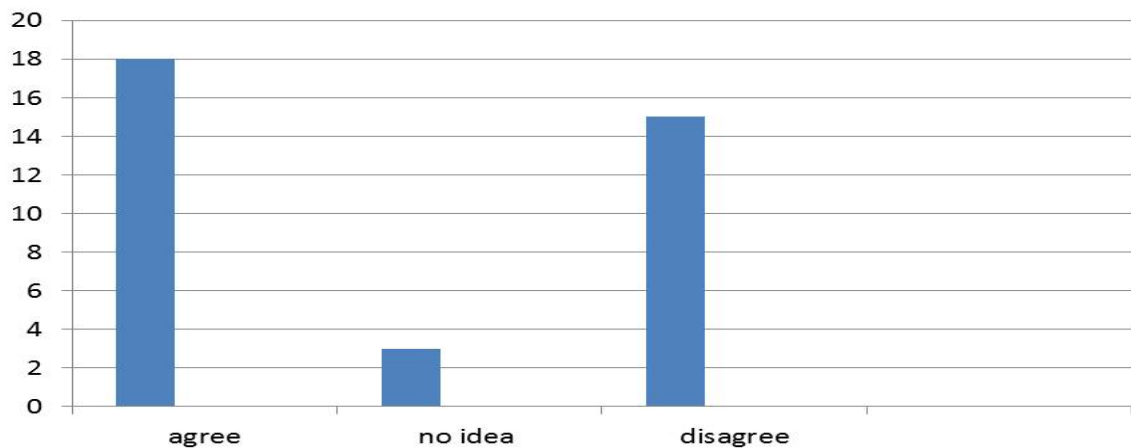
Figure 12. Questionnaire statement 12

In the above figure although the 18 students agreed that Using WhatsApp motivate them to learn English, 17 students disagree to the statement.

The results of the students questionnaire were coded and analyzed using SPSS and t-test through t-distribution to find the significance of the results.

Table 2 illustrate the questionnaire analysis.

Table 2. Questionnaire analysis

| Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test Value=2			reality of 0.05	Value
			t	df	Sig		
1. Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my listening skill.	2.3333	.75593	2.646	35	.012	significance	agree
2. Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my speaking skill.	2.2778	.91374	1.824	35	.077	insignificance	agree
3. Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my reading skill.	2.9167	.36839	14.930	35	.001	significance	agree
4. Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my writing skill.	2.7778	.59094	7.897	35	.001	significance	agree
5. Using WhatsApp helped me to enrich my vocabulary.	2.7500	.60356	7.456	35	.001	significance	agree
6. Using WhatsApp helped me to learn from my colleague mistakes.	2.7500	.55420	8.120	35	.001	significance	agree
7. Using WhatsApp helped me to think in English.	2.6944	.70991	5.869	35	.001	significance	agree
8. Using WhatsApp helped me to overcome me fear to use English language.	2.1111	.94952	.702	35	.487	insignificance	No idea
9. Using WhatsApp helped me get immediate feedback from my instructor.	2.6667	.75593	5.292	35	.001	significance	agree
10. It is easy to download WhatsApp in my cell-phone.	2.6667	.75593	5.292	35	.001	significance	agree
11. It is easier to contact my instructor through whatsApp than other application.	2.5000	.87831	3.416	35	.002	significance	agree
12. Using WhatsApp motivate me to learn English.	2.0833	.96732	.517	35	.608	insignificance	No idea

4.2 Statistics and Data Analysis

Reading the results in Table 2 above which reflects questionnaire responses which have been manually coded and analyzed using SPSS version 10, using t-test through t-distribution to find results.

Showing results of phrase No. (1) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (2.646) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.012), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that using WhatsApp helped students to develop their listening skill.

Showing results of phrase No. (2) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (1.824) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.077), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that using WhatsApp helped students to develop their speaking skill.

Reading results of phrase No. (3) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (14.930) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.001), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that using WhatsApp helped students to develop their reading skill.

Showing results of phrase No. (4) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (7.897) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.001), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that using WhatsApp helped students to develop their writing skill.

Reading results of phrase No. (5) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (7.456) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.001), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that using WhatsApp helped students to enrich their vocabulary.

Showing results of phrase No. (6) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (8.120) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.001), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that using WhatsApp helped students to learn from their colleague mistakes.

Reading results of phrase No. (7) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (5.869) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.001), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that using WhatsApp helped students to think in English.

Showing results of phrase No. (8) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (.702) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.487), which means that the statement is insignificance according to statistical reality conclusion of the term, that reads: using WhatsApp didn't help students overcome their fear to use English language.

Reading results of phrase No. (9) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (5.292) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.001), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that using WhatsApp helped the students get immediate feedback from my instructor.

Showing results of phrase No. (10) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (5.292) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.001), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that WhatsApp is easy to be downloaded in students cell-phone.

Reading results of phrase No. (11) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (3.416) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.002), which means that there is a statistical significance of the statistical reality conclusion of the term that says that it is easier for the students to contact instructor through WhatsApp than other application.

Showing results of phrase No. (12) in which the value of (T-test) is calculated (.517) with degree of freedom (35) and the value of the probability (.608), which means that there is insignificance according to the statistical reality conclusion of the term that read: WhatsApp motivates students to learn English.

4.3 Discussion of Results

After doing the statistical procedure the results of the students questionnaire were:

1) WhatsApp helped students to develop their listening skills, this agree with Oxford and Ghada Awada finding as students learn from audios and videos that are sent in the group add to that, what mates and instructor record and send.

2) WhatsApp helped students to develop their speaking skills, same results were found by Ghada Awada and Oxford and Andújar-Vaca, Alberto and Cruz-Martínez, Maria-Soledad.

3) WhatsApp helped students to develop their reading skills, this result agreed with what Ghada Awada and Oxford raveled, beside the agreement to Maria Justina results.

4) WhatsApp helped students to develop their writing skills agreed with Ghada Awada and Maria Justina findings.

5) WhatsApp helped students to enrich their vocabulary agreed with studies of 1- Hani, Nedal A Bani and 2- Abraham Gert van der Vyver, and his colleagues 3-Man, C. 4-Nedal A. Bani Hani5-BasmaIssa Ahmad Alsaleem findings.

6) WhatsApp helped students to learn from their colleague mistakes, this approved by Abraham Gert van der Vyver, and his colleagues in their study.

7) WhatsApp helped students to think in English as this was discussed in Abraham Gert van der Vyver, and his colleagues study.

8) WhatsApp didn't help students to overcome their fear to use English language although this approved in Aicha Blehch Amry finding, but agreed with Ibtehal Mahmoud Aburezeq and Fawzi Fayez Ishtaiwa findings.

9) WhatsApp helped students to get immediate feedback from their instructor which is one of Tze Ying Sim and his colleagues study results.

10) WhatsAppis easy to download in students' cell-phone.

11) WhatsApp helped students to have easier contact their instructor than other application.

12) WhatsApp is not approved that it motivates students to learn English, and doesn't agree with Maria Justina and Aicha Blehch Amry study although the majority of students' answers are with the statement.

All results above also disagree with Ibtehal Mahmoud Aburezeq and Fawzi Fayez Ishtaiwa study although some of the finding observed during the experience.

5. Conclusion

Regarding the finding above and the experience I have during using WhatsApp, I can say there was clear development in the performance of the students, although I suffered of students' posting to the group out of agreed time when the group was created first, however, students have shown very good communication skills, when they helped each other whenever I was out of net access, not only that but they also created many beneficial discussion that impressed me as instructor, I can't deny, this is their generation invention.

In spite of the advantage mentioned above I suffered of extra work load to find materials and to prepare suitable audios and videos for the App.

Although the group is closed now, but the students still send me messages of suggestions that they think can help me to develop learning process.

Since Technology is in a continuous rapid development and with every sun rise there is a new App, and as youth are using them, we have to keep ourselves updated with these App, that may at least help us succeed to catch students attention towards learning, and if we use Apps that is their preference, obviously we will reach our goals and that will reinforce the regular academic process and help us and them.

As a conclusion of my observation are the following advantages and disadvantages.

5.1 Advantages of Using WhatsApp (Experience to Share)

1) WhatsApp was alternative to virtual classes that helps absent students to catch up.

2) Whats app answers students questions, and helps to increase students feeling of security since they always have their instructor around.

3) It helps to facilitate students discussion, and helps students overcome their fear of using the language.

4) It helps the students to develop their writing.

5) It enables the students to learn from their colleagues mistakes.

6) It helps the students to believe in their abilities and to have confidence.

7) It develops writing skill and increase students' motivation towards learning.

5.2 Disadvantages of Using WhatsApp (Experience to Share)

1) Preparing material needs time and experience about software that support the Apps.

2) Students are not fixed to the agreed time, and they send messages in any time even if it is late night.

3) Some students don't participate in discussion.

4) Students' attention can't be assured, that not all students learn from the materials.

5) Some students just copy and paste.

6) Instructor must be always cautious and patient to control the group.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Students questionnaire

No	Statement	agree	No idea	disagree
1	Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my listening skill.			
2	Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my speaking skill.			
3	Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my reading skill.			
4	Using WhatsApp helped me to develop my writing skill.			
5	Using WhatsApp helped me enrich my vocabulary.			
6	Using WhatsApp helped me to learn from my colleague mistakes.			
7	Using WhatsApp helped me to think in English.			
8	Using WhatsApp helped me to overcome me fear to use English language.			
9	Using WhatsApp helped me to get immediate feedback from my instructor.			
10	It is easy to download WhatsApp in my cell-phone.			
11	It is easier to contact my instructor through WhatsApp than other application.			
12	Using WhatsApp motivate me to learn English.			

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