THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG COLLEG OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS: EVIDENCE FROM HADHRMAOUT UNIVERSITY

وجهات النظر حول استخدام تكنولوجيات التواصل الاجتماعي في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية بين

طلاب كلية الهندسة : دراسة تطبيقية على طلاب جامعة حضرموت

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Abstract

This study aims at examining the association of using social media technologies, namely; Whatsapp application, as a learning tool for English Language learning among College of Engineering's students at Hahdramout University for the academic year 2018-2019. This study uses a survey-based methodology to collect data from 50 enrolled students for the considered academic year regarding their attitudes towards the use of WhatsApp in learning English Language. Using the descriptive analysis, the results show that there is a positive satisfaction in the attitudes of the students towards the use of WhatsApp in improving their learning performance inside and outside the classroom. Further, the students indicated to the fact that the WhatsApp is an easy application that can be used anywhere and anytime as well as it can enhance students' interaction and learning experiences in English Language. The results of this study can benefit decision and policy makers at the University level.

Keywords: WhatsApp application, English Language, Hadhramout University.
JEL: N70

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ملخص الدراسة

تتناول هذه الدراسة اختبار علاقة استخدام تكنولوجيا التواصل الاجتماعي (تطبيقات الواتس آب) كأداة لتعلم اللغة الانجليزية بين طلاب كلية الهندسة في جامعة حضرموت للسنة الاكاديمية 2018– 2019م . استخدم هذا البحث منهجية الاستبانة في جمع بيانات الدراسة ، وقد تمثلت عينة الدراسة النهائية بعدد 50 طالب . وأظهرت نتائج التحليل الوصفي لهذه الدراسة أن هناك درجة رضا ايجابية في مواقف الطلاب تجاه استخدام تطبيقات الواتس آب في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية وذلك من خلال تحسين أدائهم التعليمي داخل وخارج الفصول الدراسة . كما اشارت النتائج الى أن الطلاب ينظرون لتطبيقات الواتس آب على أنها من البرامج السهلة الاستخدام في كل مكان وفي اي وقت ، وأنها تعزز من مستوى تفاعلهم وزيادة خبراتهم التعليمية في اللغة الانجليزية . نتائج هذه الدراسة مفيدة لمتخذي القرارات وواضعي السياسات على مستوى الجامعة .

الكلمات المفتاحية : تطبيقات الواتس آب ، اللغة الانجليزية ، جامعة حضرموت

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1.0 Introduction

Education is one of the most critical pillar of a nation's development, especially in this day and age. The education sector and systems have undergone significant shifts in the last few decades, particularly in approaches from traditional methods (teacher-centered methods) where the teacher is the center of learning to learner-centered methods, where the learner plays a crucial role in the learning process. The teacher, therefore, has become a facilitator of learning. This shift has been made more pronounced by the several technological innovations and other applications that have been employed in the education systems.

In the 21st century, there has been a robust development in technologies within the education paradigm. It must be noted that technology has become the core driver of several activities in the life of a human being. Several applications have been develop to help man discharge a number of functions as well as communicate with little barriers of space and distance. With a smart phone, a person can use such applications as WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook etc. It is undeniable that the current generation is one breed of techno savvy individuals whose interest and use of these gadgets are unstoppable. Therefore, educationist as well as other stakeholders must take cognizance of this fact and begin thinking and planning appropriately. The teaching approaches utilized in the past has changed significantly and any conscious comparison between the past five decades and today would reveal great shifts in terms of teaching aids, the role of a teacher as well as motivational strategies. However, in spite of these changes, today's student has challenges in attention and motivation to learn when compared with the yesteryears student.

According to Ho (2011), WhatsApp or WhatsApp Messenger is one of the social media platforms that allow users to send and receive instant messages between individuals and groups. Users having Android tablets and smartphones can only access these applications. The undergraduates in a university setup use these applications more than any other group. Initially, WhatsApp only allowed no more than ten members but now, the membership has been extended to larger numbers. Language teachers often leverage on this technology to form groups for their

classes. The purpose of this research is to explore the use of WhatsApp as a language-learning tool in regards to Mandarin Language teaching and learning.

This study aims at examining the association of using social media technologies, namely; Whatsapp application, as a learning tool for English Language learning among College of Engineering's students at Hahdramout University for the academic year 2018-2019.

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2.0 Literature Review

Communicative competence is effectively enhanced through realistic interaction by using contextualized and meaningful language (Oxford, 1991). However, it has been noted that the time in a lesson is not enough to effectively practice the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Consequently, WhatsApp has played a crucial role in filling this gap. Hani's (2014) study indicated a significant difference between the journaling participants' pre-test and post-test writing scores. Moreover, the individual item scores' test showed a statistically significant development both in voice and vocabulary choice, which are the two key characteristics of writing. In this connection, this study is very important because it provide insights that would help a teacher stretch for the impossible. This is a view supported by Zurrita and Nussbaum (2004) in their argument that mobile technology is very crucial in teaching and learning. On the other hand, Wood (2003) asserted that the employment of wireless technology within the education system is very beneficial in reducing the challenges of the digital world such as phones and personal digital assistants (PDA) in developing countries. These devices are both inexpensive and readily available when compared to laptops. This is a proposition supported by Metcalf, Milrad, Cheek, Raasch& Hamilton (2008) in their assertion that the use of mobile phones greatly enhances the students' performance of science and mathematics in class.

Maria (2016) postulates that the use of WhatsApp is very helpful in motivating learners to improve on their writing skills; a skill considered the most difficult of the four language skills. This is because a learner responds better when they use technology such as the internet due to its interactive nature. The internet is accessible with mobile phones and thus students can be highly motivated to learn L2.

The students have been found to have positive attitude towards social media platforms such as Facebook because they are engagement tool (Tze Ying Sim et al, 2014). These engagements are also very important in bolstering the class interactions and participation as well as boosting the interest on content being learned in class. In this study, the distinguishing features that affect this

engagement are also examined. In their study, Abraham Gert van der Vyver et al (2015) although WhatsApp is considered informal platform, it has been proven that it is the best means of enhancing managerial communication on any project. In the education system such as the university, lecturers can use smartphones to teach interactively outside the classroom setting with significant effect. According to Laurillard, (2002), the dissemination of information and learning resources can be sent and received anywhere at any time. Today, a bigger percentage of students possesses a smartphone, and can thus easily access and spent a lot of time in these social media platforms. These platforms allow both the students and the lecturers to communicate in real-time thus sharing a wider amount of material online.

In a study by Andújar-Vaca et al., (2017), titled "WhatsApp and its Potential to Develop oral Skills" it is clear that social media can greatly boost language competence and production as well as negotiation of meaning as exhibited by the experimental group. therefore, it can be said that mobile learning affords learners an opportunity to negotiate meaning, reflect and evaluate their own performance in various interactive contexts as well as through feedback, making mobile learning one of the most powerful learning tool for L2 development. On the other hand, GhadaAwada (2016) in their study indicated that the use of WhatsApp mediation was more effective in improving critique writing competency of the participants than it does regular instruction. It also increases the participants' motivation levels to learn language.

In Nedal's (2014) study titled "Impact of WhatsApp Group's Utilization on EFL student's Vocabulary Writing Amelioration," there is significant difference between the journaling participants' overall pre-test and post-test writing scores. In addition, the individual item scores' test showed a statistically significant development both in voice and vocabulary choice, which are the two key characteristics of writing. In this regard, this study is very helpful, especially in assisting teachers to understand the advantages of WhatsApp electronic dialogue journaling in the development of voice writing skills, word choice and vocabulary of the students.

Man's (2014) study "The Utilization of Instant Messaging in raising of Awareness of Academic Vocabulary" results indicated that it led to the increase in the scores of the participants. From the interview data, it is evident that the participants positively look at the use of IM because it helped them more aware of the wide range of academic words. This view is supported by AburezeqandFawzi Fayez Ishtaiwa's (2013) study "The Impact of WhatsApp in Interaction and Arabic Language Teaching Course" in which the findings showed that WhatsApp platform provides the learners with space for expressing ideas, exchanging information as well as communicating in real-time. However, the use of WhatsApp platform is not devoid of challenges related to learning such as cost or expenses, distraction to learning, extra workload and lack of commitment to effective use of the platform by the learners.

In a study conducted by BasmaIssa Ahmad Alsaleem (2013), the results indicated that the students who journaled showed a significant difference in overall pre-test and post-test writing scores. The results also showed a statistically significant improvement in both word choice and voice, which are important writing factors. Therefore, this study will offer crucial insights that would help teachers utilize effectively the WhatsApp electronic dialogue journaling in improving their students' word choice, vocabulary and writing skills.

Additionally, a study by AichaBlehchAmry (2014) "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" showed that real differences exist (0.05 alpha level) in the experimental group's achievement and attitudes as aided by WhatsApp mobile. Without WhatsApp mobile learning activities, face-to-face learning may not be very effective in this century.

3.0 Methodology and Data Collection

In this section, a survey instrument was used and data collection procedures are discussed. This survey isadopted and adapted from Kumar, Lian&Vasudevan (2016). The questionnaire is divided into two sections (referred to assections A and B). Section A consisted of eighteen (18) statements. Using a five- point Likert scale, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with

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each statement (1 as strongly disagree to 5as strongly agree). The survey was distributed in Arabic language.Section B of the questionnaire is designed to obtain demographic characteristics of the respondents. Questionsasked in this part relate to age, gender, and level of study.Initially, the questionnaire was pre-tested on a total of 15 students, studying at Hadhramout Universitywith a view to refine the questionnaire. Every step was taken to ensure that the final questionnaire was clearlyand easily understood by the respondents.All questionnaires were personally distributed to a group of 110 undergraduate students of computer engineering at Hadhramout University enrolled for the academic year 2018/2019. 51 usable responses werereceived with a response rate of 46%. A descriptive analysis is used to analyze the questionnaire.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Respondents Profile

Table 1: Summary of the demographic makeup of the sample

Demographic	Frequency (n=51)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	31	60.8
Female	20	39.2
Age		
Less than 19	49	96.1
19 – 25	2	3.9
26 – 30	0	0
31 – 35	0	0
Above 35	0	0
Level of Study		
Freshmen	5	10.2
Sophomore	40	78
Junior	6	11.8
Senior	0	0

A total of 51 questionnaires were gathered from the survey. As shown in Table 1, the majority of therespondents (60.8.4%) were male, and (39.2%) were female. The largest group (96.1.0%), in terms of age, was thoseaged less than 19. Specifically,

(3.9%) were aged between 19 and 25. Regarding the level of study, the largest group (78%) was sophomore, (11.8 %)was junior, and (10.2%) was a freshmen.

4.2 Findings and Discussions

The findings of the study illustrate that the respondents, in general, have a positive perception on the use of WhatsApp application in learning English language. Tables from 2 to 19 list the 18 statements and show the level of agreements for each statement.

Table 2: The use of WhatsApp in enriching English Vocabulary

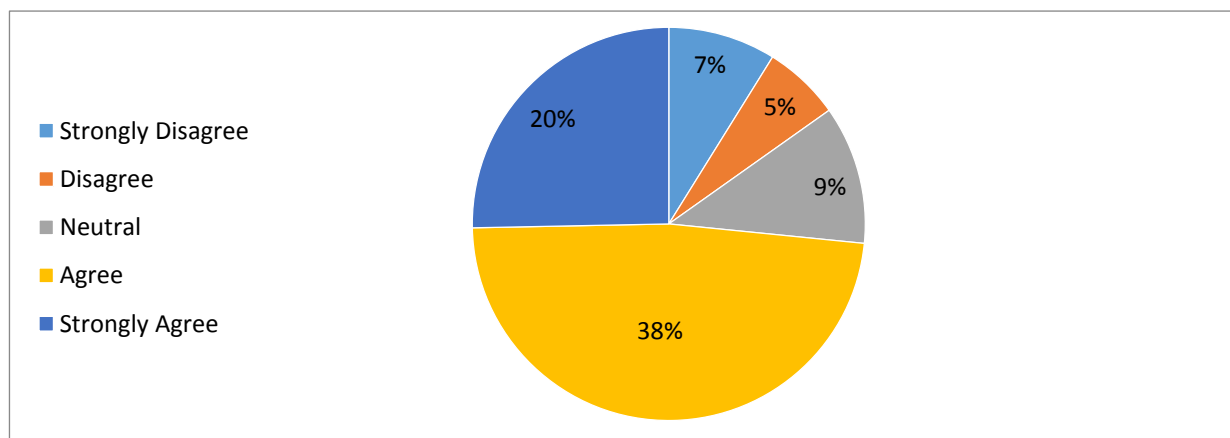| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The use of WhatsApp has help enrich my English vocabulary	7 (14%)	5 (10%)	9 (18%)	19 (38%)	10 (20%)

Figure (1): The use of WhatsApp in enriching English Vocabulary

Table 2 and Figure 1 depict that the majority of the respondents 30 (58%) agreed that the use of WhatsApp has helped them enriching their English vocabulary.

Table 3: The use of WhatsApp in improving listening skills

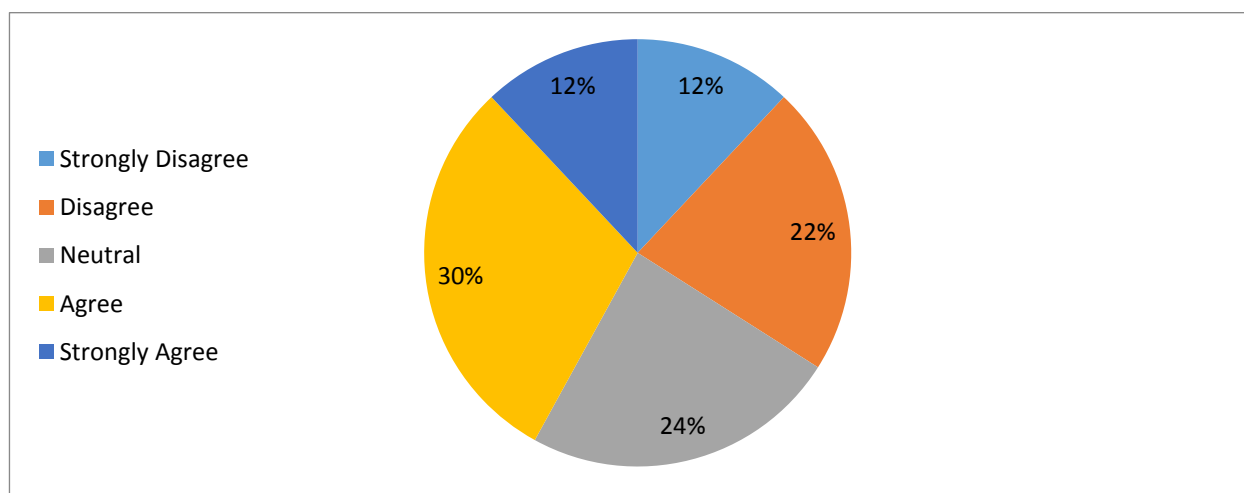| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	The use of WhatsApp has helped improve my English listening skills	6 (12%)	11 (22%)	12 (24%)	15 (30%)	6 (12%)

Figure (2): The use of WhatsApp in improving listening skills

Table 3 and Figure 2 show that 21 (42%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has helped them to improve their English listening skills. On the other hand, a number of 17 (34%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication of the general agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in improving their listening skills.

Table 4: The use of WhatsApp in improving grammar skills

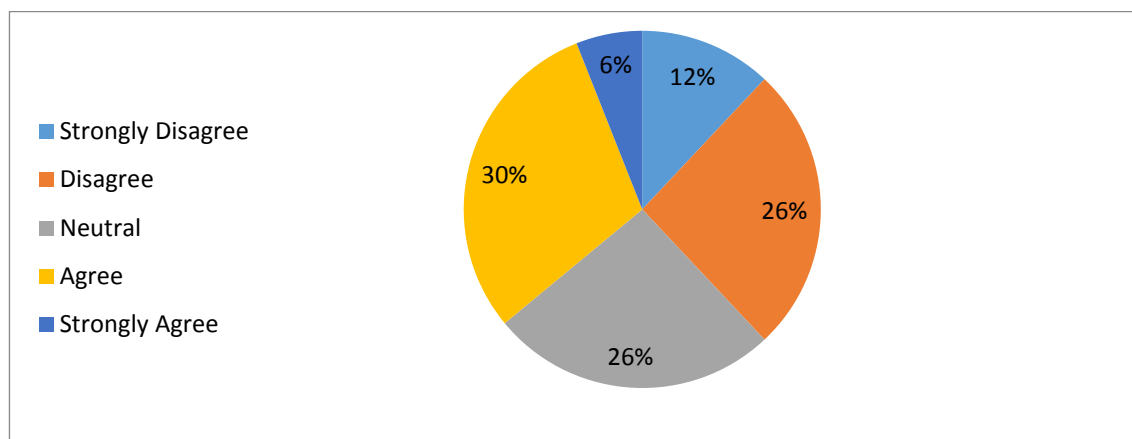| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
3	The use of WhatsApp has helped improve my English grammar skills	6 (12%)	13 (26%)	13 (26%)	15 (30%)	3 (6%)

Figure (3): The use of WhatsApp in improving grammar skills

Table 4 and Figure 3 revealed that 18 (36%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has helped them to improve their grammar skills. Conversely, a number of 19 (38%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication of a moderate agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in improving their grammar skills.

Table 5: The use of WhatsApp in improving reading skills

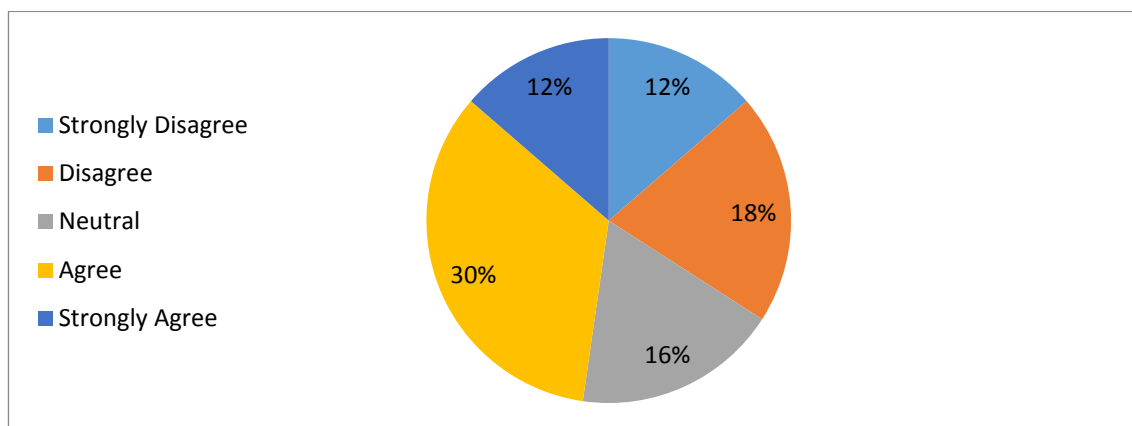| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4	The use of WhatsApp has helped improve my English reading skills	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	8 (16%)	15 (30%)	12 (24%)

Figure (4): The use of WhatsApp in improving reading skills

Table 5 and Figure 4 depict that the majority of the respondents 27 (54%) agreed that the use of WhatsApp has helped them improving their reading skills.

Table 6: The use of WhatsApp in improving reading skills

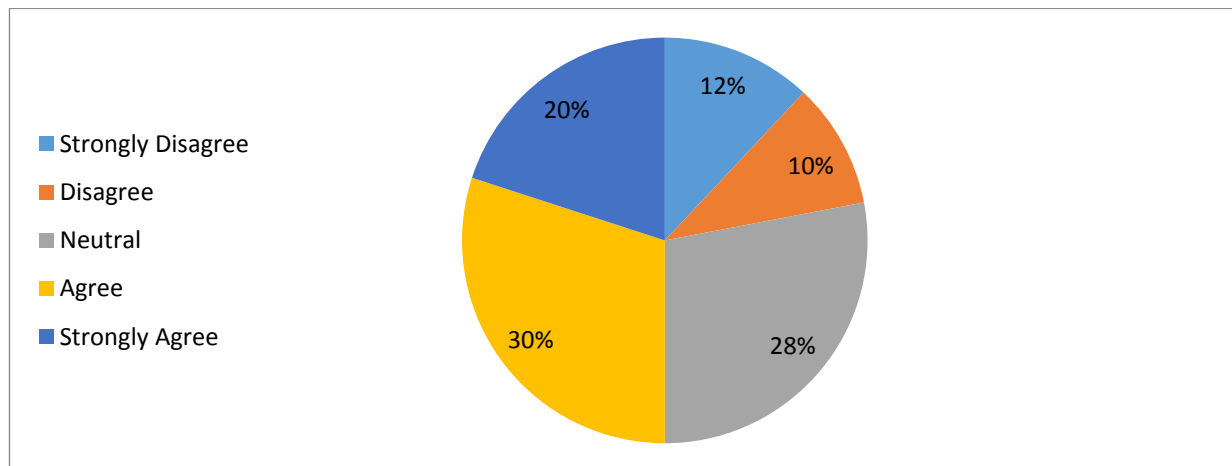| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
5	The use of WhatsApp has helped improve my English writing skills	6 (12%)	5 (10%)	14 (28%)	15 (30%)	10 (20%)

Figure (5): The use of WhatsApp in improving writing skills

Table 6 and Figure 5 illustrate that an approximately of 25 (50%) agreed that the use of WhatsApp has helped them improving their writing skills.

Table 7: The use of WhatsApp in improving reading skills

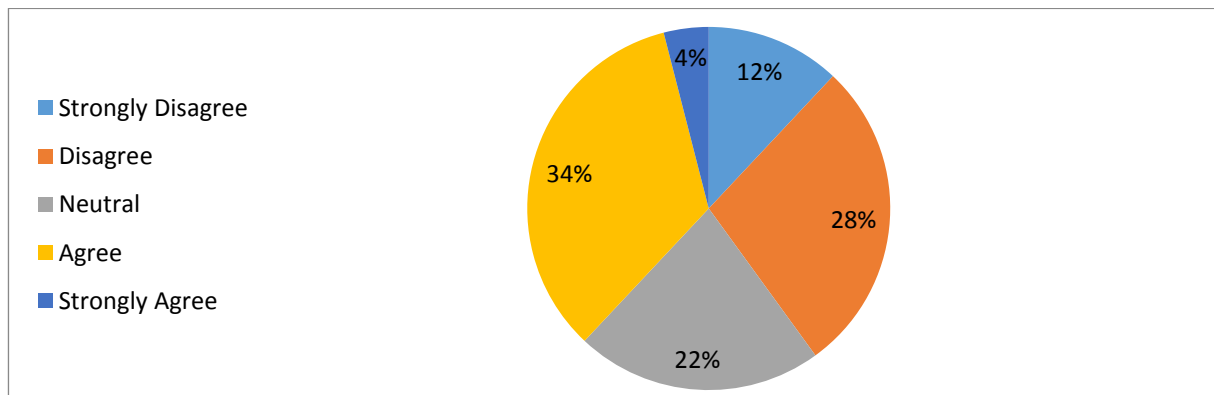| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6	The use of WhatsApp has helped improve my English speaking skills	6 (12%)	14 (28%)	11 (22%)	17 (34%)	2 (4%)

Figure (6): The use of WhatsApp in improving speaking skills

Table 7 and Figure 6 indicate that 19 (38%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has helped them to improve their speaking skills. Conversely, a number of 20 (40%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication of a reasonable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in improving their speaking skills.

Table 8: The use of WhatsApp in creating a platform to use English

No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7	The use of WhatsApp has created a platform for me to use English	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	19 (38%)	17 (34%)	2 (4%)

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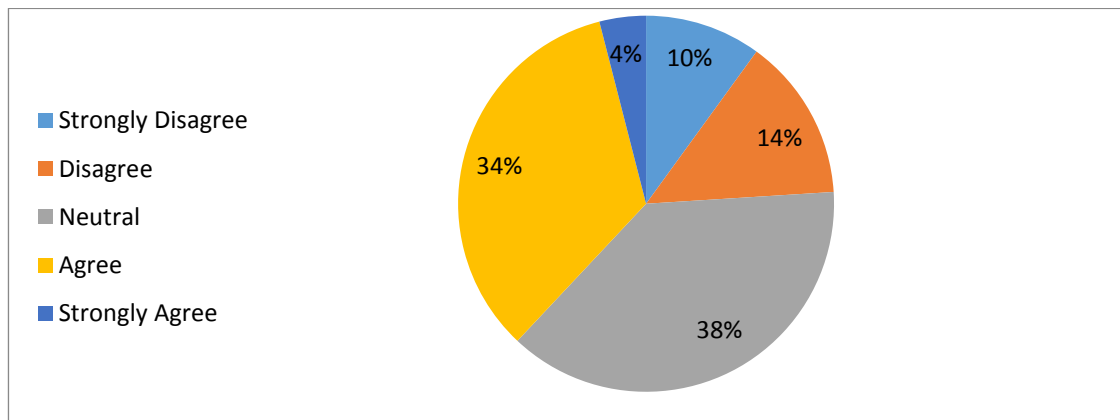

Figure (7): The use of WhatsApp in creating a platform to use English

Table 8 and Figure 7 reveal that the number of respondents 19 (38%) agreed on the use of WhatsApp in creating a platform to use English outweighs the number of respondents 12 (24%) who disagreed. This gives a signal that there is a satisfaction expressed by the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in using English.

Table 9: The use of WhatsApp in improving conversation skills

No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
8	The use of WhatsApp has helped improve my English conversations skills	2 (4%)	6 (12%)	28 (56%)	12 (24%)	2 (4%)

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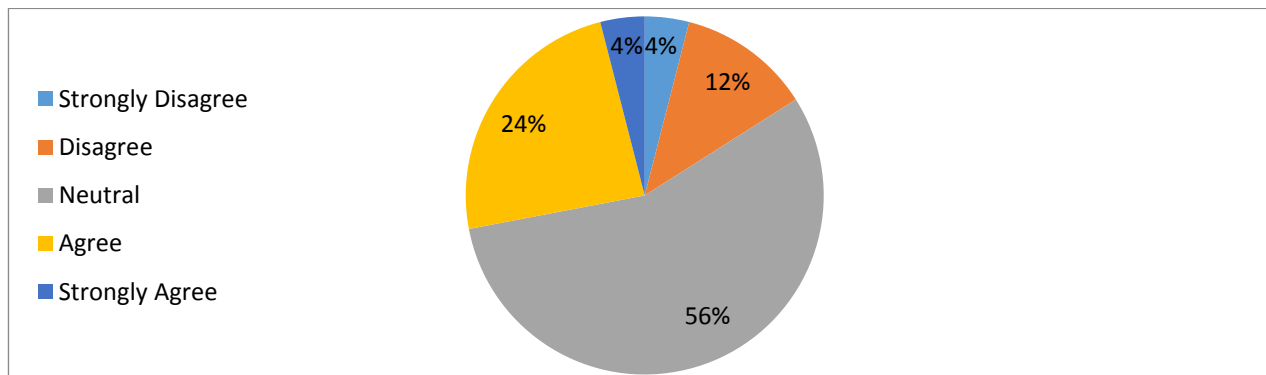

Figure (8): The use of WhatsApp in improving conversation skills

Table 9 and Figure 8 reveal that the number of respondents 14 (28%) agreed on the use of WhatsApp in improving their conversation skills outweighs the number of respondents 8 (16%) who disagreed. This gives a signal that there is a satisfaction expressed by the respondents towards the use of WhatsApp application in improving their conversation skills.

Table 10: The use of WhatsApp in obtaining information of learning English

No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
9	The use of WhatsApp has allowed me to get instant information of learning English	4 (8%)	8 (16%)	27 (54%)	6 (12%)	5 (10%)

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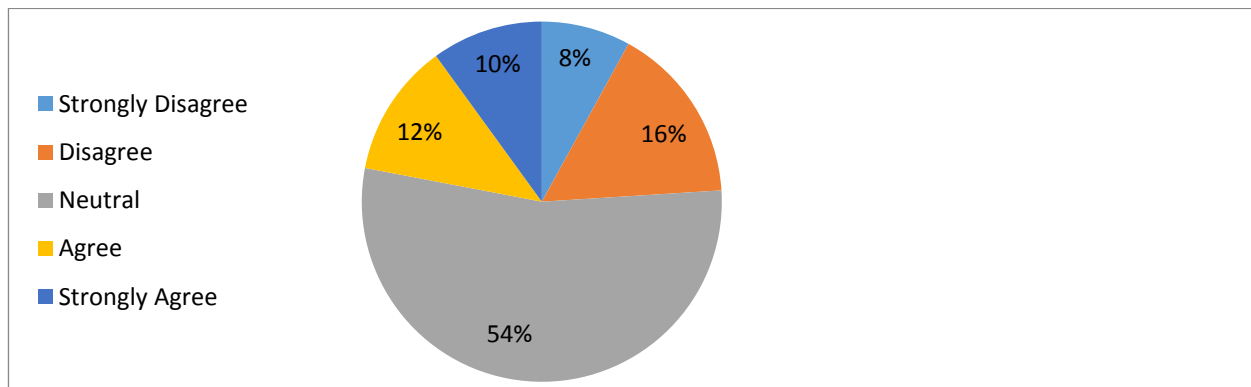

Figure (9): The use of WhatsApp in obtaining information of learning English

Table 10 and Figure 9 report that 11 (22%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has allowed them to get instant information of learning English. Contradictory, a number of 12 (24%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication of a reasonable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp in proving them an instant information of learning English.

Table 11: The use of WhatsApp in allowing to take a great control on language learning

No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10	The use of WhatsApp has allowed me to take great control on my language learning	6 (12%)	5 (10%)	20 (40%)	16 (32%)	3 (6%)

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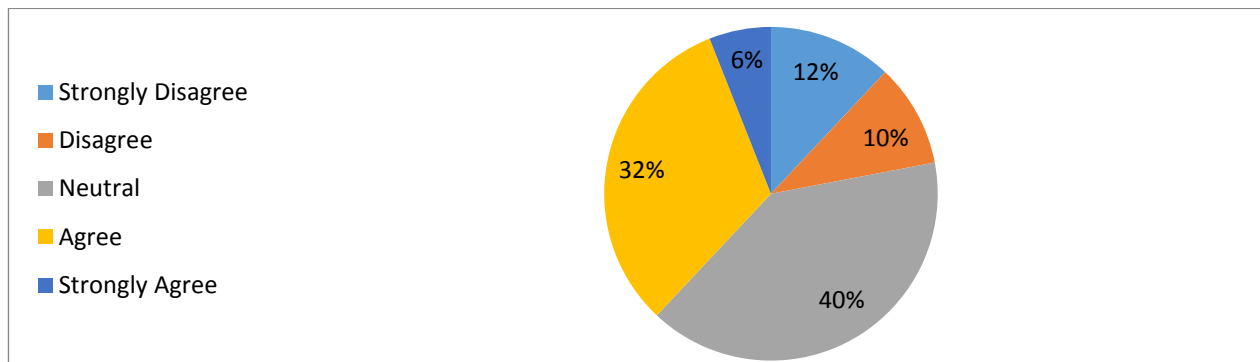

Figure (10): The use of WhatsApp in allowing to take a great control on language learning

Table 11 and Figure 10 revealed that 19 (38%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has allowed them to take great control on their language learning. Conversely, a number of 11 (22%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication of a moderate agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in controlling language learning.

Table 12: The use of WhatsApp in increasing the motivation to learn and use English

No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	The use of WhatsApp has increased my motivation to learn and use English	8 (16%)	5 (10%)	12 (24%)	18 (36%)	7 (14%)

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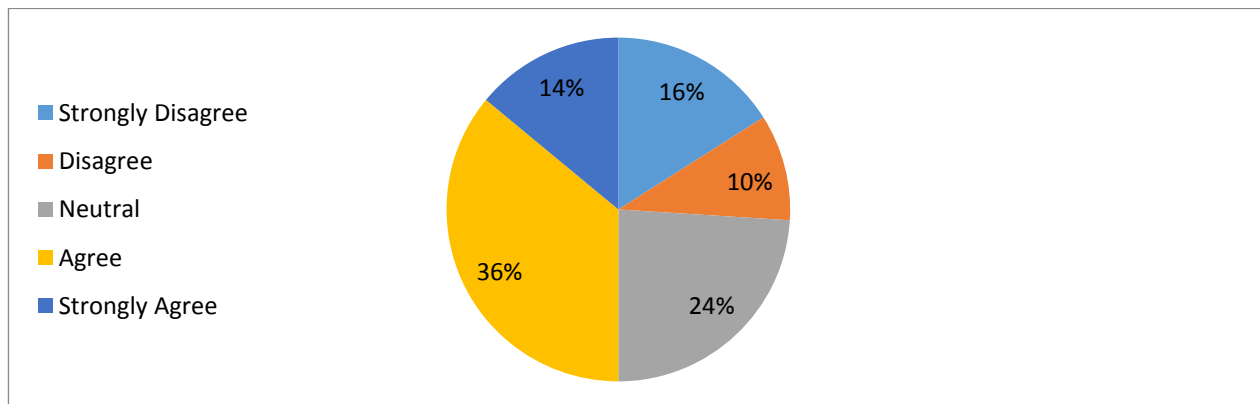

Figure (11): The use of WhatsApp in increasing the motivation to learn and use English

Table 12 and Figure 11 show that 25 (50%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has increased their motivation to learn and use English. Conversely, a number of 13 (26%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication the majority of the respondents agreed towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in increasing their motivation to learn and use English.

Table 13: The use of WhatsApp in enhancing the ability in using English Language

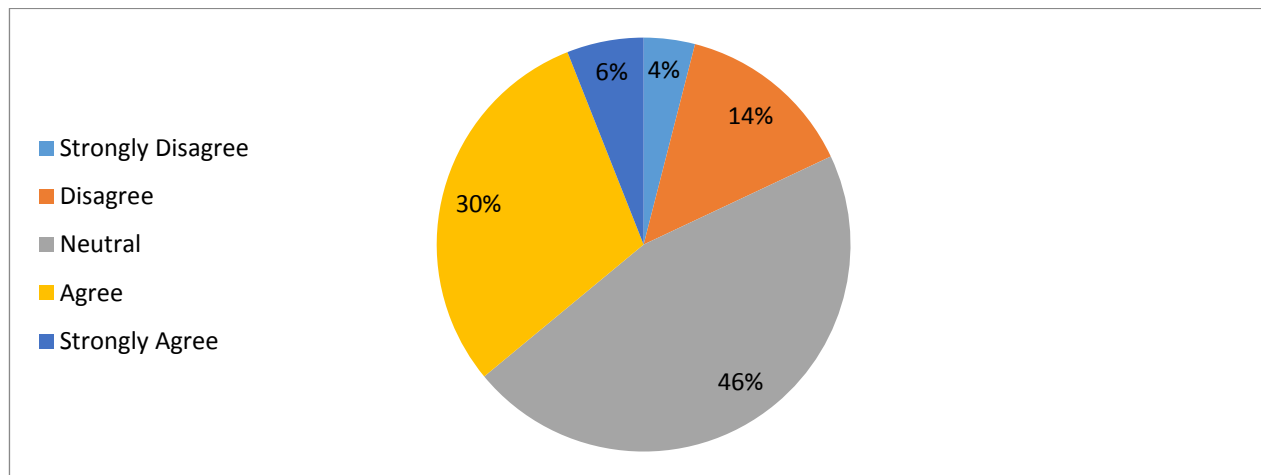| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
12	The use of WhatsApp has enhanced my ability in using English language	2 (4%)	7 (14%)	23 (46%)	15 (30%)	3 (6%)

Figure (12): The use of WhatsApp in enhancing the ability in using English Language

Table 13 and Figure 12 explicit that 18 (36%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has enhanced their ability in using English language. Conversely, a number of 9 (18%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication that there is an acceptable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in enhancing their ability in using English language.

Table 14: The interesting of learning English using WhatsApp

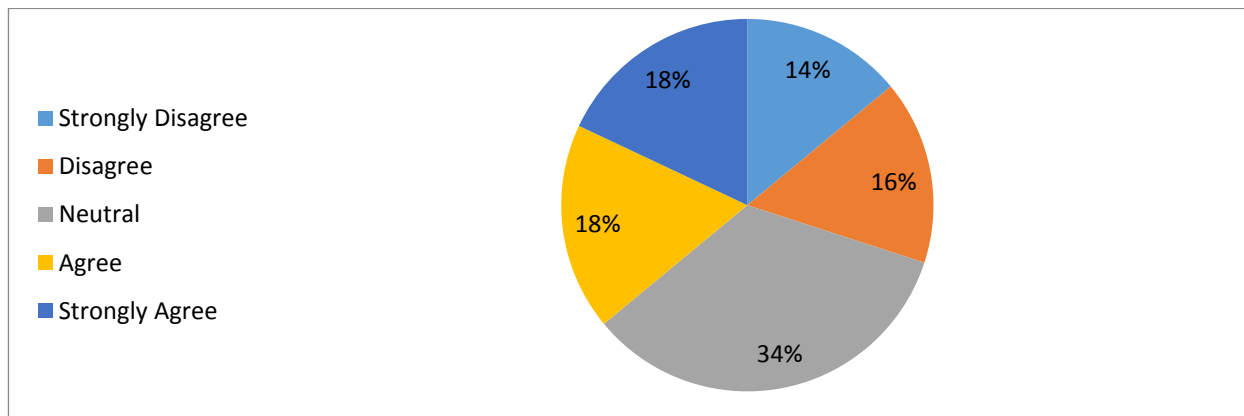| No. | Statements | The Scale | | | | |
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
13	The use of WhatsApp in learning English is interesting	7 (14%)	8 (16%)	17 (34%)	9 (18%)	9 (18%)

Figure (13): The interesting of learning English using WhatsApp

Table 14 and Figure 13 display that 18 (36%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp in learning English is interesting. Conversely, a number of 15 (30%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication that there is an acceptable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application as an interesting tool in learning English language.

Table 15: The fun of learning English using WhatsApp

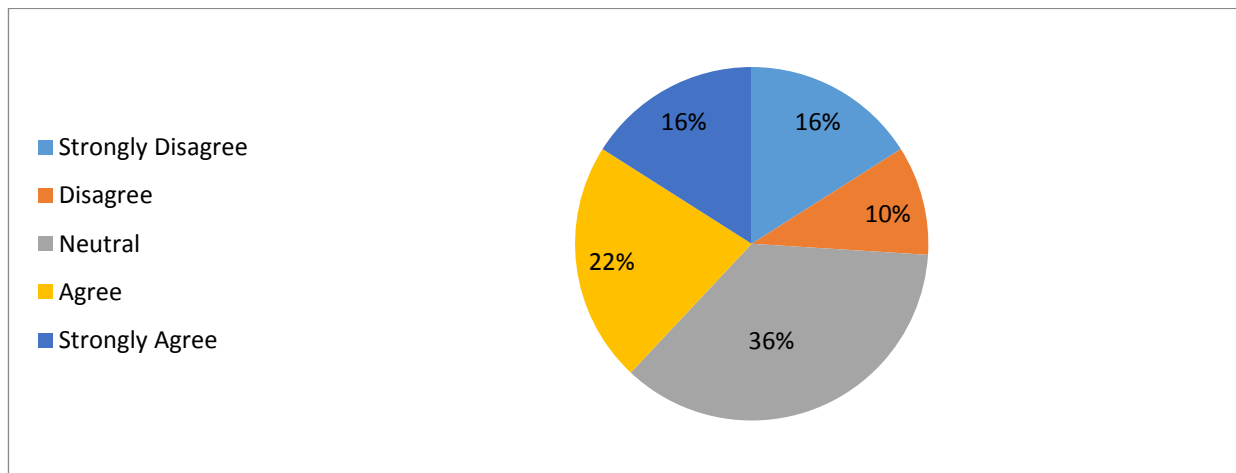| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
14	The use of WhatsApp to learn English is fun	8 (16%)	5 (10%)	18 (36%)	11 (22%)	8 (16)

Figure (14): The fun of learning English using WhatsApp

Table 15 and Figure 14 exhibit that 19 (38%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp in learning English is fun. Conversely, a number of 13 (26%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication that there is an acceptable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application as a fun tool in learning English language.

Table 16: The help of WhatsApp in reminding what I learned in the English class

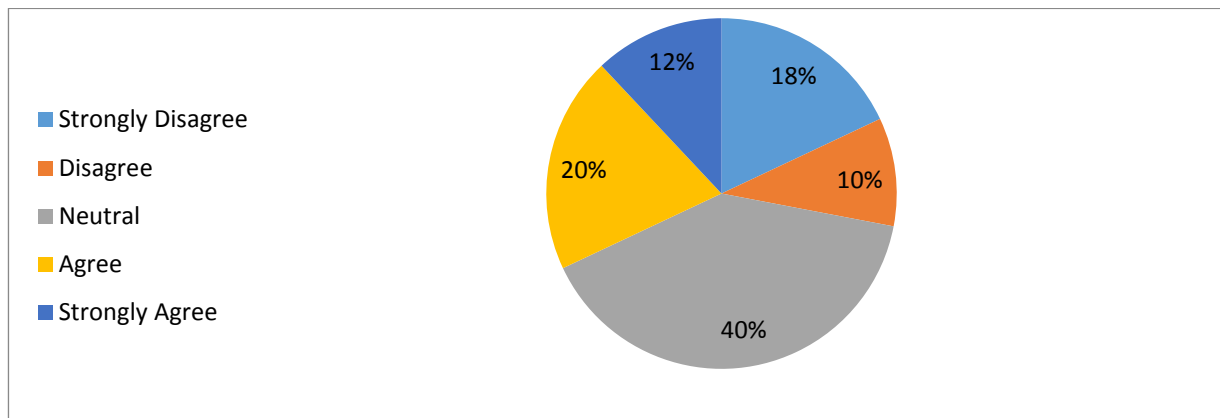| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
15	The use of WhatsApp has helped me remember what I learned in my English class	9 (18%)	5 (10%)	20 (40%)	10 (20%)	6 (12%)

Figure (15): The help of WhatsApp in reminding what I learned in the English class

Table 16 and Figure 15 exhibit that 16 (32%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has helped them remembering what they have learned in their English class. Conversely, a number of 14 (28%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication that there is an acceptable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in reminding them what they have studied in their English class.

Table 17: The use of WhatsApp in increasing the interaction with classmates

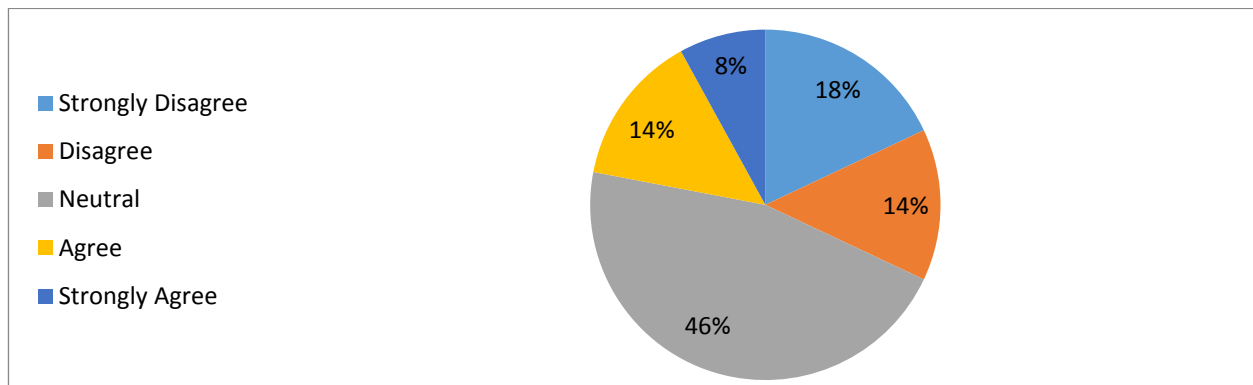| No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16	The use of WhatsApp to learn English has increased my interaction with my lecturer and classmates.	9 (18%)	7 (14%)	23 (46%)	7 (14%)	4 (8%)

Figure (16): The use of WhatsApp in increasing the interaction with classmates

Table 17 and Figure 16 exhibit that 11 (22%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp has increased their interaction with their lecturer and classmates. Conversely, a number of 16 (32%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication that there is an inacceptable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application in increasing their interaction with their lecturer and classmates.

Table 18: The use Voice notes in WhatsApp in speaking English

No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
17	Using the Voice notes feature in WhatsApp to speak in English is easy	9 (18%)	7 (14%)	23 (46%)	7 (14%)	4 (8%)

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Table 19: The challenge of using WhatsApp in learning English

No.	Statements	The Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
18	I feel it was challenging to use WhatApp to learn English	8 (16%)	11 (22%)	17 (34%)	10 (20%)	4 (8%)

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

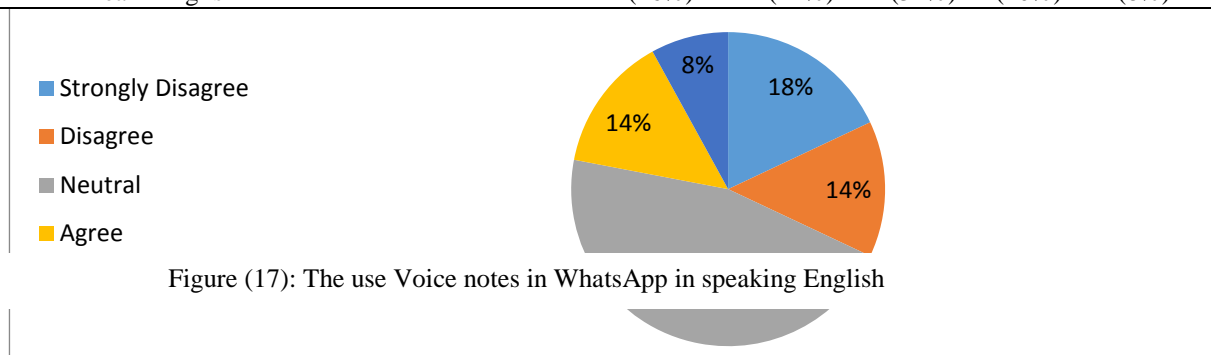Figure (17): The use Voice notes in WhatsApp in speaking English

Table 18 and Figure 17 display that 11 (22%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp especially the feature of voice notes to speak in English is easy. Conversely, a number of 16 (32%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication that there is an inacceptable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of using voice notes feature in WhatsApp to speak in English is easy.
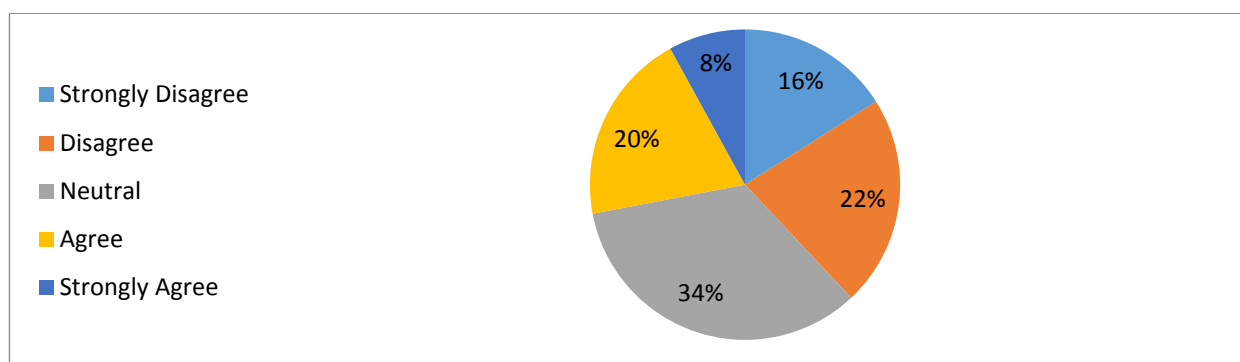
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Figure (18): The challenge of using WhatsApp in learning English

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Table 19 and Figure 18 display that 14 (28%) of the respondents agreed that the use of WhatsApp in learning English is a challenge. Conversely, a number of 19 (38%) of the respondents were disagree with this statement and the rest was in a neutral position. This gives an indication that there is an inacceptable agreement of the respondents towards the usefulness of WhatsApp application a challenge tool in learning English.

5.0 Conclusions and Implications

The objective of this study is to investigate the association of using Whatsapp application as a learning tool for English Language learning among College of Engineering's students at Hahdramout University for the academic year 2018-2019. A survey questionnaire is distributed out to 50 enrolled students for the considered academic year regarding their attitudes towards the use of WhatsApp in learning English Language.The majority of the respondents agree to the view that WhatsApp application is a useful learning tool for learning English language in the College of Engineering. In other words, as for now it is possible to say that College of Engineering's undergraduates have a positive notion on using WhatsApp in learning the language English as it enables them to learn English in a more independent, fun and interesting way. Moreover, it also helps them gain knowledge faster and also motivates them to interact more confidently among themselves as well as with their teacher.

More research is needed to determine the issues of WhatsApp in English language learning among other Colleges and universities. Thesefindings have policy implications if the College in particular and the university in general want to enhance learning English. This way, the policymakers at the university level should involve these technologies into learning process.

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