STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF WHATSAPP AS A LEARNING TOOL IN ESL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Technology gives a huge influence on students' lifestyle where many positive responses were encountered by most tertiary institutions on the development of the use of mobile technology in education. This is where WhatsApp application has become popular as a mobile learning style and regards as one of the communication platforms since many students nowadays have their own smartphone. WhatsApp is a Smartphone application for instant messaging. These days, it is difficult to engage students' interest in learning English subject. Therefore, WhatsApp can be one of the inventive teaching techniques to attract them and provide fun-based-learning. WhatsApp increases idea contribution among students and provides faster and easier communication. Thus, this research is aimed to examine the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool and how it could help the students to enhance their language learning. Besides, it also investigates the significance of using the tool and defines its use based on students' perceptions as it suits with recent young generations' lifestyle. Data were gathered from a survey conducted on 20 respondents from Kuala Pilah Pre-University students via a set of questionnaires distributed for them to answer within 15 to 20 minutes. A pilot study was also been conducted on 30 respondents in order to know the reliability of the instruments in this research. A quantitative data were collected and the result accumulates the total size of the sample together with the percentages of returns. The data is summarized to identify the usefulness of the learning tool to the students. The findings of the study suggested that the use of WhatsApp is significant in helping the students learning the language better and enhancing their proficiency in using the English language. This study implies that the usage of WhatsApp should be encouraged to the students and institutions should provide internet facilities as a top priority in today's education.

Keywords: WhatsApp, Mobile Learning, Communication Platform, Instant Message, Language Learning Tool.

Introduction

Technology gives an immense impact on human lives where the use of WhatsApp application in education carries positive response to the learning development. This application has become popular as a learning tool in many institutions. Based on a recent survey conducted by Telenor Research (2016), there are many other applications for instant messaging such as WeChat, LINE, Viber, Telegram, and email. However 97% Malaysians are using WhatsApp; only a small 3% of those surveyed said they used it less than once a month. The 'daily' use of SMS communications services has dramatically declined too. Therefore, WhatsApp is popular compared to other applications. Moreover, many of the students nowadays are already exposed to this application and used it often for the purpose of communication. Thus, it drew my interest to conduct this study and practise the use of WhatsApp application in English classroom due to it's being widely used among the students in their daily life. WhatsApp is a smartphone application for instant messaging. It provides faster and easier communication among students and develops their sharing ideas too for instance, in a WhatsApp group. WhatsApp group is a platform where it consists of all members like teachers and students. All students from the class can have their discussion on certain topics via this application as it provides immediate response within the group members to join the conversation thus making the communication effective. Moreover, it is one of the creative teaching techniques which is used to attract students' interest, attention and provides fun-based learning. It allows the students to express thoughts and ideas via various features of the WhatsApp application platform such as attaching pictures, sharing videos, sharing web-links, recording videos and many more. It also helps the students to get actively involved in learning activities via various features on this application. Thus, this research is aimed to examine the significance of the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool and how it could help the students to enhance their language learning.

This paper will examine the background of the study, some related literature reviews and the methods used in conducting this study. More specifically, the data were collected through various aspects; the students' attitude towards WhatsApp and how they perceive the application and its convenience/ ease of use, the usefulness of WhatsApp and the behavioural intention towards WhatsApp. Based on such a discussion, the usable data was processed in the SPSS, descriptive statistics is

used during the process of the data collection and the results were displayed in the form of tables. Besides, the study also provides some implications and recommendations to several practitioners, for instance, students, lecturers and the Ministry of Education. It is hoped that this study will nonetheless provide readers with an overview of this WhatsApp application.

Background of the study

WhatsApp application has been synonymous with Malaysian students especially in tertiary institutions. WhatsApp is viewed as an important platform for communication between teacher-student and student-student as well as a learning tool in ESL classroom in which it can be done at students' pace. According to the definition given from learnersdictionary.com, ESL is an abbreviation of "English as a second language" and ESL classroom is where the English subject is taught to students who speak a different language or mother tongue. Most Malaysian students were more inclined to use their mother tongue rather than the English language in English class. Therefore, WhatsApp is used in this study in order to see students' feedback towards this application which was used in English class and to know whether this application could show any significance to the students perception or not.

The undergraduates need to possess a certain level of MUET band for certain courses which was required by some universities. Students need to get at least band three for the MUET test which includes the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening, writing) and it is the university's main aspiration to produce graduates who are competent in language and professional skills in order to be parallel with other established institutions and to meet the challenges of globalisation. However, many of the students are still weak in the language skills, for instance speaking fluency. Speaking is one of the skills that is considered difficult by the students.

Some students are embarrassed to speak English language in the class due to having lack of ideas and confidence in themselves. At the same time, some of them might have a lot of ideas about a certain topic discussed but unfortunately, they faced difficulties in explaining and expressing them verbally. On the contrary, there are certain students who are very good in speaking but have problems in giving points and ideas. Thus, this is where the teacher can use WhatsApp as a medium of transferring and sharing information, ideas, pictures and many more for the students to explore more on their own. The situations occur in which the students and teacher are having regular conversation. Students could deliver their responses freely and the teacher responds to students' inquiries and comments, starts new issues, or posts queries (Dunlap, 2006). Students can easily access all the information given and generate ideas from the topic given. The teacher here is acting as an evaluator who helps in correcting and commenting on the student's responses and it is an active participation in the interchange of the conversation. Apart from that, students do not need to feel shy in expressing their thoughts via WhatsApp as they could attach any info graphics or links related to the topic because they could deliver their understanding of the topic discussed through the attachments given. This is to encourage the students to do their reading and generate ideas by exploring the knowledge available online. In fact, they become even more active in sharing attachments, hence, internal confidence in them could be gradually increased in real speaking activity lesson since they have a lot of ideas to voice out and share like what they did in the WhatsApp platform.

Even though this application is still new, students are particularly exposed to its use in their learning. Thus, it means the use of WhatsApp application in tertiary ESL classroom takes into consideration students' needs of learning the subjects. It promotes an active involvement of the students where it can be done at students paced and they can decide on how and what to learn. The study aims to identify the learner's perceptions on the use of WhatsApp thus lead to their preference in learning English for academic purposes as a new learning method. Learning method perceptions in this case include how they perceive the application, its convenience, and ease of use, its usefulness, their attitude and behavioural intention towards the use of WhatsApp which covers all on how they want to learn.

Obviously the focus here is on the students' perception on the use of WhatsApp thus it relates to the issue of students' learning strategies which has long been debated in the teaching field regardless of the courses. Most of the time language educators have been blamed for the students' weakness in language learning especially English. Kolb (1984) discovered different perspectives on students' state and achievements in learning by inventing the four learning styles which include assimilating (watching and thinking), diverging (feeling and watching), accommodating (doing and feeling) and converging (doing and thinking). These could help the students to learn better. Kolb's (1984), Blackmore's (1996) and Kavaliauskiene's (2003) works become the reference for the study. Their studies focus on learning styles and preferences, therefore teachers can design, modify and improve their way of teaching and facilitate students in learning.

Besides, as Johnsons (2014) mentioned that since WhatsApp is apparently a new phenomenon, only a few researches could be found about the WhatsApp usage as a communication platform between students and teachers (Church & Oliviera, 2013). However, positive feedback was encountered from the South African university students who were satisfied with this application due to its easily engaging with others in the school community where communication occurred in an informal and also fun way (Bere, 2013). Nevertheless, there are no studies being conducted that focus on the students' perceptions towards the use of WhatsApp application in the Malaysian context which consequently result in the invisible use of the technique in Malaysian ESL classroom. This research gap leads me to conduct a study on the Pre-University students' perception on the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool in ESL classroom.

Hence, by having this study, it could hopefully fill the gap on the absence of WhatsApp application in Malaysian ESL classroom. The findings could be new learning discoveries which would provide some beneficial insights on how the

WhatsApp application, as a new learning tool could be useful in helping Malaysian ESL students in improving their learning based on the students' perspectives themselves.

Besides, the objectives for this study are:
(a)   To identify the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool used by a group of Kuala Pilah Pre-University students in ESL classroom.
(b)   To identify students' perception on the use of WhatsApp.
(c)   To determine whether or not WhatsApp is significant.

Below are the research questions:
(a)   What is the level of students' attitude towards WhatsApp and how they perceive the application and its convenience/ ease of use of the application?
(b)   What is the usefulness level of WhatsApp application?
(c)   What is the level of the students' behaviour towards the use of WhatsApp?

Literature review

The existence of WhatsApp and its usage

Since WhatsApp application has been extremely popular, do we really understand what WhatsApp is and how it works? WhatsApp is a popular smartphone application that functions on various devices and gadgets. Jan Koum and Brian Acton were the inventors of the WhatsApp application in 2009 (Albergotti, MacMillan & Rusli, Evelyn, 2014) who formerly had invented Yahoo (Eric, 2012). It has been available on the market since 2010 and is developed mainly for the purpose of replacing the existing SMS platform by giving a free of charge service. As for the purpose of sending and receiving messages either between groups or individuals, WhatsApp provides various functions, for instance text messages, audio files, attached images, link to any websites and video files which can be shared. This new phenomenon is parallel with Vygotsky Constructivist Learning Theory which suits the use of WhatsApp. This theory aims to develop the students' social interaction as well as to raise and share information (Vygotsky, 1978). This is where the learning resources can be accessed anytime, anywhere and in any features. It could help in developing the student's learning performance though. Therefore, this application has become very popular in the last two years where it had gained over 350 million users (Cohavi, 2013).

Precisely, WhatsApp is rated as a great societal connection that connects individuals to get and share the humongous worldwide information rapidly. It is also as part of the social media growth. Whenever humans are sharing stories and influencing others, it is viewed as social networking (Nicholson, 2011). Besides, the production of knowledge among students is based on online social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). He explained that "learning can also be influenced by numerous variables, including the cognitive and psychological state of the learner, teacher professionalism and nature and complexity of the pedagogical approach", (Vygotsky, 1978). Overall, the effectiveness of learning and teaching can be improved through social interaction and this benefits the students in sharing information which parallels with the social development literature (Vygotsky, 1978).

Moreover, the simple operation of WhatsApp service makes it available to all ages and backgrounds. By having a smartphone, subscribing to the internet data plan and installing the application, it allows communication with everyone. It allows the user to create WhatsApp groups among the teacher and students by separating each group according to certain practicums to communicate among each other.

Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate the significance of using WhatsApp as a language learning tool and define its use based on the students' perceptions. As this is a new phenomenon and less research had been done, therefore I conducted this study. Many positive impacts were viewed regarding the educational and technical issues related to the use of WhatsApp application.

The importance of using WhatsApp as a learning tool in todays generations

WhatsApp is part of a smartphone's application and it is the most popular communication platform in the 21st century learning as it sends real-time messages and faster knowledge resources. This application can be only accessible with the existence of the Internet connection. As the Internet has been widely used, students were exposed to various communication tools like social network sites and application for a Smartphone (Fogg, 2010). In other words, knowledge can be found everywhere, anytime and in various formats. It is easy to get and share within communities. Besides, it could also create the possibility of learning at any time and any place.

One study claimed that by using the mobile tools in learning, it is also known as an informal kind of learning (Trentin & Repetto, 2013). It provides a relaxing and handy online activity to the students. Thus, the usage of the smartphone and WhatsApp have widely spread. There is a rising request for Smartphone among the youngsters (Han, 2009). Overall, many studies have demonstrated that WhatsApp has been widely used by individuals due to its accessibility and ease of use in communication purposes.

Moreover, many studies concluded the positive impacts of the WhatsApp application in education such as it included effective information-sharing and ease of communications. Facebook and WhatApp were also found as common application used for information sharing and academic communication among the university students (Devi& Tevera, 2014). Same finding was encountered by Lenhart (2007) where he stated that WhatsApp and emails are creating the ease of information sharing among students where every thought and feeling are translated into words. They tend to write more and it is supported by other educators where they could see the impact of this new phenomenon could teach the students about language evolution. Overall, responding through WhatsApp was viewed as thriving because it helped to develop the students' voice. The use of technologies like smartphones has gradually changed the traditional way of communication like handwriting (Ardilla, 2004).

WhatsApp is a way in enhancing students' learning performance

With the fact that WhatsApp has many benefits to the students, it also allows enhancement to the students' learning performance in the way of promoting an active learning involvement in WhatsApp conversation or discussion. Through this application, the learning process will be student-centered.

Moreover, Solomon and Schrum (2007) claimed that WhatsApp provides a conversation platform to everyone which allows the existence of a relationship among them. It promotes information and knowledge sharing unconsciously. It is supported by Patient (2013) who stated that the conversations between and among students using WhatsApp (smartphone application) demonstrates the sharing of academic information. Mar (2013) also emphasized that via WhatsApp, the majority of the students were highly satisfied and agreed with this application, not only could it increase their willingness to read in English but also it gave positive impacts on their reading habits, thus resulting in more regularity and confidence. These studies showed that WhatsApp could help a lot in enhancing students' learning performance especially in English subject.

Other studies found out that many universities and higher institutions have recently used WhatsApp via their smartphones in order to develop their communication through forums, discussions and information sharing, for instance, text messaging, mobile social network and web based learning (Echheverria, Calderon, Nussbaum, Infante & Bravo, 2011). This is where the integration of online discussion with smartphone application (WhatsApp) gives opportunities in creating an online interaction for the students to interact with their teachers and friends in facilitating the learning and solving their learning difficulties. Overall, students' learning performance and motivation have risen due to the implementation of this WhasApp application in their academic matters.

Research methodology

Generally, this study is aimed to examine the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool and how it could help the students to enhance their language learning. Besides, it also investigates the significance of using the tool and defines its use based on students' perceptions. Moreover, the study is supported by some relevant and related literature reviews about WhatsApp and its perceptions. Therefore, this section described the methodology used for completing this study.

Cresswell (2007) claimed that research approach is crucial as one of the effective strategies in order to increase the research validity. Therefore, this research is using a descriptive quantitative kind of research approach. This is because quantitative research provides a systematic empirical investigation of my research area. To gain some insight into the study, this research approach is useful to increase the understanding of the variable in order to evaluate its relevancy towards the research problem. Thus, this approach is more applicable as compared to a qualitative research.

In this proposed study, the research design is a survey research. It is one of the most popular methods in non-experimental research. Generally, survey research is when the data is gathered from the samples to get to know and describe the characteristic or criteria (for instance, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, behaviour and/ or opinions) of the population. This is the reason why I used this research design for my study.

In terms of data collection, it was collected through direct administration to a group of Kuala Pilah Pre-University students. The samples were among the students from three different classes and the researcher has the access to conduct the survey among them. The reason I chose this method was because this approach normally gave a high rate of response. Other than that, generally the cost involved is low. In addition, it provides the opportunity for the students (samples) to ask any enquiries and get better explanation from the researcher before they complete the questionnaires.

The respondents of interest of this proposed study were the Kuala Pilah Pre-University students. These students came from PDT programme (a two-year programme). They normally use and speak English for academic purposes besides Malay language as their mother tongue. These respondents were chosen because they could provide valid information concerning the strategy chosen (WhatsApp) in language learning as well as how to be proficient in learning the language. Besides, a set of questionnaire was distributed to the students in order to know their perceptions on the use of this application in their language learning. The questionnaire was adapted from two research websites found on the internet and was administered personally. It was formulated in a way that they could easily understand and would require about 15 to 20 minutes to be completed. Finally the usable data was processed in the SPSS. The sample of this study was 20 students and had been selected by the researcher from three different practicums in the PDT programme who can actively participate throughout this study. However, a pilot study has also been conducted with 30 students who were randomly selected from other

practicums in order to know the reliability of the instrument in this research. The random samples were taken from the open participation offered to the students from the other practicums. The result of the pilot study showed that every item used in this research has reliability and can be used in the actual study. The selection of the participants of the study was purposive sampling as it fitted the research objectives. The finding of this study would be able to provide some ideas on the significance of using WhatsApp as one of the learning strategies in order to be proficient in language learning.

Overall, all the information collected was being analysed and summarised accordingly. This is to draw the conclusion based on the research findings. Herewith, overall percentage was reported together with the total size of the sample. Hence, descriptive statistics is used throughout the process of the data collection. The results of the findings were displayed in the form of modes (frequencies), means, standard deviations as well as percentages.

Findings

The findings focussed on the students' perception on the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool in ESL classroom and whether or not WhatsApp is significance for future use in helping the students to enhance their language learning. The usable data is processed in SPSS 22.0. Hence, descriptive statistics is used throughout the process of the data collection that involved the mode (frequency), percentage, mean and standard deviation in order to identify the students' perception level on the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool in ESL classroom. The data were collected through various aspects. They are the attitude towards WhatsApp and how they perceive the application and its convenience/ ease of use, the usefulness of WhatsApp and the behavioural intention towards WhatsApp.

Analysis of the research findings

The analysis of the research findings is explained based on the research questions which have been mentioned earlier. The explicit analysis clarifications are showed as follow.

The attitude towards WhatsApp and its perceive, convenience/ ease of use

First Research Question: What is the level of students' attitude towards WhatsApp and how they perceive the application and its convenience/ ease of use of the application?

A descriptive analysis which involved mode (frequency), percentages, mean and standard deviation are used in order to identify the level of students' Attitude towards WhatsApp and their perceive to the application and its convenience/ ease of use. The result of the descriptive analysis is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The level of attitude towards WhatsApp and its perceive, convenience/ ease of use

No	Attitude	SD	D	U	A	SA	Min	Interp.
5	Learning language via WhatsApp is a pleasant idea	-	-	4 (20.0%)	12 (60.0%)	4 (20.0%)	4.00	High
6	Learning language via WhatsApp is a positive idea	-	-	3 (15.0%)	13 (65.0%)	4 (20.0%)	4.05	High
7	Learning how to use WhatsApp messaging was easy	-	-	-	9 (45.0%)	11 (55.0%)	4.55	High
8	WhatsApp was easy to be used	-	-	-	3 (15.0%)	17 (85.0%)	4.85	High
9	WhatsApp favoured faster knowledge sharing	-	-	1 (5.0%)	7 (35.0%)	12 (60.0%)	4.55	High
10	Using WhatsApp, it helped me to pass any information discussed easily	-	-	2 (10.0%)	6 (30.0%)	12 (60.0%)	4.50	High
11	My interaction in WhatsApp messaging was clear	-	-	4 (20.0%)	10 (50.0%)	6 (30.0%)	4.10	High
12	My interaction in WhatsApp messaging was understandable	-	-	4 (20.0%)	10 (50.0%)	6 (30.0%)	4.10	High
13	It was easy for me to become skilful in discovering information via WhatsApp.	-	-	2 (10.0%)	9 (45.0%)	9 (45.0%)	4.35	High
14	Learning English language using WhatsApp is convenient for me.	-	-	2 (10.0%)	11 (55.0%)	7 (35.0%)	4.25	High
15	WhatsApp is convenient for academic engagement purposes	-	-	-	16 (80.0%)	4 (20.0%)	4.20	High
16	WhatsApp allows me to academically engage with peers and lecturers at any time and any place.	-	-	1 (5.0%)	9 (45.0%)	10 (50.0%)	4.40	High
	Total						4.33	High

Table 1 above showed that every item in relation to students' attitude towards WhatsApp and how they perceive the application and its convenience/ ease of use of it were all at the very high level. The highest mean of the item was WhatsApp was easy to be used (mean = 4.85). In terms of its frequency and percentage, it was clearly demonstrated that 3 students (15.0%) were agree and 17 students (85.0%) were strongly agree of the easiness of using WhatsApp application.

Meanwhile, the lowest mean of the item was Learning language via WhatsApp is a pleasant idea (mean = 4.00). In terms of its frequency and percentage, it showed that 4 students (20.0%) stated for uncertain, 12 students (60.0%) were agree and 4 students (20.0%) stated for strongly agree. Overall, it can be concluded that the students' attitude towards WhatsApp and how they perceive its usage, convenience/ ease of use were rated at the very high level (mean = 4.33).

The usefulness of WhatsApp

Second Research Question: What is the usefulness level of WhatsApp application?

A descriptive analysis which involved mode (frequency), percentages, mean and standard deviation are used to identify the level of WhatsApp usefulness. The result of the descriptive analysis is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: The level of the usefulness of WhatsApp

No	The usefulness of WhatsApp	SD	D	U	A	SA	Min	Interp.
17	I found that WhatsApp is useful in my language learning	-	-	1 (5.0%)	12 (60.0%)	7 (35.0%)	4.30	High
18	The use of WhatsApp increased my language learning productively	-	-	1 (5.0%)	13 (65.0%)	6 (30.0%)	4.20	High
19	Using WhatsApp was effectively improved my language learning	-	-	2 (10.0%)	11 (55.0%)	7 (35.0%)	4.25	High
20	My performance in language learning was improved by the used of WhatsApp	-	1 (5.0%)	3 (15.0%)	11 (55.0%)	5 (25.0%)	4.00	High
21	My performance in English writing has improved by the used of WhatsApp	-	-	2 (10.0%)	14 (70.0%)	4 (20.0%)	4.10	High
22	My performance in English speaking has improved by the used of WhatsApp	-	1 (0.5%)	1 (5.0%)	12 (60.0%)	6 (30.0%)	4.15	High
23	Interaction via WhatsApp helped me to become active in language activity	-	-	1 (5.0%)	12 (60.0%)	7 (35.0%)	4.30	High
24	Interaction via WhatsApp helped me to increase my confidence level in language activity	-	-	1 (5.0%)	10 (50.0%)	9 (45.0%)	4.40	High
	Total						4.21	High

Table 2 above demonstrated that every item in relation to the usefulness of WhatsApp were all at the very high level. The highest mean of the item was Interaction via WhatsApp helped me to increase my confidence level in language activity (mean= 4.40). In terms of its frequency and percentage, it showed that 1 student (5.0%) was uncertain, 10 students (50.0%) were agree and 9 students (45.0%) were strongly agree.

Meanwhile, the item of My performance in language learning was improved by the used of WhatsApp was the lowest mean (mean = 4.00). In terms of its frequency and percentage, it illustrated that 1 student (5.0%) stated for disagree, 3 students (15.0%) stated for uncertain, 11 students (55.0%) stated for agree and 5 students (25.0%) stated for strongly agree. Above all, it can be concluded that the usefulness of WhatsApp were rated at the very high level (mean = 4.21).

The behavioural intention towards WhatsApp

Third Research Question: What is the level of the students' behaviour towards the use of WhatsApp?

A descriptive analysis which involved mode (frequency), percentages, mean and standard deviation are used to identify the level of Behavioural intention towards WhatsApp. The result of the descriptive analysis is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The level of the behavioural intention towards WhatsApp

No	The behavioural intention towards whatsapp	SD	D	U	A	SA	Min	Interp.
25	In future, I will use WhatsApp in learning English Language	-	-	2 (10.0%)	9 (45.0%)	9 (45.0%)	4.35	High
26	I will not stop using WhatsApp in my future language learning.	-	-	-	8 (40.0%)	12 (60.0%)	4.60	High
	Total						4.48	High

Table 3 above confirmed that every item in relation to the behavioural intention towards WhatsApp were all at the very high level. The highest mean of the item was I will not stop using WhatsApp in my future language learning (mean= 4.60). In terms of its frequency and percentage, it showed that 8 students (40.0%) were stated for agree and 12 students (60.0%) were stated for strongly agree.

Meanwhile, the lowest mean of the item was In future, I will use WhatsApp in learning English Language (mean = 4.35). In terms of its frequency and percentage, it showed that 2 students (10.0%) stated for uncertain, 9 students (45.0%) were agree and 9 students (45.0%) stated for strongly agree. Overall, it can be concluded that the behavioural intention towards WhatsApp were rated at the very high level (mean = 4.48).

Overall, the final findings demonstrated that the attitude towards WhatsApp on how the students perceive the application and its convenience/ ease of use, the usefulness of WhatsApp and the students' behaviour towards this application were all at the high level. It is confirmed that the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool in ESL Classroom among the Kuala Pilah Pre-University students has been highly used and significant for future use as it does help the students to enhance their language learning.

Discussion of findings

The description of the findings discussion will be described in detail as follows.

The attitude towards WhatsApp and its perceive, convenience/ ease of use

The results showed that the attitudes towards the use of WhatsApp among Kuala Pilah Pre-University students were at a high level. It gave a high level on the attitudes among the students because of it was easy to use, easy to learn, a quick sharing knowledge and helped in discussing the information easily. The results of this study support the statement made by Norfaezah (2015) who stated that the use of WhatsApp can help the students to share many things with the lecturer. It allows a two-way communication in a very short time. The ease of use by WhatsApp application like uploading videos related to language and voice recordings can provide an explanation of the topics to be taught more clearly than what is written. In addition, there were students who actively sharing reading materials for discussion between them through online services over the face-to-face process. Students also found a relationship through online by using WhatsApp will give them the freedom to discuss about personal issues that embarrassed to be shared through the mutual process, also could be able to get some guides and advices to any problems that required immediate solutions (Norashuha Tajuddin et al. 2013).

The usefulness of WhatsApp

The results showed that the usefulness of WhatsApp among Kuala Pilah Pre-University students were also at a high level. The usefulness of this application could improve students' confidence in using the language, active in the language activities and really help them in learning the language better. WhatsApp today is highly helping the students especially at the university in order to deliver and receive any information quickly and effectively. With the wifi connection at the university compound, it makes this process getting easier and faster. It is supported by a research conducted by Ida Sanjaya (2012) who found that majority of users are interested in using WhatsApp application because this application provides many attractive facilities such as sharing information in the form of audios, videos, images, or even sharing location of the user's place. Many things can be done via this application.

The behavioural intention towards WhatsApp

The study also found that students' behaviour towards WhatsApp was at a high level. The highest behavioural intention that found among the students was that, they will not stop using this WhatsApp application in their language learning in future. WhatsApp can also be a source for obtaining knowledge by sharing all information related to subjects they learned either in person or group. The shared knowledge will spread faster if it is shared via the 'group' in WhatsApp chat. This fact supports Sheard and Lynch (2003) who stated that those teaching online are able to get students' attention because it has the potential to reach a more flexible education when it is designed well and is able to respond to the diverse learning needs.

Implications and recommendations

The implications of this research are described according to the students, lecturers and the Ministry of Education in Malaysia. Since the findings showed a high level of the students' attitude towards the use of WhatsApp in language learning, therefore its usage should be encouraged to the students in order to increase the collaboration among the excellent and the weak students through WhatsApp discussions. Besides, it is also a useful teaching tool to the lecturers in order to deliver any information to their students. It can be sent very quickly and effectively. For that reason, universities should provide internet facilities as a top priority in today's education to enable the use of WhatsApp broadly. In addition, the results also showed a high level of the WhatsApp usefulness among the students. As a result, the Ministry of Education should put a concern on this situation for efforts to improve and maintain the use of WhatsApp among the students.

For the research recommendation, further study may add a few aspects such as skills, knowledge and problems faced by the students in using WhatsApp application to get more in-depth understanding about its usefulness among the students.

Besides, one could highly consider in the future is the size number of participants. In this research, as mentioned earlier, although the size number of participants might be slightly small which is 20, the researcher believes such size might be already sufficient and appropriate for a small quantitative study in providing the data which one intended to; however, a large scale research with numbers of participants might be a great idea to be conducted in the future.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded with two major findings of the use of WhatsApp in language learning. Firstly, WhatsApp is significant as a useful tool in language learning among the students and secondly, it increases students engagement in learning through WhatsApp discussions. This research was successfully conducted to determine the attitudes, its usefulness and students' behavioural intention towards the use of WhatsApp with the findings showed were all at the high levels. The study provides implications for students, lecturers and the Ministry of Education too. Suggestions for advanced study also have been recommended to further studies related to the use of WhatsApp among the Pre-University students. As for the conclusion, the use of WhatsApp in learning the language in the classroom would really beneficial to the students and also to be implemented in today's education since it could be able to make the learning more effective.

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