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PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF WHATSAPP VOICE MESSAGING: INVESTIGATING EFL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

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Abstract:
Rapid emergence of wireless technologies and ownership of mobile devices have changed many aspects of peoples' lives. These mobile technologies have been integrated into language learning and teaching as well. Successful and effective use of these technologies in language learning, however, depends on the incorporation of pedagogical principles guided by theories of second language acquisition (SLA). Accordingly, informed by the interaction hypothesis (Gass & Mackey, 2015), this study employed a messaging application, WhatsApp, to help language learners improve their communication skills. Nine A1 level EFL students used WhatsApp voice messaging with their peers outside the classes to accomplish the tasks assigned to them for four weeks in the spring semester of 2018. Later, their experiences were investigated by means of written surveys. Content analysis of the data demonstrated that all the students who took part in the study benefitted from the WhatsApp voice messaging practice and perceived numerous benefits. These included speaking and pronunciation development, an opportunity for language practice, review of previous learning, overcoming shyness, and awareness and correction of errors. The findings were discussed in the light of the existing literature and certain implications arose for both language learners and teachers.

Keywords: WhatsApp voice messaging, mobile assisted language learning, oral interaction, out-of-class learning

1. Introduction

The field of second/foreign language (L2) learning and teaching has evolved considerably over the years through a transition from teacher-oriented, grammar-based methods to communicative, student-centered methods. Currently, these mainstream communicative methods have acknowledged that the main goal of L2 learning is to be able to communicate in that language. To do this, meaningful activities that require real interaction need to be employed in instructional practices (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

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In language classrooms, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts where English is not spoken widely, interaction in the target language might be limited due to various constraints such as time and resources. To compensate for these constraints, educators, material developers, teachers and related stakeholders have searched for supplementary tools both inside and outside the classes and their endeavors have produced promising results. With the advent and development of technological tools, these tools have been gradually integrated into L2 pedagogy to support language learning. Starting from the 1960s, computer assisted language learning (CALL) has gained popularity and prominence among learners and teachers. As a result of rapid developments in mobile technology and the widespread ownership of personal and portable devices, mobile assisted language learning (MALL) has progressively made its way into education (Demouy & Kukulska-Hulme, 2010). Accordingly, since the mid-1990s, MALL has been creating new possibilities for language learning.

Mobile devices range from Tablet PCs, personal digital assistants (PDAs) to mobile and smart phones. Of these devices, mobile phones are the most frequently owned and used ones. Moreover, they have increasingly been incorporated into language learning as well. Improvements in vocabulary and grammar (Hamad, 2017; Lai, 2016; Tai, 2012), writing (Andujar, 2016), speaking (Ahn & Lee, 2016; Andújar-Vaca & Cruz-Martínez, 2017; Shi et al., 2017), pronunciation (Saran, Seferoglu et al., 2009), listening (Azar & Nasiri, 2014; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008) have been reported in numerous studies that integrated MALL.

Some of these studies have employed WhatsApp messenger, a text and voice messaging application, to demonstrate the effectiveness of the app for supplementary language practice (e.g., Andujar; 2016; Lai, 2016). However, despite the enormous potentials that mobile phones and these applications can offer, specifically for oral interaction, it appears that this affordance has not been investigated extensively. Moreover, it is vital to base mobile-based instructional practices on principles that are guided by SLA theories for effective and successful technology integration. For this reason, this study adopted the Interaction Hypothesis as its theoretical framework and aimed at providing EFL learners with extended opportunities to practice the language and improving their communication skills by means of WhatsApp. Accordingly, the central question in this research is as the following: "What are the perceived benefits of WhatsApp voice messaging application to English improvement?"

2. Literature review

2.1 The interaction hypothesis

The SLA literature argues that interaction and language learning is closely connected (Gass, 1997; Long, 1996). Discussing the relationship between the two, Gass et al. (2013) argue that interaction may be a facilitator of language development. Gass and Mackey (2015) explain that "*the interaction approach attempts to account for learning through the learner's exposure to language, production of language and feedback on that production*" (p.181). A learner's exposure to language, known as input, specifically comprehensible input that

learners can understand, is regarded vital for learning to occur (Krashen, 1985). Similarly, a learner's production of language, called output, is also widely accepted to be pivotal for language learning (Swain, 1985). Interaction is basically the activity of talking to others. Through interaction, learners "*receive information about the correctness and, more important, about the incorrectness of their utterances*" (Gass & Mackey, 2015, p.183). This information is transmitted through feedback and enable language learners to notice, modify, or correct their incorrect utterances.

The interaction hypothesis claim that input, interaction, output, and feedback explain language learning. Though no SLA approach or theory can clarify all language learning, it offers invaluable insights into the social and cognitive aspects of learning. Since this interaction and communication in the L2 is the major goal of language instruction, language teachers should be able to provide learners with meaningful contexts and authentic communicative situations. In this regard, advanced developments in mobile technologies can provide a platform for meaningful and authentic language learning.

2.2 Mobile assisted language learning

Demouy and Kukulska-Hulme (2010) suggest that mobile devices are not just simple communication and entertainment tools anymore. They have been integrated into education and learning in general, and language learning in particular. Kukulska-Hulme (2006) notes that "*mobile devices have opened a vast range of possibilities for learning in ways that are convenient and suited to the needs of an individual within the context of their lifestyle*" (p.128). Firstly, it seems that their mobility is highly likely to set learning free from the restraints of time and place. Secondly, across various contexts, these devices have enormous potentials to promote authentic interaction between students and teachers, provide active participation of learners, enhance collaboration and communication among learners, and give feedback (Andujar-Vaca & Cruz-Martinez, 2017; Comas-Quinn et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2017). In a similar vein, such affordances as "*flexible use, continuity of use, timely feedback, personalisation, socialisation, active participation, peer-coaching, self-evaluation, sources of inspiration outdoors and cultural authenticity*" are reported to be offered by mobile learning (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2008, p. 210).

Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2018) identify MALL with regards to "*…its use of personal, portable devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity or spontaneity of access and interaction across different contexts of use*" (p. 273). These devices include PDAs, MP3 player, tablet PCs, and mobile and smart phones to name but a few. "Digital around the world" (2020) statistics show that there are 5.15 billion mobile phone users in the world, which equals to %66 of the total population. In this regard, mobile phones are the most frequently owned and used devices worldwide. This high accessibility, along with features that smartphones offer, allow them to be incorporated into various fields, including language learning.

2.3 Language learning via mobile phones

Recent technological developments have turned mobile phones into smartphones that are equipped with a huge number of features and applications that allow users to perform a vast range of activities ranging from sending messages to reading books or sharing photos. These features that mobile phones own have created opportunities for language learning and teaching as well. By using various channels, teachers have attempted to integrate mobile phones into language instruction to increase the effectiveness of language learning and teaching. These include, but not limited to, vocabulary learning (Hamad, 2017; Jolliet, 2007), writing (Andujar, 2016), grammar (Tai, 2012), listening (Demouy & Kukulska-Hulme, 2010). To illustrate, in Tai's (2012) research, students used integrated language skills, collaborated and interacted with each other to solve a case by using their mobile phones. A comparison between pre- and post-tests yielded significant difference in that the students improved their vocabulary and grammar as a result of the task. In an experimental research, Andujar (2016) provided evidence regarding benefits of the WhatsApp messaging on ESL writing in terms of accuracy, syntactic complexity and lexical diversity.

One of the basic affordances of mobile phones is that they allow oral interaction, an affordance that can be used by MALL. Limited research in this regard puts forward the efficiency of this approach as well. To exemplify, Andújar-Vaca and Cruz-Martínez (2017) carried out an experimental study with 80 B1 level English learners to find out the impact of WhatsApp on L2 oral skills development. In addition to the traditional instruction, the students in the experimental group joined a WhatsApp group chat where a question was posed by a student each day and answered by every one of the students orally. Spoken English tests were administered before and after the implementation, and the results showed that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Similar results were obtained from Minalla (2018), Shi et al. (2017). These results suggest that mobile technologies, specifically mobile phones, have enormous potentials for oral interaction and communication; however, the number of studies are rather limited, and their affordances are not fully discovered.

In addition to oral interaction, few studies have demonstrated that use of mobile phones in language learning can diminish foreign language anxiety level (Han & Keskin, 2016; Shamsi et al., 2019). Han and Keskin's (2016) one group pre- and post-test experimental research demonstrated that WhatsApp dialogue activities employed in the classrooms helped the students lessen their foreign language anxiety level significantly. Moreover, follow-up interviews with students about their experiences implied that most of the students benefitted from the application in the sense that they could improve their language performance and find their errors by listening to their voices. With regards to language errors that Han and Keskin (2016) brought up, it has been shown that MALL-based oral feedback could contribute to learning. Xu et al. (2017) employed WeChat, a widely used social communication app, to examine Chinese EFL learners' perceptions of MALL-based oral feedback. 35 university students received feedback on their pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and content after they had watched video clips

posted on the group and retold and continued the stories in these clips. Both qualitative and quantitative data demonstrated that the majority of the students had positive attitudes toward teacher feedback, teacher feedback contributed to their speaking performance, and the practices helped them gain more speaking confidence.

This brief review suggests that the use of mobile phones for educational purposes can lead to linguistic growth when used effectively. Moreover, their high accessibility and easy usability allow them to be employed without too much technical burden. In doing so, however, it is vital to base mobile-based instructional practices on principles that are guided by SLA theories. For this reason, this study adopted the Interaction Hypothesis as its theoretical framework.

3. Material and methods

3.1 Research design

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study. Qualitative research is exploratory in nature; it enables researchers to make sense of complexities, and broadens our understandings (Dörnyei, 2007). It is exploratory because "*its purpose is to discover new ideas and insights…*" (Croker, 2009, p. 9). To Creswell (2007), it is appropriate to use a qualitative approach "*when a complex, detailed understanding is needed…*" (p. 51). Accordingly, to have a better and broader understanding of the students' experiences with WhatsApp voice messaging practices, to discover whether these practices contribute to language learning, qualitative data were collected via survey forms that had open ended written questions (see Appendix A).

3.2 Setting and participants

The present research was carried out at a language institution in Ankara, Turkey. The institution offers language classes for learners who intend to improve their L2 knowledge and skills. Students join these courses on their own initiatives. When they first enroll in the course, they take a proficiency exam, and they are placed to classes of different proficiency levels based on their exam results. In line with Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), classes range from A1 (beginner) to C1 (advanced). During these courses, CLT is the main method adopted and communication in the L2 is the major goal of language instruction and learning.

Participants in this study were 9 A1 level students who had little, if any, proficiency in English. Their ages were between 18 to 25 and they were all native speakers of Turkish. They were all university students majoring in different departments such as tourism, pharmaceutic and mathematics to name but a few. The classes were carried out by the researcher at the weekends for 8 hours for a total of 13 weeks in the spring semester of 2018.

3.3 Data collection

The study set out to investigate the perceived benefits of WhatsApp voice messaging in supporting out-of-class learning and to discover the students' experiences. To that end,

the classroom teacher designed eight communicative tasks that required interaction and collaboration among students, based on the themes and linguistic information covered in the course book (see Appendix B for sample tasks). These tasks were similar to those that the students completed in the class. In this sense, the students were expected to transfer knowledge that they learnt in the class to the outer world so that they would have the opportunity to improve their speaking performance by using the language.

For the language practice, first, the students were informed clearly about the purposes of the practice and its significance. Following, they were asked to choose a partner as they were to work in pairs. After the teacher made sure that every student had a partner, she asked them to create a WhatsApp group that involved themselves and the teacher.

A total of 9 students took part in the study and they created 4 groups on WhatsApp. All the groups included 3 participants, including the teacher, except one group that included 4 participants due to the odd number of the students. After that, the teacher shared the first task on these groups and explained that only oral interaction was allowed. Moreover, apart from these tasks, the students were encouraged to continue talking to each other to make better use of this language practice. Each week, two new tasks were assigned to the groups and before new assignments, the teacher listened to the recordings and gave feedback to the students on their errors including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and functions of the language.

At the end of the four weeks, an open-ended written survey form was constructed to discover perceived benefits of WhatsApp voice messaging. In writing questions, Dörnyei and Taguchi's (2010) suggestions on how to write good items were taken into consideration. Besides, an expert in the field examined the questions and gave some suggestions. In addition, the students were prompted to ask questions regarding the survey to eliminate any misunderstandings. Lastly, the students were asked to answer these questions in their native language and to give detailed information regarding their positive and negative experiences. These questions focused on the advantages and disadvantages of the use of WhatsApp voice messaging for speaking practice, the perceived benefits of the implementation for their English skills and knowledge, and the feedback given by the teacher.

3.4 Data analysis

Having been collected in the form of written responses, the data were analyzed by means of content analysis with a view to unravel codes. According to Cohen et al. (2007) "*content analysis takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into summary form through the use of both- pre-existing categories and emergent themes in order to generate or test a theory*" (p. 476). The present research did not make use of pre-existing categories, but codes emerged from data as a result of cyclical readings.

First of all, the data were read several times at different intervals. Words and phrases were coded in relation to the implementation of WhatsApp voice messaging. After that, a second coder, who is an expert in the field of English language teaching, carried out the same analysis to increase reliability of the interpretation of the data. Both

coders underlined the same words and phrases and coded these with slightly different wordings, these differences were further discussed to assign the most appropriate label. It appeared that all the codes were grouped under the category of 'perceived benefits of WhatsApp voice messaging'. Moreover, this high correspondence between the coders suggested credibility of the data interpretation (McKay, 2008). Lastly, because the open-ended survey questions were asked and answered in the students' native language, their answers were translated into English by the researcher and an experienced English teacher. The translated sentences were compared, and differences were discussed and negotiated so that the sentences would convey the best translation.

4. Results

As a result of the content analysis, the following codes emerged from data: (a) an opportunity for language practice; (b) speaking development; (c) pronunciation development; (d) reviewing previous learning; (e) overcoming shyness; (f) awareness & correction of errors. These codes show the perceived benefits of WhatsApp voice messaging implementation. The results further demonstrate that the students did not think of any disadvantages, which is a valuable indication of the feasibility of the practice to support out of class language learning.

4.1 An opportunity for language practice

The students evaluated the implementation in terms of practice opportunities. The majority of them thought that by means of WhatsApp voice messaging, they had a chance to practice the language outside the class, a chance that they did not have in most situations. The quotations below were extracted from students written reflections and demonstrate that they valued the opportunity of practice provided to them.

> *"I think it was effective. In our daily lives, we do not find the opportunity to speak English."* (S9)

> *"Everybody was saying that you could improve English by speaking but I could not have the chance. I could improve my speaking skills a bit thanks to voice messages."* (S6)

> *"Although we always encounter English in our daily lives, we have difficulties in both grammar and pronunciation because we never speak English in our daily lives. It both allowed us to practice and provided information about what we could do if we encountered these situations. I liked it in terms of speaking more comfortably."* (S2)

> *"The good thing is that I could practice, and I want to continue this in my circle of friends."* (S4)

> *"What we learned was not just a dialogue in the books. We practiced and it was effective."* (S8)

4.2 Speaking development

With regard to speaking, the students remarked that they could speak English and they believed they developed their speaking skills as can be understood from their comments.

> *"We tried making sentences and learned. Our talks got better."* (S3)

> *"I think my speaking and listening improved as I practiced and listened to my friends' pronunciation."* (S5)

> *"The implementation was beneficial because by means of voice messaging, you both attempt at speaking and making sentences. When I heard of this implementation, I was a bit afraid because how was I going to speak? I was saying to myself that I would pronounce the words wrong and I could not talk, but now I am more willing to talk."* (S6)

Apart from these comments, they did not elaborate further on the effects of the speaking practice on their speaking skills but when they were asked about the issue, all the students indicated that they benefitted from the practice and it helped them improve their speaking skills.

4.3 Pronunciation development

Improvement of pronunciation was another area that was highlighted by the students. In addition to speaking, some students believe that their pronunciation improved too.

> *"Though we come across English all the time, we have difficulty regarding grammar and pronunciation because we never speak English in our daily lives. It helped me in this issue."* (S2)

> *"My pronunciation got better as I spoke."* (S3)

> *"I believe that my English got better as I practiced and listened to my friends' pronunciation. I got used to words that I refrain from pronouncing."* (S5)

These comments indicate that pronunciation may be another area of difficulty for students and speaking activities appear to help pronunciation development as well.

4.4 Reviewing previous learning

As the communicative tasks were grounded on what the students learned in the class, many of them commented that thanks to these tasks they could revise their previous learning. The extracts below explain the situation.

> *"The good thing was that as we speak Turkish all the time, speaking English during the day reminded me of English topics. That is to say, it is a good practice so as not to forget what we learn."* (S1)

"In addition to speaking, I consider this like a revision before the exams." (S5)

"It helped because we both went over the topics and had the chance to study by helping each other in our incomplete knowledge." (S7)

"We had the chance to go over what we learned. I believe it contributed to my English." (S9)

As can be understood from these statements, the students find it useful with regard to revision of the previously learned topics.

4.5 Overcoming shyness

This practice also had positive effects on the students concerning shyness. Certain students did not favor the practice at the beginning because they were shy and timid. However, the comments below indicate that as the time passed by and they practiced more, they could be able to overcome their shyness, thus feeling more comfortable while speaking English.

"I was timid while speaking English and it was the case with not only foreigners but also my friends. I think I overcame this situation a bit." (S4)

"I think that this implementation helped me improve my speaking. The only bad thing was that I was a little timid at the beginning." (S5)

"I was afraid of talking. I got used to it by talking, thus breaking down my prejudices." (S7)

4.6 Awareness & correction of errors

Since the teacher provided the students with weekly feedback based on their dialogues, they were asked whether they found it useful or not. Almost all the students wrote that it helped them improve their English in two ways. First, they became aware of their errors and secondly, they could correct their errors and mistakes. Their comments are presented below.

"It helped me realize my errors and correct them." (S1)

"I know that there are problems in my sentences. That our teacher informed me about these helped me realize my mistakes and correct them." (S4)

"Generally, I make the same errors but receiving feedback enabled me to correct the errors that I was not aware of." (S5)

"There was not a negative side regarding the implementation. The good thing is that I corrected my pronunciation errors and mistakes by realizing them." (S7)

"I recognized my errors and pronunciation mistakes." (S8)

The quotations presented above illustrated how the students perceived the usefulness of the implementation for language learning. Besides, lack of any negative comments or any disadvantages with regard to voice messaging indicated that successful mobile technology use for educational purposes could be achieved.

5. Discussion

The present research puts forward that all the students who took part in the study benefitted from the WhatsApp voice messaging practice and perceived numerous benefits. These benefits included an opportunity to practice the language, speaking development, pronunciation development, reviewing previous learning, overcoming shyness, and awareness and correction of errors. These findings demonstrate the value of the integration of such mobile technologies into language education.

The current social constructivist approaches to learning and teaching illuminate that learning occurs as a result of the interactions among teachers, learners and tasks in a context (Williams & Burden, 1997). However, language learners in EFL contexts do not have a lot of opportunities to use the language, especially outside the classrooms. Even in classrooms, they can be told to have limited time for effective interaction. For this reason, it becomes pivotal to extend the boundaries of the classes to provide the students with language experiences. The current study prompted the students to use the target language via WhatsApp voice messaging. The data gleaned from the research demonstrated that the students valued this practice in that they considered it an opportunity to communicate in English. Likewise, Tai (2012) regarded the mobile devices as "*an aid for creating more opportunities for communicative output, in addition to facilitating face-to-face interaction*" (p. 228).

In relation to speaking improvement, the findings of this research corroborated with those obtained in previous studies. Experimental studies conducted by Andújar-Vaca and Cruz-Martínez (2017) and Minalla (2018) demonstrated that experiment groups which used WhatsApp voice messaging outperformed the control group who did not make use of the implementation. In a similar vein, another social communication app, WeChat, was also found to contribute to speaking development in experimental research studies (Shi et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2017). Even though the current study did not apply statistical analyses to measure speaking improvement, the students' reflections and the teacher's informal observations suggested that the implementation contributed to students' speaking skills.

Along with speaking, the students remarked that WhatsApp voice messaging helped them improve their pronunciation. Even though the students did not elaborate on how the voice messages boosted their pronunciation, a possible explanation can be that

they might have checked correct pronunciation of some words before recording their voices. An additional explanation can be that the teacher's feedback, which were provided to the students on WhatsApp groups, might have become efficient. The impact of voice messaging on students' pronunciation improvement has also been revealed in Akkara et al.'s (2020) study. Although few mobile applications have provided evidence in regard to the effectiveness of these applications in pronunciation improvement (Arashnia & Shahrokhi, 2016; Saran et al., 2009), the existing literature have not been able to fully discover the considerable potentials that WhatsApp voice messaging could have for linguistic improvement. In this sense, this research can pave the way for further studies, specifically for pronunciation improvement.

Some students commented that they felt shy at the beginning; however, as they continued the practice, they could overcome this feeling and felt more comfortable while speaking. This finding was also echoed in Han and Keskin's (2016) research in which WhatsApp dialogue activities enabled the students to lessen their anxiety. Likewise, Shamsi et al.'s (2019) experimental study put forwards the effectiveness of WhatsApp speaking tasks in reducing the students' anxiety levels. These findings indicate that use of WhatsApp can result in affective gains as well as language development.

WhatsApp voice messaging activities were designed in a way to complement classroom learning. The students' comments demonstrated that they could revise previous learning by means of the out-of-class activities. A purpose of this application was to provide an additional learning platform for the students, not to replace classroom instruction. As can be gleaned from the data, this purpose appeared to be accomplished. Comas-Quinn et al. (2009) also stated that "*With the introduction of new technologies, a more flexible learning environment is made available, one that can extend the potential for learning to new situations and contexts*" (p.109). Likewise, Saran et al. (2009) emphasized the potential of mobile phones to present supplemental practices.

Further, the findings of this research demonstrated that all the students benefitted from the corrective feedback provided to the by the teacher. Firstly, they could become aware of their errors as their attention was drawn to the incorrect utterances. By being aware of their errors, they could correct these errors via self-correction, peer-correction or teacher feedback. In a similar vein, Xu et al. (2017) used WeChat, a social communication tool, and reported that the students in their research reacted to teacher feedback in a positive way and they thought teacher feedback had contributed to their speaking skills. In addition, Xu and Peng (2017) found out that mobile-assisted feedback facilitated speaking development.

The evidence presented in this section suggests that the findings of this research corroborated with those obtained in the previous research. Taken together, this strand of literature illustrates the effectiveness of mobile technology use for language learning and teaching. In particular, though, the substantial benefits gained in this study underline that promoting oral interaction through out-of-class communicative activities informed by the principles of the interaction hypothesis is a promising instructional practice.

6. Conclusion

The present research set out to allow the students to speak English outside the classroom and to investigate the perceived benefits of WhatsApp voice messaging. To this end, the students worked in pairs for four weeks and completed the tasks on their WhatsApp groups. At the end of the four weeks, the students were provided with some open-ended written questions in regard to the advantages and disadvantages of the practice for their language development and they were asked to elaborate on their experiences. The findings clearly indicated that they benefitted from the WhatsApp voice messaging implementation in a number of ways. In addition to speaking and pronunciation improvement, the student reported that the implementation enabled them to practice English, review the previously learned content, conquer their shyness and correct their linguistic errors.

In view of these findings, several courses of action can be suggested for teachers and learners. Firstly, it is recommended that social applications be integrated into language learning more, specifically the ones that seem most ordinary such as WhatsApp because this ordinariness enables more accessibility and flexibility. To illustrate, every participant in this research used WhatsApp prior to the research and this knowledge allowed them and the teacher to focus on the task, rather than the technology itself. In this sense, teachers and learners can make use of WhatsApp as a complementary platform for language growth. Secondly, in doing so, teachers must be informed by SLA principles because these technological tools are just a means to an end, which is language learning. This learning, then, should be based on sound pedagogical decisions. In this research, the interaction theory proved useful in supporting language improvement and it can be adopted in practices as such. Thirdly, these applications have yielded evidence for oral language improvement both in this research and other studies. Communicative activities can be designed for language learners to help them interact with each other outside the classrooms, thereby maximizing the amount of time they spend speaking English. For example, the tasks used in this study built on what the students learnt in the class and this let the students practice what they were already familiar with. Likewise, teachers can design such interactive tasks that evolve around a language function, promote pair work as in this study, or even encourage learners to work in groups. Lastly, systematic integration of feedback can significantly contribute to students' learning. As in WhatsApp messaging, teachers can listen to students' utterances multiple times and identify areas of difficulty. This might be a crucial guide for further lesson planning.

Even though this study sheds light on an under-researched issue, it is not without some weaknesses. Firstly, due to the class size, the number of the participants is low. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings needs to be approached cautiously. Secondly, the data were gleaned from their written answers to open-ended questions. For this reason, their actual speaking or pronunciation improvement could not be measured. However, further research can reveal some more evidence on accuracy and fluency as well as linguistic complexity.

About the Author

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Appendices

Appendix A. Survey questions

1. Do you believe that you could improve your English-speaking skills via WhatsApp voice messaging? If yes, do you think how this implementation contributed to your learning? If no, do you think why?
2. What were the good and bad sides of talking to your partner via WhatsApp voice messaging? How did you make use of this practice?
3. Do you think WhatsApp voice messaging contributed to your English? How? If your answer is yes, what did you learn? If no, do you think why?
4. Did the feedback you received from your instructor contribute to your learning? Please explain.

Appendix B. Sample tasks

Task 2 – Function: Talking about daily routines
Instruction:
Student A: You want to move into a house with a friend from university. Try to get to know about your friend. Ask about his/her daily routine. Find out if you can get along.
Student B: You are looking for a roommate. Try to get to know about your friend. Ask about his/her daily routine. Find out if you can get along.
Useful expressions:
What do you do in the mornings? / At the weekends?...
What time do you get up?
Do you play very loud music?
What do you like?

Task 7 – Function: asking for information
Instruction:
Student A: You're a tourist at a hotel in Paris. Ask questions about the times and prices. Here are the services:

- Money exchange,
- Breakfast at the hotel,
- Cafe Eiffel,
- Guided tour,
- Swimming pool.

Student B: You're the hotel receptionist. Answer the customer's questions.
Hotel information
Money exchange
09.00 p.m. – 05.30 p.m on weekdays
01.00 p.m. – 04.00 p.m. at the weekends

Breakfast
07.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.
Cafe Eiffel
09.30 a.m. – 10.00 p.m. except Sundays
02.00 p.m. – 10.00 p.m. on Sundays
Guided tour
10.30 a.m., 1.30 a.m., 4.30 p.m., 20 Euros
Swimming pool
06.00 a.m. – 08.00 p.m. except Mondays
Closed on Mondays