

Role of Social Media Application in Promoting Motivation and Listening Skill of Iraqi EFL Learners: A Skype-Based Study

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the possible role of the social media applications in promoting and developing both the motivation and listening skill of Iraqi EFL learners at an academic environment. As a case study, seventy-majoring English sophomores at Mustansiriyah University in Iraq were randomly divided between two groups, experimental and control groups. The pretest and posttest were conducted to the participants of the study based on a curriculum assigned to them to be taught throughout their academic year. A 25-statement designed questionnaire and an 8-statement designed test were distributed among the respondents of the study on the suitable methods of developing and improving motivation and listening skill respectively. Using the Likert Scale, SPSS and LISERAL programs, the statistical data of the two previously mentioned variables were collected. The final findings of the study revealed that male and female participants were highly motivated after receiving their instruction via Skype device. As a result, a significant difference was noted in the listening skill achievement of the testing group participants who subjected to Skype device as a means of teaching. Grounded on these findings, educators can seriously take social media applications in their account in the process of learning language and in developing more language skills.

Keywords: listening skill, motivation, questionnaire, Skype, social media

1. Introduction

The English language has prevailed internationally. Non-speaking countries have accelerated their steps towards providing the necessary potentials that might consider the cornerstone for language learning. Such potentials comprise technological and technical facilities. Technologically, language labs, internet services, and other innovative technologies have been applied. Technically, educators are focusing their efforts to produce well-knitted curricula that supposedly meet the needs of the learners and create a real-like environment of teaching and learning.

Among these world educational trends, the Iraqi educational sector has also witnessed the wind of change in terms of language learning and teaching. After the political change in 2003 that Iraq witnessed, serious attempts have been evoked to undertake a dramatic alteration in the educational domain. Therefore, innovative technologies have emerged to announce a new era of education in Iraq. Consequently, teachers of English are required to cope with such educational advances, especially in language teaching and learning. The holistic scene of social media applications has attracted the attention of many educational specialists making them thinking seriously on how to exploit it in the educational domain.

Social media applications are growing spectacularly, more specifically, in the educational field. Considerably, social media has taken a key position in language learning and teaching through its multi-facets uses. Consequently, teachers are deemed to be in harmony with such a big technological progress. They should be depleted with good experiences in technology that enable them to create a fruitful environment of education and then familiarize themselves with the different social media applications to serve their students actively. Therefore, the significance of this study lies in the idea that some Iraqi teachers of English need such technological facilities to keep ongoing with the technologically-developed world, especially in the educational sector.

2. Review of Literature

Social media applications have come to play a vital role in our daily life, in particular, learning and teaching language. Wessner (2014) illustrates that social media applications are functioned as platforms for the learning

process and a source of backing up students in their academic tasks. Thus, "increasing student collaboration", "Rich eLearning Media Available" and "Real-time news information and discovery" are the outcomes of social media applications (Draskovic, Kustrak Korper, & Kilian-Yasin, 2017). McDonald (2008) states that social media devices such as Twitter, Myspace and Facebook are a part parcel of students' lives in the USA.

Social media devices are flexible, in other words, they can be utilized synchronously or asynchronously. The Synchronous situation means a real-time connection occurs between learners and teachers. In such a situation, time is restricted; nevertheless, it is not restricted geographically. Teleconferencing, video teleconferencing and online chat are models of synchronous situation. On the contrary, the asynchronous situation is not limited by time and place. E-mail, correspondence courses and Web/server-based are examples of asynchronous situations. (Astorga-Cabezas, 2015)

Almosawi (2017) conducted a study at Misan University in Iraq in which 30 male and female students were divided into experimental and control groups. The purpose of the study was to detect the effectiveness of using YouTube video in teaching grammar on Iraqi EFL achievement. The study showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group. Moreover, Alahmar (2016) conducted a study on 57 medical students at Babel University in Iraq to investigate the impact of social media applications on the aforementioned students' academic performance. He found out a great number of students used Facebook for their study whereas others used it for a plethora of activities during their free time.

The current study uses one of the social media applications, i.e., Skype, as a tool of instructing the English language as a foreign language to sophomores majoring in English at Mustansiriya University in Iraq. This synchronous device is supposed to motivate learners to produce the target language soundly. Roe (2007) holds the view that Skype can be operated as a supportive device for enhancing a well-constructed project of teaching a foreign language FL. This is due to its features of providing a real-like environment of practising the FL. Communicative skills such as speaking and listening skills can also be developed via Skype. In contrast, limitations of Skype are no more than computer equipment or internet link (Walker, Davies, & Hewer, 2012). On seeing such myriad features of Skype, its application in the learning process might motivate students remarkably.

2.1 Motivation

It is worth mentioning that different sorts of academic studies and articles have been conducted to approach the specific concept of motivation and its role in language teaching and learning in particular. Accordingly, Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 4) describe the relationship between language learning and motivation by saying that "in language learning, motivation is more specific than in a content-based subject". Additionally, Palmer (2016) sees motivation as mechanisms that activate and direct behaviour. Moreover, Richards and Renandya (2002) emphasize the teacher's encouragement of students to engage in the process of language learning through both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In intrinsic motivation, students realize well the fruitful outputs of learning a foreign language. Their mastering a foreign language might open a new horizon in their careers. In extrinsic motivation, rewards presented by teachers might create a suitable context of language learning for students. These rewards might include supplying additional reading materials or they may show students a video to establish a real-like situation of language use (Renandya, 2002). Meanwhile, Ur (2012) discusses that "extrinsic motivation is based on the perceived benefits of success in learning and penalties of failure". Also, he adds that "the intrinsic motivation is associated with the activity of language learning itself: whether it is seen as interesting or boring, personally fulfilling or frustrating" (Ur, 2012, pp. 10-11).

The importance of motivation in second language learning L2 has notably urged many scholars to detect this concept and at the same time to conceptualize certain motivational issues related to the role of motivation in language learning. For instance, Dornyei (2015) feels that "motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long, often tedious learning process, indeed all the other factors involved SLA presuppose motivation to some extent" (Dornyei, 2005, p. 65; Dornyei, 2015, p. 72). Moreover, long term goals and even students' achievements cannot be ensured without motivation (Dornyei, 2015).

2.2 Listening skill

A great deal of attention and efforts has been exerted by researchers discussing and hypothesizing about nature and working mechanism of the two variables of the current study namely, motivation and listening skills. As far as listening skill is concerned, Cabezas (2015, p. 40) argues that "listening skill is often seen as a passive activity or skill because it is developed internally or, rather, it is a cognitive process that does not produce observable results". In this vein, researchers like Richards (2008), Brown (2004), and Buck (2001) refer to listening skill as a cognitive, prompt and linear activity that manipulates aural input (Richards, 2008; Brown, 2004; Buck, 2001;

cited in Cabezas, 2015).

According to Richards (2008), the listening skill can be conceived from two different standpoints:

1-listening as comprehension is "the traditional way of thinking about the nature of listening" (Richards, 2008, p. 3). Additionally, in second language learning, the function of listening or listening comprehension, both listening and listening comprehension are used synonymously, is to make understanding of spoken discourse (Richards, 2008).

Aiming to grasp the mechanism of the listening process, Richards (2008) unveils the aspects of differences between spoken discourse and written discourse. These differences can be totted up as follows:

-Spoken discourse is an on-line activity and there is very little opportunity to listen to it again, so it is usually a spot activity.

-The second language learner holds a view that the spoken discourse is very fast, even though there is a considerable variation in the speed rates among speakers.

-Spoken discourse is typically seen as unplanned action which is often characterized by hesitation, reduced forms, fillers, and repeats.

-It is characterized by a linear structure, whereas written discourse has a hierarchical structure.

-The unit of organization of written discourse is the sentence, whereas spoken language or discourse is often conveyed one clause at a time but it implies longer utterances in conversation.

-Spoken texts depend on context and personal as well.

-Spoken texts may be produced by the use of a variety of accents, ranging from standard to non-standard to regional and so forth and so on (Richards, 2008, pp. 3-4).

2-Listening as acquisition: Listening skill has a crucial role in simplifying the process of second language learning. In this sense, Schimtd (1990) has emphasized that consciousness played a considerable role in language learning. Consequently, Richards feels that "Consciousness of features of the input can serve as a trigger which activates the first stage in the process of incorporating new linguistic features into one's language competence" (Richard, 2008, p. 13). Therefore, Flowerdew and Miller (2014) define academic listening as "the process of spoken language in academic contexts" (Flowered & Miller, 2014, cited in Murcia, Brinton, and Snow, 2014).

2.2.1. Listening Strategies

Vandergrift (1997) presents his taxonomy of listening strategies as follows:

A-Metacognitive strategies: These strategies include:-

-Planning: advanced organization, directed attention, selective attention, and self-management.

-Monitoring: comprehension monitoring, auditory monitory, double-check monitoring.

-Evaluation: performance evaluation, problem identification.

B- Cognitive strategies

-Inferencing: linguistic, voice, paralinguistic or kinesthetic, extra-linguistic, inferencing between parts.

-Elaboration: personal, world, academic, questioning, creative, imagery, summarization, translation, transfer, repetition, resourcing, grouping, note-taking, deduction/induction, substitution.

C-Socioaffective strategies

-Questioning for clarification, cooperation, lowering anxiety, self-encouragement, taking an emotional temperature (Vandergrift, 1997, pp. 392-395).

2.2.2 Taxonomy of Academic Listening Skills

Richard's taxonomy of academic listening skills (1983) comprises the following:

-ability to identify the purpose and the scope of the lecture,

-ability to identify the topic of the lecture and follow topic development,

-ability to identify relationships among units within discourse (e.g. major ideas, examples),

-ability to identify the role of discourse markers in the signalling structure of a lecture (e.g. conjunctions, adverbs, gambits, routines),

- ability to infer relationships (e.g. cause and effect, conclusion),
- ability to recognize key lexical terms related to subjects/topics,
- ability to deduce meanings of words from context,
- ability to recognize markers of cohesion,
- ability to recognize the function of intonation to signal information structure (e.g., pitch, volume, pace, key),
- ability to detect the attitude of the speaker toward the subject matter.
- ability to follow different methods of lecturing (e.g., spoken, audio, audiovisual),
- ability to follow lecture despite differences in accent and speed,
- familiarity with different registers (e.g., written vs. colloquial),
- ability to recognize irrelevant matter (e.g., jokes, digression, meanderings),
- ability to recognize the function of nonverbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude),
- knowledge of classroom conventions,
- ability to recognize instructional and learner tasks (e.g., warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, instructions) (Richards, 1983, pp. 228-230).

3. The Objective of the Study

The current study aims to introduce a technologically-based supportive method of teaching the English language as a foreign language. This occurs by using the Skype tool as a medium of teaching as a back-up technique to the teacher-centred class that still prevails noticeably among some Iraqi educational institutions. The listening skill and motivation are the two variables that are the focus of the study.

Initially, the study seeks to underline the extent to which social media applications can motivate learners of the target language intrinsically and extrinsically. It also proposes the possibility of engaging innovative technology in language pedagogy as a supportive technique to the traditional method of teaching, i.e., teaching-centred class.

4. Research Questions

The current study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- Is the designed motivation questionnaire valid and reliable?
- 2- Is there any statistically significant difference between the listening pretest and posttest mean scores of male and female in the experimental group who subjected to social media applications?
- 3- Is there any statistically significant difference between the listening posttest mean scores of control and experimental groups who subjected to social media applications?

5. Methodology

5.1 Participants

Two sophomore classes majoring in English at Mustansyria University in Iraq were the respondents of the current study. Seventy students participated in the study. Thirty-six of the students were female and thirty-four male. All the participants were speaking Arabic as their first language. The decision of choosing sophomores majoring in English to carry out the study was based on the following considerations:

- 1- Sophomores enjoyed with good experience in dealing with internet-based instructions.
- 2- Communicative speaking and listening skills were the contents of the subject matter allocated for sophomores and included in their curriculum which was called (Person to Person by Richards, Bycina, and Wisniewska).
- 3- The participants might be teachers of English in the future, thus, they might exploit this study in applying social media devices in their future classroom activities.
- 4- Because of their knowledge in English basics, the process of implementing the study will not be difficult.

5.2 Design

Procedures for distributing the respondents into two groups, an experimental group and a control group, happened randomly. Instruction through Skype was applied to the experimental group to investigate its effects on two variables, i.e., listening skill and motivation. Skype was chosen to carry out the study due to its synchronous characteristics in terms of audio and visual features. Moreover, it is installed easily.

5.3 Material

“Person to Person” communicative speaking and listening skills, student book2 was the subject matter of the study included in the curriculum of sophomores majoring in English. Jack C. Richards, David Bycina, and Ingrid Wisniewska are the authors of the aforementioned coursebook. *It comprises 12 units meanwhile the last units (i.e., 10-12) are review units. The coursebook is based on activities such as Conversations, Give it a try, listen to this, let's talk, Consider this, Pronunciation focus, and Person to Person.*

5.4 Instrument

5.4.1 Skype

As Kern (2013) mentions, Skype is a synchronous tool that can offer audio and video calls free of charge. It is a freely downloadable device which enables participants to make audio and video conference among them, nevertheless, only two participants can make video calls through it. Students or the instructor can show Word documents, or slide presentations or exchange websites among them through screen sharing mode which is one of the salient features of the new version of Skype. Moreover, text chat can occur with voice and video at the same time and is recorded automatically.

Kern (2013) adds that in language learning and teaching the application of Skype is not restricted to learning the formal language but also informal language. Having said that, different language courses, chat rooms or conversation clubs have their space among the variety of Skype activities. Because they tend using Skype in language learning and teaching, many language teachers are in favour of presenting their courses online. Therefore, so many educational institutions invite guest speakers via Skype to their classrooms for delivering lectures or participating in a room conference.

The popularity of Skype tool among other social media applications stems from its ease of use, accessibility to teachers and native speakers around the different parts of the world, free service and applicability for many computer programs such as Windows, Mac, Linux, etc., and good audio and video quality. (Kern, 2013)

Based on what has been mentioned earlier about the flexible features of Skype, the participants of the experimental group were told to install Skype to their computers according to the instructions given by the teacher of the subject matter. At this point, Skype was used as a tool of instructing the participants of the experimental group through which a variety of classroom activities can be practised.

5.4.2 Questionnaire

A designed motivation questionnaire was given to the respondents of the control and experimental groups. The questionnaires were distributed between the two groups in two phases, i.e., pre and post the experiment on both groups. The Likert Scale was adopted to measure the attitudes of the participants toward suitable ways of improving and developing the listening skills of the learners and their motivation as well. The Psychologist Rensis Likert developed this scale in 1932 and named after him. The scale is built on a 5-point scales ranging from **strongly agree**, scored (5), **agree** (scored 4), **undecided** (scored 3), **disagree** (scored 2), and **strongly disagree** (scored 1). The individual's total score is determined by the sum of the scores of all the items. Hence, the highest likelihood score is assessed by multiplying the numeric value (5) by the number of items (5xN), whereas the lowest possible score is (1xN) (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2014). The validity and reliability of the questionnaire have been calculated.

5.5 Procedure

Seventy university students joined to the academic semester in 2019. The participants were sophomores majoring in English. They were randomly divided into experimental and control groups. Each group included 35 students, 18 females and 17 males. Both groups were taught by the same instructor to avoid demotivation. The two groups took a pretest and posttest based on the syllabus required to be taught during the academic year. Ten units were taught to both experimental and control groups (from unit 1 to the end of unit 10). Skype tool was used for teaching the experimental group, whereas the teacher-centred class method was applied to the control group. The entire course took three months to be fulfilled.

Students of the experimental group or Skype-based instructions group were informed that the Skype-based method of teaching would be used in this way as a part of a research project. No more information about the project was disclosed to students to keep the research steps secret and not let the participants feel that they were treated differently in a way that would leave an unwanted impact on the final results of the study. To make students participate actively, the Skype-based instruction group was told that they would get two scores added to their final scores.

Two sessions were held for each group per week. The control group instructions were held at Mustansiriya University. For the control group, each session took 45 minutes. Meanwhile, Skype tool was used to teach the experimental group during their presence at their homes. The participants were connected with their instructor via Skype. In response to the willingness of the participants, the sessions were administered at night. Sudden power and internet services outages and the female participants' refusal of appearing online due to certain social considerations, each session took at least two hours. Eighteen sessions were administered to complete the entire study.

For investigating the viewpoints of both experimental and control groups respondents on the suitable approaches of developing and improving the listening skill and motivation, a designed questionnaire (eight statements for listening skill) and (eighteen statements for inner motivation and seven statements for exterior motivation) was distributed among the participants of both groups in pre and post phases of the study. The pretest and posttest were conducted for the participants of both groups based on *Person to Person Communicative Speaking and Listening Skills textbook by Richards, Bycina and Wisniewska (2005)*.

5.6 Data Analysis

SPSS and LISERAL software were applied to the research data. The standard deviation, mean, confirmatory, coefficients factor analysis, t-value, graphs, reliability and validity of the listening and motivation questionnaires were all measured.

6. Results

6.1 The Validity of the Motivation Questionnaire

This questionnaire includes 25 statements that are based on the five-choice Likert scale (**Strongly Disagree, Disagree; Not sure; Agree; Strongly Agree**). Besides, this questionnaire consists of two internal and external components. The inner component starts with statement 1 to 18, and the external component starts with statement 19 to statement 25. The confirmatory factor analysis graphs of the motivation questionnaire, the chart of path coefficients and the t-value, Figures 1 and 2, are shown below.

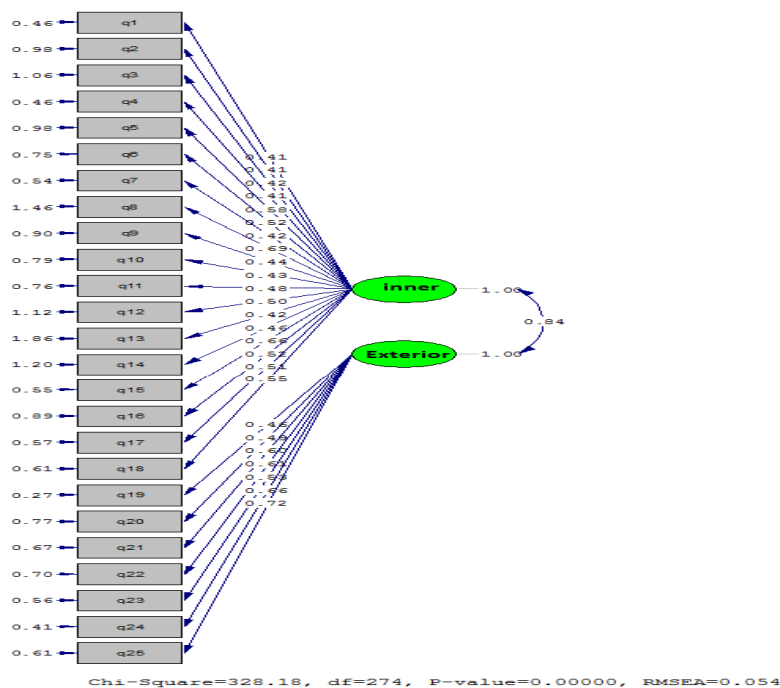


Figure 1. Path Coefficients Indicate Inner and Exterior Motivation of Learners Toward L2 Learning.

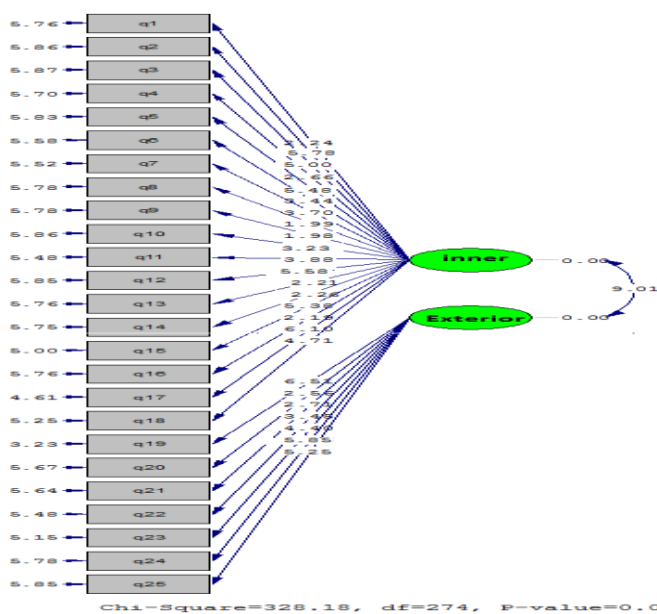


Figure 2. T-value, Chi-square, df, P-value and RMSEA of the Motivation Questionnaire

According to the above diagrams, the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the motivation questionnaire can be shown in Table 1. As can be seen, the value of t-value in all questions is higher than 1.96. Therefore, it can be concluded that the questionnaire items provide a proper structure for measuring the dimensions studied in the research model.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Motivation Questionnaire

| Motivation | Questions | Path Coefficients | t-value |
|------------|-----------|-------------------|---------|
| Inner | q1 | 0.41 | 2.24 |
| | q2 | 0.41 | 5.78 |
| | q3 | 0.42 | 5.00 |
| | q4 | 0.41 | 2.66 |
| | q5 | 0.58 | 5.48 |
| | q6 | 0.52 | 3.44 |
| | q7 | 0.42 | 3.70 |
| | q8 | 0.69 | 1.99 |
| | q9 | 0.44 | 1.98 |
| | q10 | 0.43 | 3.23 |
| | q11 | 0.48 | 3.88 |
| | q12 | 0.50 | 5.58 |
| | q13 | 0.42 | 2.21 |
| | q14 | 0.46 | 2.26 |
| | q15 | 0.66 | 5.36 |
| | q16 | 0.52 | 2.19 |
| Exterior | q17 | 0.51 | 6.10 |
| | q18 | 0.55 | 4.71 |
| | q19 | 0.46 | 6.51 |
| | q20 | 0.49 | 2.56 |
| | q21 | 0.60 | 2.71 |
| | q22 | 0.61 | 3.45 |
| | q23 | 0.53 | 4.40 |
| | q24 | 0.66 | 5.85 |
| | q25 | 0.72 | 5.25 |

Moreover, in Table 2, values for fit indices are shown. The RMSEA value is 0.054 and, given that it is more than 0.08; it indicates that the model is acceptable. Also, the relative chi-square value, i.e., the division of chi-square on freedom degree 274.18 / 274 equals to 1.19 and is between 1 and 3. The values of NFI, GFI, IFI, CFI and AGFI indices are also higher than 0.9 as seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Goodness-of-fit Indices

| χ^2/DF | RMSEA | NFI | GFI | IFI | CFI | AGFI |
|-------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.22 | 0.054 | 0.92 | 0.93 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.93 |

Therefore, it can be concluded that the values of indices correspond to their interpretive criteria and confirmatory factor analysis confirms the structure of the motivation questionnaire.

6.2 Reliability of the Questionnaires

Reliability is a technical feature of the measurement tool. The concept is concerned with the extent to which the same measurement tool yields the same results. The range of reliability is from zero to one. The closer the reliability is to 1, the more reliable the questionnaire is.

In this research, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the test. This method is used to estimate the internal consistency of a measuring instrument that measures various features. If the alpha value is higher than 0.70, it indicates desirable reliability and, if it is between 0.5 and 0.70, it has average reliability.

In this study, to determine the reliability of the questionnaires and their dimensions, Cronbach's alpha was calculated using SPSS software. The results are shown in Table 3 below. As shown in the table below, the Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaires and their dimensions is more than 0.70, so the reliability of the questionnaire can be confirmed.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

| Components | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| Motivation | | |
| Interior | 0.767 | 18 |
| Exterior | 0.719 | 7 |
| Listening skill | 0.785 | 8 |

6.3 Achievements of Males and Females in the Listening Skill

Based on the curriculum assigned to the participants of this study, a pretest and posttest in the listening skill were administered to the participants (male/female) of the experimental group. The aim was to identify whether the use of social media applications in the teaching process affects the listening achievements of both males and females. The test findings are presented in the following tables:

Table 4. Listening Statistics (Pretest and Posttest)

| | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------|--------|----|-------|----------------|
| Listening Pretest score | Male | 34 | 21.00 | 2.71 |
| | Female | 36 | 21.47 | 3.06 |
| Listening Posttest score | Male | 34 | 32.32 | 6.52 |
| | Female | 36 | 34.14 | 7.66 |

According to Table 4, in the listening pretest phase, the male participants' mean score was 21.00 with std. 2.71. In contrast, their counterparts of females obtained 21.47 mean score with std. 3.06. In the post-test phase, the mean score of the males was 32.32 and obtained 6.52 std. At the same time, the female participants achieved 34.14 mean scores with a standard deviation of 7.66.

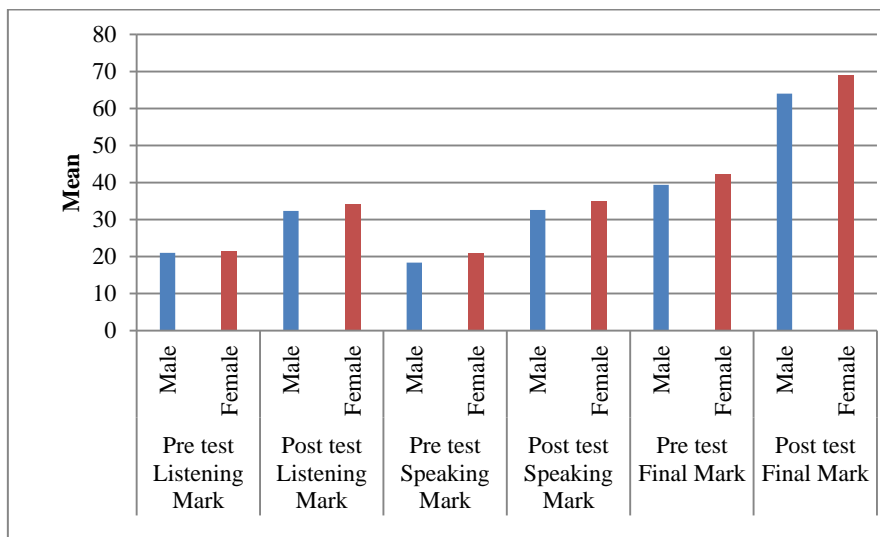


Figure 3. The Listening Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of Male and Female Participants

Figure 3 illustrates the findings of males and females of the experimental group in the listening pre and posttests. As seen, in both phases of the experiment, the females' achievement in the listening skill overcomes the male participants.

Table 5. Independent Sample t-test for Comparing Listening Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of Male and Female in the Experimental Group

| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|---|-------|
| | F | Sig. | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper | |
| | listening Pretest Mark | Equal variances assumed | .150 | .700 | -0.68 | 68 | .497 | -0.47 | 0.69 | -1.85 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -0.69 | 67.733 | .496 | -0.47 | 0.69 | -1.85 | 0.90 |
| listening Posttest Mark | Equal variances assumed | .985 | .324 | -1.07 | 68 | .291 | -1.82 | 1.70 | -5.22 | 1.59 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.07 | 67.292 | .288 | -1.82 | 1.70 | -5.20 | 1.57 |

*significant at the 0.05 level

According to Table 5, there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of male and female achievements in the listening skill. As seen in Table 4, it is clear that the average mean score of girls is higher than that of boys. This result indicates that female participants expose a great tendency towards employing innovative technology in language teaching and learning.

In the post-test phase, the mean scores of the control group participants in the listening skill were 28.09 with an std. 5.25. In contrast, the experimental group obtained mean scores 38.43 with an std. 4.54 as shown in Table 6. This increase in the mean score of the experimental group might be attributed to the application of social media as a pedagogical method of teaching.

Table 6. Listening Statistics (Posttest)

| Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Control | 35 | 28.09 | 5.25 |
| Experimental | 35 | 38.43 | 4.54 |

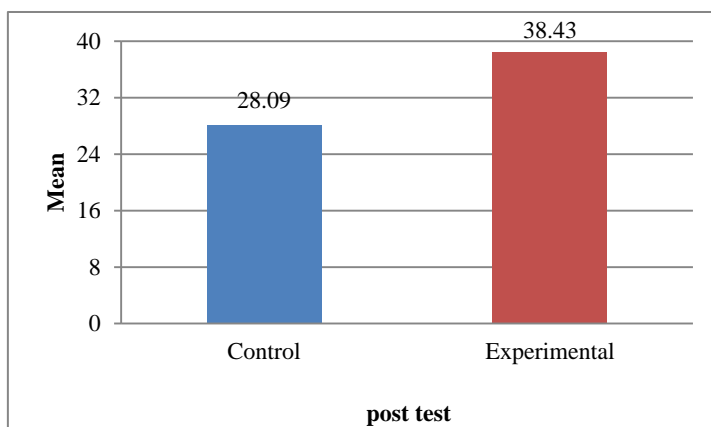


Figure 4. Bargraph of the Mean Scores Achieved in the Listening Skill Posttest by Control and Experimental Groups

Figure 4 illustrates that the control group participants obtained 28.09 mean scores in the listening posttest. At the same time, the participants of the testing group achieved 38.43 mean scores in listening posttest.

Table 7. Independent Samples t-test for Comparing Listening Posttest Mean Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-------|
| | F | Sig. | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Equal variances assume | 1.11 | 0.30 | -8.81 | 68.00 | 0.000* | -10.34 | 1.17 | -12.68 | -8.00 |
| Equal variances not assume | | | -8.81 | 66.59 | 0.000 | -10.34 | 1.17 | -12.69 | -8.00 |

*significant at the 0.05 level

Considering that in this test, first, the equality of variances is examined through Levene’s test; the significant level relating to the equality of variances is 0.30, and higher than 0.05. Therefore, it can be said that the variances are equal and the results of equality of variances, the first line of the table, can be used for the analysis.

As shown in Table 7, the significant level of the test for the posttest is 0.000 that is less than 0.05 (sig= 0.000<0.05). This result shows that there is a significant difference between the listening posttest mean scores of the control and experimental groups. As seen in Table 6, the listening post-test mean scores of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group.

Since the experimental group is the core of this study because it is received its instructions via Skype tool to teach listening skill instead of the teacher-centred class according to the practical aspect of the current experiment, making a comparison between the two means obtained from the posttest of the control and experimental groups underlined a significant difference between these two means where the control group mean score was 28.09. At the same time, the mean of the experimental group posttest was 38.43. Additionally, there is

a remarkable difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the testing group participants (male/female). In the pretest phase, the mean score of the males was 21.00, whereas females got 21.47 mean score. In the post-test phase, the male participants obtained 32.32 mean scores, while their counterpart of females got 34.14, as seen in Table 4.

7. Discussion

The first research question seeks the validity and reliability of the designed questionnaire of the current study. The overall findings of this question approved the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. As seen in Table 1 and 2, the designed motivation questionnaire enjoys a desirable average of values of indices that ascertain its validity. As can be noted in Table 3, the inner, exterior, and listening skill components of the questionnaire have reliability equals to 0.767, 0.719, and 0.785 respectively. These values of reliability are higher than 0.70 of alpha value. Consequently, these indices support the reliability of the designed motivation questionnaire of the research.

The overall results of the second question of the current study confirm the existence of a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female participants of the experimental group. In the listening pretest and posttest achievement, the females obtained mean scores higher than their counterparts of males. In the listening pretest phase, the females obtained 21.47 mean score and 3.06 std., while the males achieved 21.00 mean score and 2.71 std. In the listening post-test phase, the mean scores of the females were higher than males. It was 34.14 mean score for females and 32.32 for males. These results reflect a positive response of the female participants to the applications of social media in language learning.

Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) conducted a study on 40 students to explore the effect of applying the audio-visual aids on teaching listening among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. The overall findings of the study revealed that the participants of the experimental group instructed through genuine video achieved high scores than those of the CD-based instruction group. Besides, the findings showed that the audio-visual model of teaching has an effective role in language learning. Such findings are parallel to the outcomes of this study in terms of the effect of social media in enhancing the listening skill through the application of Skype device.

In a study aimed to detect the role of YouTube videos in improving the listening ability, Ayu (2016) discovered that YouTube videos enable instructors to create a real-like environment through which learners can identify vocabulary, contraction, speed, and tempo of speech. Further, YouTube provides an audio-visual mode of communication, which in turn helps learners to figure out what they heard, and then develops their listening skill. Skype-based instruction also provides audio-visual means of connection between the learners and their instructor. The difference is that Skype maintains an instant connection with learners. Therefore, Skype offers a real-like situation of language learning where a learner can overcome language anxiety and then produces a sound language.

The third research question of the current study sought to investigate if there were statistically significant differences in the listening posttest mean scores between the control and experimental groups. The final results of the study answered this question when they showed a significant difference in the listening posttest mean scores between the control and experimental groups. As shown in Table 6, the experimental group achieved 38.43 in mean with std. 4.54. In contrast, the control group obtained 28.09 in mean with std. 5.25. This significant difference in the mean scores revealed the effective role of social media in language learning.

If we consider the previous studies in the literature, the findings of the third question come in line with a study conducted by Almosawi (2017) at Misan University in Iraq. In this study, the researcher used YouTube device as a means of teaching English Grammar. The findings of the study showed a significant difference in the mean scores between the experimental and control group due to the use of the aforementioned device.

Additionally, Alahmar's (2016) study on the effect of social media applications on the academic performance of the medical students indicated a great number of students use Facebook for study purposes; meanwhile, others use it for a variety of activities. Such results underpin the idea of the role of social media applications in promoting the listening skill of EFL learners.

8. Conclusion

Based on the overall results of the study, Iraqi teachers of the English language should take into their accounts the role of innovative technology particularly, social media, in creating a native-like environment of language learning. Such educational context may motivate students to do better in their process of learning. Hence, the Iraqi educational institutions are required to provide technical facilities in a way these facilities are accessible by students anywhere and anytime.

More importantly, to gain benefits from the myriad faces of social media, students should not use this innovative technology haphazardly. Therefore, educators should set guidelines for students to define the purpose of using social media. Additionally, they should bring these technological applications into the classroom environment.

Some impediments, such as lack of internet services or inefficiency in managing technology-based teaching, may hinder educators in doing their pedagogical task but extra efforts are needed to accomplish their task of teaching.

The researcher suggests that more attention should be devoted to the use of technology in language teaching and learning. Further, the researcher noticed that students, who have part-time work, were willing to take their academic instructions via Skype. This is because Skype enjoys audio and visual features in such a way that students of part-time work will keep on going with their colleagues who engaged in full-time instructions.

Moreover, based on the results obtained in Table 4 and 6, the difference between the means of the two groups (control and experimental) in the listening pre and posttests might lead us to infer that the use of social media is effective on student's learning motivation and leads to motivation of the students in the process of learning a second or foreign language.

Finally, further research on the usage of social media applications in the educational domain is needed to provide a supportive method of teaching.

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