# Using WhatsApp for Developing EFL Intermediate Students' Paragraph Writing Skills

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A Thesis Submitted for the Master's Degree in Education

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## Abstract:

The present study investigated the effect of WhatsApp on developing English paragraph writing skills of third year students enrolled at Abdallah EL Qurashy Preparatory School, Qena. Participants are (120) male and female students. The study was divided into four groups: Two experimental groups and two control groups. The two control groups are one male group (N=30) and one female group (N=30) who received traditional classroom instruction. Likewise, the two experimental groups are one male group (N=30) and one female group (N=30) and they received the treatment (WhatsApp program). Data was collected through the English Paragraph Writing Test (EPWT). Descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test and Spearman rank order coefficient of correlation were used in data analysis. Findings revealed a significant development in English Paragraph writing skills of the WhatsApp group compared with the non- WhatsApp group. Findings also indicated significant gains obtained by the experimental group in the post administration of the test as compared with the pre- administration. Furthermore, findings revealed significant gains obtained by females as compared with males. Findings confirmed that WhatsApp model is an effective instructional tool that develops the students' English paragraph writing skills.

*Key Words:* *WhatsApp, English paragraph writing skills.*

# استخدام الواتساب لتنمية مهارات كتابة الفقرة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية لدى طلاب المرحلة الإعدادية

## إعداد

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## المستخلص :

هدفت الدراسة الحالية الى بحث أثر استخدام تطبيق الواتساب في تنمية مهارات كتابة الفقرة في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية لطلاب الصف الثالث بمدرسة عبد الله القرشي الإعدادية المشتركة بقنا. تكونت عينة البحث من (١٢٠) طالب وطالبة. حيث تم تقسيمهم الى ٤ مجموعات: مجموعتان تجريبيتان ومجموعتان ضابطتان. وانقسمت المجموعتان الضابطتان الى مجموعة ذكور (٣٠ طالب) ومجموعة اناث (٣٠ طالبة)، والتي درست بالطريقة التقليدية (وهي الكتابة بالورقة والقلم). وتم تقسيم المجموعتان التجريبيتان الى مجموعة ذكور (٣٠ طالب) ومجموعة اناث (٣٠ طالبة)، والتي درست باستخدام الواتساب. ولقد تم جمع بيانات الدراسة من خلال: اختبار تقييم مهارات كتابة الفقرة باللغة الإنجليزية، وقائمة تقدير الدرجات التحليلية، نموذج (برنامج) الواتساب، كما تم استخدام اختبار (ت) ومعامل ارتباط سبيرمان لتحليل البيانات. ولقد دلت النتائج على تحسن ملحوظ في مهارات كتابة الفقرة لدى مجموعة الواتساب مقارنة بالمجموعة الضابطة. ولقد اشارت النتائج ايضا الى تحسن ذو دلالة إحصائية في أداء المجموعة التجريبية في التطبيق البعدي مقارنة بالتطبيق القبلي. بالإضافة الى ذلك، فقد دلت النتائج على وجود تحسن في أداء الاناث مقارنة بأداء الذكور. ولقد اثبتت الدراسة ان نموذج الواتساب اداه تعليمية فعالة في تنمية مهارات كتابة الفقرة باللغة الإنجليزية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:**الواتساب، مهارات كتابة الفقرة .

## 1.1   Background of the Problem

In learning English, there are four basic skills to be mastered to have better communication. These skills are: listening and reading or the receptive skills, and speaking and writing or the productive skills. In order to learn English, one needs to master those four skills, as they make exchanging information easier. Teachers need to recognize that the four skills have to be integrated. Burns & Siegel (2018) stated that "It needs, of course, to be recognized that much recent thinking contests the idea of the separation and segregation of the four language skills''. (p.2). In short, it is quite recognized the importance of the four 'macro' skills in English language teaching and learning.

Writing is one of the most challenging skills that EFL learners need to develop. Recently, writing has received a great attention because it plays a central role in language learning and communication. Indeed, the style of writing that is meant here is the essay. This type of writing has some rules to follow. To produce a well-written formal piece of writing one must avoid using slang, abbreviations and contractions (e.g., don't and isn't) and use full words instead, colloquial terms, pronouns, subjective language and try to be objective, use different fonts, sizes and styles in order not to make that piece of writing messy for the reader and hard to read. Finally, use complete sentences, correct spelling, punctuation and grammar, italics, bold and underlines to

highlight heading, but avoid overusing them. (Connelly& Forsyth,2012).

On the other hand, the non-academic writing is informal or casual type of language. In addition, this type of writing may be personal, impersonal, subjective or emotional in nature. Also, non-academic writing may contain slang language: Magazine articles, text messages, letters etc. Besides, the basic focus and goal of non-academic writing is to entertain, inform or persuade the reader. Furthermore, the majority of non-academic writings do not include references or citations. Moreover, non-academic writing does not have a well-set structure as academic writing. In sum, academic writing and non-academic writing are different in many features such as language, format, purpose, tone and audience. (Hasa, 2019).

Gender refers to the socially learned patterns of behavior and the psychological and emotional attitudes that distinguish males from females. It refers to the way we talk, act, read, write and this constitutes us as masculine and feminine in the social structures. (Duran,2006). In fact, not all members of a given society speak or write in the same way. Consequently, each person has his/her own social, cultural and dialectical aspects of speaking and different writing styles. (Bijami,2013). Female students had more favorable attitudes towards learning handwriting and produced a higher

level of handwriting than male students. (Rashed,1982). Does gender affect the writing product of male and female students? Literature revealed that there were differences between male and female students in learning writing skills (Bijami, et al., 2013; Bourke&Adams,2010; Pajares &Valiante,2002).

Recently, researches have noted that while learning EFL, girls achieved higher marks than boys. Actually, girls use language in emotional relationship contexts with others, unlike boys who use language to describe objects and actions. Consequently, males do not prefer to use language to express their emotions. Therefore, gender has been considered as an effective factor in second language acquisition. (Stearns, 2020).

There are two types of writing: writing for learning, and writing for writing. In this respect, Harmer (2007) reported that "If we are to build the students' writing skills (as opposed to building their writing habits or getting them to write for language practice) we will have to use such writing for writing tasks as often as is appropriate'' (p.330). We need to motivate our students to write for the purpose of writing, to be creative in their writings, to brainstorm and capture good ideas and produce a well-developed piece of writing. To produce a well-developed piece of writing, one needs to write cohesive, logical, clearly structured, interesting, concise sentences and make his/her writing well-organized with

rich amount of vocabulary, and mastery of conventions in mechanics. Briefly, writing is a core skill in teaching and learning English and it starts from writing a word, a sentence and a paragraph.

Furthermore, a paragraph is a set of related sentences that are developed to cover a certain topic. Supporting that, Checkett & Checkett (2009) mentioned that "A paragraph is a group of sentences concerned with developing or expressing a single topic (one main idea)". (p.133). There are two types of sentences in a paragraph: first, the topic sentence that tells the reader about the main idea or topic of the paragraph. Second, the support sentences that explain, clarify, and define the topic through giving specific details. Therefore, writing a paragraph has certain features. First of all, a paragraph has a topic sentence that states the main idea of the topic. The topic sentence is the base for a paragraph, it is usually at the beginning and sometimes in the middle or at the end of a paragraph. It helps the reader recognize what the paragraph is about. Second, all of the following sentences are about one topic and they are related to the topic sentence. Third, the last sentence or the concluding sentence, brings the paragraph to a logical conclusion. It is very important because it restates the main idea. In addition, it can present a suggestion, an opinion, or a prediction. (Folse,2010).

Moreover, paragraphs are the building blocks of papers. A lot of students define paragraphs in terms of their lengths. Actually, coherence and unity of sentences are what constitute a paragraph. In addition, length and appearance do not determine if a part in a paper is a paragraph or not. Further, one must prepare an argument about the topic before beginning to write. Next, set the statement of a topic so that the reader can get the idea the writer wants to convey to him\her. Therefore, all the information in the paragraph will be clearly related to the idea. (The writing Center, n.d).

Besides, deciding what to write in the paragraph depends on germination process which is brainstorming. Indeed, the stage of brainstorming is a core step which cannot be neglected. Hence, building a paragraph is as building a skyscraper. This means that there must be a well-set base which will support the whole building. Therefore, any corruptions or cracks in the base will lead to the corruption of the whole paper. Finally, brainstorming is the foundation of the piece of writing. (Lumenlearning, n.d).

Moreover, there are different types of paragraphs, as Boardman & Frydenberg (2008) mentioned that "There are three main types of paragraphs. Narrative paragraphs tell a story, descriptive paragraphs tell what something looks like physically, and expository paragraphs explain something." (p.18). Also, the

persuasive paragraph, that tries to convince he reader with a certain point of view, is an important type.

Descriptive paragraphs, the focus of this study, describe how something or someone looks or feels. Descriptive paragraphs present an impression about something to the reader. Descriptive paragraphs have a concrete focus. In addition, they create a multi-sensory image in the reader's imagination. As a result, the writer uses the five senses to send this sensory image clearly. Hence, the readers feel and sense what the writer wants to convey. For example, describe your feelings when you succeeded; so, you will write a descriptive paragraph. (Folse et al.,2010).

Furthermore, the first point in writing a descriptive paragraph is recognizing the topic. Then, start examining the details of the paragraph subject. Thus, be closer to the topic and study it from different sides. So, begin with the five senses: What does an object look, smell, sound, feel and taste like? What are the relationships and memories with this object? Now, write down every detail that comes in mind. After that, put all these details all together into a paragraph. Besides, put in mind the aim of the descriptive paragraph. Actually, these details tell the reader what does the writer feel about his\her topic. In addition, the reader can get the message the writer wants to bridge to him\her.

Further, arrange the details in a well-set order that gives sense to the topic. In describing an object, describe it from up to down and from left to right in a way that makes the reader feels like he\she is looking at it. Details should, as well, follow a logical pattern, through connecting each sentence to the previous and following sentence. Further, edit and proofread the paragraph and check errors. Moreover, you can ask a friend to read your paragraph and give you feedback about it. Lastly, ask teacher to read it or consult a checklist to be sure that the paragraph is free from mistakes. (Valdes, 2019).

There must be some key elements for writing a well-developed paragraph. There must be one topic and one main idea in the first line of the paragraph. Next, it is necessary that the paragraph should be written in a coherent unified manner. This means that the middle sentences should support the topic sentence. In addition, use descriptions and details to help the reader get the idea. Also, use transition words to tie the paragraphs altogether. Be specific and clear enough and avoid repetitions. In the end, use a conclusive sentence that briefly summarizes the information mentioned before. (MasterClass staff, 2021).

In the first place of producing a well-developed paragraph, comes coherence. To have a coherent paragraph, the supporting sentences must be ordered according to a principle. The sentences

are put in order so that the reader can capture your ideas easily. Ordering principle depends on the paragraph type. Secondly, cohesion is another important element. All the supporting sentences should be connected to each other in their support of the topic sentence. The final element of a well-developed paragraph is unity. All the supporting sentences should be related to the topic sentence. Unfortunately, most of EFL students do not follow these rules so they face a lot of problems in paragraph writing. (Boardman & Frydenberg,2008).

Thus, paragraphs have a central role in writing because they set and provide a framework for organizing ideas in a logical order. Moreover, to have a well-structured paragraph, place it as a block that is consisted of three parts: The beginning, the middle and the end. As for the beginning part, it is known as the topic sentence that gives the reader a hint about the topic of the paragraph. Therefore, there must be one idea stating one topic clearly placed in the beginning of the paragraph. Additionally, the middle represents what is called supporting sentences. They explain and illustrate the idea of the topic sentence. Besides, they provide evidences and examples about the topic and the main idea. Lastly, the end of the paragraph which is known as the concluding sentence confirms and reminds the reader of the main idea. (University of Newcastle, 2021).

Furthermore, in writing a paragraph, some rules should be followed known as a paragraph format. First, put the title in the center of the line, then indent the first sentence of the paragraph by tabbing five spaces to the right. Next start each new sentence with a capital letter. After that end sentences with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation mark. Ultimately, set about one-inch margins on the two sides of the paper. (Boardman & Frydenberg,2008). Actually, a large number of EFL learners do not follow these rules. In fact, various mistakes are made instead. Those learners write long sentences, incorrect mechanics (punctuation, spelling, and capitalization) and repeat ideas without stating the main idea of the topic. In addition, most Arab learners of English tend to transfer their first language stylistic features into English. In this respect, Hoge (2014) elaborated that:

> I read the first paragraph and was completely confused. The introduction was a mess. The sentences were extremely long and complex and were written in the passive voice. The vocabulary was complex and was used incorrectly…. The student`s essay was unintelligible. I couldn`t even understand his main idea. (p.101)

Besides, in their writing classes, teachers only focus on grammar and punctuation rather than content and organizing

ideas. They do not help their students to develop their ability to express their ideas. To sum up, EFL learners` common mistakes in paragraph writing are in terms of unity, coherence, organization, incorrect mechanics and long sentences.

To solve the above-mentioned problems, EFL teachers need to motivate their students to improve their paragraph writing skills. In fact, using technology has proved its validity in the recent years, especially in EFL classrooms. Actually, integrating technology in learning is a matter of great significance. We feel this a lot these days after the decisions taken by our Egyptian government to face COVID19.Now our school and university students are learning online in order to prevent them from gathering and to prevent spreading the pandemic. Teachers give online lessons to them through various applications and platforms, such as Edmodo, WhatsApp, Zoom and Facebook and answer students' questions, and give them assignments. This in itself saves time, efforts, and resources. Al-Mahrooqi & Troudi (2014) reported that "In fact, generally technology use in learning environments has presented itself as a necessity for continued lifelong learning.'' (p.1).

Definitely, using technology in learning has become a must in the era of Covid-19. Thus, online learning here plays an important role in this era. During the pandemic, distant learning is

a suitable solution. As a result, teachers can use virtual classrooms to teach from home using the needed tools that make this online learning meaningful and effective. This type of learning keeps teachers and learners interactive, engaged and free from stress. What is meant by online learning here is transforming the learning environment from classroom to the internet. Besides, it is known as e-learning. (Jena,2020).

Nowadays, smartphones have become a core part of everyone's daily life. In addition, smartphones have clearly transformed the process of teaching and learning world widely. They, as well, have catchy features such as chatting, sending and receiving emails, sharing photos, videos and documents, listening to music, checking health and weight and browsing. Therefore, smartphones have become tool of the age. (Adjei, 2019).

Still, smartphones can attract the whole world with their interesting applications and websites. Further, they could respond to the needs of the generation and support them with a rich amount of data and multimedia features and facilitate students' learning process and everyday life. The approach of learning through the use of mobile devices is called Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL).  In fact, MALL enables students to access language learning materials. Besides, MALL enables students to communicate with their peers and teachers at anytime

and anywhere. MALL is being used through: Cell phones, iPhone or iPad, MP3 or MP4, etc. (Valarmathi,2011). In this respect, Iversen and Eierman (2013) asserted that "Mobile devices add a host of new possibilities for business and personal software because they are truly the first Mobile computing platforms. Although laptops and netbooks are moveable, their size significantly impacts how easily they are transported". (p.1)

Consequently, MALL serves as a basic source of language acquisition and support the utilization of the acquired language skills. Furthermore, MALL supports collaborative learning among learners where the teacher is acting as a facilitator. As a result, this helps students be engaged, motivated and involved in the learning process. Ultimately, language can be learned through collaboration by the use of smartphones. (Valarmathi,2011).

As for writing, students use mobile devices for informal writing than formal writing in the classroom. Instead, they use these devices to chat with their families and friends and spend most of their time writing and enjoying sending messages through different platforms and applications which are so popular in comparison with the already used pen and paper writing that may seem boring. For this reason, a teacher needs to choose the technique which is suitable to the level of his/her students. In this respect, Erben et al. (2008) mentioned that "It is important to use ITs that promote speaking, reading and writing skills such as

synchronous VoIP's (skype.com, gizmo.com), online elaborated texts and process writing tools such as writeboard.com". (p.80)

One of these popular platforms which promotes speaking, reading, and writing skills is WhatsApp. WhatsApp is the most popular social network among other applications. It is a platform for messaging among social media users. It is an easy and interesting application that enables its users to:(1) send text messages for free, (2)send photos and videos, so that they can share their important moments with their friends and families, (3)make audio and video calls around the world as it enables them to see their friends and families , (4) share documents easily, pdfs, slideshows and more, (5) record voice messages or voice notes, users can say whatever they want. Finally, they can post their own status and get replies and comments from others. (Dictionary.com, 2018). WhatsApp is a very popular platform which is almost available for all smart phones' users. For its popularity among students, WhatsApp is being used in English language teaching. It is used in teaching vocabulary, spelling, reading, listening comprehension and improving students' writing skills.

Recently, WhatsApp is gaining extra attention in TEFL researches, in general, and in improving the writing skills, in particular. Researchers are using WhatsApp as an instructional tool as they make instructional groups in it for their students and now the teacher is available outside the classroom. The teacher

acts as a facilitator in the group to help them and answer their questions. Consequently, the role of the teachers is changed; he or she is no longer the controller of the classroom. In this respect, Erben et al. (2008) stated that "The more a teacher employs instructional technology in the classroom, the less teacher-centered and the more student-centered a classroom will become". (pp.80-81)

Nowadays, children spend most of their times holding their phones texting and chatting with their families and friends on WhatsApp. Although they do not like traditional pen and paper writing and find it boring, they enjoy digital writing on WhatsApp and other applications. As a result, when we use WhatsApp as an instructional tool this may raise their motivation towards paragraph writing. No doubt, using WhatsApp in teaching writing is not new. Supporting this idea, a study conducted by Abdul Fattah (2015) revealed that WhatsApp enhanced students' active participation in the classroom. It provided them with a chance for practicing language. It helped them share their opinions to others.

Moreover, Ma'ruf, et al. (2019) stated that WhatsApp could support students' learning activities in language learning, especially in learning paragraph writing skills. Therefore, WhatsApp should be used as a teaching and learning tool.

Based on the previous discussion, WhatsApp has become a widely used instructional platform. Accordingly, the focus of this study will be on how students produce a well written English paragraph via a WhatsApp chat. Since instruction and technology are integrated, WhatsApp could be used for instructional objectives.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

For most students, writing is an extremely difficult task, though, it is one of the most important means of communication. According to the objectives of teaching writing in the intermediate stage in the Egyptian Ministry of Education textbook (New Hello! English for Preparatory School Year Three), by the end of this stage, students are expected to gain a reasonable mastery of paragraph writing skills. It was noticed that the majority of students' performance in paragraph writing was poor. They had various problems in writing a well-developed-paragraph. Teachers' interviews revealed that most of the students find difficulties in writing a well-written paragraph. Moreover, some students sometimes resort to copy and paste their paragraphs from the internet. In addition, the collected samples of students' written work (n=20) supported this claim. Students were asked to write a paragraph about: "Places you recommend your friend to visit in Egypt." Based on the results of the pilot study, the problem can be

stated as follows: The majority of those students lack paragraph writing skills.  Students' mistakes were in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, vocabulary, organization and grammar.

## 1.3 Questions of the Study

Based on the above-mentioned problem, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

What is the effect of using WhatsApp on developing third year intermediate students' paragraph writing skills?

This major question can be divided into three sub-questions as follows:

1.  What is the effect of using WhatsApp on developing students' mechanics of writing (spelling, capitalization, punctuation)?

2.  What is the effect of using WhatsApp on developing students' skills in paragraph structure?

3.  What is the effect of gender differences on the written products of males and females using WhatsApp?

## 1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

1.  There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test favoring the experimental groups.

**2.** There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the English Paragraph Writing Test (mechanics of writing), favoring the experimental groups.

**3.** There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the EPWT (structure of the paragraph), favoring the experimental groups.

**4.** There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental    groups in the pre- post administration of the EPWT, favoring the post test.

**5.** There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students in the post English Paragraph Writing Test favoring female students.

## 1.5 Purposes of the Study

Purposes of the study are as follows:

**1.** Investigating the effect of using WhatsApp on developing third year intermediate    students' paragraph writing skills.

**2.**    Exploring if WhatsApp is feasible to apply in our EFL classrooms.

**3.** Investigating gender differences in the students' written products while using WhatsApp.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

Significance of the study can be described in the following points:

1. The study attempts to implement WhatsApp writing process in EFL classrooms, which may have a beneficial effect on developing     EFL intermediate students' paragraph writing skills.

**2.** An important contribution of the study, is a set of procedures and guidelines presented for teachers to use in teaching paragraph writing through using WhatsApp.

**3.** The instrument constructed for this study namely, English Paragraph Writing Test, may be beneficial for students, teachers and other researchers.

**4.** The scarcity of studies addressing the use of WhatsApp in Egypt in EFL intermediate classrooms enhances the significance of the study.

**5.** Findings of the study might encourage textbook writers to think seriously of incorporating WhatsApp as a teaching tool while teaching English skills, in general, and the writing skill, in particular.

## 1.7 Delimitations of the Study:

The study will be delimited to the following:

**1.** A group of EFL third year Intermediate students(N=120), enrolled at Abdallah EL-Qurashy Preparatory School at Qena.

**2.** The experiment was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022.

**3.** Using WhatsApp as an instructional tool.

**4.** Certain paragraph writing skills: (1) paragraph structure (topic sentence, body of the paragraph, concluding sentence), (2) mechanics of writing (capitalization, spelling and punctuation), (3) content.

**5.** Descriptive paragraph writing.

## Methodology and Procedures

Prior to the experiment, the subjects (both experimental and control groups) were given the English Paragraph Writing Test as a pre-test. The test was divided into two parts, 30 minutes for each. The experimental and control group were taught by the researcher with the help of the teacher. The only difference was the instructional method. The experimental group received the treatment (WhatsApp procedures). The experiment lasted for four weeks (three classes per week). The same writing assignments were given to both experimental and control groups. Experimental group students were added to the WhatsApp group, made by the researcher, a group for males and another one for females. There

was an introductory session to explain to students how to use WhatsApp in paragraph writing and the rules of the group were set too. The researcher assigned a leader for each WhatsApp group to undertake work with their colleagues and help the researcher be acquainted with each one of them. Then, lessons were taught and students used to log into the group in the allocated time, the researcher great them and check attendance. The researcher used to set the objectives of the lesson, then allow students to have a discussion together, questions and answers and she monitored and corrected their mistakes. In addition, after the session ended the researcher posted a status related to the lesson and student read and send their answers as a reply. Students, also used to write and post the paragraphs to the group. They, after that, correct the paragraphs posted to the group (peer correction) when they finished, the researcher corrected their errors and motivated them to be better. At the end of the experiment, the English Paragraph Writing Test was administered as a posttest to both experimental and control groups and a rubric was used to grade students.

## Design of the Study

It is very hard to arrange a true experimental design, especially in classroom experimental research. For this reason, this study adopts one of the quasi-experimental designs which is "The pretest-posttest non-equivalent groups".

To carry out the experiment, four classes were randomly selected. Two classes were designed to serve as experimental groups (WhatsApp group) and the other two classes as control group.

## Instruments of the Study

To investigate the effect of WhatsApp on developing students' paragraph writing skills, one instrument was developed by the researcher:

## English Paragraph Writing Test (EPWT)

### *Validity of the English Paragraph Writing Test.*

To determine the face and content validity of the EPWT, it was submitted to a panel of jury. The jury panel examined the instrument and expressed their opinions regarding clarity, adequacy and difficulty level of the test items and its relevance to the writing product skills (sub-writing domains) which are intended to be assessed. The jury members suggested slight modifications of the test materials. Suggestions and comments of the jury members were taken into consideration when making the final version. For final form of the test see (Appendix, A).

Intrinsic validity of the test was also obtained by using the following formula:

$$\text{Intrinsic validity} = \sqrt{\text{Reliability item}}$$

Intrinsic validity $= \sqrt{0.91} = 0.95$

Intrinsic validity = 0.95

This result indicates that the test is highly valid.

## 3.4.1.2.2 *Reliability of the English Paragraph Writing Test.*

To establish the EPWT reliability, one type of reliability was used: the spilt half method. This was accomplished by correlating the scores on the first half of the test with scores on the second half of the test. The coefficient of correlation between the two halves was computed using Spearman-Brown Formula. Results are reported in table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1:**

**The correlation Between the Two Halves (Part 1 & Part 2) of the EPWT**

| EPWT | M | SD | Spearman's Correlation 'r' |
|------|------|------|-----------------------------|
| Part one | 9.35 | 2.34 | |
| Part two | 7.37 | 2.08 | 0.91** |
| TOTAL | 16.72 | 4.42 | |

*Note*. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in table 3.1, the correlation between the two halves was .0.91. It was statistically significant at the level of 0.01. To determine the internal consistency of the two parts of the test, the correlation coefficient for each part with the whole test was computed which confirms that the test is reliable.

# Materials of the Study:

# Writing Scoring Rubric (WSR)

Standard 1.8: Student written paragraph demonstrates command of appropriate English writing domains: Content, organization, mechanics, vocabulary, sensory images, figurative language, paragraph structure and paragraph format.

| Criterion/ Standard | Indicator | Score Point 4 Perfect Writing | Score Point 3 Proficient Writing | Score Point 2 Average Writing | Score Point 1 Poor Writing | Score Point 0 N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Content** | Develops ideas easily and smoothly. Provides relevant ideas. Details should support the main idea. | -Fully clear and smooth ideas. -More relevant ideas. -Very thorough developments of supporting details. | -Well-clear ideas. -Relevant enough. -Well supporting and sufficient details. | -Ideas are clear to some extent. -Limited relevant ideas. -Fewer simple details. | Unclear ideas -Few relevant ideas. -Irrelevant and poor details. | Not applicable to this criterion    Not applicable to this criterion |
| **Organization** | Organizes the paragraph. Shows unity and coherence. Supports logical sequencing. | -Well-organized and developed paragraph. -Clearly coherent. -Perfect logical sequencing. | -Adequately developed and organized. -Well-coherent -Moderately logical sequencing. | Organized and developed to some extent. -A bit coherent and some unity -A little logically sequenced. | -Lacks organization. -The paragraph is messy /poor coherence and unity. -Poor sequencing. | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mechanics** | Demonstrates mastery of punctuation marks. | -Excellent command of punctuation marks. | -Very good command of punctuation marks/rare mistakes. | -Average command of punctuation marks/some mistakes. | -Poor command of punctuation marks/ repeated mistakes. |
| | Avoid spelling mistakes. | -Excellent command of spelling rules. | -Very good command of spelling rules/rare mistakes. | -Average command of spelling rules/some mistakes. | -Poor command of spelling rules/repeated mistakes. |
| | Provides mastery of capitalization rules. | -Excellent command of capitalization rules. | Very good command of capitalization rules/rare mistakes. | -Average command of capitalization rules/some mistakes. | -Poor command of capitalization rules. |
| **Vocabulary** | Use a great repertoire of vocabulary. | -More varied vocabulary. | -Varied with rare repetitions. | -Limited variety with some repetitions. | -Less variety of vocabulary and a lot of repetitions. |
| | Uses vocabulary appropriately. | -Excellent use of vocabulary. | -Good use of vocabulary with rare confusing meanings. | -Average use of vocabulary with frequent mistakes of word choices. | -Poor range of vocabulary with various mistakes in word choices. |
| **Sensory Images** | -Uses impressing sensory images (how it tastes, smells, looks…like). | -Excellent use of sensory images. | -Well-use of sensory images. | -Limited use of sensory images. | -Lacks sensory images. |
| **Figurative Language** | Uses catchy language with simile, metaphor and personification. | -Effective use of figurative words. | -Very good use of figurative words. | -Limited use of figurative words. | -Poor use of figurative words. |

(Rightmost column spanning: "Not applicable to this criterion")

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Paragraph Structure** | -Provides strong topic sentence.<br><br>-Sets relevant supporting sentences.<br><br>- Closes the paragraph with a good concluding sentence. | -Starts with a strong topic sentence.<br><br>-Uses relevant and related supporting sentences smartly.<br><br>-Perfect concluding sentence. | -Good topic sentence.<br><br>-The supporting sentences are related.<br><br>-Very good concluding sentence. | -The topic sentence is acceptable to some extent.<br><br>-The supporting sentences are related to some extent.<br><br>Acceptable concluding sentence. | -The topic sentence is unrelated.<br><br>-The supporting sentences are unrelated.<br><br>-The concluding sentence is confusing. |
| **Paragraph Format** | -Provides the title concisely.<br><br>-Indents the paragraph. | -The title is more concise and centered.<br><br>-The first line is well-indented. | -The title is quite centered and concise.<br><br>- The first line is sometimes indented. | -The title is centered but it is a bit long.<br><br>-The first line is rarely indented. | -The title is centered but is too long.<br><br>-Not indented. |

## Results of the Study

## Results Concerning the Hypotheses of the Stud*4.1.1*

### *The first hypothesis.*

There is a statistically significant difference at 0.000 in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the

**post administration of the overall English paragraph writing test favoring the experimental group.**

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, independent sample t-test was used to find out difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test.

**Table 4.2:**

*Independent sample T-test (control- experimental) groups of the English paragraph writing test*

| Group | Control Groups | | | Experimental Groups | | | t-value | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | | |
| Female group | 30 | 23.63 | 3.615 | 30 | 66.60 | 2.527 | 53.357 | 0.000 |
| Male group | 30 | 19.80 | 3.408 | 30 | 59.60 | 4.760 | 37.235 | 0.000 |

**Data in Table 4.2 showed that:**

There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental female group in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test favoring the female experimental group. There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental male group in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test favoring the male experimental group.
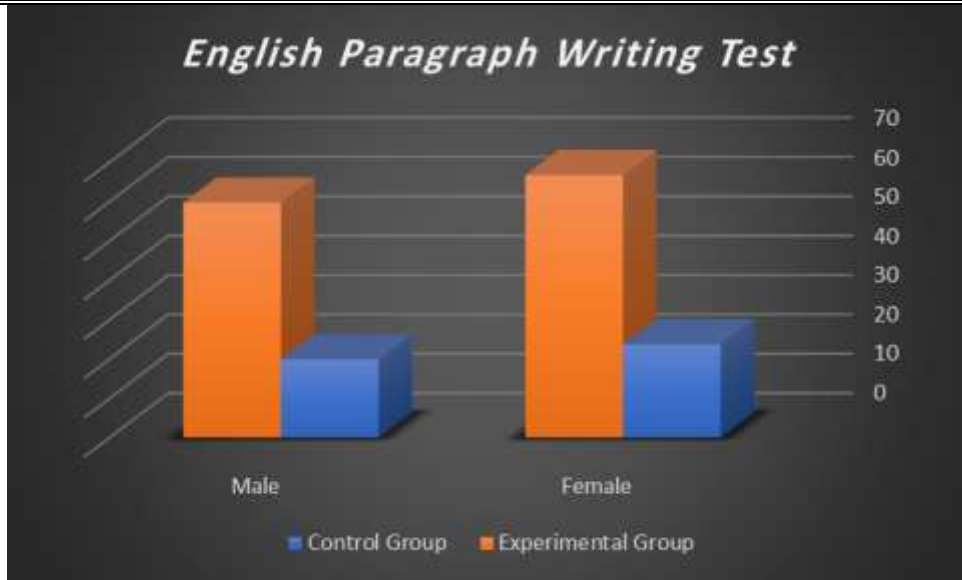
**Figure 4.1**

*Comparison between scores of both control and experimental groups in the post administration of overall EPWT.*

Results reported in table 4.2 revealed that the gain scores of the experimental groups in the post administration were (66.60 for females and 59.60 for males). On the other hand, the gain scores of the control groups were (23.63 for females and 19.80 for males). Data reflected that the experimental groups were much better than the control groups in the writing product of the EPWT. In light of this result, the first hypothesis was accepted. These findings provided an answer for the main question of the study: What is the effect of using WhatsApp on developing third year intermediate students' paragraph writing skills?

## The effect size of WhatsApp on developing English paragraph writing:

Table 4.3:

*Value of ($\eta^2$) and the level of English paragraph writing effect size*

| The Dependent Variable (English paragraph writing) | t | $t^2$ | df | $t^2$ + df | $\eta^2$ | The Effective Size | d | The Effective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female group | 53.357 | 2846.969 | 58 | 2904.969 | 0.980 | 98.0% | 14.012 | high |
| Male group | 37.235 | 1386.445 | 58 | 1444.445 | 0.960 | 96.0% | 9.778 | high |

## Data in table 4.3 shows the following:

- This means that the effect size of using WhatsApp on developing the English paragraph writing in each group separately is large.

- This indicates that value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " English paragraph writing " in Female group is (0.980), which means that (98.0%) of the variance occurring in the level of English paragraph writing (the dependent variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (14.012), which expresses a large

effect size for the independent variable, because the value of (d) is greater than (0.8).

- Value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " English paragraph writing " in Male group is (0.960), which means that (96.0%) of the variance occurring in the level of English paragraph writing (the dependent variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (9.778), which expresses a large effect size for the independent variable.

## *4.1.2 The Second Hypothesis.*

**There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test (mechanics of writing) favoring the experimental groups.**

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, independent sample t-test was used to find out the difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test (mechanics of writing).

**Table 4.4:**

*Independent Sample T-Test (Control- Experimental) Groups of the (EPWT) (Mechanics of Writing)*

| Group | Control Groups | | | Experimental Groups | | | t-value | SIG |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | | |
| Female group | 30 | 3.53 | 0.681 | 30 | 9.87 | 1.167 | 25.676 | 0.000 |
| Male group | 30 | 3.70 | 0.535 | 30 | 9.73 | 1.202 | 25.125 | 0.000 |

There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental female group in the post administration of the EPWT (Mechanics of Writing) favoring the female experimental group. There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental male group in the post administration of the EPWT (mechanics of writing) favoring the male experimental group. Figure 4.2 illustrates the results in table 4.3.
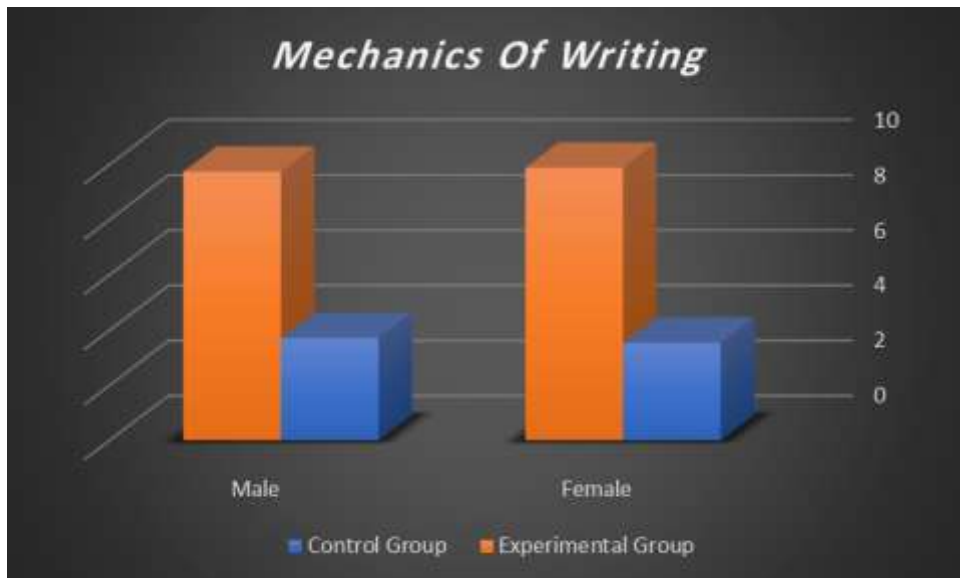
**Figure 4.2**

*Comparison between the mean scores of control and experimental groups in the Mechanics of writing.*

Data displayed in table 4.3 showed that the mean scores of the experimental groups in the EPWT (mechanics of writing) were (9.87 for females and 9.73 for males) and the scores of control groups were (3.53 for females and 3.70 for males). This indicates that the subjects in the experimental groups were much better in producing good mechanics of writing. Thus, the second hypothesis of the study was confirmed. Findings were the answer of the second question of the study (first sub-question): What is the effect of using WhatsApp on developing students' mechanics of writing (spelling, capitalization and punctuation)?

**The effect size of WhatsApp on developing English paragraph writing  (mechanics of writing):**

Table 4.5:

*Value of ($\eta^2$) and the level of mechanics of writing effect size*

| The Dependent Variable (mechanics of writing) | t | $t^2$ | df | $t^2$ + df | $\eta^2$ | The Effective Size | d | The Effective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female group | 25.676 | 659.257 | 58 | 717.257 | 0.919 | 91.9% | 6.743 | high |
| Male group | 25.125 | 631.266 | 58 | 689.266 | 0.916 | 91.6% | 6.598 | high |

**Data in table 4.5 shows the following:**

- This means the that effect size of using WhatsApp on developing English paragraph writing (mechanics of writing) in each group separately is large.

- This indicates that value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " mechanics of writing " in Female group is (0.919), which means that (91.9%) of the variance occurring in the level of mechanics of writing (the dependent variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (6.743), which expresses a large effect size for the independent variable.

- Value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " mechanics of writing " in Male group is (0.916), which means that (91.6%) of the variance occurring in the level of mechanics of writing (the dependent variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (6.598), which expresses a large effect size for the independent variable.

## 4.1.3 The Third Hypothesis.

**There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the EPWT (structure of the paragraph) favoring the experimental groups.**

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, independent sample t-test was used to find out the difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test (structure of the paragraph).

**Table 4.6:**

*Independent Sample T-Test (Control- Experimental) Group of The EPWT (structure of the paragraph)*

| Group | Control Group | | | Experimental Group | | | t-value | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | | |
| Female groups | 30 | 3.37 | 0.615 | 30 | 10.07 | 0.785 | 36.803 | 0.000 |
| Male | 30 | 3.37 | 0.615 | 30 | 9.80 | 0.925 | 31.729 | 0.000 |

groups

**Table 4.6 showed that**:

There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental female group in the post administration of the EPWT (structure of the paragraph) favoring the Female experimental group. There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental male group in the post administration of the EPWT (structure of the paragraph) favoring the male experimental group. Figure 4.3 illustrates the results in table 4.4.
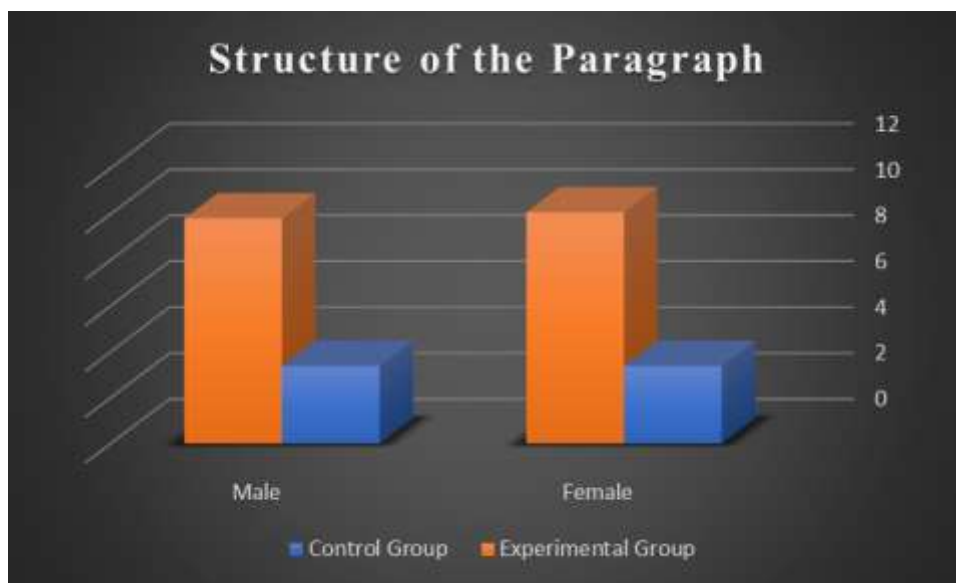


**Figure 4.3**

*Comparison between the mean scores of control and experimental groups in structure of the paragraph*

As shown in table 4.4, the means of experimental groups in paragraph structure were (10.7 for females and 9.80 for males) and the scores of the control groups were (3.37 for females and 3.37 for males). This, indicates that the subjects of the experimental groups were much successful in developing a well-structured paragraph than the control groups. Thus, the third hypothesis was accepted. These results provided an answer for the third question (second sub-question): What is the effect of using WhatsApp on developing students' skills in paragraph structure?

**The effect size of WhatsApp on developing the EPWT (structure of the paragraph):**

Table 4.7

*Value of ($\eta^2$) and the level of structure of the paragraph effect size*

| The Dependent Variable (structure of the paragraph) | t | $t^2$ | df | $t^2 + df$ | $\eta^2$ | The Effective Size | d | The Effective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female group | 36.803 | 1354.461 | 58 | 1412.461 | 0.959 | 95.9% | 9.665 | high |
| Male group | 31.729 | 1006.729 | 58 | 1064.729 | 0.946 | 94.6% | 8.332 | high |

**Data in table 4.7 shows the following:**

- This means that the effect size of using WhatsApp on developing the EPWT (structure of the paragraph) in each group separately is large.

- This indicates that value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " the EPWT (structure of the paragraph)" in Female group is (0.959), which means that (95.9%) of the variance occurring in the level of the EPWT (structure of the paragraph) (the dependent variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (9.665), which expresses a large effect size for the independent variable.

- Value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " the EPWT (structure of the paragraph)" in Male group is (0.946), which means that (94.6%) of the variance occurring in the level of the EPWT (structure of the paragraph) (the dependent variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (8.332), which expresses a large effect size for the independent variable.

## *4.1.4 The Fourth Hypothesis.*

**There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental groups in the pre- post administration of the EPWT, favoring the post test.**

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, independent samples T-test was used to find out difference in the mean scores of the

control and experimental groups in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test (structure of the paragraph).

## Table 4.8:

*Paired sample t-test (Pre- Post) administration of the EPWT*

| Group | Pre- test | | | Post test | | | t-value | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | | |
| Female group | 30 | 17.40 | 2.415 | 30 | 66.60 | 2.527 | 85.394 | 0.000 |
| Male group | 30 | 15.7 | 3.408 | 30 | 59.60 | 4.760 | 59.944 | 0.000 |

### Data in table 4.8 shows that:

There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the Female experimental group in the pre- post administration of the EPWT, favoring the post test. There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the male experimental group in the pre- post administration of the EPWT, favoring the post test. Figure 3.4 illustrates the results in table 3.5.
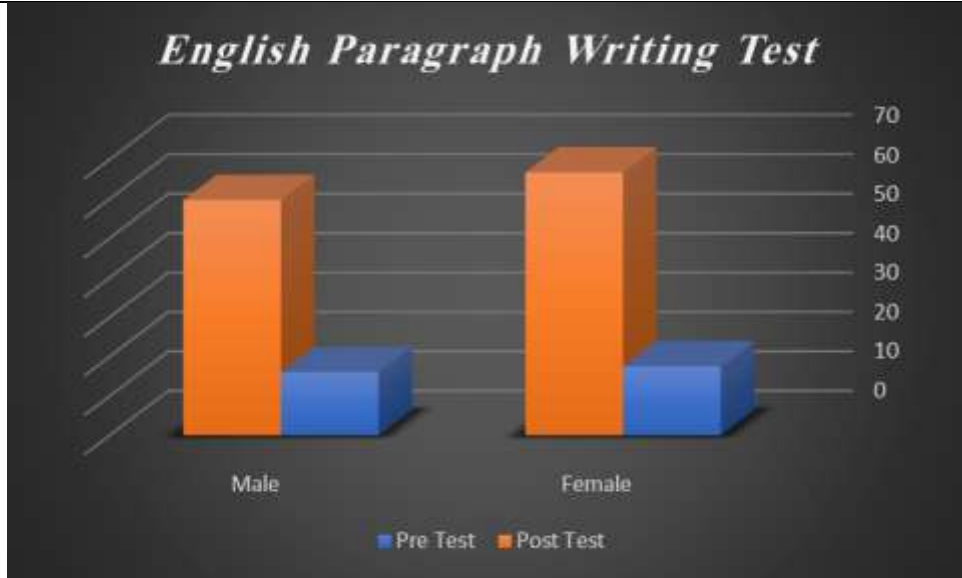
**Figure 4.4**

*Comparison between the mean scores of control and experimental group in the pre and post administration (EPWT)*

As shown in table 4.5, the scores of the female experimental groups in the post administration was (85.394) which was higher than their scores in the pre-administration which was (17.40). In addition, the scores of male experimental groups in the post administration was (59.944) which was higher than their scores in the pre administration which was (15.97). Thus, the fourth hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that WhatsApp could improve students' paragraph writing skills.

**The effect size of WhatsApp on developing the EPWT:**

Table 4.9:

*Value of ($\eta^2$) and the level of the EPWT effect size*

| The Dependent Variable (the EPWT) | t | df | $\eta^2$ | The Effective Size | d | The Effective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female group | 85.394 | 29 | 0.996 | 99.6% | 15.591 | high |
| Male group | 59.944 | 29 | 0.992 | 99.2% | 10.944 | high |

**Data in table 4.9 shows the following:**

- This means that the effect size of using WhatsApp on developing the EPWT in each group separately is large.

- This indicates that value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " the EPWT " in Female group is (0.996), which means that 99.6%) of the variance occurring in the level of the EPWT (the dependent variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (15.591), which expresses a large effect size for the independent variable.

- value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " the EPWT " in Male group is (0.992), which means that (99.2%) of the variance occurring in the level of the EPWT (the dependent

variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (10.944), which expresses a large effect size for the independent variable.

## 4.1.5 The Fifth Hypothesis.

**There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students in the post English Paragraph Writing Test favoring female students.**

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, independent samples T-test was used to find out difference in the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post administration of the English paragraph writing test.

**Table 4.10:**

*Independent sample t-test (Male- Female) groups of the EPWT*

| Group | Male groups | | | Female groups | | | t-value | Sig  ETA |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|---------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | | |
| Post Test | 30 | 59.60 | 4.760 | 30 | 66.60 | 2.527 | 7.114 | 0.000 47% |

**Data in table 4.10 shows that:**

There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the Male and Female students in the post administration of the EPWT favoring the Female students. Also, the effect size of using WhatsApp on developing overall English language writing skills and on the two parts of the EPWT, ETA squared is 47%. Figure 4.5 illustrates the results in table 4.6.
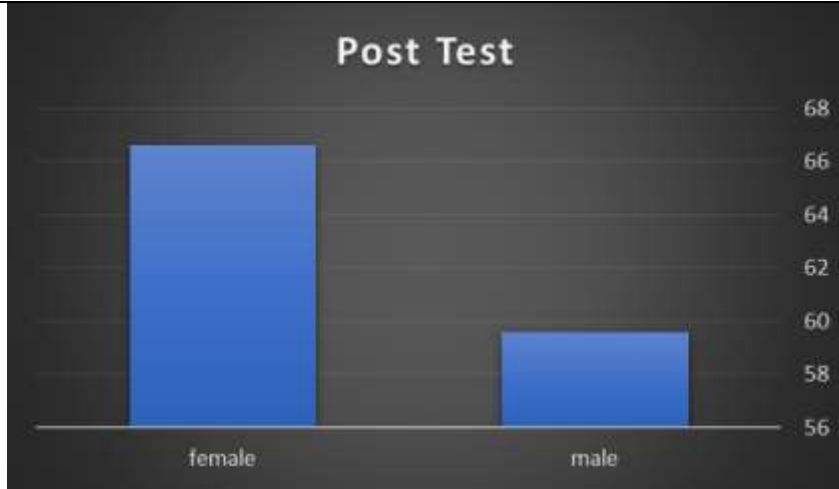
**Figure 4.5**

*Comparison between the mean scores of males and females in the post administration of the EPWT*

As shown in table 4.6, the scores of the female group was (66.60) in the post administration which was higher than male group's scores (59.60). This indicates that females were successful writers than males. Also, females were much better in using descriptions than males. Based on this result, the fifth hypothesis of the study was accepted. These results provided an answer for the fourth question of the study (third sub-question): What is the effect of gender difference on the written products of males and females using WhatsApp?

**The effect size of WhatsApp on developing English Paragraph Writing:**

Table 4.11

*Value of ($\eta^2$) and the level of English Paragraph Writing*

*effect size*

| The Dependent Variable (English Paragraph Writing) | t | $t^2$ | df | $t^2$ + df | $\eta^2$ | The Effective Size | d | The Effective |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post Test | 7. 114 | 50. 609 | 58 | 108. 609 | 0. 466 | 46. 6% | 1. 868 | high |

### Data in table 4.11 shows the following:

- This means that the effect size of using WhatsApp on developing English Paragraph Writing in Post Test is large.

- This indicates that value of ETA square ($\eta^2$) for " English Paragraph Writing " in Post Test is (0.466), which means that (46.6%) of the variance occurring in the level of the posttest English Paragraph Writing (the dependent variable) is due to the use of WhatsApp (the independent variable), as The value of (d) equal (1.868), which expresses a large effect size for the independent variable.

## Summary of the Results

The following is a summary of the results:

4.4.1 The WhatsApp groups students (N=60) were much better in the overall writing performance (t-value is 53.357 and 37.235) when compared with the control groups students.

4.4.2 A Statistically significant difference in mechanics of writing was found on behalf of the experimental groups (t-value is 25.676 and 25.125).

4.4.3 A Statistically significant difference in paragraph structure was found favoring the experimental groups (t-value is 36.803 and 31.729).

4.4.4 A Statistically significant difference in gender was found favoring the female group (t-value is 7.114).

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study, the following conclusions were drawn:

5.2.1 WhatsApp is found to be an effective instructional tool in teaching English writing skills.

5.2.2 WhatsApp procedures affect the students' English paragraph writing skills by focusing efforts on the writing products.

5.2.3 Using WhatsApp is quite acceptable for EFL third year preparatory Egyptian students.

5.2.4 WhatsApp provides students with a motivating environment in the group chat.

5.2.5 WhatsApp creates a communicative social sense among students and the teacher.

5.2.6 WhatsApp helps students to express themselves in a stress-free community.

5.2.7 WhatsApp contributes to English language methodology and provides new strategies for teaching English.

5.2.8 WhatsApp develops the critical skills with students through peer corrections.

5.2.9 There are some drawbacks of using WhatsApp that not all the subjects participated in the discussion and some sent messages late at night.

## Recommendations

Several recommendations are provided:

5.3.1 WhatsApp should be used in teaching English writing skills.

5.3.2 Teachers are recommended to be trained in using WhatsApp as a new instructional tool in EFL classes.

5.3.3 Team work should be promoted in EFL writing classes.

5.3.4 Teachers should encourage their students to participate in peer correction as it helps in evaluating themselves' and others' works as well.

5.3.5 Students should be trained to use smart phones in the learning process. **Suggestions for Further Studies**

5.4.1 Conducting studies to use WhatsApp with EFL students at various educational levels.

5.4.2 This study can be replicated on other English language skills grammar, spelling, reading and speaking.

5.4.3 Investigating the effects of using smart phones in teaching and learning.

5.4.4 Investigating the feasibility of using social media in EFL classes.

5.4.5 More research is needed to investigate the effect of WhatsApp on promoting EFL students' motivation towards learning English writing.

5.4.6 Further research is needed to explore the challenges of using WhatsApp in EFL classes.

5.4.7 Investigating teachers' attitudes towards WhatsApp as a new instructional tool.

5.4.8 A study is needed to explore the effect of WhatsApp in other types of writing.

5.4.9 Investigating the effect of using WhatsApp on developing students' self-confidence and critical thinking skills through peer corrections.

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