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Faculty of Letters and Languages  
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**The Impact of Facebook Comments on EFL Learners' Writing Skill  
& Language Teaching  
Case Study of Second Year Master Students of Linguistics**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and Foreign Languages in  
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master in Linguistics

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## **Declaration**

**We hereby declare that the substance of this Master dissertation is entirely the result of our investigation and that due references or acknowledgements are made whenever necessary to the work of other researchers.**

## **DEDICATION**

We dedicate this modest work:

To our dear parents,

To our lovely

sisters,

To our brothers,

To all family members,

To our friends

And to every person we share love and respect with.

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## **List of Acronyms**

<b>AW</b>	.	Academic Writing
<b>CMC</b>	.	Computer Mediated Communication
<b>EFL</b>	.	English as a Foreign language
<b>FB</b>	.	Facebook
<b>IFD</b>	.	The International Federation of Documentation
<b>ISO</b>	.	The International Standardisation Organisation
<b>UNESCO</b>		United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to determine whether Facebook (FB) commenting can enhance one's ability to write in the English language. Thus, second-year master's students in linguistics at the Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret, Algeria, make up the study's sample. Where the researchers used a semi-structured questionnaire for 38 Master's students. Next, teachers participated in a semi-structured interview. Consequently, the findings indicate that students concur that the phenomenon of Facebook commenting has a detrimental impact on their writing because it has significantly reduced the use of standard language due to factors like excessive use of social media, distractions and reliance on abbreviations, acronyms, and emojis in typing, which can result in disregarding the importance of developing one's vocabulary and spelling. However, some professors and students acknowledged that, if used properly, Facebook holds great potential for enhancing students writing abilities, since Facebook is good at bridging time/space in a virtual setting. Moreover, the importance of this study is set to provide insightful analysis and feedback regarding the connection between Facebook and English writing skill and style.

**Keywords: Facebook, writing styles,. vocabulary, writing skills, FB commenting**

# General Introduction

Internet web or social networking has been a major factor in shortening the gaps in terms of Internet web or social networking has been a major factor in shortening the gaps in terms of communication and a fast getaway for information (Shih. 2013) this has enabled knowledge exchange in ways such as online meetings and discussions that were not possible before. which made it an ideal tool for evolving many intellectual fields the likes of education and one of the most noticeable effects of social networking is the spread of English. thus the potential that the social world of the internet has for English learning is noticeable on so many levels.

Henceforth, the researchers decided to investigate the possibility and effect of using social media platforms notably Facebook in learning English and narrowed its too revealing the effect on the writing skill of English learners to see weather it riches or decreases a language's vocabulary, grammar, and spelling also the academic writing abilities of students. Thus, the study has targeted and questioned Ibn Khaldoun's second-year Master's students and teachers who serve as a convenient sample. the motives behind this study are to build on the belief that English is bound to be 'defiled'. That is to say, for students, online writing extends beyond merely socializing. Therefore, these Facebook written conversations and commenting not only engender new ways of using language, but also new forms of literacy. Moreover, Master two students in the English department, use Facebook beyond the boundaries of social communication, they use Facebook groups and pages to learn English and to exchange information in varied ways which are doomed to affect students' writing skills or English language standard version in general.



## **The Purpose of The Study**

This study aims to investigate the impact of using Facebook on improving English Foreign Language (EFL) Writing Skills and Vocabulary Enrichment among University students of Ibn Khaldoun of Tiaret, Linguistics students. Henceforth, Facebook can be a virtual platform where both teachers and students can interact and discuss the classroom subject matter through posting and commenting in Facebook groups. Writing skills can be major criteria for a better academic position and greater educational success. However, this advantage will be lost, if students do not believe in the importance of writing skills and how Facebook could affect it. Moreover, language learning has grown beyond the boundaries of the four walls of the classroom most language learning occurs outside and informally. Informal learning through social media like Facebook is a significant alternative environment for language practice and use.

## **The Research Problem**

The current generation is considered as digital natives that can manipulate electronic devices like smart-phones, and involve in the virtual world via mastering the use of ANDROID and IOS applications the likes of Facebook. Whereas. the objective of the research is rather a contribution that covers the already existed stock of knowledge about Facebook effect in and for educational and pedagogical purposes.

## **Research Questions**

5.1-Does Facebook improve the learners' writing skill proficiency?

5.2-Can we consider Facebook as a teaching/learning tool?

## **Hypothesis**

6.1-According to what has been said before, we hypothesize that Facebook has an impact on students' writing proficiency. Hereby, the researcher is also open to investigating how FB might impact the written language and motivation as a whole. Also, Facebook can play an important role in learning a foreign language. That is to say, It can be a virtual world where both teachers and students interact and discuss the classroom subjects or other educational topics through posting and commenting in Facebook groups and pages.

## **Research Objectives**

- To raise both teachers and students' awareness about the advantages and the disadvantages of Facebook on students' vocabulary learning.
- Check whether Facebook comments have an effective key role in enhancing the writing style of EFL learners

- To examine how EFL Tiaret university students develop their writing style by the use of Facebook.

## **Research Methodology**

A mixed research method consisting of quantitative and qualitative approaches has been used in this research, which includes two types of data collection: students' questionnaire, and teachers' interview. Furthermore The research investigation was centred on a Facebook group "Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret Department of English," with students who study Applied Linguistics.

## **Sample of The Study**

To obtain sufficient data, a set of list questions were given to a large number of teachers, but the misfortune was on our side the whole research investigation, Due to the lock-down, only 12 of them were available to help us conduct our investigation as for the questionnaire, we had to post it online for the sake of getting enough data to set a base for our research

## **The Organization of The Study**

The present research is divided into a general introduction, three main chapters and a general conclusion. The general introduction includes a brief discussion of the topic and the research problem:

Chapter one will be devoted to the literature review, it examines the importance of writing as a skill and to EFL learners, and it emphasizes the relation between the two terms, "writing and FB". The second chapter sheds light on social media and discusses its different elements. Additionally, it deals with some aspects of FB and its role as a tool in learning a foreign language The third chapter provides the reader with some details on the research design, methodology and the analysis of the research methods, where we discuss our research findings. The last part is the general conclusion which summarises the main points of the conducted research and make path for further study about the topic as well it provides a list of suggestions and recommendations.

# Chapter One

## Literature Review

**1.1. Introduction:**

In this chapter, there will be a brief discussion of the origin of writing, particularly, academic writing, where we will discuss its definition and illustrate its importance to learners. Moreover, this paper highlights the importance of writing in general and the importance of teaching writing skills in EFL classroom. It also tries to cast light on the usage of Facebook for learning reasons. And it will review the relationship between writing and Facebook.

**1.2. Origin of Writing**

Writing is an activity or process to express ideas, thoughts or merely to speak your mind. According to Collins & Genter (1980, p.16), writing is generally a set of letters or symbols written or marked on a surface to give birth to what is known as communication. “Writing is transforming information or expression of original ideas consecutively in the new language”. (Rivers, 1981, p.294). Brown, (2001, p.336) also says that writing is procedural thinking. Moreover, he claims that writing can be structured and given with an infinite number of revisions before its release.

Writing symbolizes what we think. It is because the writing process conveys things, which lingers in the brain. The writers have to write about what is laying in their thoughts pattern on a paper by using the correct procedure. Another definition of writing proposed by Nation (2009, p.112) “Writing is an activity that can be put to good use preparing for my work in other different skills; listening, speaking, and reading. It gives the possibility for words that have been receptively to come into productivity”.

Both second and foreign language has a primordial feature for any communication interaction and acquired more and more significant impact in our universal society and effective in schooling. In other words, writing begins to be commonly notable as an essential skill for education, personal and business reasons. “As advances in transportation and technology allow people to interact with each other, communication across languages becomes ever more essential” (Cushing, 2002).

**1.3. Academic Writing**

A.W (Academic Writing) is either composing tasks that may go from one passage to a few pages in length or, composing answers on tests and tests that might be a couple of sentences long or a total article. These activities are designed for anybody who is studying at English medium colleges and universities (Bailey, 2003).

“Academic writing in English may be different not only from academic writing in your language but even from other writing in English” (Zemach & Rumisek, 2003, p.?).

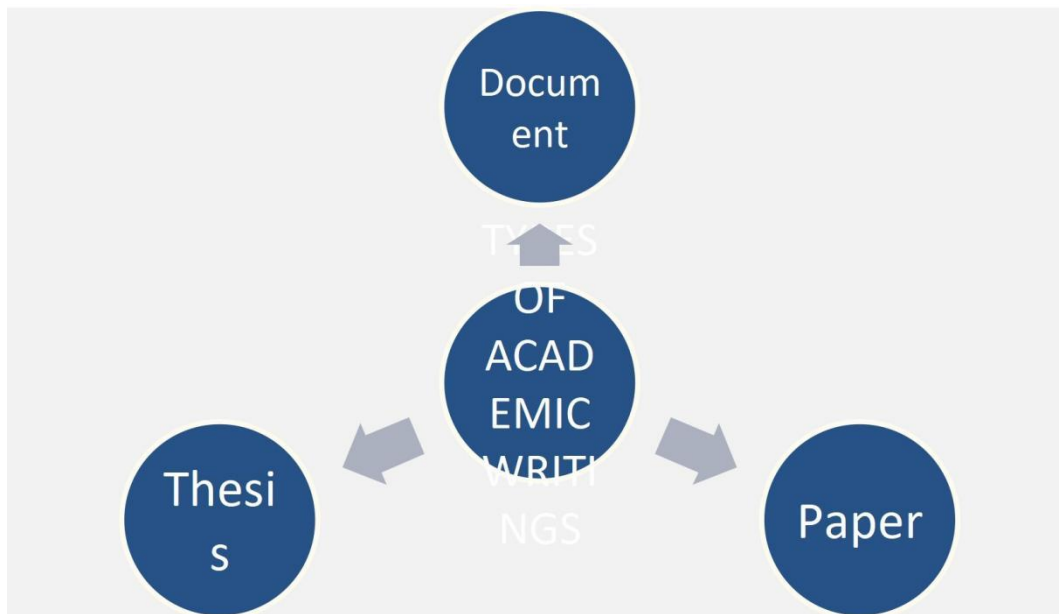
Bailey also points out that academic writing is a flexible course that legalizes students to operate their work either lonely or with the help of the teacher (2003).

### **1.3.1. Aspects of Academic Writing**

Academic writing is complex when it comes to its ideas, objectives, formal style and way of presenting thoughts and concepts, and it has very little of the author's personality and responsibility; above all, it uses language precisely and accurately. Many features of academic writing create its organized and well-planned structure. (Willson, 2018) illustrates these features as follows:

- 1- Formal vocabulary: academic writing style must avoid many informal words or phrases that are usually used for speech purposes such as phrasal verbs: shut down, bring up. Or abbreviated language forms as: can't, ain't.
- 2- Cautious language: academic writing requires a cautious style of writing. Therefore the ideas that are presented should be based on absolute truth and strongest arguments.
- 3- Objectivity: the author should thoroughly focus on the information that he is giving, by keeping his point of view as limited as possible.
- 4- Precision: when showing a certain type of data in academic writing, it is best to be precise and keep away from ambiguity. For example, instead of writing "a bunch of people" write "90 thousand people".
- 5- Organization: academic writing is a well-organized style; it shifts from one concept to another with logical sense and planned direction.
- 6- Complexity: written language is known to be more complex than spoken language. It has more lexical variation. Moreover, academic texts are shorter; they also have longer words and complex phrases.

### 1.3.1. Types of Academic Writing



**Figure 01: Types of Academic Writing (Google Images)**

The research that one does means to attempt to find answers to a set of questions that make up a problematic. This research may be a fruit of a personal choice, or interest in a given field; or imposed by some authority or by the necessities of the environment. A historical research paper should be undertaken within a period of time. But before dealing with the components of a research work, we must first tackle some types of academic writing (research paper).

a) Thesis: “It is a long piece of writing on a given topic that students do to state an idea or theory, in order to get a University degree” (Hornby, 2010, p.1640).

b) Document; “A document is an official piece of writing which gives information about a given subject “(Hornby, 2010, p.200).

c) Paper: According to Hornby the word paper refers either to examination or to “ A written document that reports scientific or academic research and is usually subjected to peer review before publication in a scientific journal or in the proceedings of a scientific or academic meeting” (2010,p.1040).

**1.4. The Importance of Writing**

Writing is important because it is used extensively in higher education and workplace. In discussing the significance of writing to learning, Suleiman (2002) stresses that writing is an essential factor of language.

Long ago writing really started, though approximately the majority of human beings grow up speaking their first language, writing came after, and acquiring a spoken language comes naturally as long as a person is exposed to it. However, children for starter should get a conscious learning in order to write. As Harmer states: “being able to write is a vital skill for ‘speakers’ of a foreign language as much as for anyone using their own first language” (2004, p.7). Yet, in the context of education, relying on ‘writing proficiency’ is important in a way of measuring the student’s knowledge in most exams of testing foreign language abilities (Harmer, 2004, p.7).

The word writing which comes from the verb “to write” means being engaged in an activity and process. Thus, writing is the most popular means of communication. In addition, writing is transforming thoughts into statements. It is a production of spoken language on paper. Mayer believes that writing is speaking to others on paper –or on a computer screen...writing is also an action- a process of discovering and assembling your ideas, putting them on paper...(2009, p.2) One of the important reasons that pushes a student to write, is communication. The spread of the internet and the subsistence in technological world make connecting with computers desirable. “People are exchanging messages faster by sending quick computer messages or by getting in a chat room” (Mayer, 2009, p.5).

**1.5. Conducting an Academic Research Paper**

In Any scientific production, whether a paper, a thesis or a document, it should necessarily abide by conventional rules which are internationally agreed on. Furthermore, The evaluation of such a work focuses on its content and its form. Here, we are going to focus on the form which refers to the presentation of the work.

**1.5.1. Presentation**

International norms for the presentation of papers, thesis, books, etc., have been standardised by international institutions such as: the UNESCO, the International Federation of Documentation (I. F. D), the International Standardisation Organisation (I. S. O.). A research paper, then, is to be presented as follows:

- The front page/cover (title, researcher“ name, supervisor, year...).

- The title page: first page after the cover with title.
- Dedication: not academic but personal and optional.
- Acknowledgments: express gratitude to people who helped in the elaboration of the work.
- Contents.
- List of tables, abbreviations, illustration, maps, figures, etc.
- Introduction.
- Main body of the paper (development).
- Conclusion,
- Bibliography (Bailey, 2003, p.106).

### **1.6. The Writing Styles**

It is the style of writing or the way we use words to say what we want to say. Different situations call for different ways of putting words together. The way we write in academic and scientific settings differs greatly from the way we write to a friend or close one. The tone, vocabulary, and syntax, all change as the occasion changes. This difference of writing styles lies in the difference between formality and informality, or the difference between formal and informal writing.

#### **1.6.1. Formal Writing**

Formality in writing does not come from deliberately writing easy, simple sentences, or using colloquial words where more complex and sophisticated ones would serve the same purpose better. It comes from making sure that no inappropriate informal language, like “slang”, is used. This also reinforces the sense of “objectivity”. Formal writing style tends to cover the use of longer and more complex sentences. Therefore, formal writing is less personal and can be used when writing for professional or academic purposes like university assignments, examinations...etc. Formal writing occurs in situations that are serious or that involve people who are not close enough. It avoids the use of colloquialisms, contractions, or first-person pronouns such as ‘I’ or ‘We’.

#### **1.6.2. Informal Writing**

The informal use of language can occur in casual situations, as in the case of oral performance of language, informal language may occur within the writing process, especially when it comes to the diction of words. Currin and Tracy (2003) argued that: “the informal can give a chance to see one’s own ability before writing a formal paper.” (p.16), here it means



that informal language use might occur before writing down any formal written composition. Thus, Currin and Tracy (2003) pointed out that at a certain level: “students must master unfamiliar vocabulary before they can comprehend difficult ideas.”(p. 05). So, as it tends to be more casual and spontaneous, the informal style made it easier for students to write using abbreviations, and colloquial words and expressions to form short and simple sentences. “Such writing style avoids word clutter and gets directly to the point” (Navickienė, V., Kavaliauskienė, D., & Pevcevičiūtė, S, 2010). The latter, is appropriate when communicating with friends and other close ones, using more personal tone. It is used when writing personal e-mails, letters, text messages or IMs or in “net-speak” through the different Social Network Websites such as making Facebook/Twitter posts. In such writing style, making use of “shorthand” such as texting, using contractions and/or abbreviations in addition to slang, clichés, passive and/or imperative voice can be acceptable. In fact, formal and informal writing serve different purposes. The tone, the choice of words and the way the words are put together vary between the two styles. It is social rather than any other codes to determine which style to adopt in a given situation. Thus, what determines whether your writing is informal or formal includes: what type of writing it is (letter, report, e-mail ...etc.), and who the audience is (friend, boss, family member...etc.). Obviously, formal and informal writing styles differ at certain levels. Yet, the main thing to remember is that both are correct, it is just a matter of tone and setting. State from where you get the info.

### **1.7. The New Area of Modern Writing**

As the world developed and opted for the use of technologies in all domains, writers as well shifted towards technology-based writing tools in order to write and polish their written compositions, and thus the digital writing emerged as a new way to write. Merchant (2006) stated that nowadays, Digital tools are considered to be a feature of everyday life in the 21st century, with emerging technology devices constantly reconfiguring possibilities for communication and for knowledge flows. As these technologies gain momentum, they are profoundly changing the context of almost every aspect of life including education, where students – now became screen-addicted practicing reading and writing using computers and/or mobile devices (p. 85).

**1.8. The Chronicles of Writing in the New Area**

In today's complex, high-technological world, the importance of writing is a fundamental organizing objective of education which is no less than valid but practical. Writing, properly understood, thought on paper increasingly in this information age, it is also thought on a screen and much has changed in the landscape of what it meant to "write" and to "be a writer". Social Networking and collaborative writing technologies have taken a big hold if not always, in Education.

Certainly among students the Internet has changed the way of writing. Today for instance, there are more people writing e-mails, text messages, blog posts, and more self-published authors than ever before. Written communication is popular in, and everyone is doing it. Although, writing between two people was private, much of today's writing is loud and public connected through a web of hyperlinks to every other piece of writing out there. So, the digital writing is more than just a skill; it is a mean of interfacing with ideas and with the world, a mode of thinking and expressing in all grades and disciplines, and what is written does not just say a lot about people, it says a lot about their communities, their societies, their cultures. Before, writing has never been more influential, more dispersed, and more abundant than right now.

For Merchant (2006), what critically defines digital writing makes it necessary to bind between the act of "writing" and "technology". Particularly, digital writing is a singular product of the computer age (p. 86). Whereby, the text becomes more immediate, more fragmented, and fluid, and the medium offers greater capacity for individual participation and interactivity. So, books will move to a new version because technology made a shift in the way information is presented today, as it was a turning point from papers to digital screens. Therefore, plenty of writings nowadays take place over electronic screens. In this regard, Gnanadesikan (2009):

The move to word processing brought a change from writing that is either physiologically produced (in handwriting) or mechanically produced (in type) to writing that is electronically produced and digitally stored ... This digital writing is not fixed in any location: it moves automatically up the screen as new writing appears below it. It can also be erased with convenient but occasionally disastrous ease. Its chief attraction is the ease by which a witch can be revised. Nowadays we all must be typists. But no matter how poorly we type, the backspace is there to provide us with orthographic forgiveness ... Electronic writing is so easy and so fast that one can be fooled into thinking that there is a direct transfer of thought into text – though this may not be either true or good thing. Writers spend less time

planning to write and more time writing, though they often then fritter away the saved time by fiddling with the resulted text.” (N.P). paraphrase this or select the most important.

Digital writing can be anything. It can be a blog post, an e-mail, a text message. It can be a tweet, or a Facebook update, or a conversation on Tumblr. It can be comments on blog posts, responses to news articles, book reviews shared on GoodReads, or fan fiction. It can also look a lot more traditional: poems posted on the web, self-published novels on Amazon and iBooks, or short stories uploaded to an online ‘zone. Hypertext allows linking what one writes with what others have written. Google docs allow for simultaneous collaborative writing. Multi-site blogs allow many authors to work together toward a common goal. The internet allows communication through texts in new ways; it frees the writer to join his/her words with others, to innovate, and to let their words become their actions. Living spontaneously, or vicariously, or cooperatively through words, which can form communities, can take a stand, and at the same time can create as they were created. For that reason, many scholars emphasized the importance of e-writing or what is labeled as online or digital writing. Gerson and Gerson (2006) argued that: “More and more, technical writing is online. One component of this growth is the Internet, which has generated a variety of occupations related to the design, development, and maintenance of websites (p. 58). That is to say; online writing is what is written on Web pages, those written compositions fulfill the purposes and aims of the sites it was dedicated to. Moreover, e-writing or the typed written works and composition became more polished and much more organized and readable on screens. Kent (2002) asserted that: “ good page and screen design not only enhances the visual appeal of your writing but improves its legibility- readers will be able to locate information on the page faster..., will read the text faster” (p. 89).

### **1.9. Definition and Features of Writing Skills**

According to Nunan (2003, p.2), Writing is a physical and mental activity. It is about discovering ideas, thinking about how to communicate, develop them into statements and paragraphs that will be comprehensible to a reader. Writing is a skill that is powered by emotion, artistry, and imagination. It requires time, skill, knowledge, and efforts. It is in the loop of the give and takes cycle. It is a basic skill of language that should be taught and learned. The writing skill based on standard features which are:

- 1) Thesis focus: clear writing starts with clear thinking.
- 2) Organization: effective writing demands logical, coherence and cohesive ideas.
- 3) Support and Elaboration: the ideas must be supported by strong evidences.

4) Grammatical convention: grammatical rules must be respected in order to serve a clear written document to the reader.

Style: good writing communicates ideas clearly and effectively based on elegant style.

### **1.10. The Importance of Teaching the Writing Skills in an EFL Classroom**

David Nunan (2005) stated that writing is an extremely cognitive activity in which the writer is acquired to demonstrate control of variables simultaneously. Strong writing skills may enhance students' chances for success. Writing is an essential factor of language. Good writing skills are needed for all the students in order to accomplish their educational and employable requirements (as cited in Bell and Burnaby, (1984, p. 36). Also. developing written skills will enable students to learn how to compose ideas, organize their thoughts and arguments, support key points, and share information.

### **1.11. The Relation Between Writing and Facebook**

Social Media has an impact on the writing skills. Accordingly, frequent exposure to FB has influenced every aspect of our lives and one of the most noticeable aspects is the way we write, and use language. Seeing lots of informal written language in FB is inevitable since people are free to post anything in this site.” Therefore, frequency in using Facebook in its first stages means adopting its informal language by its users” (Tretenfahn, 2011). In the same vent retenfahn says some of the ramifications can be seen on the internet, Email, blogs, Chartrooms, MySpace and Facebook seem to be treated as “Trash” forms of communication where good spelling and grammar are irrelevant.(2011). Such as spelling errors and poor grammar, particularly the confusion of words such as "fourth" and "forth", "bean" and "been", "principle" and "principal", and "formerly" and "formally". And yet millions of users are still active in FB for the attractive linguistics features that are available on the site.

#### **1.11.1. Facebook Groups as a Learning Tool**

Yu-ching Chen (2014) declared that people in Facebook groups addressed complex topics and provided and detailed replies and that discussion in Facebook groups promoted high level of thinking skills (as cited in Schroeder and Greenbowe, 2009, p. 26 ). Moreover, a 2015 review by Bernard Montoneri found educators can open and administrate Facebook, groups for their students to share knowledge post, comment and dialogue with other members of the groups (as cited in Baran, 2010, p. 64). Facebook group supports teaching/ learning process. Facebook group will be the world's engine of discovery and innovation. Facebook may play virtual role on learning English language practice.

**1.11.2. Facebook Comments as a Learning Tool**

Facebook group provides a feature where the members can share and discuss about something. It is called Facebook comments. Facebook comments are used to interact among the members of Facebook group. This situation underlies the creativity of the teacher to create something new in the teaching and learning process. Teacher can bring the ability of Facebook comments as a media in teaching, specifically in teaching writing.

**1.12. Students' Written Comments as a Feedback on Facebook**

Mervat Abd Elfatah Ali Said Ahmed (2016) found that Students managed to learn new sentences or new writing structures when they saw friends posting about their feelings and ideas, and when they commented on each other's comments. Students learned grammar and improved their writing skills by:

- Reading the comments and posts from their peers.
- Being able to identify their own and their friends' writing mistakes and correct them.
- Discussing incorrect grammar with Facebook friends.
- Responding to classmates' comments and posts. (P. 11).

Comment is one of the Facebook's features. It is a Facebook add that allows students to interact through writing their thoughts and opinions. The possibility of modifying and editing offers the students with a chance to correct their feedback.

**1.13. Enhancing the Writing Components: Grammar, Sentence Structure and Vocabulary**

Ru-Chu Shih (2013) viewed that: Using peer assessment on Facebook to assist students in learning English for Business Communication can be an effective way to improve their grammar skills such as tense and sentence structure as well as to enhance their learning desire of such a difficult professional subject. (P.7). Additionally, (Bouhami, W, 2016) claimed that using Facebook may impact the students' vocabulary by joining groups that have been set up specifically for learning English and learning new vocabularies. (P. 44). Facebook is a learning platform offers students a large sphere to interact with each other, when they post or comment they have enough time to choose words, apply grammar rules and sentence structure, check punctuation, and learn new vocabulary from each other.

**1.14. Conclusion**

This chapter is purely the theoretical phase of the whole work. In brief, it sheds light on two major issues that this research paper aims to unveil. First, it introduces academic writing and its importance to EFL learners. Second, the researcher extended the discussion to thoroughly identify Facebook groups and comments as a learning tool in education which offers many opportunities of learning for students.

# Chapter Two

## Facebook in Algeria

**2.1. Introduction**

The whole world has turned to a “small village” with no doubt. The globe has been unified and changed by the development of technology as the perfect medium to investigate the vast extent of knowledge. Social networking sites although has been reorganized as an important resource for education today, studies however shows that students use social networking sites such as Facebook for fun, to kill time, to meet existing friends or to make new ones (Ellison, Stienfield and Lamp 2007). Cited in Tharinee Kamnortsin, 2014.

Students are more exposed and influenced by social media networks. Social media as a medium of interaction between students have been part of a debate in present day, and which have affected their academic performance; because of their addictiveness and exposure on it.

This research is specifically interested in EFL students of Algeria. A straight connection occurs between social media and scholar performance of ELT students; hence, social media is negatively combined with their academic accomplishment, because of the use of abbreviations while texting affect directly their formal writing and is more serious than its benefits.

**2.2. An Overview on Modern Social Media**

Over the last two decades, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) has seized the spotlight in terms of its effect upon language. In its most basic sense, CMC is a contact between human beings through computer devices. Additionally, Computer-Mediated Communication can be defined as a research field that explores the social, communicative and linguistic impact of communication technologies, which have continually evolved in connection with the use of computer networks (Baron, 2000).

**2.2.1. Linguistic Features of CMC**

Language is a means of conveying ideas and human speech through a system of arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols. In writing, Crystal (2004) identifies five distinctive features of written language, summarized as follows:

- Graphic features: the general presentation and organization of the written language, defined in terms of such factors as distinctive typography, page design, spacing, use of illustrations and colour.
- Orthographic (or graph logical) features: the writing system of an individual language, defined in terms of such factors as distinctive use of the alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, and ways of expressing emphasis such as italics, boldface; for instance,



American and British English are distinguished by many spelling differences (e.g. centre vs. center).

- Grammatical features: the many possibilities of syntax and morphology, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of sentence structure, word order and word inflections.
- Lexical features: the vocabulary of a language, defined in terms of the set of words and idioms given distinctive use within a variety.
- Discourse features: the structural organization of a text, defined in terms of such factors as coherence, relevance, paragraph structure, and the logical progression of ideas.

### **2.3. Social Media in Algeria**

As it was stated in „African Leadership Magazine“, the Internet has observed a maintained growth in adoption rate in Africa, with penetration currently pegged at 16 per cent and more than 167 million active users across the continent. (Elhimden et al, 2014). The vast developed adoption of social media is not easily an argument of creating more local content. “The world is a stage where with the internet people can do whatever they want. Because it gives them power, opportunity and space to be creative and free” said Atagana (cited in Elhimden et al, 2014)

Social media have become a strong instrument in Africa. To speak more specifically the case of Algeria is taken. According to internet web state (cited in

Samira Chaabna & Hu Wang, 2014: 48), over the past decade the number of internet users in Algeria has greatly increased more than 100 times, from 50.000 users in 2000 to approximately 6,7 million users in 2014. This is due to the increase of internet speed and lowering of tariffs as well as the introduction of new telecommunication technologies such as 3G and 4G LTE. Algerie telecom launched an LTE network in 2014, making Algeria the first country in North Africa to have such a network.

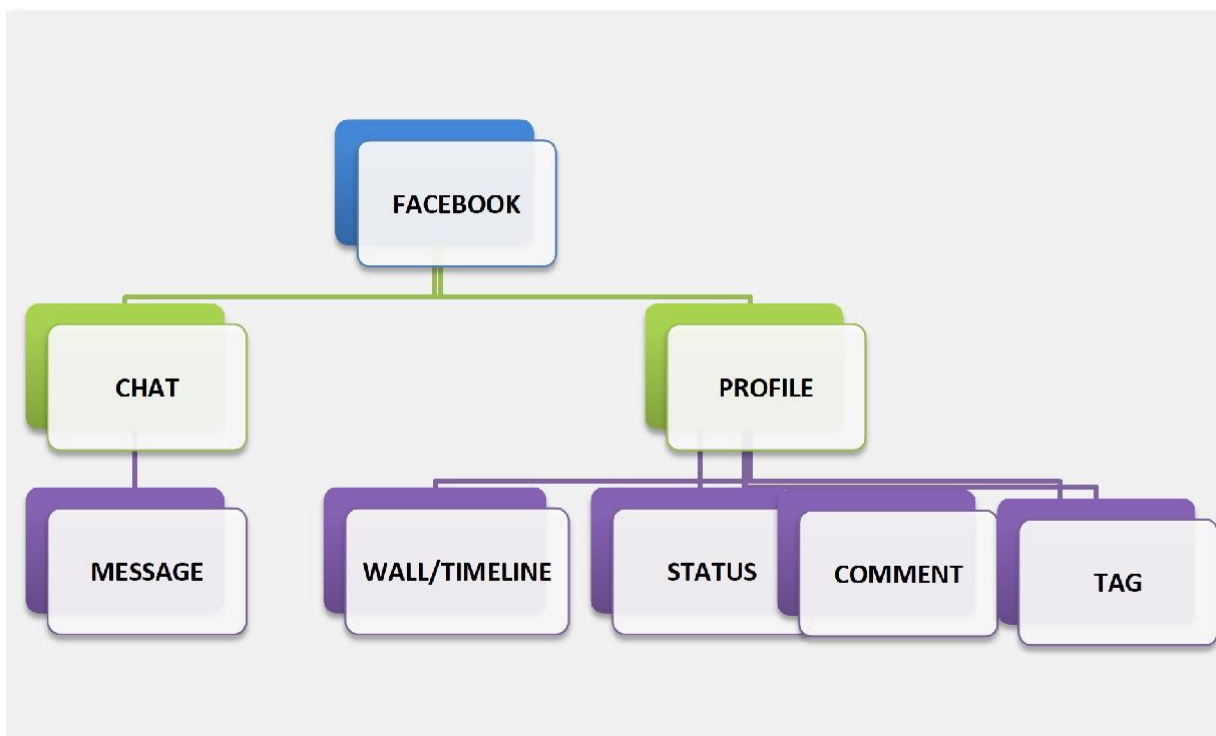
### **2.4. Facebook (FB)**

Facebook is a networking site, which connects people from all over the world, making the Earth a global village. This giant social networking was launched by Mark Zuckerberg and his friends. The website mainly aims at connecting people or helps them socialize and makes it revenue out of advertising. Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and his roommates at Harvard. He initially founded a website called “Facemash” for Harvard students. Since the website attracted many users, he was motivated to programme “Facebook”. Initially, the usage of this website was limited to Harvard students. Later, seeing the response that

website received, it was extended to students of other universities as well. In 2009, the services of this website were made global to any one above the age of 13.

FB does not only allow its users to upload photos, discuss different subjects, and update their profiles but also leave messages for other users whether they are their friends or not; being online or offline (Amasha & Alkhalaf, 2014,p. ). Bodomo (2010) describes FB in the following words: FB, the new CMC medium, would become one of the most popular websites ...its popularity has increased so much so that not only the youth but some prominent members of older generations...use it to get in touch with customers (316). In the same stream of thought, Christensson (2008) defines Facebook as “a social networking website that was originally designed for college students, but is now open to anyone 13 years of age or older”.

### 2.4.1. FB Vocabulary



**Figure02: Facebook components**

FB is currently the leading social networking site with more than 500 million active users as of March 2011. Working within and around FB benefits users to encounter various elements of FB vocabulary. The most known ones are mentioned below:

### 2.4.2. FB Profile

It is where FB’s users share information about themselves, including their interests, work history, education, religion, date of birth, location (past and present), favourite music, movies, etc. These pieces of information shown on the profile can be updated at any time (Margret, 2010).

**2.4.3. Wall/ Timeline**

“Timeline” is a new Facebook feature where most recent updates are introduced such as photos, events, friends added and comments. Members can click to specific months and years to see FB activity from that time period. “Timeline” has replaced the “Facebook Wall” (Christensson, 2008).

**2.4.4. Status**

This space is used by Facebookers to update their friends with recent news. These updates could be short. e.g. “Home sick”, “Stuck in traffic” or long such as a debate of thousands of characters. “Status can take numerous forms and be in different posts, for instance, photos, questions, mentioning what they are doing and so on” (Beese, 2015, para23).

1.2.10.1.4. Home Page Though an FB newbie may not distinguish between profile and home page. “There is a slight difference between these two terms. By definition, page refers to the account of brands and celebrities. E.g.: a company’s page. In home page, any FB’s participant has a list of recent updates from the individuals and companies that they have chosen to follow” (Facebook Vocabulary, 2011, p.?).

**2.4.5. Comment**

“Users write messages by clicking “comment”. These messages occur either as a reply to a status update or to a note on a photograph “(Facebook Vocabulary, 2011).

**2.4.6. Tag**

“Tagging is marking a photo, video, or any post with other Facebook members” (Beese, 2015, P.?).

**2.4.7. Chat**

“Chat is a type of instant messaging via FB. Additionally, it is the exchange of typed messages between computer users in real time via the Internet “(Beese, 2015, para.21).

**2.4.8. Message**

“Similar to emails, they are messages sent from one Facebook account to another. You can message more than one person at a time” (Beese, 2015P.?).

**2.5. FB Linguistic Features**

Facebook’s conversation cannot be free from the use of these three features: abbreviation, acronyms and emoticons. These elements are needed for expressing nuances of meaning (e.g. Sarcasm, bemusement, tentativeness, irritation, etc.). Thus, the communication between the users is clearly understandable.

2.5.1. Emoticons ( smiley)

The first appearance of emoticons was in 1982 by Scott Fahlman. Baron (2000) states that “Fahlman wrote at the time: “I propose...the following character sequence for joke markers: :)”. Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this use :- (“). The feature emoticons or smiley are generated from the combination of punctuation marks or numerals on the keyboard. She further argues that the most common emoticons are:

- :-) **Happiness, humour**
- :-o **Shocked, amazed**
- :-( **Sadness, displeased**
- :“( **Crying**
- ;-) **Winking**
- :-] **Sarcastic**

Figure three 03 below shows examples of Facebook emoticon:

:) happy	:c call me - New!	:> blushing	L-) loser
:( sad	:)] on the phone - New!	:P tongue	:-& sick
;) winking	~X( at wits' end - New!	:-* kiss	:-\$ don't tell anyone
:D big grin	:-h wave - New!	=(( broken heart	[-( not talking
::) batting eyelashes	:t time out - New!	:-O surprise	:O) clown
>D< big hug	8-> daydreaming - New!	X( angry	8-) silly
:-/ confused	l-) sleepy	:-> smug	<:-P party
:x love struck	8-  rolling eyes	B-) cool	(  yawn
:-S worried	=P~ drooling	/:) raised eyebrow	:^o liar
#-S whew!	:-? thinking	=)) rolling on the floor	:-w waiting
>:) devil	#-o d'oh	O:-) angel	:-< sigh
:(( crying	=D> applause	:-B nerd	>:P phbbbbt
:)) laughing	:-SS nailbiting	=; talk to the hand	<:~ cowboy

Figure03: Facebook smileys codes and emoticons

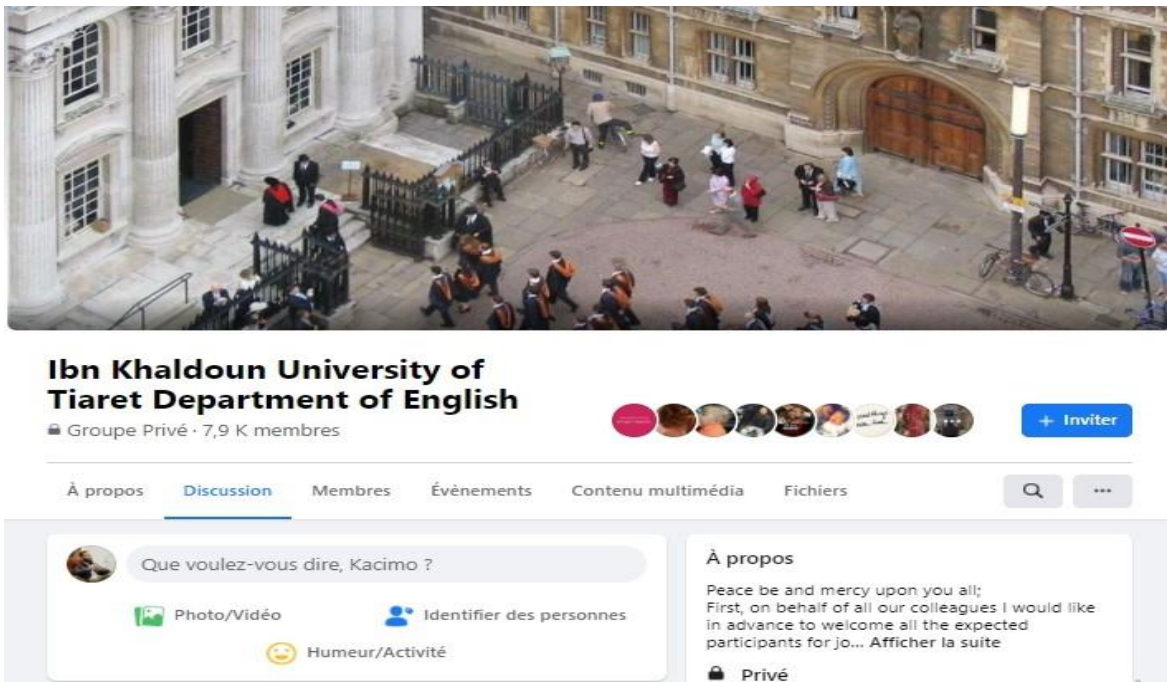
2.5.2. Abbreviations and Acronyms

Beside emoticons, abbreviations and acronyms have also been prominent in FB’s features. These abbreviations are shorthands for sentences, and phrases such as “BBL” for “Be Back Later”, “LOL” “Laugh out Loud”, “WG” “Wicked Grin” and “THX” “Thanks” (Mesthrie, 2001, p.288). Other current abbreviations are listed in the table below:

Abbreviations	The whole sentence (word)	Abbreviations	The whole sentence (word)
LOL	Laugh out loud	BFF	Best friend forever
OMG	Oh my God	OOTD	Outfit of the day
ILY	I love you	FTW	For the win
LMAO	Laughing my a** off	TXT	Text
WTF	What the f***?	HMU	Hit me up
PPL	People	HBD	Happy birthday
IDK	I don't know	TMI	Too much information
TBH	To be honest	NM	Not much
BTW	By the way	GTFO	Get the f*** out
THX	Thanks	NVM	Never mind
SMH	Shaking my head	DGAF	Don't give a f***
FFS	For f***'s sake	FBF	Flashback Friday
AMA	Ask me anything	DTF	Down to f***
FML	F*** my life	FOMO	Fear of missing out
TBT	Throwback Thursday	SMFH	Shaking my f*** head
JK	Just kidding	OMW	On my way
IMO	In my opinion	POTD	Photo of the day
YOLO	You only live once	LMS	Like my status
ROFL	Rolling on the flour laughing	GTG	Got to go
MCM	Man crush Monday	ROF	Rolling on floor
IKR	I know right?	LMAO	Laughing my a*** off
FYI	For your information	TTYL	Talk to you later
BRB	Be right back	AFAIK	As far as I know
GG	Good game	LMK	Let me know
IDC	I don't care	PTFO	Passed the f*** out
TGIF	Thank God it's Friday	SFW	Safe for work
NSFW	Not safe for work	HMB	Hit me back
ICYMI	In case you missed it	TTYS	Talk to you soon
STFU	Shut the f*** up	FBO	Facebook Official
WCW	Woman crush Wednesday	TTYN	Talk to you never
		IRL	In real life

**Figure 04: A table of some common used abbreviations on Facebook (Google source).**

## 2.6. FB as a Learning Tool



Isham Shah Hassan (2014) said that “There are many tools available for e learning, Facebook seems to be one of the most effective tools because students generally respond to discussion quickly and are comfortable enough in their ‘space’ to share their information and opinion”. (p. 1). Facebook is a learning tool provide student with chance to interact and communicate with each other’s and with the teacher outside of the blackboard. It provides learners access to more controlled authentic materials.

## 2.7. The Role of FB in Learning a Foreign Language

Jacqueline Araya Ríos and Jorge Luis Espinoza Campos (2015) believed that, “Since English is the language commonly used in these websites; researchers found that there are potential benefits when using a Facebook group in teaching ESL contexts” (P. 255). Young learners get exposure to social media which offers a various opportunities for learning anything. It is time to profit from the chances and get in touch with dominant language on social media which is English language

## 2.8. FB as a Virtual Learning Platform for Teacher-Students Interactions

Rebecca Tolland (2013) viewed that: Incorporation of constructivist and authentic learning strategies coupled with the use of the social media, Facebook. The platform initiates collaboration between teacher and students as well as peer interaction. However, when creating and encouraging the use of Facebook as a learning tool, instructors should adhere to “best practices” in order for students to achieve an optimal learning experience” (P. 42). It is important for teachers to adapt a flexible process of learning depending on learners who are

most of the time on Facebook and provide educational opportunities for them to see how Facebook as a particular platform can be used in education and study. Furthermore, the teacher needs to help them to knowing how to use this platform in professional study. The practitioner must give them a chance to practice both; knowing how to use Facebook in professional contexts and also using it as a learning tool.

### **2.9. Advantages and Disadvantages of FB to English Language Learning**

Facebook has been proved to be a double edged sword, due to its advantages and disadvantages that may significantly affect English language learning as a whole, and the writing style skill in particular. Because of Facebook unique and fun environment, it considerably decreases learners 'stress levels and yet increases their engagement and interaction. Wu and Hsu (2011) believe that Facebook arena helps English language learners enjoy interacting with peers; in a way they feel comfortable to express their ideas and opinions in English. In addition, Facebook informal setting helps learners feel less pressure and more confident to use English. Accordingly, (White, 2009; Zaidieh, 2012) state that Facebook provides language learners with perfect and adequate opportunities to interact with their teachers and peers, and it helps them feel comfortable and less stress. Additionally, Yunus and Salehi (2012) mention that Facebook plays a positive role and helps learners develop their creative thinking skills, in a way it positively fosters their brain storming ability and thinking skills as well. Moreover, White (2009) celebrates the fact that using Facebook for a discussion group increases students 'level of effort and motivation, since its platform provides them with the opportunity to engage in multi- level interactions, whereby they become highly motivated to participate and freely express their opinions. Thus, a positive Facebook interaction help students build up self-confidence and increases their motivation to acquire positive attitudes towards language learning. Facebook as McCarthy (2010) mentions often removes some common learning barriers for language learners. That is, Facebook activities help not only advanced learners, but also lower language proficient students to have the ability to participate and gain knowledge in such enjoyable and motivating manner. Yunus and Salehi (2012) also state that Facebook enables language learners expand their knowledge, in which they can use it for academic and educational goals; by creating new ways of interactions with their teachers that have ultimate academic orientation.

### 2.9.1. Advantages

Most college students are active on social media. It doesn't matter where you are in this world or what race you are; social media sites can assist in improving your writing skills. It's especially true if you text, tweet or post frequently. That's because social media allows you to express yourself creatively, thereby, enabling you to have a strong understanding of how the English language works. Before, text talk didn't have a place in a smart girl lingo. However, in a new study, researchers found that the use of social media can actually enhance your ability to read and write coherently.



**Figure 05: Advantages of Facebook on Writing Skill**

The study also showed that the use of shorthand on social media does not affect communication development of teens. In fact, those who frequently text or tweet were considered as better writers.

#### 2.9.1.1. Engage with the language

The act of writing can do wonders to your communication skills, regardless of the platform you're using. A study confirmed that those who avoided the Internet also prevented themselves from having the opportunity to engage with the language in an outside classroom setting, which raises the question on how exactly social media train you and actually improve your writing skill?.



**2.9.1.2. Express Yourself Succinctly**

To develop your writing skills, you need to learn to express yourself concisely. Because there are limitations on characters, it allows you to be creative enough so you can express yourself in 140 characters or less. When you do express yourself, make sure that you don't dance around the topic as your audience will only ignore you.

**2.9.1.3. Hone Editing skills**

One of the best things about posting on social media is that your friends can quickly point out your mistakes. For example, if you committed a tragic spelling mistake, it could go viral.

That's why it's vital that you edit your post, choose the right words carefully and proofread it to find any spelling mistakes so you can correct them.

Those who are active on, say, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are aware of the nuances that some phrases have. Thus, these platforms can train you to be careful with the words you choose, how you use them, and their spelling.

**2.9.1.4. Develop a Style**

Writers have an individual voice. But it takes practice to hone it. As you frequently communicate with social media, you'll slowly develop a form of expression.

Writing some tweets can be a good start, and it can gradually help you write well-structured essays or posts. If you have the habit of expressing yourself online, then you've already developed a style or voice. You just need to hone it a bit further.

**2.9.1.5. Learn From The Experts**

You can follow authors on social media. And if you wish to attract their attention, write a meaningful comment on their post. You need to connect with them first before they can connect with you.

Keep in mind that at first, they don't have any clue that you exist. When you start communicating with them by sharing their posts, commenting on their updates, etc., they'll have an idea of who you are. Now, if you send them a shout out, they might respond.

**2.9.1.6. Build Confidence**

When you frequently write on social media, you develop your own voice. As you write authoritatively about a particular topic that you're passionate about, you're building confidence.

A boost in confidence can make a difference in your writing skills.

**2.9.1.7. Learn how to Write for an Audience**

In social media, you need to know your audience so that your post will reach them. And as you write for your audience, you'll put more thought into what words and subject to choose. If you continue to write for your audience, you'll be adept at writing online with readers and peers.

**2.9.1.8. Avoid Cutting Characters**

Writing for social media may require you to cut some characters to shorten your post. But avoid it as much as you can. Use your creativity on how to write something that doesn't require cutting characters but the gist is still there.

**2.9.1.9. Be Conscious of Your Grammar**

Since you'll receive instant feedback from your followers, you need to ensure that what you post is free of any grammatical errors. You may think that social media is less formal. However, your grammar must always be impeccable. Before you post it, make sure to edit and proofread it. It's especially true if you're writing for your brand.

Taking the time to edit it before publishing your post means that you truly care about your followers' experience. Social media has a positive effect on your writing skills as shown above. On social media, you can get creative with the language. In other words, you have a good understanding of how it works.

**2.9.2. Disadvantages**

Despite evidence for the positive impact of Facebook on English language learning, some researchers have also mentioned some of its negative impacts as well. First, Facebook is described as an open environment, since it allows users to see what others are sharing and posting on it. Consequently, Wu and Hsu (2011) stated that Facebook could lower students' motivation to write, because they feel stressed that others will be able to see their weak performance and criticize them accordingly. Second, Distraction can also be classified as one negative impact caused by Facebook. For some students, it is easy to lose concentrating on learning while using Facebook. Thus, they tend to entertain themselves and follow unnecessary details instead of focusing on their academic work (Yunus, 2012). Third, Facebook chatting habits affect negatively learners' writing skills, since they are unable to find the right way to use their Facebook conversation language to accomplish academic tasks that are devoted to academic language only, but instead they tend to acquire colloquial and abbreviated language. That is, using Facebook to communicate usually requires learners to

follow specific linguistic system based on acronyms and informal structures that greatly differ from the standard language that learners aim to learn at institutions.

### **2.10. Students' Attitude toward Using FB as a Learning Tool**

A 2017 review by Romualdo A. Mabuan and Gregorio P. Ebron, Jr. found that, "The use of Facebook groups for educational purposes is favoured by the students because they appreciate the idea of using a social tool as a means of learning, where they can freely share their opinions and apply lessons concepts learned in the classroom" (as cited in Miron and Ravid, 2015, pp. 371–384).

Isham Shah Hassan (2014) reported, "By using Facebook in learning, the role of students can therefore shift from only receiving knowledge to both searching and sharing their knowledge" ("Facebook as a Tool", para.1). Using Facebook in the classroom encourage students' engagement. It enables learners connect with partners, ask questions, answer each other, and collaborate as a team work. The enrichment of context by posting, commenting, and sharing various resources reactivate the learners' long term memory.

### **2.11. Teacher's Attitude towards the Use of FB as a Learning Tool**

Isham Shah Hassan (2014) claimed that, "To get the benefits from Facebook instead of being against the usage of Facebook, teachers can creatively employ them as tool for supporting students' continuous learning activities" ("Facebook as a Tool", para.1). Teachers must have a positive attitude towards Facebook as a learning tool. They can integrate it in the classroom to motivate students and encourage them to react and negotiate about the classroom subject matters. Thus, through Facebook teachers can creatively employ them as tools for supporting students' continuous learning activities.

### **2.12. Conclusion**

This chapter was concerned with the different social Medias and their influence on both global and local level on education. Moreover, it also dealt with Facebook and its utility in education. It discussed its advantages and disadvantages to English language learning, and its impact on EFL learners as well, which has been referred to as a topic of an infinite debate between course designers and linguists. In addition, the role of the different social Medias as a whole and Facebook as a piece of a puzzle of a larger picture, that has been discussed as well, since it represents a perfect platform for the interaction for the EFL learners. Thus, it is safe to say that, Facebook could enhance communication and co-operative learning, as it may cause EFL learners language distortion

# Chapter Three Data Analysis & Findings

### **3.1. Introduction**

Investigating the impact of Facebook language use on EFL students writing style is mainly the ultimate goal of the current research paper. In order to reach the research expectations, two main data gathering tools were used; a questionnaire and an interview, the questionnaire was designed for second year master students, while the interview was given to our university teachers.

### **3.2. Analysis of The students' Questionnaire**

#### **3.2.1. Sample Description**

The respondents of the questionnaire were 34 students among the total number of second year master students of Linguistics population (120) at Tiaret University.

#### **3.2.2. Questionnaire Description**

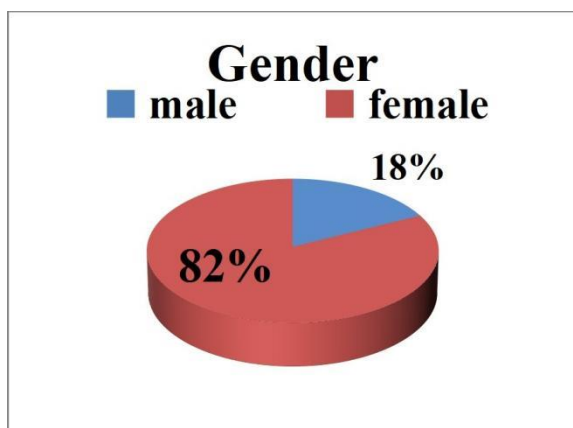
The students' questionnaire was created basically to collect information concerning their opinions and attitudes towards English language learning, vocabulary learning, and most importantly, the impact of Facebook on their writing skills. The questionnaire is consisted of 13 items, categorized by two types: close-ended questions, where students are asked to tick the appropriate answers, and open-ended questions whereby students have the ability to justify their answers. The questionnaire is divided into two sections; each part addresses particular points. The first part is mainly about students' general information and it contains three questions. Part two is related to students and the amount of time they spend on Facebook and their interaction and it contains six questions. The third part includes 4 questions designed to discuss students' opinions and beliefs concerning the impact of Facebook language on their writing skills. The last part is based on an open-ended question that allows students provide their suggestions concerning the impact of Facebook language on their writing style process and on their English learning based on their personal experienced.

### **3.3. Analysing The Questionnaire**

#### **3.3.1. Part One: General Information**

This part is intended to collect data about the students 'personal information, including their age, gender, and the amount of time they spend surfing on Facebook

**Question 01: Gender**



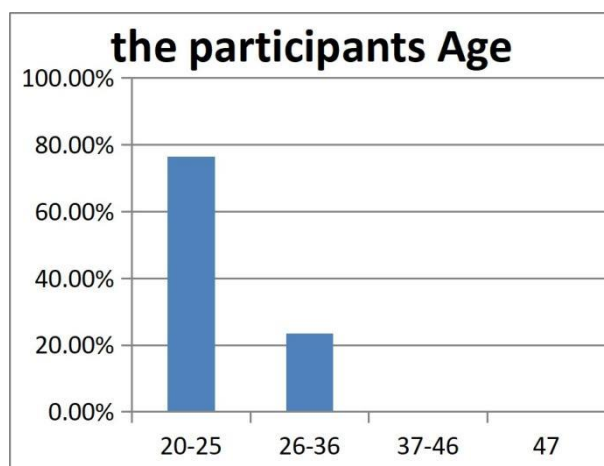
Gender	Responses	Percentage
Male	6	18%
Female	28	82%
Total	34	100%

**Table 3.1: Gender**

**Chart 3.1: Gender**

As it is clearly shown in the table and the graph (3.1), the total number of the respondents is 34 participants. Also, it shows that male participants are 18 % (n=06), while female participants are 82% (n=28).The statistical data reveal that among the surveyed population the majority of students are females (n=28) from the whole participants. Therefore, this result may be due to the fact that females like to study foreign languages and they are most of the time highly cooperative and motivated than males who prefer to study scientific subjects.

**Question 02: Participants' Age**



Rages of ages	Responses	Percentage
20-25	26	76,5%
26-36	8	23,5%
37-46	0	0%
47-58	0	0%

**Table 3.2: Participants' Age**

**Graph 3.1: Participants' Age**

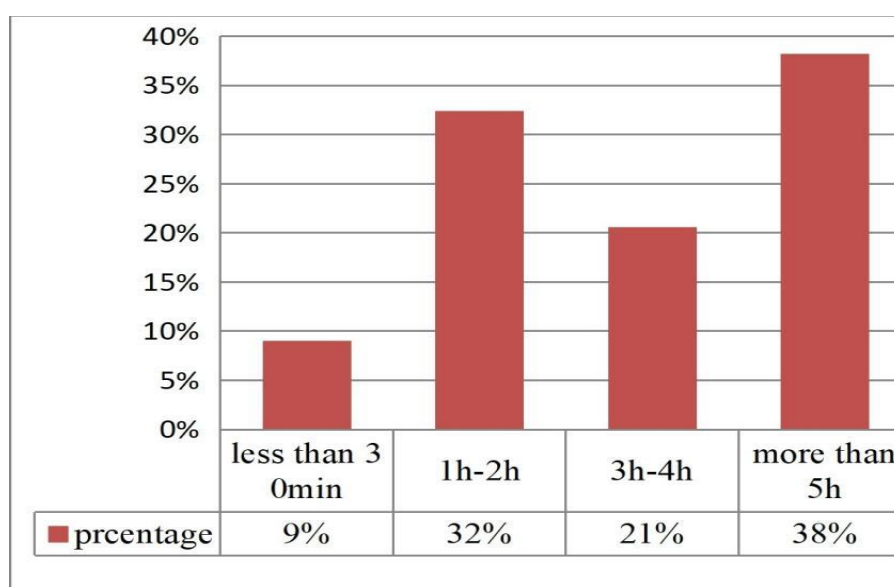
From this two (2) above table and graph (3.2), the results show that the respondents are divided into three (3) different age ranges, the first group represents 77% (n=26) of the targeted students which are between 20 years old and 25 years old (new generation). Meanwhile, 24% (n=8) of them aged between 26 to 36 years old. The last group, consisting

of 0 students (0%), has an age varying from 37 to 46. And also, 0 student (0%) has an age ranging between 47 and 58. The above data demonstrate that 7% of the students are young, whereas only 24% have an age exceeding 26 years old.

The above data are clearly demonstrated that the first group are outnumbered the other groups to a great extent. In fact, the main reason behind this result is that most of students at Ibn Khaldoun University are young (new generation). Whereas; the old generations are obviously representing the minority percentage among the others

**3.3.2. Part Two: Students and the amount of time they spend on Facebook and their interaction**

**Question 03: Participants' Time Spending on Facebook**



**Graph 3.2: Facebook usage by the participants during the day**

Duration of time	Responses	percentage
Less than 30min	3	9%
1h-2h	11	32%
3h-4h	7	21%
More than 5h	13	38%

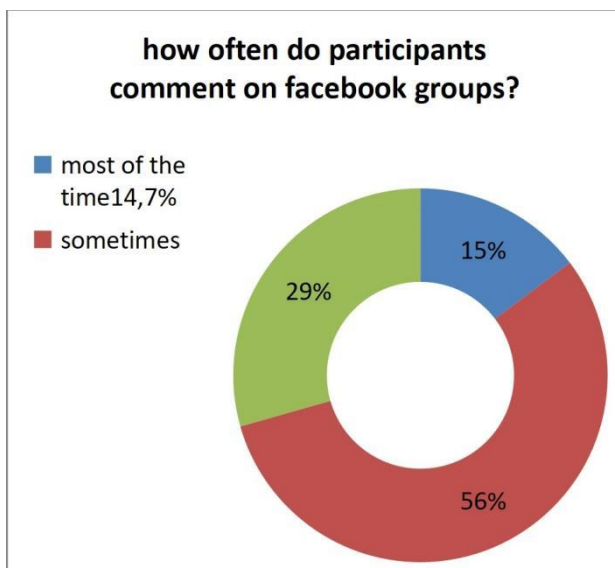
**Table 3.3: Facebook usage by the participants during the day**

The purpose behind this question is to figure out approximately the time spent by the student on Facebook, In fact, the table and graph above show that there are some (9%; n=3) participants who do not often use face book with a duration of time of less than 30 min, in the other hand (38%; n=13) of them use face book for more than 5h. However, (32%; n=11) of

participants testify that they go on face book for 1h to 2h, and (21%; n=7) who strongly use the face book application with a duration of 3h-4 hours.

Thus, from the above statistics one can include that most of students of English language are divided into two types; 9% of them use Facebook for less than 30 minute, while 38% of them use it for more than 5 hours.

**Question 04: Duration of Participants Commenting on FB groups**



**Chart 3.2: Participants' frequency of commenting on FB groups**

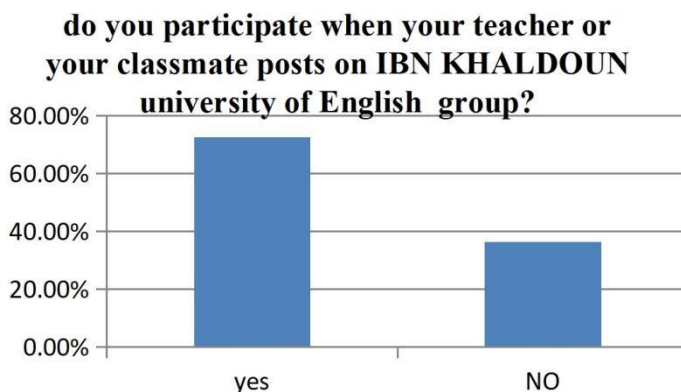
Duration time	Responses	Percentage
Most of the time	4	15%
Sometimes	19	56%
Rarely	11	29%

**Table 3.4: Participants' frequency of commenting on FB groups**

Referring to the numerical data above, it can be stated that for 56% (n=19) of the students comment sometimes only on Facebook groups. Only 15% (n=4) of them use to comment on Facebook groups which means most of the time. The rest, i.e., 29% (n=11) confirm that they rarely comment or keep some writings on Facebook groups.



**Question 05: Students' Participation when teachers or classmates post on Ibn Khaldoun University of English group**



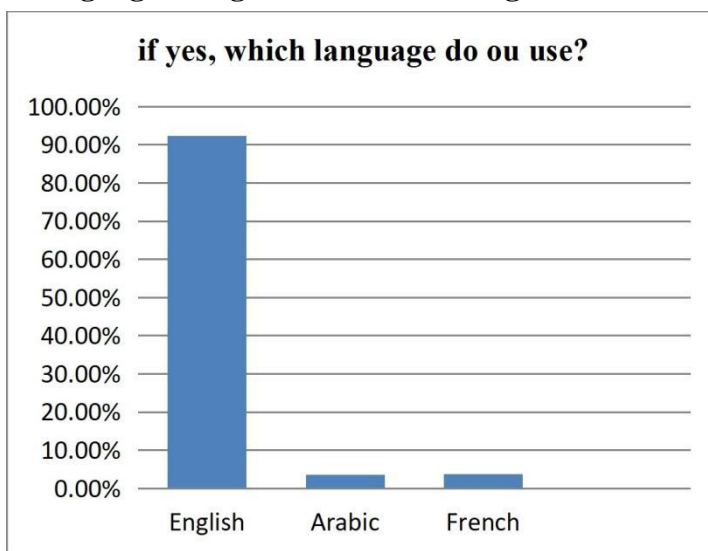
**Graph 3.3: Participants' involvement in the group "Ibn Khaldoun University of English" on Facebook**

Yes/No	Responses	Percentage
Yes	22	72,7%
No	12	36,4%

**Table 3.5: Participants' involvement in the group "Ibn Khaldoun University of English" on Facebook**

In spite the fact that the Facebook groups of English was created in order to give an opportunity to students to give their points of view and to share their knowledge also to communicate, however we found out that 36,4% (n=12) of the participants do not participate when teachers of classmates posts on the group of the university of English of Tiaret, Whereas 72,7% (n24=) of the surveyed students participate.

**Question 06: The Language Using While Commenting**



**Graph 3.4: Participants' preferred language**

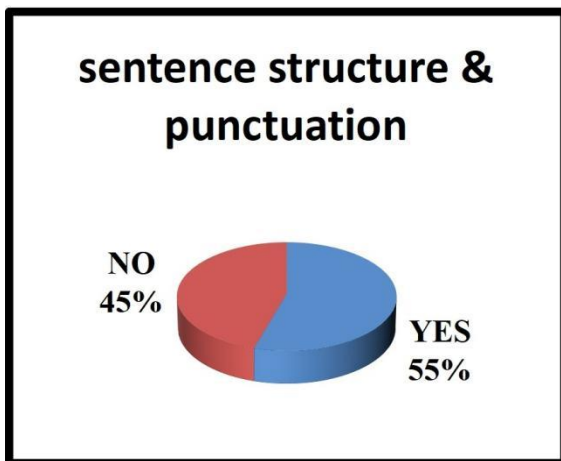
Language	Responses	Percentage
English	31	92%
Arabic	2	4%
French	1	3%

**Table 3.6: Participants' preferred language**

According to the graph and the table (6), 4% (n=2) participants choose Modern Standard Arabic (Arabic) which is the official and national language of country, 3% (n =1) participants use the French language which is the first foreign language in Algeria. Whereas 92% (n=31) of students use the English language.

So, in the department of English language, students are able and competent to speak English language in their daily life by communicating with different people from different places easily and this may be due to their interest in learning this language and it is their speciality.

**Question 07: Sentence Structure and Punctuation While Writing Comments**



Yes/No	Responses	Percentage
Yes	18	55%
No	15	45%

**Table 3.7: Sentence structure and punctuation**

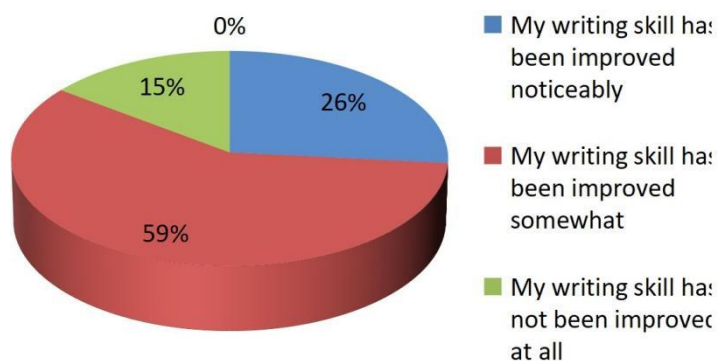
**Chart 3.3: Sentence structure and punctuation**

The data resulting from question-item 7 reveal that nearly half, 45, 5% (n=15), of the questioned students attest that they do not respect the sentence structure and punctuation while writing comments. Yet, the rest, i.e., 54, 5% (n=18), affirmed that they respect the rules of writing even when they write comments of Facebook in order to for visual effect or to highlight the interplay of textual voices.

To conclude, most of our respondents respect the grammar rules i.e. sentence structure and punctuation. While some of the other students don't respect any of them. They comment directly without respecting the grammatical rules.

**3.3.3. Part Three: Students' opinions and beliefs concerning the impact of Facebook language on their writing skills**

**Question 08: How Facebook can improve student' writing skill?**



**how did facebook improve your writing skill?**

**Chart 3.4: Facebook's role in enhancing the writing skill of the participants**

	Responded with yes	Percentage
My writing skill has improved noticeably	9	26%
My writing skill has improved somewhat	20	59%
My writing skill has not been improved at all	5	15%

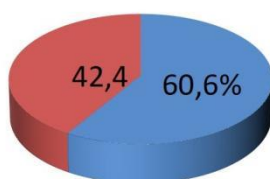
**Table 3.8: Facebook's role in enhancing the writing skill of the participants**

The results demonstrate that: 59% (n=20) of the students declare that their writing skill has been improved somewhat. For 26% (n=9) of the students the Facebook help them to improve their writing skill. For the rest, i.e. 15% (n=5), the use of this application is worthless to improve their writing skill.

**Question 09: The use of abbreviations and emojis instead of words**

**while commenting do you use abbreviations and emojis instead of words?**

■ yes ■ no



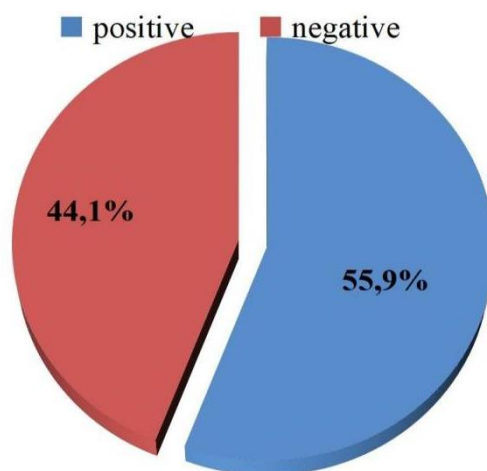
**Chart 3.5: Participant's choice of emojis vs actual words in FB comments**

Yes/No	Responses	Percentage
Yes	20	60,6
No	14	42,4

**Table 3.9: Participant's choice of emojis vs actual words in FB comments**

From these results, we noticed that (60,6%; n=20) of students use abbreviations and Emojis instead of words , however (42,4%; n=14) of the participants do not use abbreviations and Emojis instead of words . So we notice that the majority of the students prefer the easy way to communicate and write.

**Question 10: How does Facebook impact your academic writing?**



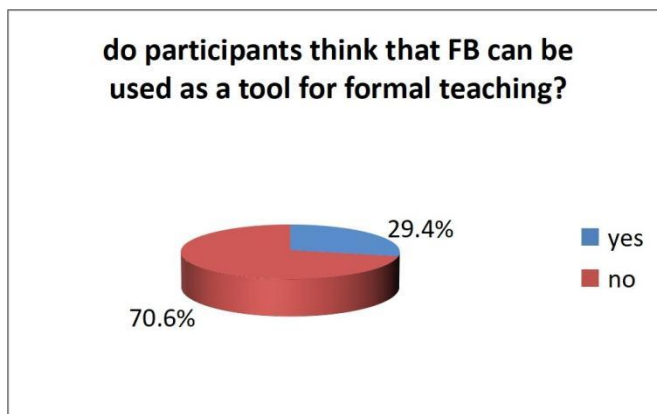
**Chart 3.6: Facebook impact on students academic writing**

	Responses	Percentage
Positive	19	55,9%
Negative	15	44,1%

**Table 3.10: Facebook impact on students academic writing**

This graph shows that 55, 9 %( n=19) of the students the Facebook has a positive impact on their academic writing, whereas, 44, 1% (n=15) of them deny any kind of improvement in their academic writing while using Facebook. Consequently, for the majority of our informant’s, Facebook has very positive effects on them, especially in their studies and their writing process.

**Question 11: The use of Facebook as a tool for formal teaching**



Yes / No	Responses	Percentage
Yes	10	29,4%
No	25	70,6%

**Table 3.11: Facebook as a potential platform of Formal teaching**

**Chart 3.7: Facebook as a potential platform of Formal teaching**

This graph shows that 70,6% (n=24) of the students think that FB is not a good tool for formal teaching, so they are against this idea. Some others 29,4% (n=10) said that the FB is a good tool for the formal teaching.

From observing the informants response, it was shown that Facebook is not a toll for formal teaching and this may be due to their thinking where they think that Facebook is a platform for making friends and relationships with others and it make the word very small, where people can talk and have fan using this network.

**3.4. Interview**

The semi-structured interview that we have conducted in our study included a set of seventeen questions organized into three different sections or parts. First were insightful questions that surrounded teachers’ career and speciality so to identify and categorize our collected data. Second was about their insight and method regarding English vocabulary teaching. Last we asked them to give their opinion on the possibility of using Facebook as an online platform for English language teaching.

### 3.5. The Interview Questions and Answers

#### 3.5.1. Part One: we asked the teachers some personal questions

**Q1\_** How long they have been teaching English as a foreign language at university?

According to the collected data, The average durations was around 5 years.

**Q2\_** What module are you teaching at the current time?

All teachers share a common knowledge about English yet each one teaches a different speciality as of phonetics, linguistics, civilization ...etc. Besides, some can switch or teach more than one speciality.

#### 3.5.2. Part Two: we propose questions about vocabulary teaching

**Q3\_** Do you think that vocabulary teaching takes a part in the curriculum?

80% of the answers were yes however 20% others had a different answer rather than "no".

**Q4\_** How great emphasis do you place on vocabulary during your lectures?  Not so great,  Great,  Very great

The majority of the participants answered, " very great".

**Q5\_** What kind of method or technique that you usually engage in presenting a new vocabulary?

Visual,  Regalia ,  Synonyms & definition,  Translation

A small percentage answered  visuals and the majority declared that they use both  synonyms, definition, and  translation.

**Q6\_** When presenting new words, you add their:  Translation,  Spelling,  Grammatical functions.

In this question, we concluded that teachers use all of this and sometimes all in once.

**Q7\_** Does your students face problems in improving their writing skill? and Why?

All answered yes and listed different reasons behind the issue.

#### 3.5.3. Part Three: teachers opinion about using Facebook for English language teaching

**Q8\_** Do you believe that Facebook as an online platform could be considered or used for Teaching and Learning strategies?, Justify?

The interviewees agreed on one point that is Facebook can be a useful strategy to develop different learning skills.

**Q9\_** Do you think that Facebook can help learners to improve their writing skill? and How?

Most teachers said "no" and the reason was about the tendinous or the act of mixing Arabic, French, and English in commenting, texting, and posting ...etc by students.

**Q10\_** Do you think that Facebook language affects the writing style of learners?

In most cases, they think that Facebook can affects learners writing style, especially in the learning process.

**Q11\_** Do you think that extensive use of Facebook could affect learners' language performance?.

Few answers were "no" but the majority were "yes", most had one common reason which is the use of different languages in texting via Facebook.

**Q12\_** Do you believe that Facebook chatting habits affect learners writing skill?

All said "yes|"

**Q13\_** Do you think that Facebook has changed the way EFL learners use the language?

All teachers said "yes".

**Q14\_** Could any of your learners' misuses of language be related to Facebook language?

They strongly agreed with that.

**Q15\_** In your opinion, does the written language of Facebook pose any threat for language standard variety?

In the past interview, the teachers all agreed that Facebook can pose a threat to the written part of the language.

**Q16\_** How can students use Facebook as a learning tool?

Each teacher shared different ideas one was to create a chat group where students are encouraged to integrate online courses.

**Q17\_** Do you have any suggestions for enhancing learners writing skill through Face-booking?

50% of the interviewed teachers said yes and 50 % said no.

### **3.6. The Interview's Feedback**

From this present interview, we concluded that the writing skill of a language is seriously losing its significance to Algerians in general due to factors such as Facebook and specifically it users tendinous of code-mixing between French, Arabic and sometimes English. Also, the low state that English currently has in Algeria which is a big factor because the country is still at the sovereignty of the past colonial language "French". In other words, many French words are morphologically adapted to Algeria's colloquial language along with other lexical items from other various languages the likes of Spanish, Turkish, Berber...etc, all of which discouraged the use of the standard language in writing, even the use of MSA is relatively low though it is supposed to be Algeria's official language. The bottom line is that



Facebook can not or at least not yet be used for learning because it is insignificant for developing students writing skill. Consequently, MSA is also absent from the valued scientific and research fields which leave no space to presenting papers knowing that most written works are of English, this is the result of the inappropriate decision making by the government in a broader sense and its speakers neglect toward preserving their identity in a more narrowed perspective. Lastly, According to the interviewees, the use of Arabic and French on Facebook though is sometimes needed to facilitate or simplify some concepts its overuse may interfere negatively and leaves an unhelpful impact on English learners, since most students are learning for the sake of becoming native-like speakers and writers. Also, Algeria's official language is MSA so overall switching back and forth between ADA and EFL is not ideal for improving standard English writing skill.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

After discussing the results obtained from the research used tools, the initial hypotheses are confirmed, that Facebook helps EFL students develop their writing skills, and that the overuse of it affects instinctively and negatively their ability to learn and use English and its vocabulary correctly (linguistically) and appropriately (pragmatically). It becomes interesting now to search for a way to minimize Facebook language negative impacts, in such a way that it provides EFL learners with the necessary abilities to acquire the right knowledge and use of the language and its vocabulary, through consolidating them for careful engagement in such learning platforms.

### **3.8. Recommendations for Further Research**

#### **1. For teachers:**

EFL teachers are recommended to stop being sceptical towards using Facebook as a teaching material. The fact that, students ' rate of using Facebook is increasing day after day, leaves teachers with two options: The first option is to use Facebook as a teaching tool, and this could be for the following reasons:

- Teachers can benefit from Facebook by using it for educational purposes, in order to break monotonous of the traditional classrooms, especially oral and written expression teachers.
- Facebook could help EFL teachers cope with the learner-centered approach, since it represents new and enthusiastic method of teaching.
- Facebook can be used as an extension to the classroom, so that students can continue with their learning process outside schools in a fun environment.

- Teachers can create online tutorial classes, that allow them control their students ' writing and language learning process.

While the second option is to avoid using it, but instead they have to:

- Raise their students ' awareness about Facebook negatives on their English vocabulary and language learning, by providing instructions about how to use it correctly.
- Be careful when encouraging their students to use Facebook, especially beginners.

**2. For students:**

- Students should take into consideration the negative impact of Facebook on their writing performance, and accordingly on their English language.
- Students should minimize their use of Facebook language, by replacing it with formal one.
- Students should use Facebook with the intentions of learning and acquiring knowledge.
- Students should understand that Facebook could be used positively to help increasing their chances to learn and practice the language.
- Students must give equal attention to the form as given to the content.
- Students could benefit from Facebook, by engaging into discussions and interactions with natives and other learners, in order to develop their English.

Also, some points are suggested for further researches:

- Investigating the possibility of using Facebook language in academic contexts.

Future research on the same area, should include all EFL teachers of the university, in order to be able to understand the whole picture, through comparing their opinions on using Facebook for educational purposes, so that, the results will help reach final decision

### **3.9. Limitations**

This study had got some major setbacks that heavily crippled our advancement when conducting this research, properly due to the corona-virus pandemic in the first place and the total lock-down that limited our data intake as it consequence. Nevertheless, these study that we have presented will surely pave the way for a further research and investigations.

# General Conclusion

One of the possible reasons that triggered what can only be described as modern literacy among language learners is the overuse of social media and its effect on language performance, and with a fast-growing world and highly advanced technology, our view of education should be modernized and include all kind of social media platforms like Facebook. Henceforth, we decided to investigate the effect of Facebook on language learning specifically the writing skill as well the possibility of using Facebook in teaching languages, the case study of Algerian second-year master students of Ib Khaldoun university.

Moreover, The present research was set to reveal the role of Facebook in the proficiency of writing skill and style and the inquiry of whether Facebook can be used for teaching or not, so we decided to begin chapter one which we called it «The Literature Review» by introducing some common knowledge and general information regarding the writing skill of a language and its relation to Facebook. Then we moved to chapter two where we explained some key terms and talked more specifically about our and others opening towards Facebook and its role as a foreign language learning tool. Lastly, in chapter three we presented, interpreted, and explained our collected data in a matter of both qualitative and quantitative representation all in an effort to prove our hypothesis. Furthermore, for our data collecting method, we applied a semi-structured interview on teachers and an online questionnaire on students.

In the light of this present study, we can safely say that we have managed to give adequate answers to our research questions and proved our hypothesis. As a start, we believe that Facebook may not entirely help in improving language learning since it offers simplicity in sort of speaking, it facilitates communication through the many gadgets and option that can replace old-fashion language use, but we acknowledge that Facebook has a great potential in language teaching if it is purposely directed for education. According to teachers and students if we only managed to minimize the wrong habits of writing and depended more on our ability to write correct sentences. Correspondingly, providing EFL learners with the necessary abilities to acquire the right practice of a language and its vocabulary. At last, we recommend an investigation that touches all kinds of social platforms and their effect on a skills of the language such as the role of audiovisual media on the spread and the usage of language.

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# Appendices



## Students Questionnaire

### The Effectiveness of Using Facebook Comments on EFL Learners Writing Skill:

Dear colleagues,

We are carrying out a survey of our Master Dissertation entitled: The Effectiveness of Using Facebook Comments on EFL Learners Writing Skill. And we call for your help, so you are kindly requested to answer the following questions.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

#### Section one:

1. Gender:

Male

Female

2. Age:

20-25

26-36

37-46

+47

3. How much time do you spend on Facebook?

Less than 30min

1h- 2h

3h-4h

More than 5h

#### Section two:

4. How often do you comment on Facebook groups?

Most of the time

Sometimes

Rarely

5. Do you participate when your teacher or your classmate posts on Ibn Khaldoun University of English group?

Yes

No

6. If yes, which language do you use?

- English
- Arabic
- French
- Others

7. Do you respect the sentence structure and punctuation while writing comments?

- Yes
- No

8. How did Facebook improve your writingskill?

- My writing skill has been improved noticeably
- My writing skill has been improved somewhat
- My writing skill has not been improved at all

9. While commenting do you use abbreviations and emojis instead of words?

- Yes
- No

10. If yes, give us some examples with explanation.

.....

.....

11. How does FB impact your academic writing?

- Negative
- Positive

12. At the end do you think that FB can be used as a tool for formal teaching? \*

- Yes
- No

13. If Yes!, how?

.....

.....

## Teachers' Interview

Dear teacher,

Your responses to this interview will improve our understanding of how Facebook language is affecting EFL learners' writing style process. Please select the appropriate response from those provided, or when appropriate, please provide a brief written response. We would be grateful for your help.

Thank you so much in advance for your collaboration

### **Part One:** General Information

1. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language at University?

.....

2. What module(s) are you teaching in the current time?

.....

### **Part Two:** Vocabulary Teaching

3. Do you think that vocabulary teaching takes a part in the curriculum?

.....

4. How great emphasis do you place on vocabulary during your lectures? (     )  
Great (     ) Very great

5. What techniques do you prefer to present new vocabulary items?  
( ) Visuals    ( ) Regalia ( ) Synonyms and definition (     ) Translation

6. When presenting new words, you also add their:  
( ) Translation    (     ) Spelling    (     ) Grammatical functions

7. Do your learners face problems in improving their writing style skill? Why?

.....  
.....  
.....

And how would you help them to overcome such difficulties?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Part Three: Facebook Impact**

8. Do you believe that Facebook arena could be used as a Teaching Learning strategy for? Justify.

.....  
.....

9. Do you think that Facebook can help learners improve their writing skill? How?

.....  
.....

10. Do you think that Facebook language affects learners' writing style learning process?

.....  
.....

11. Do you think that extensive use of Facebook could affect learners' language performance? How?

.....  
.....

12. Do you believe that Facebook chatting habits affect learners' writing skill? Justify please?

.....  
.....

10. Do you think that Facebook has changed the way EFL learners use the language?

.....  
.....

11. Could any of your learners' misuses of language skills be related to Facebook language?

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12. In your opinion, does the written language of Facebook pose any threat for standard variety of your learners' language?

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.....

13. How could students use Facebook as learning tool?

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14. Do you have any suggestions for enhancing learners' writing skill through Facebooking? If no, please mention the reasons why you think Facebook cannot be that useful tool.

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine whether Facebook (FB) commenting can enhance one's ability to write in the English language. Thus, second-year master's students in linguistics at the Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret, Algeria, make up the study's sample. Where the researchers used a semi-structured questionnaire for 38 Master's students. Next, teachers participated in a semi-structured interview. Consequently, the findings indicate that students concur that the phenomenon of Facebook commenting has a detrimental impact on their writing because it has significantly reduced the use of standard language due to factors like excessive use of social media, distractions and reliance on abbreviations, acronyms, and emojis in typing, which can result in disregarding the importance of developing one's vocabulary and spelling. However, some professors and students acknowledged that, if used properly, Facebook holds great potential for enhancing students writing abilities, since Facebook is good at bridging time/space in a virtual setting. Moreover, the importance of this study is set to provide insightful analysis and feedback regarding the connection between Facebook and English writing skill and style.

**Keywords: Facebook (FB). writing styles, Facebook (FB). vocabulary, writing skills, EFL studies, FB commenting**

## Résumé

Le but de cette étude est de déterminer si les commentaires sur Facebook (FB) peuvent améliorer la capacité d'écrire en anglais. Ainsi, les étudiants en deuxième année de master en linguistique de l'Université Ibn Khaldoun de Tiaret, en Algérie, constituent l'échantillon de l'étude. Où les chercheurs ont utilisé un questionnaire semi-structuré auprès de 38 étudiants en master. Ensuite, les enseignants ont participé à une entrevue semi-dirigée. Par conséquent, les résultats indiquent que les étudiants s'accordent à dire que le phénomène des commentaires sur Facebook a un impact négatif sur leur écriture car il a considérablement réduit l'utilisation du langage standard en raison de facteurs tels que l'utilisation excessive des médias sociaux, les distractions et le recours aux abréviations, acronymes et emojis dans la dactylographie, ce qui peut conduire à négliger l'importance de développer son vocabulaire et son orthographe. Cependant, certains professeurs et étudiants ont reconnu que, s'il est utilisé correctement, Facebook recèle un grand potentiel pour améliorer les capacités d'écriture des étudiants, car Facebook est bon pour faire le pont entre le temps et l'espace dans un environnement virtuel. De plus, l'importance de cette étude est définie pour fournir une analyse et des commentaires perspicaces concernant le lien entre Facebook et les compétences et le style d'écriture en anglais.

**Mots-clés : Facebook (FB). styles d'écriture, Facebook (FB). vocabulaire, compétences en écriture, études EFL, commentaires FB**

## المخلص

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تحديد ما إذا كان التعليق على Facebook (FB) يمكن أن يعزز قدرة الفرد على الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. وهكذا، يشكل طلاب السنة الثانية في الماجستير في اللغويات بجامعة ابن خلدون بتيارت بالجزائر عينة الدراسة. حيث استخدم الباحثون استبانة شبه منظمة لـ 38 طالب ماجستير. بعد ذلك، شارك المعلمون في مقابلة شبه منظمة. وبالتالي، تشير النتائج إلى أن الطلاب يتفقون على أن ظاهرة التعليق على Facebook لها تأثير ضار على كتاباتهم لأنها قللت بشكل كبير من استخدام اللغة القياسية بسبب عوامل مثل الاستخدام المفرط لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، والانحرافات والاعتماد على الاختصارات، والاختصارات، والرموز التعبيرية في الكتابة، والتي يمكن أن تؤدي إلى تجاهل أهمية تطوير المفردات والهجاء. ومع ذلك، أقر بعض الأساتذة والطلاب أنه إذا تم استخدامه بشكل صحيح، فإن Facebook يحمل إمكانات كبيرة لتعزيز قدرات الطلاب على الكتابة، نظرًا لأن Facebook جيد في تجسير الوقت / الفضاء في بيئة افتراضية. علاوة على ذلك، تم تعيين أهمية هذه الدراسة لتقديم تحليل ثاقب وردود الفعل فيما يتعلق بالعلاقة بين Facebook ومهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية وأسلوبها.

الكلمات الرئيسية: Facebook (FB). أساليب الكتابة على الفيس بوك (FB). المفردات، مهارات الكتابة، دراسات اللغة

الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تعليقات الفيس بوك