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*Faculty of Letters and Languages*

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**The Academic Usages of Social  
Networks among Master2 EFL  
Students at Tlemcen University:  
Case of Facebook**

A Dissertation Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements  
Of the Master Degree in Language Studies

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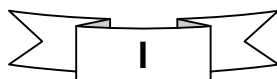
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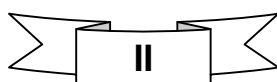
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# Abstract

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Facebook (FB) is now considered to be the most popular platform for online social networking among university students , who are attracted to such space more than any time before. At first glance, this seems to be a waste of time ; however, it also helps students to develop important knowledge and social skills. It provides various oppurtunities for both teachers and students to, flexibly, interact beyond classroom walls. The ever growing popularity of such space, launches the debate among educators, who view these online tools as a clear opportunity to develop innovative ways of teaching and learning. The purpose of this study is to investigate if Master 2 EFL students at Tlemcen University consider and know how to use Facebook effectively as a learning environment that could support their educational matters. Two questionnaires were administered to a representative sample of students and teachers belonging to a Facebook closed group named : "*Master2Lit&Civ13*". It was found that students believe FB could be used as an online environment to support their educational matters. Social networks like FB, provide students and teachers with promising oppurtunities to interact and share academic matters.



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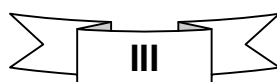
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# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

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EFL : English as a Foreign Language

ELL : English Language Learning

FB : Facebook

FL : Foreign Language

ICT's : Information Communication Technologies

L2 : Second Language

LMD : License- Master-Doctorate

SNSs : Social Networking Sites

# General Introduction

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# General Introduction

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Observing the students across university halls and corridors, one will, certainly, notice a stunning number of electronic devices, computer labs and computer stations scattered in every corner. One can also observe students sitting around tables working on laptops, holding tablets or checking their smartphones, and strolling across the university buildings while listening to music with an ipad.

Students are, clearly, dependant on technology more than any time before, and with the ease of access to wireless and mobile technologies, they are equipped with unprecedented supply of information as well as entertainment at their fingertips. Social Networking sites (SNSs henceforth) make up the largest part of these technologies, and students are, entirely, emmerged in these virtual spaces such as Facebook (FB henceforth) throughout the course of their everyday activities. The prevalence of these websites among students of all ages, has launched the debate among educators about the academic value of these platforms, claiming that social networks share many of the desirable features to acheive quality in education, and remain an area of considerable expectation for the education sector. One of the academic values of SNSs lies on their open nature which promotes students´ interaction, and help them confront the dilemma of managing their relationships online. These considerations has, in fact, directed some educationalists to investigate the potential of these virtual spaces to create meaningful interactions and dialogue between students and teachers.

With these issues in mind, the present work will strive to investigate the academic value of SNSs, among a FB closed group made up by Master 2 EFL students at Tlemcen University. With the assumption that network consumption has profoundly penetrated into the e-routine of the students, the vast communication possibilities of these networks could be considered for educational use, despite a predominance of entertainment-related use. To adress this issue, the researchers set up two major research questions formulated as follows :

- ❖ Question one : Do Master 2 EFL students at the university of Tlemcen make use of SNSs for academic purposes ?if they do, what is their perception about the academic value of these spaces ?
- ❖ Question two : Can the online social network :“Facebook” be taken as a reliable source for education ?

These questions have, further, helped the researchers to construct two distinctive hypotheses coined as follows:

- ❖ Master 2 EFL students make use of SNSs, FB notably, for their academic practices
- ❖ Facebook, the most popular website among university students, can be used as an effective setting for education.

Chapter one spells out the important themes related to the use of SNSs in education, with special emphasis on FB as being the most popular website among students. It also highlights some drawbacks driven from the use of such spaces for academic practices.

Chapter two, in which the researchers strive to introduce the methodology conducted in this study, which aims primarily at providing descriptions of the target population. It describes the situation and population under investigation, and displays the research instrument used to investigate the case.

The aim of the third chapter is to analyse and interpret the data obtained, for the sake of answering the projected research questions, and gaining further insight towards the academic value of SNSs. The chapter will also address some practical recommendations in the light of the results of the study. Taken into consideration, these suggestions may provide teachers and learners with better practices to well- manage their interaction in such spaces.

# Chapter One: Social Networking Sites and Education

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1.1. Introduction

1.2. The Concept of “Social Networking “

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1.4. Conclusion

## 1.1 Introduction

Based on the findings from other studies and data from journals, books, academic literature, and websites pertaining to social networking sites. The present chapter will highlight the significance of social networks in education. It will include two major ideas : the first one will shed light on social networking sites with their main characteristics; the second is rather a presentation of the academic benefits of social networks with emphasis on Facebook, as being the most popular website among students.

## 1.2. The Concept of "Social Networking"

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, "social" as the word sounds, relates, or involves activities in which people spend time talking to each other, or doing enjoyable things. "Network " is the connection of parts together to allow movement or communication with other parts. "Social Networking" is, thus, the maintenance of personal and business relationship especially online. It is also the practice of expanding the number of one's social contacts by making connections through individuals. Boyd and Ellison (2007:4) define SNSs as :

*Web- based services that allow individuals to construct public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and the nomenclature of those connections may vary from the site.*

In general, SNSs can be defined as online services, platforms, or social areas where people (users) can communicate with each other, share information and knowledge relative to individual experiences activities in real-life. Individuals may define themselves over the internet life and become members of social networks in order to reach and communicate with individuals of the same cultural interest, common background, and mutual freinds. Thus, "a group of freinds can be enlarged and information exchanged is enabled" Jordan (1999 :199). They allow people to easily and simply create their own online network of contacts often called " freinds". In sum, Social networking sites have revolutionized the way people interact , the way they communicate , and even the way they think

### 1.2.1. Characteristics of SNSs

Unlike content-based Websites , SNSs are based on users, who are united online based on their interests, activities, and common views . What may bring audiences online together are issues like: religion, common language , nationality, or other interests. According to Boyd & Ellison (2007 ), users make up the backbone of the social networking sites in such a way that without them there would be empty forums, chatrooms, or applications.

Social networks like FB have become online meeting spaces where users – members can interact and express themselves. They offer a way to keep in touch with virtual communities that users belong to, such as social and professional groups. Users are the ones who give dynamic in a network in way that as much as relationships in a network, as deeper is the network and more active it will be. In deed, SNSs are provided with a variety of applications that attracted billions of users on a daily basis, among which we select the followings :

- Presentation of oneself : Most SNSs require its users to set up a personal profile, which is a personalized page developed by the user, in which he/she introduces him/herself to other users. The personal profile among other functions, includes texts, photos, music , or videos. This application allows the users to well-manage their social contacts and profiles.
- The formation of virtual communities : Although the concepts of virtual communities have existed long before, SNSs advocate innovative ways for users to interact through various online communities. Users may join a community based on a common interest such as : a community of learners or book readers
- Ease of access : An attribution of FB to be the most popular website among students is its ease of use. Any one with the least digital competence is able to create and manage a personal account. SNSs are free of charge, and represent an open space for everyone to access. With a simple click, users can register themselves, invite other contacts, or join a particular group.



- **Interactivity**: Thanks to the availability of chat rooms, discussions forums, and online gaming applications, SNSs are more interactive than other websites. As a result, they offer users with various avenues to connect and have fun with other contacts.

Admittedly, one of the reasons that convince people to take part in such form of media, is because of the social and professional interaction they would have there. Although it is as simple as checking back to see what other comments have been added to yours, the nature of the attraction lies in the connections between people that these online spaces afford.

### **1.3. Social Networks and Education**

Presently, SNSs have affected almost every angle of life. Gone are the times of traditional classroom learning as now there are many alternative ways of learning. These types of spaces are seen as the key driver of the 21st century communications. Online social networks like FB are the new tools for knowledge sharing. SNSs have become the focal point for many educators, teachers and students all over the world have welcomed this as an indispensable addition to the education sector. In fact, These outcomes have led some to focus on the significance of online social networks as an excellent way to increase student motivation. Many users routinely use FB pages to discuss specific topics, thereby learn through informal ways of learning.

The interactive, participatory, and open nature of social networking technologies present a promising opportunities for learning and innovation. Social networking tools are already facilitating innovative educational practices that center around collaboration and information sharing. One of the key established advantages of social networking tools is facilitating peer learning and emphasizing the importance of learning from one's peers and network through massive social interaction. Unlike previously existing technologies, social networking platforms are able to break down barriers of time and space, and enable real-time interactions, broader, and targeted information sharing.

### 1.3.1. SNSs and New Type of Learners

Most of today's students can be described as "digital natives", a term set up by Prensky (2001) to refer to those individuals who have known nothing but a digital environment since birth, where the use of cell phones, computers, videogames, digital music players and all the requirements of the digital age, is quite prevalent. Mc Carthy (2010), further, maintains that These students prefer receiving information quickly and are competent at processing that information rapidly, they prefer multi-tasking and non-linear access to information, they have a low tolerance for lectures and prefer active rather than passive learning, and they rely heavily on social media for social and professional interactions and accessing information

Due to this fact, teachers have started adjusting themselves in this pattern by using SNSs, like FB, as a tool to communicate with their students. Teachers and lecturers involve themselves in creating chatrooms, and forums for the purpose of academic discussion. In this vein, Greenhow (2011 :123) states that :

*Despite the application of formal pedagogical practices used in the education sector and especially in universities, we cannot ignore the contributions of informal learning. Young people have now more choices over what, how, and with whom they learn in a wide range of setting ; classrooms, afterschool programs, or formal online programs.*

Research evidence report that those "Digital Natives" or "Millennials", are more likely to engage with active learning activities, where they seek relevance to apply what they are learning. Bart (2011) claims that "Millennials" prefer a "laid back" learning environment, where they can informally interact with teachers and peers. In other term, " *they are more willing to pursue learning outcomes when instructors connect with them on a personal level* " (p.5). The use of technology, especially social networking tools, has been shown to nurture students-teachers relationship which is a key element to achieve quality in teaching and learning. This relationship is likely to promote students' motivation. Students, by then, feel more valued, less hesitant to express

themselves, and more willing to be intellectually challenged (Cornel University Center for teaching Excellence, 2012).

### 1.3.2. Academic Usages of SNSs

There has been wide academic and research interests in the growing use of SNSs by academic community and their influence on instruction and learning outcomes. Just as they reshape communication, and offer a variety of avenues for more socialization of individuals, online social networks can also be successfully used in the educational sphere. This can be reflected in the increasing tendency towards the so-called collaborative and interactive learning where students' self-governed and problem-solving activities are claimed to be the central point of learning process.

Mazman and Ulsuel (2010 :78) consider SNSs as an indispensable gain for the educational field. They, further, maintain that the nature and the various utilities of FB, a popular networking site, such as providing members with spontaneous or intentional learning opportunities by bridging distances between people across common interests, exchanging information, sharing ideas, topics discussion and collaboration, have made of it an adequate space for learning. In the same vein, Selwyn (2009) emphasized that the prominence of SNSs in the lives of learners of all ages has prompted great enthusiasm among educators. It has been stated, for example, that *social networking offers the opportunity to re-engage individuals with learning and education, by developing learners critical thinking skills, which is one of the traditional objectives of education* (Bureja, 2006 :1). SNSs, according to Ziegler(2007), have also the capacity to " *radically, change the educational system...to better motivate students as engaged learners rather than learners who are passive observers of the educational process* "(p.69)

This has encouraged some instructors to explore the ability of SNSs tools to increases meaningful interactions and dialogue between students and teachers. In fact, some have welcomed the potential of these spaces to *offer educators a forum for easy networking and positive networking with students* Lemeul (2006 :1). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), some of the most effective faculty members are those that create an informal relationship with their students. And FB is, clearly, a space that supports this type of

interaction. Philips et al.(2011) Claim that SNSs can provide students with tools to effectively present their ideas, lead online discussions, and collaborate. They also suggest that these platforms can be effective tools to help educators to connect with their colleagues, share educational content, and enhance communication among students and teachers.

### **1.3.3. "Facebook" as an Educational Platform**

Facebook is one of the largest and best known SNSs. It was launched by Mark Zuckerberg to support a virtual network in Harvard university, but was soon expanded to include other schools. In 2005, FB was opened up to high school students and then eventually, was allowed for anyone to join in 2006 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The mission, it was designed for, is to offer people the power to share and make the world more open and connected , to figure out what s going on in the world and share what matters to them (Facebook 2013). It brings users together through the *freind* function. Users are, also, able to create and join *groups* based on interests, location, and any other number of factors, and allows them to communicate in real-time chat, private messages ( similar to e-mail), or by publicly posting messages on contacts´ wall. FB Users can also use this online space to share not only texts, but also videos, pictures, and other media files as well.

Social networks like FB have growing pedagogical potentials, because it offers an opourunity for students to share ideas, knowledge, and individual and group activities ( Cloete, Villiers & Roodt, 2009). FB can, also, serve as a stunning tool in teaching L2 or FL, as mastering these types of languages requires students´ involment outside classroom activities."*The successful mastery or foreign language will depend on learners´ autonomous ability to continue their journey beyond the classroom and the teacher*" (Brown, 2008 :70).

The value of FB in higher education has not gone unnoticed by many scholars. In this respect, Kabilan et al.(2010) explored FB practices of English Students at a University in Malaysia through a student survey. They found that their participants perceived FB to be valuable to their English education according to four categories : motivation, attitudes, improving English skills, and confidence. They suggest that in order for the use of FB to facilitate

language learning to be effective, instructors must plan projects that incorporate this site as a tool for socialization as well as a learning platform. They also suggest that instructors should make learning outcomes clear to students in order to allow them to actively participate in their own learning. According to the FB guide for educators :

*Facebook can provide students with opportunity to effectively present their ideas, lead online discussions, and collaboration. Facebook can help you, as an educator, to tap into the the digital learning styles of your students . For example . It can facilitate student-to-student collaboration and provide innovative ways for you to involve students in your subject matter. Fogg et al.(2011 :3)*

Although FB was not, primarily, created for the purpose of being used in teaching and learning, there are, in fact, compelling reasons that make of this website a real support to teach English language skills, we shall outline a number of them as follows:

- Many English language learners already make use of FB
- FB can promote many types of interaction that are necessary for a successful language class including : learner and content, learner and learner and learner and teacher
- Teachers can create a closed group, to ensure private interaction among the group using facebook.
- Teachers can use FB as an enhancement tool that gives learners extra curricular activities, and more learning opportunities, by which learning can extend outside the walls of the traditional classroom.
- FB increase learners´ collaborative sense by sharing ideas, learning experiences and learning materials.
- Learners can use FB not only on their laptops at home, but also on their smart phones while at home or outside home.
- FB can be used to expose learners to authentic English materials such as : videos, newspapers articles and TV news and programs. English can also be used in real communicative situation like :requesting, commenting, and asking and answering questions, etc.

- FB offers students with the opportunity to communicate with each other, and their teachers in a manner that might not entirely be possible in a traditional classroom.

### **1.3.3.1. Community Building via “FB”**

Many researchers have already identified the significance of creating a community of learners in an educational environment, providing various definitions to the concept of “sense of community” (eg: Mc millan & Chavis, 1986). mutual interdependence among members, connectedness, trust and shared expectations and goals. Psychologists have claimed these features to positively create a rewarding reason for learners to take part in such groups ( Kuo, 2003). In this respect, students and educators do not only strengthen their relationships, but also establish virtual communities which are not only restricted to linking people with others they already know.

prensky (2006) points out that students are fully immersed in 21st century technology ;consequently, it is logical to assume that they will effortlessly exploit such tools to collaborate and develop a mutual interdependence. Instructors need to capitalize on the fact that FB is already an integral part of many students’ e-routine. As a result, if educators pave the road for students to use such a site, it will be a significant support to their academic and social experience. Recognition of the academic benefits that such networks offer is to be considerable for faculty and students alike. Students must be aware of the autonomous learning and the flexibility of time and place these websites provide. Which can support their learning experience.

Certain FB applications have been specifically designed to build bonds between users that share a common interest or activity. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, users can join already existing groups or easily create new ones based on their interests. Therefore, it is easy for an educator to create a group associated with a particular course to engage students in virtual discussions. As a result, the tools that keep them connected socially, will keep them connected academically thanks to different types of group notifications of group postings of any type ( wall postings, videos and audio profiles...etc).

### 1.3.3.2. Development of Socio-pragmatic and Pragmalinguistic Competence

Esalami & Rasekh (2005) defines Pragmatics as language use in sociocultural context. Pragmatic competence encompasses knowledge of speech acts and the ability to use language appropriately in specific contexts. Kasper & Rose (2003), further, elaborates this notion by adding that pragmatics deals with the way speakers and writers achieve goals as social actors who respect social norms in order to attain interpersonal relationship with interlocutors.

Kasper (1997) targets two types of activities that can be developed in the language classroom for developing pragmatic competence: activities raising the students' pragmatic awareness, or tasks which provide opportunities for students to actually practice communication. Both of these activities can be accomplished via FB. In this context, language learners can easily join various FB groups, interacting in no language but the target one and observe written exchanges between the members on the wall or in the discussion forums. A learner, thus, can use observation as one of the best tools to understand the practices of any given community. It is also a good experience for learners to have an exposure to language variation. Groups on FB are often connected online based on linguistic or geographical pride and also expose basic images associated with the main concept introduced, such as flags, landmarks, and powerful visual cues. As a result language variation and other important linguistic and cultural issues can easily be presented to L2 learners by consulting various groups.

Blattner & Fiori (2009) explored the potential of FB to establish strong relationships among student, provide significant educational outcomes and open avenues to collaborate with instructors, or even native speakers of a variety of foreign languages. They found that successful integration of these online spaces in the language classroom can lead to a sense of community and increase learners' socio-pragmatic pragmatic competence in language. In addition, Blattner & Lomicka (2012) examined pedagogical practices using a FB forum in the context of an intermediate French course. Students were required to identify information in posts made by forum members: types of salutation, use of pronouns, question formation, and colloquial vocabulary (eg: abbreviations...etc). The findings revealed that language analysis on such

forums can be an effective tool to enhance learners' awareness about some important socio-pragmatic elements, and overcome national and cultural barriers.

### 1.3.3.3 Intractivity with Peers and Teachers

The importance of interactivity in learning process has already been emphasized in learning theories (Muirhead & Juwah, 2004). For example connectivism involves learning taking place through interaction with various sources of knowledge and participation in communities of common interests, social networks, and group tasks (Siemens, 2009). This learning theory also emphasises the important role that the technology plays in the learning process and the connection of individuals .

Numerous studies have, clearly, demonstrated that benefits of online social interactions in the learning process. Positive aspects of online interaction with teachers and peers may include the followings:

- Access to peer and expert knowledge, ability to receive feedback from teachers and peers, and an opportunity to reflect on the exchanged messages ( Ellis, 2007).
- By expressing their thoughts , discussing and challenging the ideas of others, and working together towards a group solution to a given problem, student develop critical thinking skills as well as skills of self-reflection and co- construction of knowledge and meaning ( Brindley, Walti & Blaschke, 2009).

An attribute of FB that could have an educational value is its social interaction. In modern education, interaction is considered to be an essential aspect. Philips and his colleagues (2011) suggest that this website can provide the students with an opportunity to effectively present their ideas, lead online discussions and collaborate. In addition, it can help educators to tap into the digital learning style of students.They, further, maintain that *"FB can facilitate student-to student collaboration and provide innovative ways for you to involve students in your subject matter"*(p3). They also describe FB as being a powerful tool to help educators connect with their colleagues, share educational content, and enhance communication among student and teachers.



However, the students' lack of collaboration skills such as: decision-making and dealing with conflict may often decrease the degree of interaction (Finegold & cooke, 2006). Therefore, in order to yield the desired educational benefits, the use of technology in general and social networking tools in particular, needs careful attention and investigation. All in all, the role of SNSs as educational platforms is questionable, and offer opportunities as well as threats to education. Couillard (2009) points out that : *"It will not be easy but by following some recommendations and using Facebook and other technologies teachers and students can learn and collaborate together"*. The following section will be devoted to present some concerns about the academic use of SNSs.

#### **1.3.4. The Downside of Social Networks in Education**

In current learning practices, the use of SNSs is still primarily targeted by educators, in an attempt to promote their students' engagement. However, evidence is still lacking as to what extent these tools are profitable for education. A growing number of researchers (eg: Minocha, 2009) in technology-enhanced learning have explored the potentials of these tools and reported benefits but drawbacks and challenges for their applications in educational setting.

Unlike many other studies Wu et al.(2011) did not only report the advantages of using FB in an English language learning setting (ELL), but they also suggested that students' motivation to write may be lower when using this site than when they were in regular classrooms. This is because FB is an open environment; it allows other people (group members) to see students' English writing. Students worried that others would see their writing mistakes so it lowered their motivation to write. In addition, using FB may not be considered as a suitable environment for learning English because broken English is often used , which seems to affect students' communicative skills (Kabilan et al. 2010) . The habit of using English in informal short forms is prevailing among English language learners, and it, badly, affects students' academic writings. Since some may get used to the habit and then use it in the formal writing tasks.

Another pitfall of using SNSs in ELL classes is distraction. Accordingly, students might not concentrate on learning activities or update their FB homepage instead of focusing on their academic work ( Yunus et al. 2012). SNSs may grab the total attention and the concentration of the students and direct them towards non educational and inappropriate actions such as useless chatting, random killing of time and not doing their jobs. Although users experience delight and enjoyment when interacting with others on these networks and appear to be in total command of this activity, they may lose control over other tasks that they are expected to perform. Time flies while they are absorbed in the joy and curiosity produced by these websites, and no time or effort is left to conduct other tasks. In fact, SNSs have introduced many attractive tasks like gamming, advertisements...etc, and providing such kind of applications is a straight invitation to addiction to any regular user of these online spaces.

### **1.5. Conclusion :**

Based on the literature review, it is well-acknowledged that SNSs like FB have affected the modern society positively. Effective use of features and opportunities of these platforms can help instructors to empower the educational process with active learning, creativity and cooperation. They can also develop students' communicative skills, extend participation and social commitment, and, thus, enables the realisation of cooperation-based learning.

FB, as being the most popular website among students, can provide them with communication environment that is not limited with space and time. Students can join specified groups that enable them to share ideas, views and topics, and engage in an online discussion that is significant to their Educational matters. The students are , thus, able to learn new words, build confidence, and increase their motivation, which can create a positive educational climate. The next chapter will be an attempt to adress these facts on a practical framework.

# Chapter Two: Research Design and Procedures

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# Chapter Two :

## Research Design and Procedures

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2.1. Introduction

2.2. ELT Situation at Tlemcen University

2.2.1. Challenges of Using SNSs at the English Department

2.3. Methodological Considerations

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2.3.3.1.2. Teachers´ Questionnaire

2.4. Conclusion

## **2.1.Introduction**

The present study is conducted for the sake of investigating the Academic value of SNSs in general , and FB in particular. Selecting the appropriate methodology and research tool for a given research work helps in building-up a valid investigation.This chapter, hence, is devoted to introduce the research tool selected for this study, including its description, and the way it was administered.

## **2.2. ELT Situation at Tlemcen University**

Tlemcen university is acknowledged to be one of the well known institutions of higher education in Algeria. The establishment of foreign languages department dates back to more than 24 years ago, with English and French as the only languages to be taught at the level of this department. The year 2010 witnessed the emergence of two new sections: Spanish and Translation consecutively. As well as all the university sections, The department of Foreign Languages at the new pole of Tlemcen operates under the umbrella of the newly implemented LMD system, which stands for: Licence/ Master/ Doctorate in French, or Bachelor's /Master's/Doctorate in English.

The LMD system has been introduced in Algeria in the academic year 2004/2005, with the following schedule :

- ❖ Students are awarded with a General Bachelor's Degree , following a three years-study, which paves the road for the the students towards the next level :The Master's Degree
- ❖ Master's Degree after two years of study ( Master1 and Master2).
- ❖ Doctorate Degree is awarded after three years of study.

Students admitted to pursue an English Master Degree, have the choice to be registred in various specialities.These latters include: Language studies, Litterature and civilization, English language Teaching,Didactics and Assessment in Education, English Literary and Cultural Studies

### **2.2.1. Challenges of Using SNSs at the English Department**

It seems that question of using SNSs in the English department at the University of Tlemcen is Quite intricate because of the avalaibility of

technological equipments and the human resources that are still poor and not enough to control the situation. Accordingly, many authors have already highlighted the ability of social networks to deeply transform the face of education. More to the point, to transform teaching and learning as more social, open, and collaboration-oriented. However, in parallel with these claims, other scholars have raised many concerns about the possible tensions that may arise when integrating collaborative practices derived from such spaces into curriculum and academic practices. An interesting point to note when observing the FB closed group under research, is that a number of issues like student–teacher relationships with regard to professional behaviour, the disparity between the very closed boundaries of formal learning environments and the open nature of social networks where every one can contribute and comment, in addition to some pedagogical and technical-related challenges, seem to address a number of concerns when using social networkings tool for academic purposes. Therefore, it would be wiser to examine some challenges related to the use of SNSs for teaching and learning.

➤ *Students-teachers relationships and issues of professional behavior*

With the increasing popularity of social networks among university students, teachers-students relationships with reference to the issues of professional behaviour on these websites, have been tackled in a numerous studies. Greenhow et al.(2014) state that the entire engagement of students in SNSs necessitates the creation of an informal-formal space, to combine learning activities and students’ informal social networking. In fact, this, strongly, requires teachers and students alike to re-examine their roles across such spaces.

To address the issue, Selwyn (2009)’ pioneering study on students use of SNSs, showcased the students’ unwillingness to universities staff making formal usage of these sites, claiming that these practices are rather “back stage” in their studies. In the same line of thought, Cheung and Vogel (2011) study reports students’ resistance to use FB to communicate with their teachers, suggesting that academic and social life, should be treated separately. These findings, clearly, support traditional perception of education that calls for a clear separation of “life” from “studying” and “home” from “lectures”.Manca & Ranieri (2013)

In deed, the above considerations target the fundamental issue of online social networks for educational purposes: whether students and teachers should be friends on these websites. Some authors, In fact, stress that the word “friend” reflects an image that does not suit student-teacher relationships. Issues of privacy, and even abuse have triggered the debate among educators about the implications of student-teacher connections using these sites. Gagnon & Milbourne (2014) explain that students social addiction to this websites increases the degree of intimacy. The students may , then, experience inappropriate feelings of connectedness with others, by which everyone -including teachers- is expected to be accessible and responsive 24/7. Such misinterpretation of the notion of closeness is a straightforward invitation to invade professional boundaries, by which the students´ perception of the authoritative status of the teacher is mistranslated to “friendship”.

Having a positive or a negative outcomes, students-teachers relationships on social networks present serious challenges, that seek a careful attention among stakeholders. The issues presented above, do not, but raise a number of challenges that may put these type of relationships in the front line towards the adoption of such spaces for academic practices.

➤ *Technical- Related Challenges*

Although “Digital natives” are skillful in using communication technologies, they may not be able of adopting them for academic practices, and may not be well-informed of how to use online learning resources. Many of the tasks that students, actually, perform online involve, simply, clicking on buttons, and except for few number of self-motivated students, most of them are not expected to integrate any of these technologies, not excluding social networks, into their learning goals. Therefore, it is the duty of instructors to increase students´ awareness for the possible educational technologies, students could use for their learning. It is believed that students wouldn´t explore and use educational technologies, unless they are introduced to them clearly. In fact, some would argue that many university teachers themselves have not much experience with the available technologies; and may not recognize the educational potentials and possibilities for their learners.

Along with these assumptions, a serie of empirical studies discuss the outcome of adopting SNSs for teaching and learning with regard to the higher education sector. In this context, Many scholars state that using such spaces, requires higher education instructors to explore a series of issues such as: their personal experience with educational technologies. Instance of these, is Scott(2013)´ study, which reports how: age, gender, and prior experience are more likely to affect teachers who take up e-learning, notably, emerging technologies such as SNSs. Similarly, in a study about the use of ICT´s in education acroos 27 countries, Wastiaux et al. (2013) report how social media skills were rated lower in some countries, both among teachers and learners. The authors highlight how the development of one of the key component of 21<sup>st</sup> century education is indispensable,which requires policy makers at all levels (regional, national ,local) to invest in teachers´ professional development, in order to improve the teachers´s digital confident. As a result, teachers would supplement their every day use of social networking tools in professional contexts, with respect to their implications for learning strategies and students social networking skills.

In sum, if social networks tools are to be implemented in the technological luggage of teaching staff, then specific support and training will be needed. Teachers, thus,should familiarize themselves with the various applications of SNSs designed for academic purposes ( see appendix C ), and master how to use these features clearly.

### **2.3. Methodological Considerations**

Methodology is better expressed as the practical road through which the researcher reach the aim of the study undertaken . Methodology enables the researcher to account for the nature of the data obtained, through the selection af an appropriate research tool , in order , at the end, to generate the findings ( Leedy, 1993). In other words, methodology makes the way of dealing with problematic topics less compicated. The methodology of any study is selected on the basis of specific standard, As for the present study, the descriptive method is deemed suitable for the questions stated.

Through descriptive method, the researcher unveils the reasons and the effects of a given problem, so that he/ she can set up possible solution to cure



that problem. To address the problem, It is strongly recommended that the researcher uses one or a combination of various research tools such as : observation, questionnaire, or an interview. The aim of the study, the sample to be investigated, and the time available, are all significant factors in choosing the appropriate research tool in any study

### **2.3.1. Qualitative versus Quantitative Research:**

The method, the researchers pursued, to gather data for the present work is a mixture between quantitative and qualitative ones rather than the use of one method over another. The data obtained in an investigation could be analyzed either quantitatively as when the researchers consider the frequency of each item in a multiple-choice question, or qualitatively in the case when some data cannot be quantified, and do not, then, produce any numerical information or statistics.

The data under analysis in a given research are to be expressed either by numbers, or by a direct interpretation through a qualitative analysis, as for when an open-ended question is treated with a concise textual analysis that doesn't require any kind of counting or measuring. The combination of quantitative & qualitative data permitted the researchers, hence, to develop a clear idea about the academic usage of social networks (FB for the present case).

### **2.3.2.Sampling and Population**

The targeted population of this study has been primarily Master2 EFL students enrolled in Abou Bekr Belkaid University of Tlemcen, including a number of teachers in the same university. More to the point, the researchers targeted a FB closed group named "Master2Lit&Civ13",consisting mainly of Master2 EFL Civilisation&Literary students and teachers. The FB closed group is accessible through the following URL:

[www.facebook.com/groups/678078002306262/934032946710765/?notif\\_t=group\\_activity](http://www.facebook.com/groups/678078002306262/934032946710765/?notif_t=group_activity)

To join this FB group, the user must have a FB account. Once the permission to join this group has been approved by the group administrator, the member can start to participate in the group activities. The researchers, as members of

the group, were allowed to conduct an effective observation of the different activities performed by members of the group since every post and comment made by the members of the group is notified to all

The selection of such sample was purposive on the premises that students and teachers belonging to the FB closed group will provide us with the desired data for our present study, since they are more likely to interact academically on such a network (FB in our case) on a daily basis.

### **2.3.2.1.Learners' Profile**

Out of 100 students participating in the FB closed group, a sample of 50 students were chosen randomly to take part in the present study. As it was stated before, The participants of this study consist of both males and females belonging to Master2 EFL students at Abu Bekr Belkaid University of Tlemcen. Their ages vary between 23-25, except for 3 students who has more than 30 years old.

### **2.3.2.2.Teachers' Profile**

Because teachers play an active role in such a group, they are also concerned with this topic. Thus, three teachers, as members of the closed group, were questioned in order to consider their attitudes about the effectiveness of social networks, FB notably , for educational purposes.The teachers participating in this study are responsible of numbers of modules for Master2 civilization and literary studies which include: American philosophy, Woman writers, and Creativity&performance.

### **2.3.3.Research Instrument**

Due to the nature of the current research, the reliance on the questionnaire as a research tool appears to be exclusive as we deem it to be an appropriate process to gather data about the targeted population. Brown (2001:6) states that:"*Questionnaires are any research instrument that provide the present respondents with a series of questions...to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from any existing answers*".

The questionnaire is easy to administer for it provides clear views with the least effort and time. Richards (2005:60) points out that questionnaires are one

of the well known research tools, which enable the researcher to reach larger number of subjects in a shorter time. They are easily structured, and can obtain information that is relatively easy to tabulate and analyse.

### **2.3.3.1. Description of the Questionnaires**

For the present research we devised two questionnaires, one for the students and one for the teachers (see appendix A and appendix B).

#### **2.3.3.1.1 Student's Questionnaire**

Out of 100 students participating in the closed group, a sample of 50 students were chosen randomly to take part in the present study. As it was stated before, The participants of this study are all Master2 EFL students at Tlemcen University. Most of them aged between 23-25, except for 3 students who have more than 30 years old.

The questionnaire consists of ten (10) questions ranked from general to specific so as to introduce clearly the topic of the study to the students and implicitly get the information needed from the answers they provide. The questions are either close-ended requiring from the students to choose "yes" or "no" answers, or multiple choice questions where the participants are to select the appropriate answers and justify them when necessary.

The questionnaire includes, further, an open-ended question which does not intend to affect the students' attitudes, but elicit as much as needed information for the topic under investigation. The questions are presented as follows:

**Q1:** Is rather an informative question about the students' FB seniority.

**Q2:** Is devoted to know the frequency of FB access for each student during a typical day.

**Q3:** This question is used in an attempt to know the number of FB contacts for each of the participants.

**Q4:** Asks the informants about the possible reasons that attract them to use FB.

**Q5:** Targets the students' views about the educational value of interacting through SNSs like FB

**Q6:** Asks the participants if their use of FB, has noticed any changes since they joined the closed group.

**Q7:** Seems to be a follow-up to question 5, where the students were required to clarify if their interaction with peers and teachers inside the group helps them to achieve better academic performances.

**Q8:** A multiple choice question, where the participants are solicited to give their perceptions about the possible impact of social networks like FB on learning outcomes

**Q9:** Is rather an open-ended question, which wants to elicit the students' views about teachers, they interact with, in the FB closed group.

**Q10:** Intend to know the students' view about the potential pitfalls of using FB as an educational setting

### **2.3.3.1.2. Teachers' Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire was administered, as stated previously, to three (03) teachers participating in the FB closed group. The selection of such sample was purposive on the consideration that those teachers are more likely to provide us with the necessary data, since they, usually, interact with the student through the FB closed group. Teachers' responses are, thus, highly, valuable for our present study.

The teacher's questionnaire comprises six (06) major questions. Except for the 2nd question-item which belongs to the close-ended category, all the questions are open-ended, not to affect the teachers' perceptions about the academic value of FB as being the most popular social network site among students and teachers. The questions are introduced as follows:

**Q1:** An informative question seeking to know how familiar are the participant teachers with interacting with students through FB.

**Q2:** Ask the teachers participating in the closed group about their attitudes on the effectiveness of using SNSs, FB notably, to reach their students.

**Q3:** Seeks to know What affected teachers' decision to use FB to interact with students?

**Q4:** Ask the teachers to set up the most important remarks, they have noticed, about social networks ( FB mainly) as being effective educational settings?

**Q5:** Inquires about the impact of FB on both student-student and teacher-student relationships.

**Q6:** The last question-item, where the teachers were required to reveal the various difficulties, they encounter when interacting with their students through FB.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researchers attempted to provide a clear picture about the methodology conducted in this study, with the great consideration , being given to the choice of sample, and the research instrument used to gather data and; therefore, find out satisfactory answers to the research questions and test the validity ofthe hypotheses put forward, which is the task of the following chapter.

# Chapter Three : Data Analysis and Interpretation

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# Chapter Three :

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

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3.1. Introduction

3.2. Analysis of the Main Findings

3.2.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

3.2.2. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

3.3. Interpretation and Discussion of the Main findings

3.4. Recommendations and Implications for SNSs in Education

3.4.1. Creating Closed Groups

3.4.2. Promoting Teachers-Students interaction

3.4.3. Developing Sense of Collaboration

3.5. Conclusion

### **3.1.Introduction**

Up till now, The review of literature related to The academic use of Social networks, FB namely, as well as the research tool selected for the present study are presented. The following step in any research work is to move to something more practical. Therefore, The current chapter is conceived to report quantitatively as well as Qualitatively the data which have been obtained and compiled through the questionnaire administered to students and teachers alike.

Data analysis, as acknowledged, is a crucial process which allows the investigators to order, well-structure, and summarize, the bulk of raw data obtained. Therefore, Students and teachers attitudinal information are carefully examined in order to reflect on the research questions and objectives. Data analysis will be reported in tabular and graphic presentations. It will, thus, permit us to construct our view points about the topic under investigation. By the end,t he results of the study will be translated to draw some practical recommendations to use FB for academic purposes.

### **3.2. Analysis of the Main Findings**

The procedure of analyzing data from the questionnaire is as follows:

- Statement of the questionnaires are presented as they appear.
- The results of the questions are expressed with tabular and graphic representations.
- The abbreviation *N* stands for the number of respondents and % stands for the number of the percentage this number represents.
- Tables and graphs are accompanied with a brief comment on the data obtained with their percentages, in order to build a clearer image about the subject under investigation



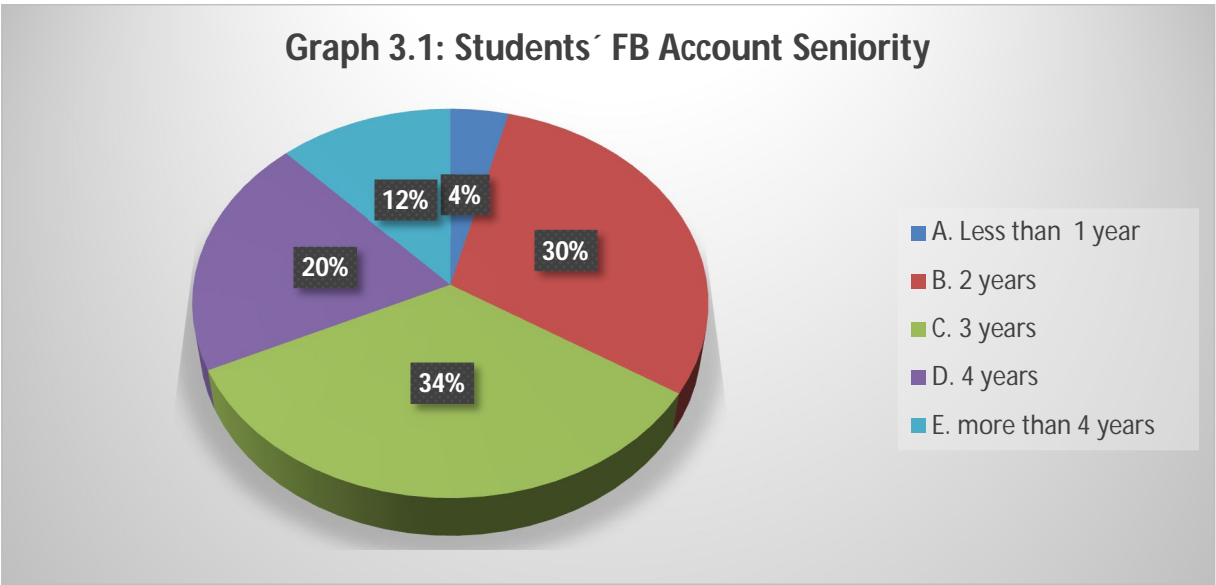
**3.2.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire**

Q1: How long have you had a FB account?

- a/ Less than 1 year
- b/ 2 years
- c/ 3 years
- d/ 4 years
- e/ more than 4 years

Table 3.1: Students' FB Account Seniority

Response	N	%
a	2	4%
b	15	30%
c	17	34%
d	10	20%
e	6	12%



The first question-item appears of considerable interest for the researchers, since it tests the participants' familiarity with using FB. The results indicate that

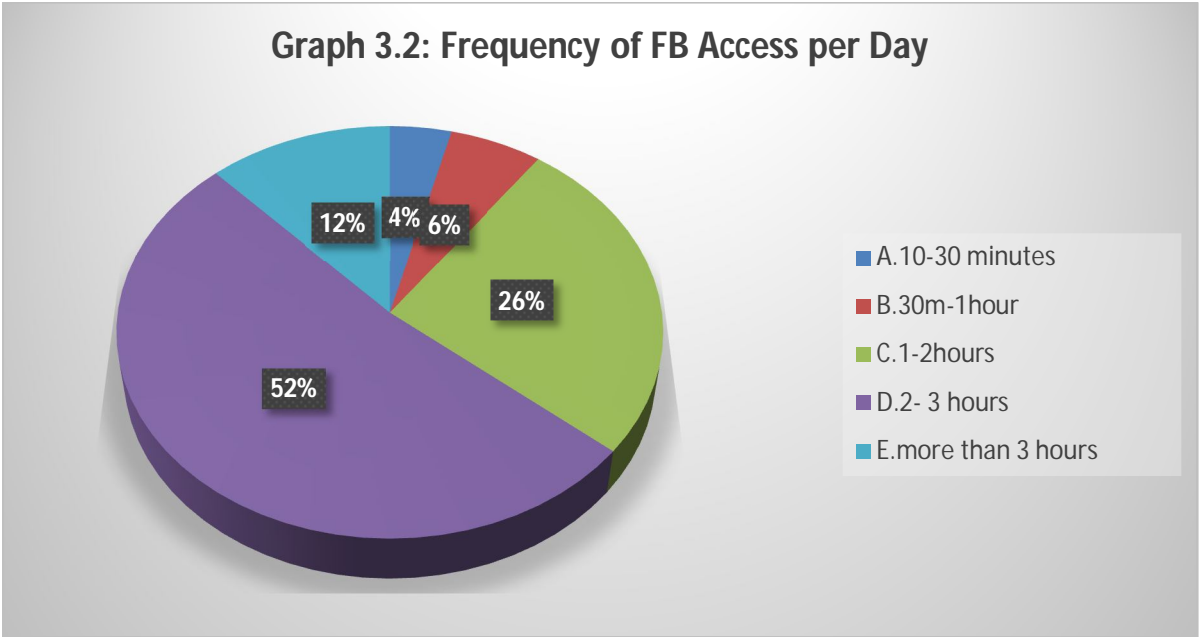
the majority of the participants (34%) are familiar with FB usages, since they have used it for 03 years, while only 4% of the participants are more or less newbies (less than 01 year) in using FB.

**Q2:** How long do you spend on FB during a typical day?

- a/ 10-30 minutes
- b/ 30m-1hour
- c/ 1-2hours
- d/ 2- 3 hours
- e/ more than 3 hours

Table 3.2: Frequency of FB Access per Day

Response	N	%
a	2	4%
b	3	6%
c	13	26%
d	26	52%
e	6	12%



In terms of frequency of access. The results showed that more than half of the participants (52%) have a daily access to FB that exceed 02 hours per day.

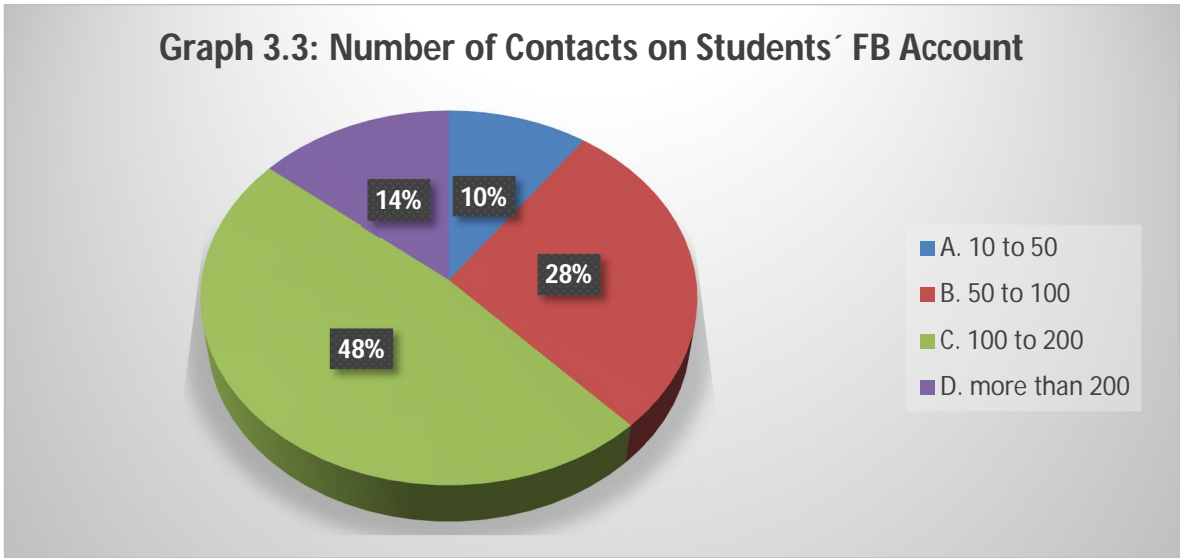
This clearly gives credit to our justification that networks consumption has profoundly penetrated into the daily routine of the students. The results reflected that around 12 % (6) could be considered pretty addicted to FB.

**Q03:** How many contacts do you have on your Facebook Profile?

- a/10 to 50
- b/50 to 100
- c/100 to 200
- d/more than 200

Table 3.3: Number of Contacts on Students' FB Profile

Response	N	%
a	5	10%
b	14	28%
c	24	48%
d	7	14%



The results above revealed that the number of contacts of most of those who filled the questionnaire (48%) outnumbered 100 for each of the participants, whereas 24% declared that they have between 50 to 100 friends on their FB profiles. Only seven (07) students have less than 50 contact. This clearly gives tribute to FB as being an environment which leads to social

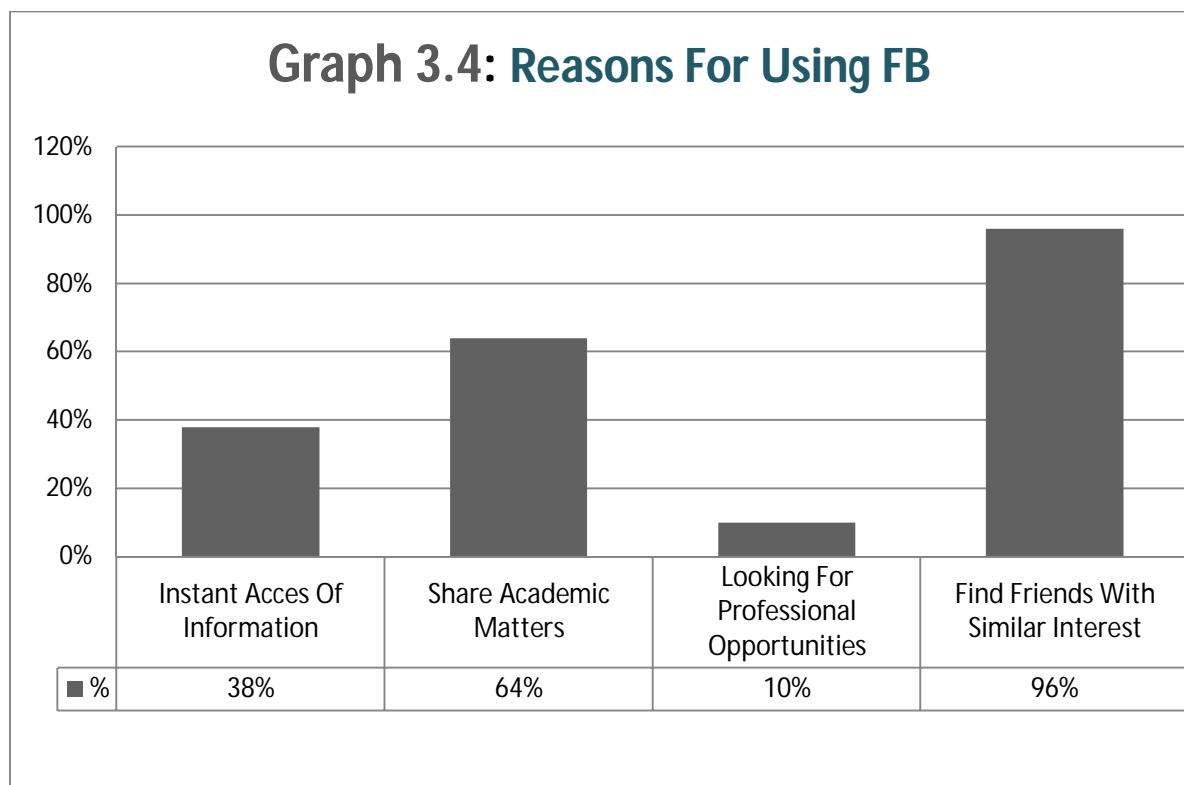
relationships building and acquaintanceships between learners who previously did not know each other. Collaboration may, thus, perpetuate as some may, further, communicate via personal e-mails.

**Q04:**What most attracted you to use FB?

- a/Instant access of information      c/Looking for professional opportunities  
 b/Share academic matters          d/ Find friends with similar interest

Table 3.4: Reasons of Using FB by Students

Response	N	%
a	19	38 %
b	32	64%
c	5	10%
d	48	96%

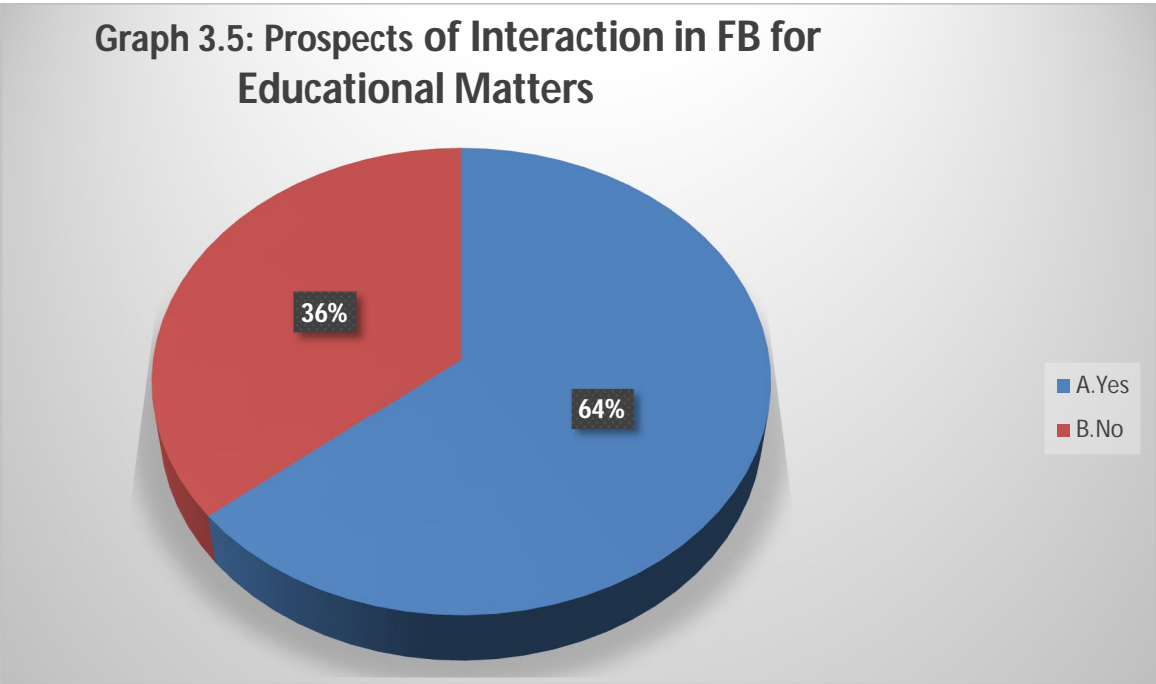


Providing an opportunity to select multiple answers, the fourth question-item attempted to establish quantitatively the reasons behind using FB applications. 96% showed that it is for finding new friends. 64% to share academic matters. 38% to have an instant access of information, whereas only 10% of the participants indicated that they are attracted to FB because of their professional careers.

**Q05:** Do you believe interacting with other student through FB, can support your educational matters? If yes how ?

Table 3.5: Prospects for Interaction in FB as a Support for Educational Matters

Response	N	%
Yes	32	64%
No	18	36%



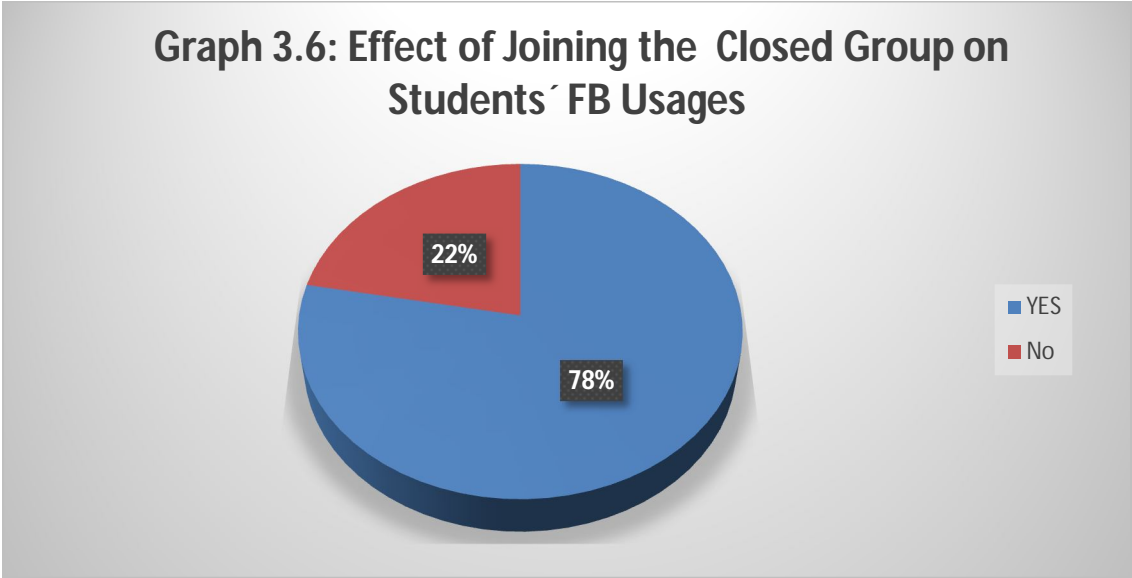
The questionnaire went further in exploring if interaction through FB, is supportive to students' academic matters. The results showed 64% of the respondents agreed to be supportive; whereas, 36% showed a disagreement. Some participants claimed that FB is useful in such a way that students can exchange a lot of information, and notify members of the closed group about

what may be missed in a formal classroom, and since English is the medium used for interaction, new expressions and words are to be learnt. FB is an effective tool for sharing ideas as well as posting reminders.

**Q06:** Do you feel your use of FB changed in any way since you joined the closed group named: *master2 civ&lit13*? If yes, how?

Table 3.6: Effect of Joining the Closed Group on Students' FB Usages

Response	N	%
Yes	39	78%
No	11	22%

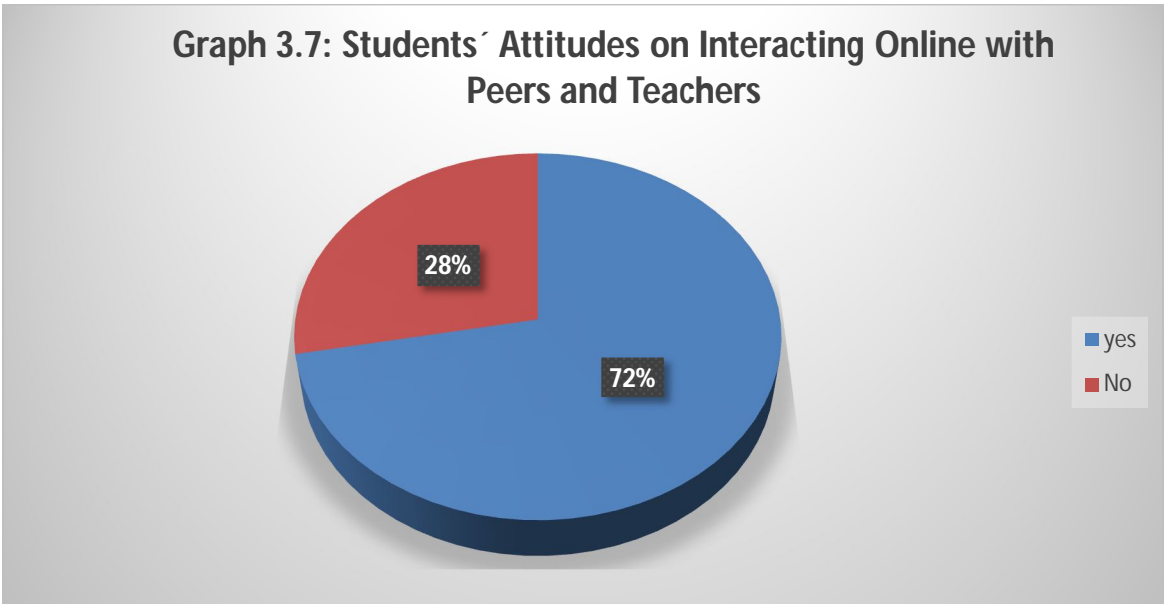


This question-item purports itself to know if joining the closed group has affected the participants' FB usages. Most of the participants (78%) admitted the closed group to be very useful in such a way that it allows for participating in various academic debates with other members, hence, becoming active users of FB. One student reported that he/she cannot spend a single day without checking his/her Facebook account to see what other members have posted.

**Q07:** Do you feel your interaction with your peers and teachers inside the group helps you to achieve better results? If yes, how?

Table 3.7: Students’ Attitudes on Interacting Online with Peers and Teachers

Response	N	%
yes	36	72%
No	14	28%



Similarly, this question-item, which is basically a follow-up to question 5 targets to indicate if interaction with peers and teachers inside the group, improve the participants’ academic performance. The data obtained unveiled that 72% of the participants showed a positive attitudes towards such interaction with their peers and teachers, since , according to them, it provides a classroom-like environment, where students can collaborate and express themselves out of any kind of stress or pressure, the way it frequently happens in face-to-face interaction with peers or teachers. Students, encouraged by the informality of this online environment, would have more freedom, and be less hesitant to make comments on different academic issues. Interaction, this way, will bridge the gap between students and teachers, hence, help to yield better academic achievement.

**Q08:** What is your perception about the impact of SNSs like FB on learning outcomes?

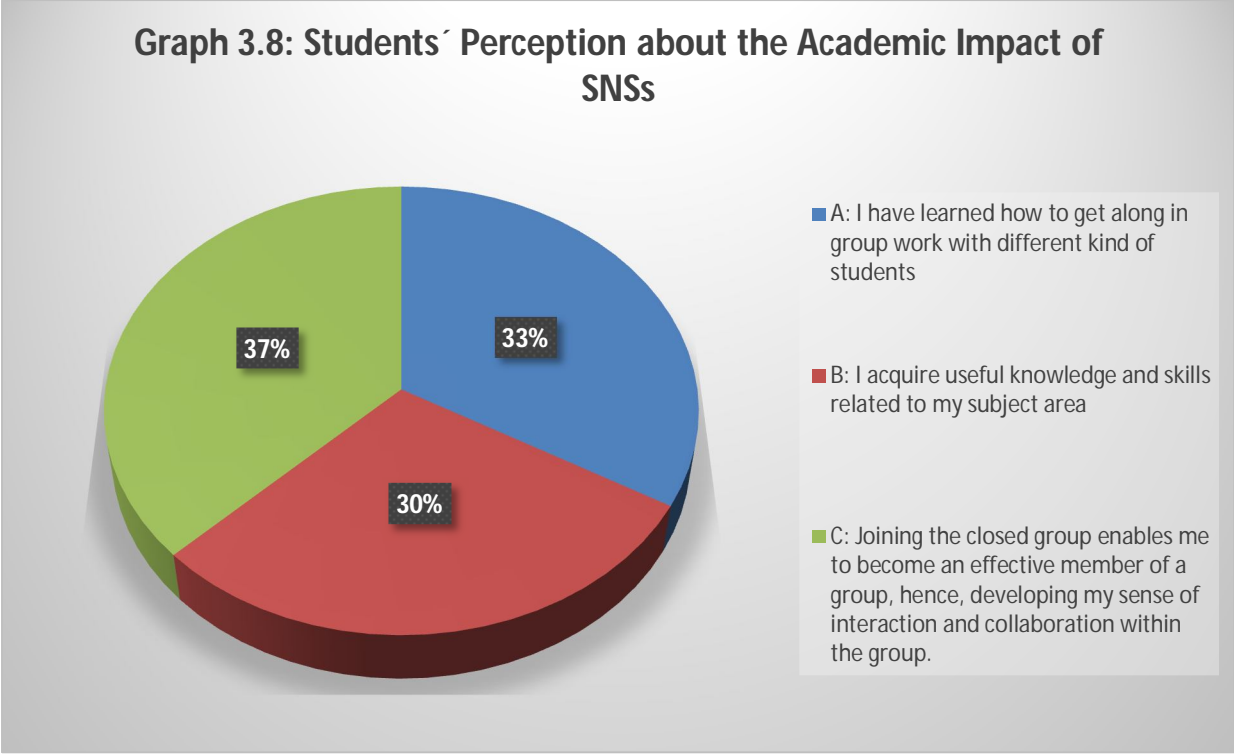
a/ I have learned how to get along in group work with different kind of students

b/ I have acquired useful knowledge and skills related to my subject area

c/ Joining the closed group has enabled me to become an effective member of a group, hence, developing my sense of interaction and collaboration within the group.

Table 3.8: Students’ Perception about the Academic Impact of SNSs

Response	N	%
A	17	34%
B	15	30%
C	19	38%



Always concerning their attitudes vis-a-vis the use of SNSs, FB namely, for educational purposes, table 08 reveals that students’ perceptions about impact



of these spaces on learning outcomes vary slightly since the patterns of responses is nearly similar for the three outcome statements. The data obtained revealed that most of the participants are positive about the value of social networks in their academic matters, which reflects the importance of interaction, this online environment affords.

**Q09:** How do you believe about teachers who use FB to interact with their students?

Still concerning their use of social networks (FB), the present-item question is rather an open-ended question which aims to investigate the participants' views about teachers who use FB to interact with their students. Unsurprisingly, all the participants acknowledge the importance of interacting with such kind of teachers, whom they believe, provide their students with an alternative setting for learning. Interacting with students through Facebook, according to participants, reflect the teachers' highly sense of collaboration. Teachers, in this view, don't take a "back seat", instead, they would have more opportunities to well-manage their classes by keeping in touch with their students through daily posts.

**Q10:** What do you consider the main pitfalls of using FB as an educational setting?

a/ Addiction to social networks like FB causes distraction

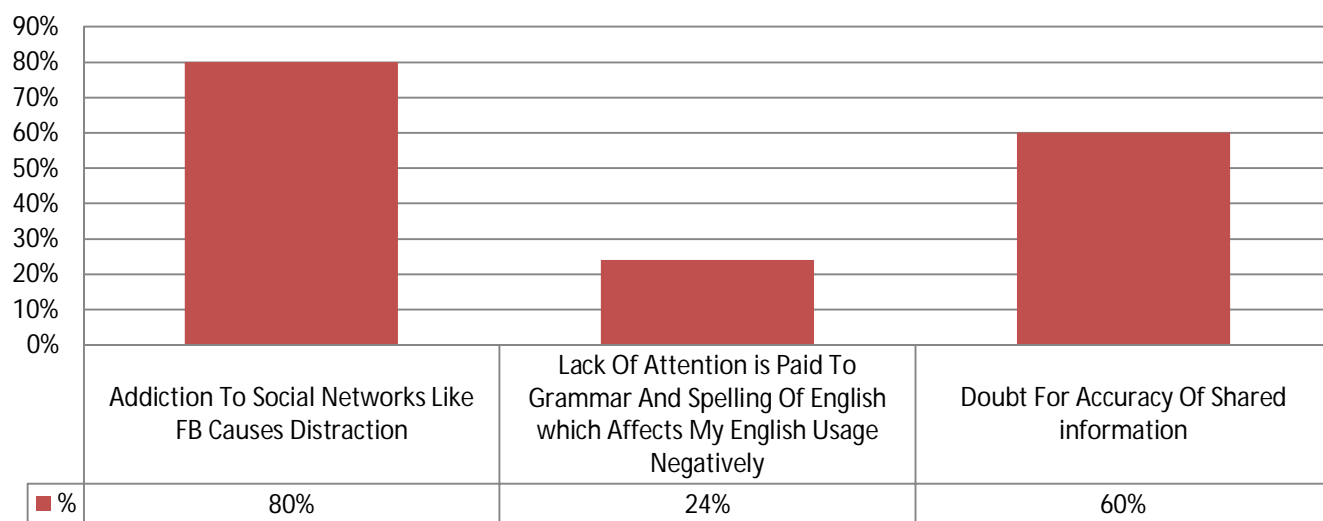
b/ Lack of attention is paid to grammar and spelling of English which affects my English usage negatively

c/ Doubt for the accuracy of shared information

Table 3.9: The Potential Pitfalls of Using FB

Response	N	%
a	40	80%
b	12	24%
c	30	60%

### Graph 3.9 : The Potential Pitfalls Of Using FB



Providing an opportunity for selecting multiple answers, the final question of the current questionnaire concerns itself with gauging students' concerns about the use of FB for educational purposes. The majority of the respondents (80%) believed that distraction is the main pitfall of using FB for educational purposes. Spending time on fun and social activities of FB may influence the students' academic performance. Some participants identified mobile phone use as real distraction in the classroom. Regarding possible inaccuracies 60% felt that sometimes they are misled if fellow students made uncertain statements. The results revealed, also, that 24% of the participants showed their concern about the lack of attention which is paid to Grammar and spelling of English in such a social network; One participant admitted that sometimes he/she forgot and used the same short forms of writing words in the classroom, for example : the use of "4" in place of "for", "u" instead of "you", and "the" is replaced by "D". What seem to be important, is that two (2) participants out of fifty (50) participating in the study reported that SNSs, like FB have discouraged face-to-face communication.

**3.2.2. Analysis of Teachers’ Questionnaire**

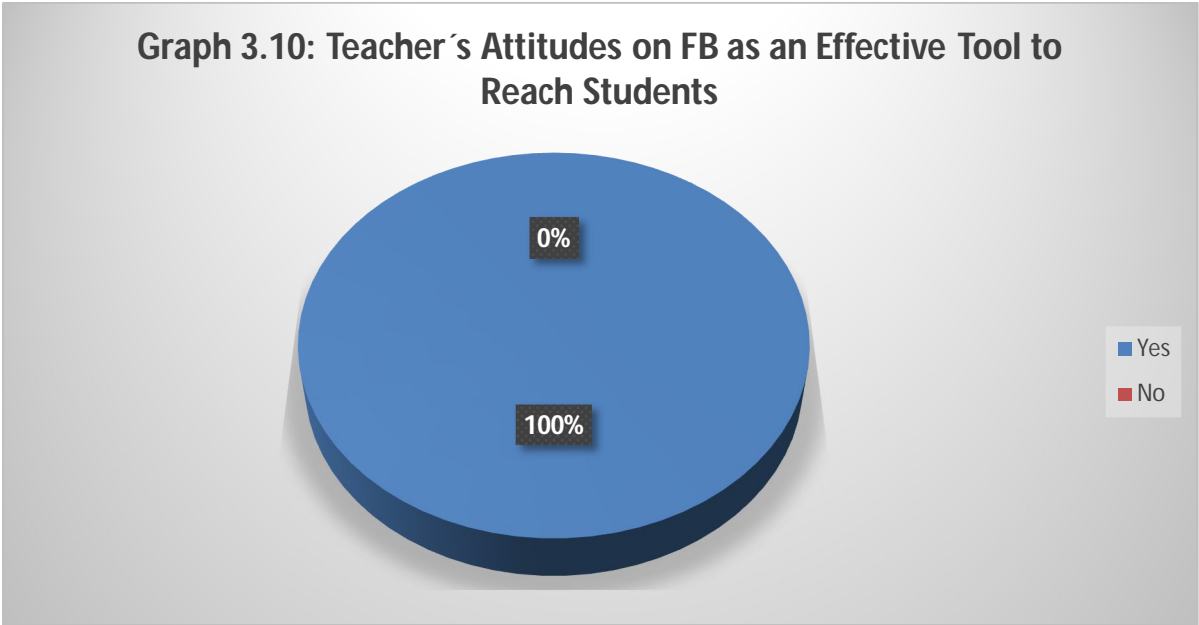
**Q1:**How long have you been interacting with your students through FB?

The results showed that all teachers participating in the closed group have already a pattern of interacting with their students through this social website, and this fact is reflected by the answers which vary between two (2) and three (3) years of interaction for each of the teachers participating in the study.

**Q02:** Do you think social networks like FB is an effective way to reach your students?

Table 3.10:Teacher’s Attitudes on FB as an Effective Tool to Reach Students

Response	N	%
Yes	3	100%
No	0	0%



The results tabulated above indicate that all the teachers who filled the questionnaire responded positively with regard to FB as being an effective tool to reach students. One of the teachers, further, claimed that some students have some difficulties to engage in formal classes and are often marginalized in a traditional classroom setting. However these students are highly creative and

proficient with technology. Using social networks like FB provides promising opportunities to reach these kind of students, who may not only actively engage in discussions, but also exhibit leadership skills as well

**Q03 :** What affected your decision to use FB to interact with your students?

This question-item targets to elicit the reasons that motivated the participants' teachers to interact with their students through FB. The teachers reported a variety of motives, which we summarize as follows:

- To share handouts, lectures, and supervision matters.
- Reach a large number of students, including those who are usually not available at the level of formal classes.
- Gaining time and efforts, and facilitating the interaction with learners in an era where everything is available on the net.

**Q04 :** What observations have you most noted about the effectiveness of SNSs like FB in an educational setting?

Getting directly to the main purpose of the present study, this question represents the basic of our research, since it highlights the teachers' attitudes about the effectiveness of using social networks (FB in this case) for educational purposes. The participants' teachers reported a set of remarks, we shall give an outline of them as follows:

- They serve as a platform to provide information relevant to the course. For e.g.: lecturer's notification on the course, changes to lecture times and locations.
- Correction of tests and exams can be made online with students.
- Students feel free with their teachers to comment on any post or to post their own questions regarding course material.
- FB allows teachers to share electronic books and additional information, which haven't been talked about in formal classes.
- Students tend to read more as they are attracted by the titles of the material shared with them.
- Suitable and helpful to create a joint level of ambition, and represent an opportunity to share a lot of ideas and points of view which may be missed in formal classes.

- Because students are familiar with and enjoy SNS, they are automatically more receptive to materials presented on these types of platforms.

**Q05:** How do you think using FB affects students' relationships with each other? With you?

A priori, this question-item is a follow-up to the previous, and the data obtained appear to confirm what have already found in Q04. The answers revealed that The participants teachers portray this social website to be an Environment, where students tend to transfer their relationship from classmates to friendships, hence, a community of learners is to be established through daily interactions.

The results, also, revealed this electronic contact for academic purposes to yield an academic environment which leads to relationships building between students who previously did not even know each other, hence, students would truly learn from others' contributions, by making a range of opinions on some objects which, unarguably, adds an academic value to the discussion topics. Students feel free, by then, to engage in talks and express themselves in ways in which they feel comfortable. Light- hearted humor occurs alongside serious and deep contributions. Teachers, in this regard, admitted that they had fun within the closed group.

**Q06:**What pitfalls have you encountered when interacting with your students via FB?

The last question-item highlights the potential pitfalls, participants went through when interacting online with their students. Similarly, the participant teachers showed a number of concerns about FB as reliable setting for sharing academic matters. Regarding these, teachers stated that a large number of students would be left on the margin, because they don't have a regular access to check their FB profiles. Teachers also acknowledged experiencing distractions on their academic visits, since some students /members of the closed group wanted to entertain when teachers were there for academic reasons. one teacher reported that sometimes students tend to ignore that formal academic relation between teachers and learners. As claimed by teachers, the open nature of such a network affects student-teacher relationship

### **3.3. Interpretation and Discussion of the Main Findings**

For the sake of answering the projected research questions, and gaining further insight towards the academic relevance of social networking sites, FB notably, we redirect our attention in this section to discuss the aforementioned results in relation to the major research questions. The discussion will, thus, be based on the two main research questions addressed in the study, and presented on the basis of the evaluation and interpretation of the results obtained from our analysis.

The first Hypothesis was formulated to serve as a guide and provide answer to the first research question: Do Master 2 EFL students of Tlemcen University make use of SNSs in their academic issues? If they do, what is their perception about the academic value of these platforms ?

The data obtained seem to confirm our prediction that a considerable number of students are making use of Social networks (FB) for educational matters. The majority of participants confirmed that they make a daily access to FB for educational goals. The students, further, revealed that they have acquired useful knowledge and skills, and develop their sense of interaction and collaboration within the group. The data obtained from the questionnaire are quite reasonable to support our view not to reject the first hypothesis.

Regarding the second hypothesis which was designed to answer the second research question: can social networking sites like FB be taken as a reliable source of education by Master2 EFL students?. The showcased study unveiled that social networking websites provide students with venues to freely express themselves. The teacher's responses reflect the nature of interaction with their students, which seems to positively affect their relationship both online and offline. In this regard, teachers and students who interact regularly, posting questions, were observed to have a stronger relationship, allowing them to share their knowledge and at the same time have access to specific and targeted one in a given field of interest. The confirmation of the first hypothesis, further, clearly, paves the road for the researchers not to reject the second one. FB proves to be a good platform for the students to share their academic matters, and maintain the team-working skills necessary to make

students show more interest in lessons, and, hence, make learning more enjoyable.

### **3.4. Recommendations and Implications for SNSs in Education**

While previous section attempted to analyse and interpret the findings of the current research, we will now consider some ideas and recommendations on how to use SNSs like FB as a learning support in an university environment. The aim of this section, thus, is to propose a reliable policy aiming at equipping both learners and teachers with effective tools to well-manage their interaction via these platforms

#### **3.4.1. Creating Closed Groups:**

Social networks like FB can be useful for teachers to create closed groups to post class information such as lists of readings, assignments and its deadlines, upcoming events, useful links. Students can ask questions and inquiries related to their studies, and discuss the readings and the assignments. Classroom activities can be done more effectively. Teachers, as well, can provide learning materials and motivate their students, as an effective way to achieve quality in education. Accordingly, teachers should familiarize themselves with the various applications designed for academic practices, and learn how to create an online group for their classes to provide a space for learners to communicate and share information and interests (see appendix C). Instances of these applications can be summarized as follows:

- *Post text*: which allows teacher to send any piece of written discourse ranging from a phrase to an essay or an article
- *Add photo*: This application is designed for teachers and students to upload a picture.
- *Add videos*: which enables uploading videos.
- *Add link*: allows teachers and students to share a link in a post
- *Add file*: this feature enables teachers and students to post files such as presentations, schedules, and documents.
- *Ask question*: promote online discussion between teachers and students on a given topic.

The teachers' awareness of the above features will, further, help them managing their relationships with the students, so that they can overcome the barriers that may prevent those teaching staff from addressing social networks in their academic practices.

### **3.4.2.Promoting Teachers-Students interaction:**

As stated previously, the impact of students-teachers relationships on the quality of interaction on these platforms is well-documented. Especially at university level, where the prevalence of these kind of technologies among students is evident. So, what are the best academic practices for teachers to better control their interaction with students via these networks? Stewart (2009:117) points out that instructors first keep their academic principles, "*even it means (student) must sometimes move outside their comfort zones and we must move outside ours*". Here are some suggestion for teachers to maintain a respectful relationship with students, regarding a well-established authority and clear professional boundaries:

- A high degree of professionalism in face-to-face interactions is the basis of students' perception of your authoritative status. Make clear that students use professional language and address you formally. However, to make effective balance between authority and a relationship with students, a sense of "humor" and "being yourself" can go along with face-to-face interaction.
- Set up clear plan for out-class communication. Specify how your students would contact you (eg: e-mails, FB account), and clearly state "offlimits" types of contact ( eg: friendship requests) in order to maintain professional boundaries.
- A pre-organisation of tasks without heaviness or vague information, will, certainly, enhance students' perception about your ability to lead them online. This includes daily posts such as : course policies, powerpoints, handouts and assignment. Support useful discussion, among members of the group, and avoid conflict
- Use the FB group to post a specific topic for written tasks, then choose the best pieces of writing for voting, using FB applications (Appendix C). Creating competition among learners would create an admirable climate, which is likely to promote teacher-student rapport.



- Your written words are a reflection of your personality. Therefore, use professional language when interacting, virtually, with students. Always check your grammar and spelling of your entire message before hitting the “send” button. Get more closer to your students, but always maintain professional distance.

### **3.4.2.3. Developing Sense of Collaboration**

One of the practical recommendations of using social networks for academic purposes, is to promote collaborative work, which is a key factor to increase students motivation to learn and generates higher levels of academic performance. Social networks would, thus, foster critical thinking and increases the diversity of the knowledge being shared.

Therefore, the teacher’s duty, besides transmitting information, is to facilitate the students interaction and to promote the flux of information online especially with collaborative work. Social networks can act as spaces which bring certain learning communities into contact. These learning communities are formed on the premises of exchanging information and creating knowledge in a collaborative way. Members of the learning community would challenge one another intellectually with a common goal, being to work collaboratively to solve a problem or to perform a given task. If this goal is achieved, then social networks like FB can serve as a real informal learning platform.

### **3.5..Conclusion**

This chapter presented the analysis of data obtained along the different stages of the present study, with respect to theoretical and practical considerations presented in the previous chapters. The data were, then, collected through the administration of two questionnaires ; for teachers and students alike. Questions were analysed privately, and followed with tabular, and graphic representation as well. Wiener & Bazerman (2000) explain the importance of graphs to provide, visually, a precise comparison between the available research statistics.

The chapter has,also, attempted to interpret and discuss the findings of the current research with the main objective, being to answer the two main research questions, and, thus, test the validity of the research hypotheses.

Recommendations and Implications about the investigated topic were also presented at the end of this chapter.

# General Conclusion

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# General Conclusion

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The present study represented an attempt to examine the academic value of social Networking sites in general and Facebook in particular. The researchers targeted a FB closed group made up by Master2 EFL students and teachers at Tlemcen University.

To clearly understand the above issue, the researchers conducted a case study, in which two questionnaires were administered to both teachers and students interacting through the FB closed Group, with the main objective being to provide answers to the two following research questions :

- ❖ Question one : Do Master 2 EFL students at university of Tlemcen make use of SNSs for academic purposes? If they do, what is their perception about the academic value of these spaces ?
- ❖ Question two : Can the online social network : "Facebook" be taken as a reliable source for education ?

and, thus confirm or infirm the two constructed hypotheses :

- ❖ Master 2 EFL students make use of SNSs, FB notably for their academic practices
- ❖ Facebook, the most popular website among university students, can be an effective setting for education.

The general layout of this study comprised three chapters. The first chapter is rather a theoretical presentation of the main themes related to the use of SNSs for academic purposes, with reference to FB as being the most popular website among university students. Chapter two was concerned with the detailed description of the data collection procedure undertaken to provide suggestive answers for the research questions and test the hypotheses. This included the methodological framework of the study, and the research instrument used, sampling, and Data analysis techniques. Chapter three represented the most important part in this research, in which the researchers strive to analyse the data collected through the questionnaires, as well as some recommendations and considerations derived from the use of SNSs in the

educational sphere, as an attempt to help students and teachers, who make informal use of these online spaces.

The data obtained reflected the teachers' and students' positive views about the various educational use of FB. The results showed that this online spaces enables teachers to reach a large number of students, and increase students' sense of collaboration and degree of interaction. The electronic contact between students and teachers seems to yield an alternative setting for learning, where students can get to know each other better and take education to its highest levels. SNSs such as FB provide students and teachers with promising opportunities to interact, and share educational matters, thus, creating teacher environments.

Our analysis indicated that the teacher within these networks has not the ultimate role, but rather, serves as a guide to encourage students to take more active role. As such, teachers continue to be responsible for the various activities on social networks and its educational goals. Our study showed that students give more value to teachers' involvement in such networks as they perceive them as more constructive and encouraging. The teachers' role is to create an open climate and make use of his/ her prior experience to support formal classes. Their presence in these platforms should support connection between the students-members of the group by keeping a close watch at the group without interfering, but being ready to assist. Thus, enabling university students to gain confidence and more responsibility to manage their learning which is an important factor for their future professional career.

Increased motivation and improved performance in language classes have always been associated with the feeling of classroom community (Rovai,2002), and FB is, unarguably, a space that can promote self of belonging and social presence. The educational potentials of these websites is evident, with new applications being integrated everyday, which have not been tackled in the present reseach. More researches with larger population are required to,further, explore the extent to which the findings are generalizable and, thus, refine our understanding about the educational potentials of online social networks .

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# Appendices

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# Appendix A : Teacher´s Questionnaire

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We would be very grateful to you if you devote some of your time to answer the following questionnaire which is part of a research we are carrying out to investigate the academic usage of social networks like Facebook . your contribution will be highly valued since it will serve as the basis to our research

We thank you in advance for your collaboration .

**The questions are the following :**

1-How long have you been interacting with your students through facebook ?

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2-Do you think social networks like Facebook is an effective way to reach your students ?

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3-What affected your decision to use facebook to interact with your students ?

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4- What observations have you most noted about the effectiveness of social networks like facebook in an educational setting ?

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5-How do you think using Facebook affects students' relationships with each other ? with you ?

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6- What pitfalls have you encountered when interacting with your students via facebook

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# Appendix B : Students´ Questionnaire

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This questionnaire is an attempt for collecting information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation in language sciences . This study aims to investigate the student´s perception of the academic Usage of Facebook . You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire to help us accomplishing this research

Please, tick the appropriate answer and justify it whenever it is possible .

Gender : \_\_\_\_\_ Age : \_\_\_\_\_

**1-How long have you had a facebook account ?**

- a/ Less than 1 year                      c/ 3 years                      e/ more than 4 years
- b/ 2 years                                      d/ 4 years

**2- How long do you spend on facebook during a typical day ?**

- a/ 10-30 minutes                      c/ 1-2hours                      e/ more than 3 hours
- b/ 30m-1hour                              d/ 2- 3 hours

**3- How many contacts do you have on your facebook profile ?**

- a/10 to 50                                      c/100 to 200
- b/50 to 100                                      d/more than 200

**4-What most attracted you to use facebook ?**

- a/Instant access of information                      c/Looking for professional opportunities
- b/Share academic matters                              d/ Find friends with similar interest

. List others if any .....

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5-Do you believe intracting with other students throug facebook, can support your educational matters ? If yes, how ?

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6- Do you feel your use of facebook changed in any way since you joined the closed group named : **Master2 Lit & Civ 13**?If yes, how ?

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7- Do you feel your interaction with your peers and teachers inside the group helps you to achieve better results ?If yes,how ?

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8- What is your perception about the impact of social networks like facebook on learning outcomes ?

a/ I have learned how to get along in group work with different kind of students

b/ I have acquired useful knowledge and skills related to my subjects area

c/ Joining such closed group has enabled me to become an effective member of a group, thus, developing my sense of interaction and collaboration within the group

.Others : .....

9- How do you believe about teachers who use facebook to interact with their students ?

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10- What do you consider the main pitfalls of using facebook as an educational setting ?

- a/. Addiction to social networks like Facebook causes distraction
- b/. Lack of attention is paid to grammar and spelling of English which affects my English usage negatively .
- c/. Doubt for the accuracy of shared information
- . List others if any

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# Appendix C :

## Useful Facebook Pages for Teaching and Learning English

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1-Familiarize your self with Facebook if you have not use it before :

Facebook help center at : <http://www.facebook.com/help/>

2-Learn more about Facebook group basics on :

<http://www.facebook.com/help/162866443847527>

3-Recommended Facebook Pages for English language teachers :

<http://www.really-learn-english.com/top-facebook-pages-for-english-language-teachers.html>

4-Facebook English : 14 Top Pages designed for learning and teaching English

<http://www.myenglishteacher.eu/blog/facebook-english-14-super-pages-to-learn-and-teach-english/#v5aWpsoJgCvy9RD2.99>

5- Learn English – British Council MENA

<http://www.facebook.com/LearnEnglish.BritishCouncilMENA/info>

6-Cambridge Dictionaries Online

<http://www.facebook.com/CambridgeDictionariesOnline/info>

7-VOA Learning English : [http://www.facebook.com/voa learning English/info](http://www.facebook.com/voalearningEnglish/info)

8-English club Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/englishclub/jnfo>

9-English Idioms : <http://www.facebook.com/EnglishIdiomsExpressions/info>

10-Learn English Teens-British Council :

<http://www.facebook.com/LearnEnglishTeens.BritishCouncil/info>