# PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITY OF ABDELHAMID IBN BADIS –MOSTAGANEMFACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTEMENT OF ENGLISH



# MASTER "Language and Communication"

## The Impact of Using Facebook on EFL learners' Writing Skill

A Case Study of First year Master Students of Language and

Communication at Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaghanem

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#### **Abstract**

Current generation consider as digital natives that can manipulate electronic devices like smart phones, and involve in the virtual world via mastering the use of android applications like Facebook. It can play a virtual role in learning a foreign language. It 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. The aim of this study is to investigate how Facebook can enhance EFL learners' written skills. Likewise, it aims to highlight the teacher/students relationship, and attitudes on Facebook as a virtual learning platform. The objective of the research is to contribute to covering the lack of research that deal with the Facebook for educational and pedagogical purposes. A mixed research method consisting of quantitative and qualitative methods was used in this research, which includes three types of data collection: students' questionnaire, teacher's interview, and analysis of posts and comments of four selected students. Facebook is not a standard to enhance EFL learners' writing skill because there was no improvement in terms of writing, for some students have maintained the same level, while others have dropped their level.

**Keywords:** Facebook, EFL learners, writing skills.

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I owe everything I am today to my family, especially my dear mother and father who have always made the education of their children a top priority, without them I would not have been the person I am today.

## **Dedication**

To my family

#### **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English foreign language

M1: Master one

**SNSs:** Social Network Sites

**ESL:** English Situational Learning

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#### **General introduction**

Recentllly, technology has intervened in all the aspects of our lives. Internet and social network sites offer an easy access to information throughout technological devices for human who exploit this for reasonable benefits and use it in different areas of life including education. Online learning had been revolutionized nowadays. It is a way to grow knowledge and solve problems. Online learning offers flexibility to study anywhere with electronic devices and an internet connection.

Blog, Flicker, Twitter, You Tube and Facebook are social networks tools that endow knowledge sharing through virtual meetings and discussions that were impossible before. The students have multiple available alternatives to participate in active discussions with other students as well as collaborate in various activities to construct knowledge.

Students access Facebook anywhere and everywhere. They join facebook groups for several purposes as well as educational purposes. They can learn English language and improve the writing skills throughout interaction with teacher and classmates in a virtual learning atmosphere which is Facebook.

Writing is one of the basic four language skills. It is a language product that requires special alertness as it is a medium of communication. Writing proficiency demands cognition of its features and components. Teaching writing skills to EFL learners is a corps of foreign language that reveals the student's ability to learn a foreign language.

Facebook can be a beneficial platform where the students can practice the writing skills throughout exchange knowledge and interactive with each others by writing comments. The teacher may involve in the process of teaching via facebook by transferring information to students, and reacts with the written discussion in the Facebook group.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate how Facebook can enhance EFL learners' writing skills and to what extent it helps students master the writing's components and features. This research work also aims to test the teacher/student relationship on the Facebook group and their attitudes towards Facebook as a learning platform. Therefore, the main questions raised in this study are as follows:

- How can Facebook enhance EFL learners' writing skills?
- What are the writing's components and features that EFL learners can master through interaction on Facebook group?

• What are EFL students and teachers attitudes towards Facebook as a platform for the process of learning a foreign language?

Attempting to answer the questions above, we can predict the important role of using "Facebook" by EFL students, it is a quite valuable tool in foreign language learning. In this vein, we hypothesize that EFL students and teachers may consider Facebook as a platform to develop writing skill.

The work is divided into three main parts, which include one chapter that presents a theorical background about Facebook application and EFL learners' development of their writing skills. In the second chapter, we provide the reader with some details on the research design, methodology and the analysis of the research methods; whereas, the third chapter is devoted to the discussion of our research findings.

#### 1. Introduction

Social sites like Facebook today are free available means for students to search and share information. It helps a major chunked of learners for educational purposes. Facebook can be the world's engine of discovery and innovation in education. It would be useful for classroom level discussion and assistance with home work. This paper mainly tries to concentrate on how Facebook can be used for educational purposes. It also highlights the student-teacher interaction via Facebook. This part mainly tries to concentrate on how Facebook can be used for educational purposes. An Overview about Facebook

Facebook is a networking site, which connects people from all over the world, making the Earth a global village. This social networking giant 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.

#### 1.1.1. Facebook 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 as a learning tool purvis students with chance to interact and communicate with each others and with the teacher outside of the blackboard. It provides learners access to more controlled authentic materials.

#### 1.2. Mobile Pedagogy

Mobile pedagogy is unusual term since it is more common to talk about mobile learning. The use of mobile devices, which is accompanied by learner mobility across diverse context and setting, puts a spot light on learners and their experiences, but in so doing it may obscure the

Agnes Kukulska-Hulme, Lucy Norris and Jim Donohue (2015) declared that:

vital role played by teachers. (p. 7).

Since mobile learning is still relatively new, there is not a fixed pedagogy that can explain mobile learning. However, because of the diversity of mobile devices we can see how

mobile learning set in with many different pedagogies of learning like; behaviorist, constructivist, connectivist, ect.

Romualdo Mabuan and Gregorio Ebron Jr. (2017) claimed that:

while some educators and practitioners may be skeptical on the pedagogical viability of integrating SNSs such as Facebook into the language classroom, we believe that it can be one of the feasible and practical means to engage our modern learners – 'the digital natives' of the generation Z – and address their changing needs and nature, and connect with their dynamic, fast-paced, and mobile lifestyle. (p. 271).

The pedagogy of technology integration is still in debate. It is about how the teacher can learn, practice, reflect, and refine pedagogical best practices and show the pictures how technology can be smoothly integrate into world of those practices.

#### 1.3. The Role of Facebook 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

#### 1.4. Facebook as a Virtual Learning Platform for Teacher-Student Interaction

Rebecca Toland (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 t 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.

#### 1.5. Students' Attitude toward Using Facebook 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 favored 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.

#### 1.6. Teacher's Attitude Towards the Use of Facebook 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.

Facebook, teachers can creatively employ them as tools for supporting students' continuous learning activities.

#### 1.7. Definition and Features of Writing Skill

According to Numan (2003); "Writing are physical and mental act. It is about discovering ideas, thinking about how to communicate, develop them into statements and paragraphs that will be comprehensible to a reader" (p.2).

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 give and take cycle. It is a basic skill of language that should be taught and leaned. 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.

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

#### 1.8. 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).

Developing written skills will enable students to learn how to compose ideas, organize their thoughts and arguments, support key points and share information 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.

#### 1.9. Students' Written Comments as a Feedback on Facebook

Mervat Abd Elfatah Ali Said Ahmed (2016) found that:

Students learned new sentences or new writing structures when they saw friends share feelings and ideas, and when they commented on each other's comments. Students learned grammar and improved their writing skills by (1) reading the comments and posts from their peers; (2) being able to identify their own and their friends' writing mistakes and correct them; (3) discussing incorrect grammar with Facebook friends; and (4) by 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.

## 1.10. Developing 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, Widad BOUHAMI (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.

#### 1.11. Conclusion

Facebook group incorporation in education offers many opportunities of learning for students through the easy search for information and negotiation of content with each other via writing pasts and comments which is a chance to develop the writing components.

#### 2. Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the method that we used to collect data for valuable results about the role of Facebook in enhancing writing skills for EFL learners. This chapter will introduce; research design, participants, research Instruments, the procedure followed while gathering process, and data analysis.

#### 2.1. Research Design

A mixed research method consisting of quantitative and qualitative approaches has been used in this research, which includes three types of data collection: students' questionnaire, teacher's interview, and analysis of posts and comments of four selected students. The research investigation was conducted at Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University, with students who study blended learning.

#### 2.2. Research Participants

(39) Students, (11 male and 28 female), 37 of them are between (20 to 25) years old and 2 students are between the age of (26 to 36) years old participate in the investigation. They are major in English master one, language and communication specialty, at Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaghanem.

#### 2.3. Research Instruments

The tools that have been used for data collection were questionnaire, interview and analysis. These three important materials were meant to provide worthy data.

#### 2.4. Research Procedure

We conducted a questionnaire with first year master students, specialty language and communication, department of English Language, Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University. Furthermore, we selected four students (2 male, 2 female) and asked for their permission in order to analyse their posts and comments on M1 Language and Communication Facebook group for a valuable results relate to the research question how can Facebook enhance EFL learners' writing skills. Moreover, the teacher of blended learning module which delivered to the target sample enables us to have interview with her.

#### 2.5. Students' Questionnaire

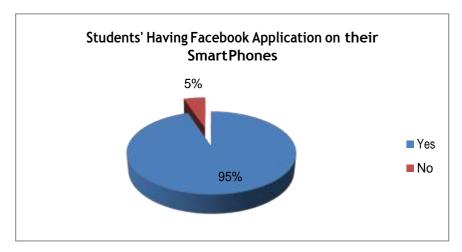
The questionnaire was used as an integral method in the research. It is a helpful aid to collect the necessary data and provide the researcher with different kinds of interpretations. Two types of questions were used in this investigation, closed-ended and open-ended questions.

A questionnaire that contain 12 question was given to first year master students, specialty

of language and communication to have better feedback on students' attitude and opinion about Facebook as a tool that can enhance EFL students' writing skill.

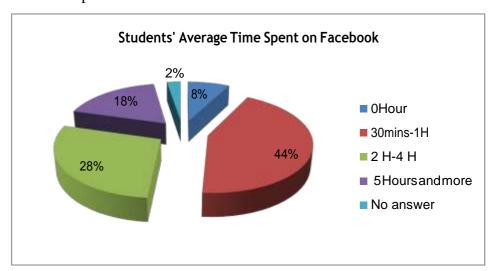
Question one and two are general questions about informants' profiles; gender and age.

The third, fourth and fifth questions were asked to know the average use of Facebook application and the involvement of participants on the Facebook group discussion that they have created M1 Language and Communication.



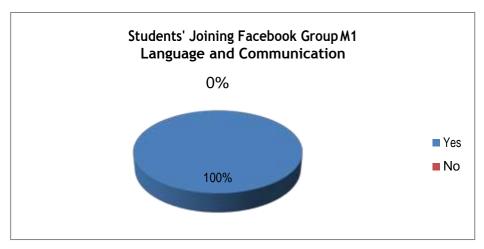
**Graph 1: Facebook Application on the Smart Phones** 

Graph 1 shows that 95% of the participants have a Facebook application on their smart phones except 5% of them which represent 2 students who do not have Facebook application on their smart phones.



**Graph 2: Students' Average Time Spent on Facebook** 

Graph 2 designate that 3 (8%) of the participants do not spend any time on Facebook, while 17 (44%) of them spend from 30 minutes to 1 hour on Facebook. 11 (28%) of the students consume between 2 hours till 4 hours on Facebook, while 7 (18%) of them exhaust more than 5 hours on Facebook, and 1 (2%) did not give any answer.

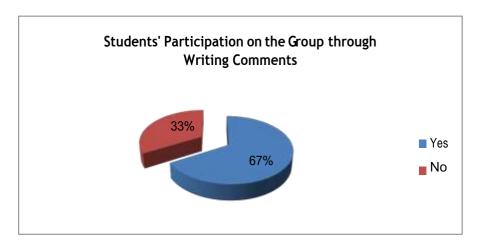


Graph 3: Students' Joining Facebook Group M1 Language and Communication

As disclosed in graph (3), all the students 39 (100%) join (or joined) the Facebook group M1 Language and Communication.

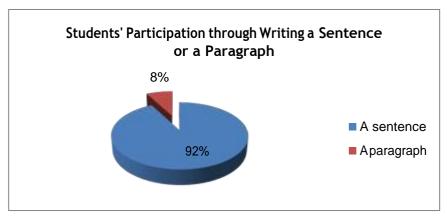
Questions 6 to 8 were designed to know the students' attitudes toward Facebook as a platform where they can participate via writing comments.

- 3) Do you participate through writing comments when your teacher posts; information, questions or tasks about classroom topics?
- 4) Do you respect the sentence structure and punctuation while writing comments?
- 5) How did Facebook improve your writing skill proficiency?



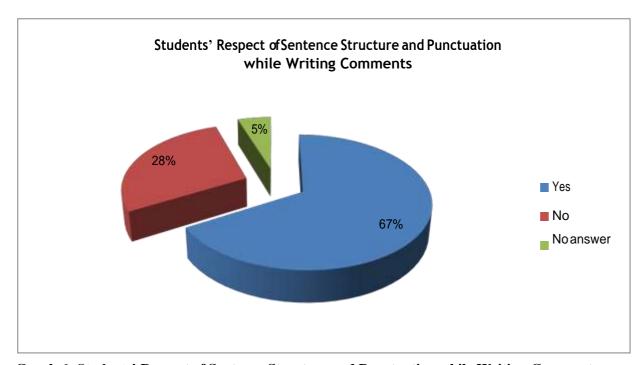
**Graph 4: Students' Participation through Writing Comments** 

Graph 4 indicates that 26 (67%) students write comments on the Facebook group, while 13 (33%) of them do not write comments.



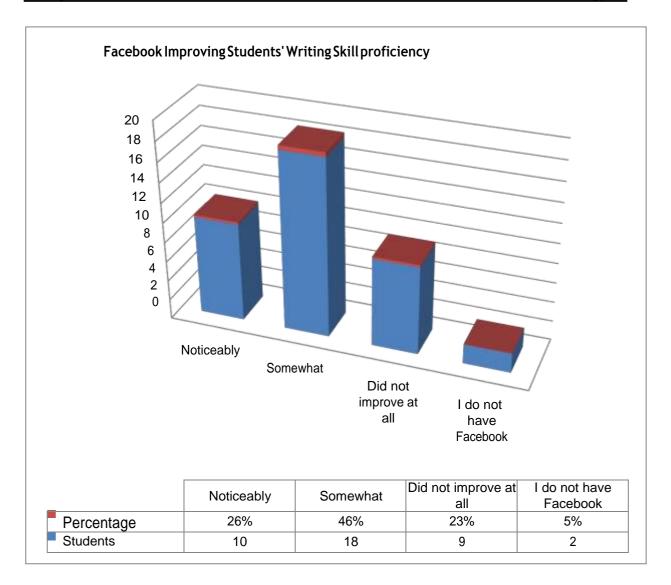
Graph 5: Students' Participation through Writing a Sentence or a Paragraph

Graph 5 represents 24 (92%) of the students who write comments, they write sentences and 2 (8%) of them write paragraphs.



**Graph 6: Students' Respect of Sentence Structure and Punctuation while Writing Comments** 

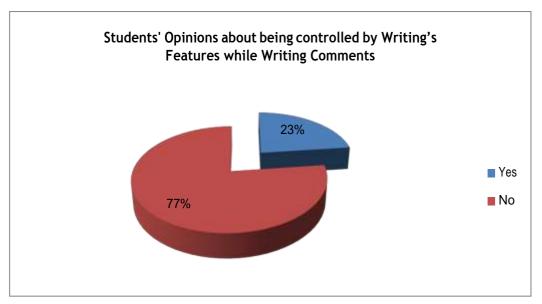
As presented in graph (6), 67% (26) students respect the sentence structure and punctuation while writing comments. However 28% (11) students do not respect the sentence structure and punctuation while writing comments and 5% (2) participants did not give any answer.



**Graph 7: Facebook Improving Students' Writing Skill Proficiency** 

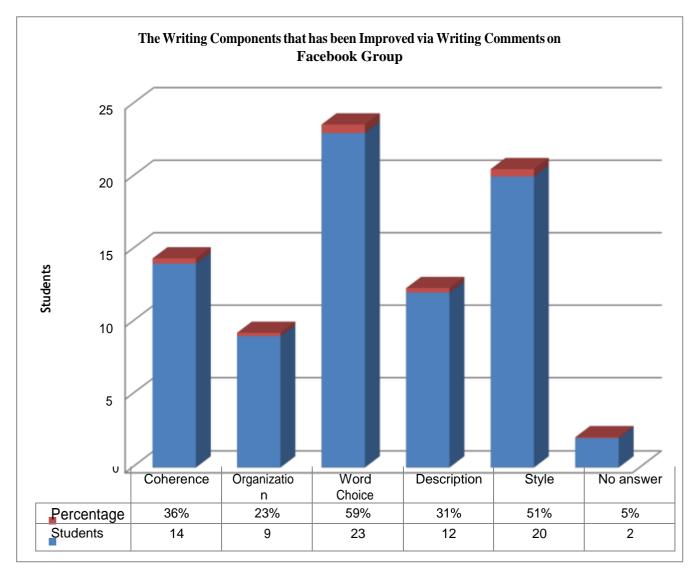
The graph above (7) indicates that there are 10 (26%) respondents who report that their writing skills has been improved noticeably while 18 (46%) students believe that their writing skills has been improved somewhat. Furthermore 9 (23%) participants see that their writing skills has been not improved at all and 2 (5%) students did not give any answer.

The last four questions 9, 10, 11 and 12 aimed to express the participants' opinions about the impact of Facebook in enhancing writing skills through investigating to how extend did the students respect the writing's components and features while writing comments.



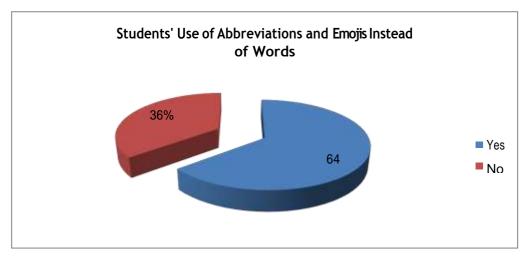
**Graph 8: Students' Opinions about Being Controlled by Writing's Features while Writing Comments.** 

As illustrated in the afore-designed graph (8), 9(23%) informants acknowledge that they feel that they are controlled in terms of language; terms and word choice, grammar mistakes, and sentence structure while writing comments. However, 30 (77%) students report that they do not feel that they are controlled by the writing's features.



**Graph 9: The Writing Components that has been Improved via Writing Comments on Facebook Group** 

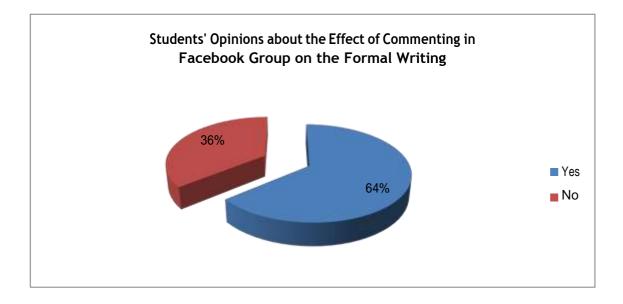
This chart represents the writing's components that has been improved via writing comments on the Facebook group depending on the participants' point of view. 36% of the respondents see that the coherence component has been improved. 23% agreed that organisation as a component has been improved while 59% reported that the word choice component has been improved. Moreover, 31% students believe that description has been improved and 5% participants said that the writing style has been improved. The students had the right to chose more than one answer on that question.



Graph 10: Students' Use of Abbreviations and Emojis Instead of Words

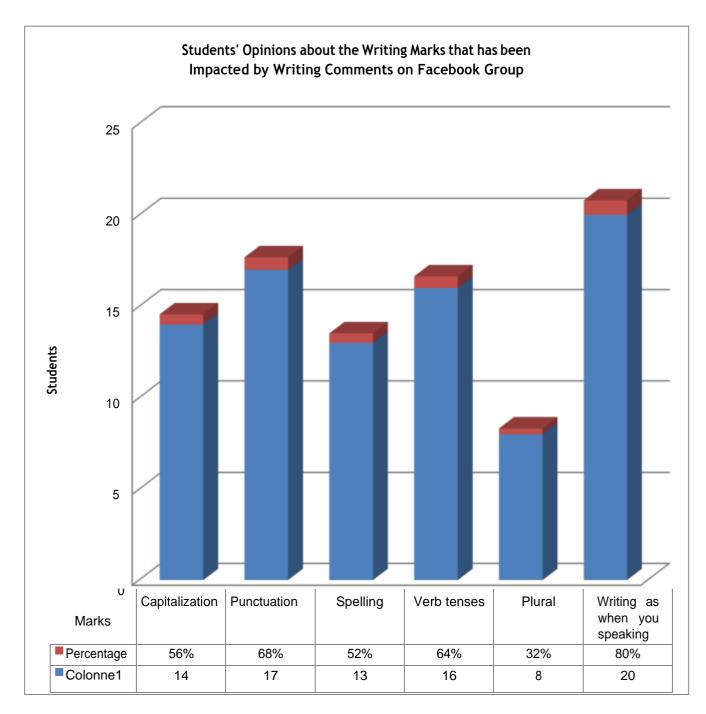
Graph 10 shows that 25 (64%) informants use abbreviation and emojis to express words and sentences while 14 (36%) do not use it.

The two tables (Appendices C and D) show that students use common abbreviations and emojis instead of writing sentences and words. The learners understand the abbreviations and emojis' interpretation and call it "Facebook language".



**Graph 11: Students' Opinions about the Effect of Commenting in Facebook Group on the Formal Writing** 

Graph 11 displays students' opinions about the effect of commenting in Facebook group on the formal writing. As indicated in the graph above, 25 (64%) students agreed that commenting in the Facebook group effect the formal writing while 14 (36%) students did not agree on that.



Graph 12: Students' Opinions about the Writing's Marks that has been Impacted by Writing Comments on Facebook Group

Graph 12 shows that 56% students see capitalization as a writing's mark has been impacted by writing comments on the Facebook group and 68% reported that the punctuation mark has been impacted. 52% participants agreed that spelling mark has been affected by commenting on the Facebook group while 64% of them answered that the verb tenses has been affected. 32% informants believe that plural mark has been influenced by writing

comments on the Facebook group and 80% reported that they write comments as when they speak.

#### 2.6. Teacher's Interview

Conducting an interview was necessary for better understanding and obtaining more indepth information. The interview addressed to the teacher who teaches blended learning as a module for first year master students, specialty language and communication, English department, Abdel Hamid Ibn Badis University. The interview seeks to explore the teacher's attitude toward Facebook as a teaching/learning tool in an EFL classroom and her opinion about the ability of Facebook in enhancing the writing skill for EFL learners. The interview took place in room 27 at the university around 12:00 a.m. The teacher allowed us to record the interview on the mobile phone.

The interview is made up of 3 parts in which the first part consist of two questions that aim to investigate the respondent's opinion about Facebook as a learning tool and to what extent and purpose does she use it.

Questions 3 and 4 inquire the teacher's point of view and attitude toward the students' written comments as a feedback.

The last question aspires to explore the teacher's expression of view about the Facebook's ability to enhance EFL students' writing skill.

**Question 1:** Do you consider Facebook as a teaching/learning tool? Justify please.

The teacher's answer: No, because I experience that for three years, and it has been never useful tool for an educational target or educational setting, because our students always can't use Facebook for informal interactions they do not respect the formality of the context, and the relation between the teacher and the student should be formal, that is absolutely not present or less present in Facebook.

**Question 2:** Do you post tasks and assignments on M1 Language and Communication Facebook group for your students?

The teacher's answer: No, because I am not even a member of that group, I did it on the first month, and I just had those responses that I don't like. When I post something, I expect full sentences and grammar mistakes free. The reactions were not that really much appreciated. This is why I moved from the Facebook to Edmodo.

**Question 3:** Do you considered students' comments as a feedback? Justify please.

The teacher's answer: Sometimes, for the first promotion. For the first cohort, yes it was. Last year cohort M2 (master two), but other cohorts it was not a feedback.

**Question 4:** Do you evaluate the students' comments?

**The teacher's answer:** No, because they do not spend that energy, will and potential to write full sentences with comments. Most of them (students) don't it. That why I do not evaluate. For me they are not a feedback, so how can I evaluate them!

**Question 5:** Do you think that writing comments on Facebook group can enhance EFL students' writing skills? Justify please.

The teacher's answer: Yes, if it is a carefully written and the students taking into consideration that the teacher would evaluate their comments and highlight the grammar mistakes in their comments.

#### 2.7. Analysis

Analysis as research instrument conducted to examine in such manner as to ascertain the elements and nature of the written pieces. It attempted to analyze sentences and words of written posts and comments on M1 Language and Communication Facebook group of four students (2 males, 2 females) first year master, specialty language and communication, between the period of 15 November till 15 December 2018, and from 15 January till 15 February 2019, after asking for the permission of the students who allowed us to work on their comments. The selective learners are the active members on the Facebook group. Analysis of the comments will provide us with valuable findings about the research hypothesis. It aims to assess the development of the students' writing skills during the two periods, and to see whether they have been developed it over time.

#### 2.7.1. Students' posts and comments

There is a contrast between the first and the second period in terms of students' comments and posts. The participation in the second period was less active and the second candidate does not involve in the discussions that were happening in the Facebook group. The common observable attitude among those students is the use of abbreviations and emojis in their writing (See Appendix E).

#### 2.8. Conclusion

This second chapter portray the reasoning for the implementation of various data methods and presented the finding results related to the research study question. Throughout this part we could collect several insightful results which will be offered in the next chapter.

#### 3. Introduction

The present chapter aims to report the finding extracted from the data collection instruments. This part of the research discusses the results and obtained through the learners' questionnaire and the interview conducted to the teacher, then to deeply discussing the selective students' posts and comments. We conclude this chapter suggesting recommendations.

#### 3.1. Discussion of the Questionnaire

#### **Students' Having Facebook Application on their Smart Phones**

The majority of the students have the Facebook application on their mobiles phone except two of them who replied on our direct face to face question about the reason. They were addicted to Facebook, so they deleted the application.

#### Students' Average Time Use on Facebook

There is a contrastive on the time spent on Facebook among the students. The average time is between 30 minutes till 4 hours, and there are students who spend more than 5 hours per day using Facebook. While the students were answering the questionnaire, we asked them direct question if they use Facebook in the classroom? Most of them said that they do not turn off their Facebook accounts at all, and sometimes use it in the classroom in order to ask or send information to their friends in the Facebook group concerning the classroom topic that they are dealing with, also to check if there is any new post in the Facebook group concerning their study.

#### Students' Joining Facebook Group M1 Language and Communication

All the students join the Facebook group M1 Language and Communication. At the beginning of the academic year they had a kind of meeting in their classroom where they agreed to create the group for the purpose of share knowledge and to be as a mean of communication between the teachers, the administration's decisions and announcements, and the students via the delegate of the cohort. The two students who did not give any answer are the students who do not have Facebook account.

#### **Students' Participation through Writing Comments**

The majority of the participants write comments on the Facebook group either on topics concerning their study or on any post of their classmates. However 33% of them do not participate, they just see what has been posted without any reaction.

#### Students' Participation through Writing a Sentence or a Paragraph

Majority of those students who write comments, they write sentence. When we asked them a direct question why do they write sentences? Their common answers were; they want to be precise and concise, also to be quick in responding their friends and instead of writing a paragraph which takes time they prefer to write sentences in several comments. Some students prefer to write paragraphs on their comments because they can write quickly on the keyboard of their smart phones, and they prefer to express their ideas at once.

# Students' Respect of Sentence Structure and Punctuation while Writing Comments

67% of the participants respect the sentence structure and punctuation while writing comments, however 28% of them do not. We can see on the Facebook group that the sentence structure is somehow respected but the punctuation is ignored.

#### Facebook Improving Students' Writing Skill Proficiency

10 students see that their writing skills has been improved and 18 of them believe that their writing skill has been improved somewhat. However, 9 of them agree that their writing skills did not improved at all. It depends on the participation through writing posts or comments, those who feel that they improve their writing skills they are active members in the Facebook group who interact with each post, and the 18 of them whose writing skills has been improved somewhat they participate less than the others, and just on the necessary posts. However, those who think that their writing skills did not improved at all they comment occasionally.

# Students' Opinions about being Controlled by Writing's Features while Writing a Comments

The majority of the students see that they are not controlled by the writing's features because they have the knowledge since they studied General English Language for three years and they have the vocabulary baggage. While some of them reported that they are controlled by the writing's features because they should pay attention to the verb tenses and the meaning of words while they write comments, and sometimes they check electronic dictionaries on their phones in order to chose the suitable word.

# The Writing Components that has been Improved via Writing Comments on Facebook Group

According to the participants all the writing components has been improved via writing comments on Facebook but at different rates. By time, students became more intellectual in choosing the suitable words to express their ideas thanks to the easy access to electronic dictionaries and they are not controlled by a limited time to give their answers. Moreover, they pay attention to the logic of writing in order to deliver meaningful thoughts. In addition, through time each participant tried to enhance his/her style in order to be special from the classmates and to prepare him/her self for the exams. Description and organization was a challenge because the most of the time the students either write one sentence or use abbreviations and emojis instead of words.

#### Students' use of abbreviations and emojis instead of words

We observed that the students' interpretations to the common abbreviations and emojis are the same. Their shared answer about how could they understand the meaning of those abbreviations and emojis was that they use in order to express words and a complete sentences is that it is "Facebook Language".

# Students' opinions about the affect of commenting in Facebook group on the formal writing

The candidates who believe that writing comments in the Facebook group affect the formal writing, some of them agreed that they write as when they speak because they do not consider Facebook as a formal academic setting. Furthermore, punctuation, capitalization and plural form are not important marks to be taken into consideration because the comments address to their classmates. Additionally, since they use abbreviations and emojis in their writing, they do not check the spelling. However, the students control the verb tenses while writing comments and specially written post, because it affects the meaning of the speech.

#### **3.2. Discussion of the Interview**

The teacher had the experience of using Facebook for educational purposes and from her perspective the experience failed. Different reasons affected the use of Facebook for learning purposes, students cannot interact in a formal because they neglect the role of the teacher in the Facebook group. The teacher / student relation on Facebook may exceed the limits of the formal relationship and degenerates to the level of friendship, which effects negatively on the student's respect to the teacher.

The teacher's expectations were high than the students' reactions. The students' responses on the topics posted on the Facebook group were not satisfying because they prefer to thank the teacher for the post only. They do not make efforts in order to produce complete, health sentences and paragraphs. The previous reasons promoted the teacher not to take the students' comments as a feedback and do not evaluate it.

Facebook can enhance the students' writing skills if the teacher and the students take responsibility and consider Facebook as an academic setting with full demarcation in the relationship between them, where they can share knowledge and discuss relevant issues to the classroom subject matter. Students must take into consideration the teacher's evaluation of their written comments as a feedback, so they should focus more when writing.

#### 3.3. Discussion of the Analysis of the Students' Posts and Comments

There is a difference in the volume of comments between the two periods (See Appendix E). Students 1, 2 and 4 became less active in the second period; the reason refers to that the second period was a stage of tutorial tests and official exams. However student 3 was more active because she is the delegate of the cohort and admin of the Facebook group.

In the first period, Student 1 used abbreviations and emojis in each comment, he do not respect capitalization and punctuation. He used English language and other unknown expressions in one sentence "anytime ma nibba". Furthermore, in numerous comments he merged the English language with Algerian dialect written by using Latin alphabets and numbers "i m legally blind (free fcb issues) aaatcho khbroni chaho el" good stuff" li rakom tbi3o fiha". Moreover, in some comments he thinks in Arabic and writes in English "if u r useful in anyting". Sentence structure is totally absent in his comments. Comparing the student 1's comments between the two periods, it has remained the same.

The second student is able to write full correct sentences in English language "Last session we didn't finish with presentations i think we had only 2", but he comments up to his mood. In most of his comments, he did not respect the writing's components and features, also he does not write full sentences. Most of his comments were thanks. In the second period he did not comment at all.

During the two periods, student 3 was the most active member in the group. She was participating through written posts. We can observe that she respected capitalization and punctuation in most of her posts. She wrote paragraphs when she was posting a teacher's message, so she wrote the post carefully, taking into consideration all the aspects that can affect the meaning of the delivered message. However, we can see that she used abbreviations and emojis when she was writing comments to her classmates "ur wlcm".

The fourth student, she can produce a correct and complete sentences "I watched it for billion time and can never stop laughing". However, she used the English language and Arabic

Algerian dialect in one sentence "but let hope العيد ماشي كل يوم ". Furthermore, she used the English language with Algerian dialect written by using Latin alphabets "I was asking him, golhom bli blk fiha". In most of her comments, she respected capitalization, but she ignored the other writing's components, and she used abbreviations and emojis. In the second period, she wrote a post which was a message from her teacher addressed to her classmates "No ICC instead we will have AL test. And for the summary of ICC she asked us to bring it on Sunday.". We deductive that when the student take a responsibility of his/her written product, he/she makes more efforts to produce a clean and clear written piece.

Deductively, analyzing the students' written comments and posts shows that all of them use abbreviation and emojis. Most of the time, they prefer to writ sentences instead of paragraphs. When interacting with each other about ordinary topics, they use English language and other languages like Arabic Algerian dialect. Nonetheless, when they want to be responsible about their written product, they do their best in order to write accomplished and comprehensible written piece.

#### 3.4. Conclusion

Extractively, from the analysis of the data that we gathered from the three instruments that we used questionnaire, teacher's interview, and analysis of the four students' posts and comments, we can say that Facebook can enhance the EFL students' writing skills if certain conditions are met; both teacher and students regard Facebook as a platform for learning process and respect the teacher/students relationship, and use the Facebook group only for academic purposes like sharing classroom topics and discuss it as a whole group where all the students participate. Otherwise, if we only take into account the discourse analysis of the students' comments and posts we can say that Facebook is not a standard space to enhance EFL learners' writing skills because there was no improvement in terms of writing, for some students have maintained the same level, while others have dropped their level.

#### **General Conclusion**

The world faces many variables and challenges which affect the institutions of society in all fields, including the field of education. This is why the development of these institutions and the improvement of the quality of the outputs of the educational process are necessary. Educational development is one of the most important issues of national interest.

Due to the stupendous expand of technological tools especially among younger generation, in the field of foreign language education; practitioners are seeking to find out efficient ways to integrate new technology. Facebook is an android application which can provide real learning experiences of foreign languages, where subject-centered approach can be discuss through teacher/students interaction in virtual environment.

Facebook provides an environment that is conducive to the process of teaching that should focus on the subject matter-centered approach to be discussed and the interaction between the two party teacher and students not the technology itself.

Integrating Facebook in the educational field is a recent concept, there is still research to be done especially in terms of how can integrate Facebook in pedagogy. Despite, Facebook is not yet a legitimate platform for education.

Unfortunately, e-learning tools have not yet been viewed as a traditional component of the learning / learning process and have not yet become an essential element of learning English as a foreign language.

In this study, we investigated the ability of Facebook in enhancing EFL learners' writing skills at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University. The first chapter determines elements and components of Facebook and writing skills, and provides theories previous research studies dealt with the subject of research

The last chapter meant to discuss and interpret the collective information. It attempted to answer the hypothesis question that aims to investigate the Facebook's ability to enhance EFL learners' writing skills.

The analysis of the questionnaire revealed that learners use Facebook for educational process but not in formal and professional way. In fact, they broke up the limits of the relationship between them and the teacher. In addition, they can discuss topics relevant to the classroom subject matter but not academically.

Moreover, the findings of the teacher's interview shows that it is difficult to use Facebook as a platform for teaching and learning a foreign language. It based on the awareness and maturity of the learners to be responsible about their input and output in the Facebook group.

The analysis of the students' posts and comments displays that there are differences in their writing; when the students take the complete responsibility about the delivered message, they write a clear and comprehensive sentences. However, they write informal written pieces when they discuss with each other.

The integration of Facebook in the pedagogy and academic system is still in debate. Consequently, Facebook cannot be used as a virtual platform for learning a foreign language. Therefore, Facebook cannot an effective tool to enhance EFL learners' writing skills.

This study has got some limitations essentially in terms of the lack of printed books and the sample population as its results cannot be generalized, unless other studies are carried elsewhere on a larger scale and with a larger sample population. Another limitation concerns the use of questionnaires; data would have been much more accurate if the questionnaires were carried out with classroom observation. Further studies could be conducted to explore whether Facebook is a constructive or deconstructive tool in the classroom. Further studies could be conducted to explore whether Facebook is a constructive or deconstructive tool in the classroom. Likewise, investigate the efficiency of Edmodo as a virtual classroom as the traditional classroom.

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## **Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire**

Please, mention  $(\sqrt{})$  on your choice. There is no "right" or "wrong" answers and you don't even have to write your name on it. Please, give your answer sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

uestions:		
1) Gender:		
Male	Female	
2) Age: 20-25 26-3	36 37-46	+47
3) Do you have Facebook app	plication on your smart	phone?
Yes No No How often do you access y	our Facebook account	?
0 hour 30minute  5) Do you join the Facebook	group M1 Language an	2h-4h +5h nd Communication?
Yes No Comparticipate through questions or tasks about clayer No No Comparticipate through questions or tasks about clayer no Comparticipate through the Comparticipate throu		en your teacher posts; information,
If the answer is "yes"; do  A sentence  7) Do you respect the sentence	A paragraph	ation while writing comments? Yes
No [		
8) How did Facebook improve	your writing skill profi	iciency?
a) My writing skill impro	ved noticeably.	
b) My writing skill impro	ved somewhat.	
c) My writing skill did no	•	
d) I do not use Facebook.		

9) While using Facebook,	do you feel that you are controll	ed in terms of usir	ng language;	
terms and word choice	, grammar mistakes, and sentence	e structure?		
Yes No				
If yes, justify your ar	nswer.			
10) Which component of	writing skill do you think that it	has been improved	l via writing	
		_	i via wiiting	
comments on the Facebook group: you can select more than one answer;				
Coherence Organization				
Word choice Description Style 11) While commenting, do you use abbreviation and emojis instead of to express words?				
Yes Yes	No No	is instead of to exp	ness words?	
	mples with explanation.			
Abbreviation /emoji	Explanation			
12) Do you think that con	nmenting on Facebook group aff	ect the students' for	ormal writing?	
Yes No				
If yes, how did comme	ents impact the students' formal	writing?		
Mistakes you do when writing		Yes	No	
Capitalization				
Punctuation				
		<u> </u>	1	

Spelling	
Verb tenses	
Plural	
Writing as when speaking	

### **Appendix B: Teacher's Interview**

Dear teacher, this interview is a part of our research work. Your completion of this interview will be a great help to bring fruition to the present research work. The main purpose of this interview is to investigate the role Facebook in enhancing EFL students' writing skills. I would be grateful if you could answer these questions to help us in my research for the Master's degree in English Language and communication.

Thank you very much in advance for collaboration

- 1) Do you consider Facebook as a teaching/learning tool? Justify please.
- 2) Do you post tasks and assignments on M1 Language and Communication Facebook group for your students?
- 3) Do you considered students' comments as a feedback? Justify please.
- 4) Do you evaluate the students' comments?
- 5) Do you think that writing comments on Facebook group can enhance EFL students' writing skills? Justify please.

## **Appendix C: Students' Use of Abbreviations**

Abbreviations	Explanation
Al	Applied lingustics.
asap	As soon as possible.
b4	Before.
brb	Be right back/ I will be right back.
btw	By the way.
DA	Discourse analysis.
dw	Don't worry.
ESP	English for Specific Purposes.
ex	Example.
Gd	Good.
GN	Good Night.
GTF	Go to Facebook.
HRU	How are you?
Idc	I don't care.
Idk	I don't know.
Ik	I know.
Ikr	I know! right.
lge	Language.
LOL	Lot of laugh/ laugh out loud.
ofcrs	Of course.
OMG	OH! MY GOD.
plz	Please.
sm	Some.
ТВН	To be honest.
Thx	Thanks.
Tmr	Tomorrow.
ur	Your.
wby	What about you.
wht	What.
yolo	You only live once.

Table 1: Students' Use of Abbreviation Instead of Words and Sentences

# Appendix D: Students' Use of Emojis

Emojis	Explanation
25	I am angry.
	Your speech is boring/you are silly.
	I am shocked.
	I am happy.
	I like it.
	I like it.
	I love it.
	It is perfect.
	I am sad.
••	Seriously!

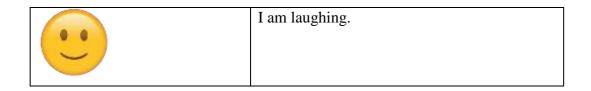


Table 2: Students' Use of Emojis Instead of Words and Sentences

### Appendix E: The Students' Comments and Posts

The period from 15 November to 15 December 2018:

#### **Student 1:**







#### **Student 2:**













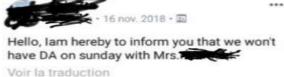








#### **Student3:**





Mrs asked you to join her on edmodo where she will be posting lectures, assignments ect. Click on the link below and follow the instructions. https://cdn.fbsbx.com/

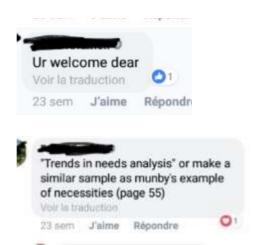












The period from 15 January till 15 February 2019:

#### **Student 1:**



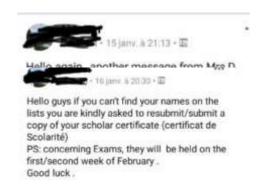
#### **Student 2:**

No posts or comments.

#### **Student 3:**







On Sunday i will try to solve the prblm, but still bring your certificates. Voir la traduction

18 sem J'aime Répondre





No ICC instead we will have the AL test. And for the summary of ICC she asked us to bring it on sunday.

Mair In tendustion

you choose one of them and you bring it as a Homework to give it to her for tomorrow

Voir la traduction

15 sem J'aime Répondre

well you still have to come, if you want to

Voir la traduction

15 sem J'aime Répondre

Nchallah, thank you miss

15 sem J'aime Répondre

9 févr. à 19:00 · 🗷

Hello, This is a message fro MRs.

Vair la traduction

u can find them un the grp, thanks.

Voir la traduction

14 sem Répondre



hello guys, you are kindly ask to classify/ choose what module you would like have to take first for the exams.



Hello, i am hereby to inform you that for those who did not sit for the TEST of discourse analysis,Mrs. asked you to do research on : discourse analysis in general, cohesion,coherence, the difference between pragmatics and discourse analysis or the cooperative principles. PS: This is your LAST chance.

- The rest are not obliged to attend.



Oral session at 9:30 till 12:30, this is the LAST chance to present for those who did not . Good luck



E-learning exam will take place in Amphi E at 9:30 for tomorrow an after tomorrow. Good luck

Voir la traduction

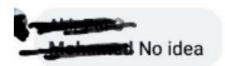
nope she meant before 9:30, apparently we will start at 9:30 not 9

Voir la traduction

14 sem J'aime Répondre



Hello Everybody, just to reminde tomorrow's exam starts at 9h inchallah. good luck



Répondre 14 sem



Tomorrow's exam will take place in Amphi G .

#### **Student 4:**





17 sem Répondre





No ICC instead we will have the AL test. And for the summary of ICC she asked us to bring it on sunday.

Mair la tenduction



Tomorrow's exam will take place in Amphi G. Concerning Spanish exam it will take place on Sunday at 9:30 in Amphi E Good Luck.

Voir la traduction



