

## University Students Academic Usage of Facebook. Case Study: Licence 2 English Students, Mostaganem University

**Amel Ghermaoui**

Department of English

Faculty of Foreign Languages

University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, Mostaganem, Algeria

### Abstract

last decade has witnessed the rapid popularity of social networking sites like Facebook and College students constitute a large population of Facebook users. Advancement in telecommunication and information technology has resulted in a tremendous impact on teaching and learning. Accordingly, university education has started to benefit from online learning platforms. The revolutionary progress that the internet has known is giving a modern dimension to the teaching process, thus, facilitating university students' learning. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the extent to which Facebook can be an effective means to distribute academic content to university students. Department of English of Mostaganem University is involved in this study. The Study combines quantitative with qualitative types of research. Quantitate research involves distributing a survey in the form of a questionnaire among License 2 students department of English as well as teachers to examine to what extent Facebook can be used for academic purposes. Qualitative research is dedicated to the analysis and observation of studens' Facebook group page. The results showed that Students confirm that Facebook is a useful tool to distribute and share academic knowledge yet there are still many obstacles that hinder its use at the university context. On another hand, the present research suggests some helping solutions to enhance Facebook educational use among university students and their teachers. Future research may include a larger population from every Department of Mostaganem University to ensure generalizability of the study's findings.

**Key Words:** Facebook academic usage, Licence 2 English students, Students' Facebook group, teachers' facebook academic usage

Cite as: Ghermaoui, A. (2018). University Students Academic Usage of Facebook. Case Study: Licence 2 English Students, Mostaganem University. *Arab World English Journal*, 9 (4), 242-256. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no4.18>

## Introduction

The recent years have witnessed the emergence of a high number of networks used to share information universally providing more information, content and social connections than ever before. The most interesting and outstanding evolution in the history of the internet has been social media, “ a web – based made of dialogue that uses a wide array of tools, websites and other applications to encourage communication between individuals, corporations, non – profits and other organizations”(Boswell, 2014, P.01).

Social media has become very closely related to our lives because it allows us to stay connected to the world. Every platform that enables people to share information, photos, and news with other individuals is considered as one of the various social media platforms that exist now. Different definitions of social media have been provided by many scholars and dictionaries. Meriam- Webster dictionary online defines social media as a “*form of electronic communication* (as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)” (Taprial & Kanwar, 2013, P. 08).

Boyd and Ellison, (2007) discuss social media in their article social media network sites. Definition history and scholarship and defined social networks as:

web- based services that allow to (1) construct a public or semi-public profiles within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site (p. 213).

A great variety of social media networking sites has been launched in the last 12 years. Facebook belongs to the long list of these sites, but it has remained up-to-date the most popular website and platform worldwide. Without any doubt, the revolutionary networking site Facebook is inspiring researchers to introduce new avenues in social media studies. Facebook is not only a simple site or a wealthy company that is making money, but it is also a computerized human- based virtual universe that is deeply anchored into our lives. The main reason behind the creation of such a networking site was the quest for globalization, making people better understand each other, and eliminating any distance barriers that hinder any continuous, long-lasting, and instantaneous communication. Facebook is indeed a “distance killer”. The whole world is transformed into a global village thanks to Facebook and many other social media networking sites. This view is confirmed by Horváth, (2014) when she states that Facebook:

Strengthened the world’s global village character. Geographical distances play none ever-increasing role in our lives given the possibility of being in the same cyberspace, whatever our geographical location might be. Maintaining contact does not depend on geographical proximity anymore, what does count, though, is internet availability(P. 86).

Facebook is used for social, journalistic, economic and artistic ends. Facebook is a means of socializing that is used by all the categories of any society. Facebook is an excellent tool to maintain strong ties and create new connections. Facebook is an excellent digital space where the

young generation can make a difference in their communities by participating in various activities online and creating Facebook interest groups to organize unlimited events. Facebook indeed bolsters the youth's civic engagement and local activism. In the same vein, Facebook promotes free speech and enables journalists to work collaboratively with users to create up-to-date stories. Facebook never replaces the traditional news outlets, but it adds new information that is as well valuable to many journalistic contents. Facebook can be also used to enhance an open discussion between companies and their customers. Moreover, Facebook can be efficiently used as an instrument for digital marketing, preserving brands' reputation and providing engaged users with information about newly launched products. And one cannot leave this discussion of Facebook's use without a mention that it can also be a space where artists can exhibit their works. One can plausibly state that Facebook can wonderfully serve as a "global museum" and access to it is free for every user. It is true that Facebook has been criticized by many scholars; however, the obsessive use of Facebook is everyone's responsibility.

After being introduced in 2004, Facebook has been until the present time the most used social networking platform worldwide. Although Facebook promotes primarily online socialization, it also started to become an important e-learning platform (Irwin, Desbow & Leveritt, (2012, p. 1222). In fact, some studies confirm that students welcome integrating Facebook into their academic learning process, because it increases communication among students, gives them access to course materials and improves logistical management of courses. Incorporating such a platform would consolidate academic instruction as well as student learning experiences. As a way of example, Facebook can support the management of course activities, provide information and resources to students as it can make them interact with each other and collaborate.

Many studies have examined Facebook from another angle that it is a source of distraction and impacts negatively university students' academic performance. Other Studies focus on the psychological consequences of Facebook use among College students (Park & Lee, 2014, pp. 601-620) or Teenagers' Facebook use as a tool for identity construction (Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin, 2008, P.1816-1836). Other pieces of research focus on the influence of University student's use of Facebook applications on study time. However, there have been two contradicting views regarding this issue. Some authors suggest that Facebook users spend less time studying and achieve lower grades if compared to their non-users counterparts (Kirschner & Karpenski, 2010 as cited in Irwish, Ball & Laveritt, 2012, P. 1223), while other researchers do not find any relationship between Facebook use and university academic achievement (Kabre & Brown, 2011, as cited in Irwish Ball & Laveritt, 2012, P. 1223). The weakness of these studies is that they focus on the impact of Facebook on students' academic performance and neglect Facebook's capacity to provide other academic benefits to students. Students have the ability to integrate academic content with a social networking site with which they are highly engaged. As a result, incorporating Facebook into university learning courses and resources may impact students' learning motivation positively.

Few international studies have dealt with the academic uses of Facebook at University. Christopher Irwin et.al (2012) conducted a study at Griffith's Gold Coast Campus in 2011. It included 253 students and 04 teachers. The researchers reach the conclusion that the majority of students recommend using Facebook as a learning aid. Another study was conducted by Muge Akyiliz and Metin Argan (n.d) which included 1300 undergraduate students from Anadolu

University in Turkey. The results show that students spend more time socializing than sharing academic content on Facebook. Lam, (2012) Conducted in-depth interviews with students of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCS) in Hong Kong and surveyed 312 students of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His results show that Facebook can be a very efficient tool to increase students' learning motivation.

In the Algerian context, Facebook is considered by Zaghلامي, (n.d) as the most popular social networking site. According to him, 44% of Algerians use Facebook, 7.9 use MySpace, 7.5% use Viadeo, 2.8% use Twitter, 2.1% use LinkedIn and 0.7% use Xing. Moreover, 95% of Algerians use Facebook for chatting, relationship, games, and companies as news sources and interaction with clients. 66.4% spend more than thirty minutes a day .33.6% spend less than thirty minutes a day. 27.7% Spend between thirty minutes and one hour a day. 21.5% spend between one hour and 3 hours a day. And 17.3% spend more than three hours a day. All these statistics confirm that Facebook is widely used by Algerians and studies concerning the use of Facebook in different domains like the academic one should be undertaken in a rigorous and scientific way.

Despite of Facebook's popularity in the last few years, it is not clear for what purposes Algerian students use Facebook: Do they use it for social interaction, daily activities or academic purposes? Comprehending how much, why and how Algerian students use social networking platforms for educational purposes provides a new venue for contemporary research. As a way of example, An Algerian researcher named Samia Ouaj undertook a survey at the University of Settif, Department of Foreign Languages which included 197 students and 35 teachers. The results of her research indicate that using social media platforms like Facebook facilitate the teaching process as it creates a social collaborative learning environment. She also concluded that by using social media academic features, traditional learning becomes more efficient. A Master Student from Tlemcen University undertook another survey which included 50 Master2 Literature and Civilization students and three teachers. Her results show that Facebook provides both faculty and students with a myriad of opportunities to communicate, and share academic content, consequently, creating a more collaborative learning sphere.

Because there is relatively little research on Facebook's use in Algerian Universities general, and in Mostaganem University, in particular, the researcher believes that the findings of this piece of the investigation will be very helpful for both teachers and students. Teachers will be encouraged to give importance to many variables considered in my research to better use Facebook to share academic content with their students on the one hand. On the other hand, students will spend more time on Facebook to receive academic content because their teachers are relying heavily on it.

The theory that is closely related to the findings of this work is connectivism. It is created by Siemens and Downes, (2009). This approach reflects perfectly our rapidly changing society. Our society is more complex due to the revolutionary developments in technology. Connectivism focuses on the individual. According to this theory, personal knowledge comprises a system of networks which provides an organization. This group relates back to the system. The individual maintains his experience growth using his or her interaction with the system. The learners can, therefore, be up-to-date concerning any topic thanks to the connections they have put into

existence. A group of people with a common goal is, therefore, created to promote and sustain a well-organized flow of information (Duke, Harper & Johnston, 2013).

University education interests students; thus, it is of high import to focus on students' perceptions of technology that is part of their learning environment. The aim of this study is to evaluate the extent to which Facebook can be an effective means to distribute academic content to Licence two English Mostaganem students. As a teacher, I tried to use Facebook to distribute academic content to my L2 students, but the process did not work. This fact resulted in asking many questions like: Why did students not receive the academic content sent by me or other teachers who are my colleagues via Facebook? What are the obstacles that prevent students from receiving academic content submitted by their teachers? Can Facebook be a suitable platform to share academic content with one's students? How can Facebook be used effectively to distribute academic content at university? It has been hypothesized that there are many reasons behind students' non-reception of academic content sent by their teacher via Facebook like: 1- Not all students have internet access during school days. 2- Not all teachers have a Facebook profile and they use it rarely to share academic content with their students. 3- Students lack a sense of community so sharing any academic contents with each other becomes involved. The second hypothesis is that Web2.0 technologies like Facebook replace the old ways of distributing academic content in the form of handouts. Facebook is an easy and a rapid way to share academic content with one's students as it leads to greater communication between students. Additionally, Facebook saves time because it helps teachers share academic content beforehand which is going to be tackled in later classes. Facebook pages with university academic content will enhance, on another hand, students' interaction with their courses instructors online as well as offline; the learning process using such platforms becomes, thus, interactive and time-saving. The last contention is that Facebook academic use can be reinforced by enabling students and teachers to interact via a university official Facebook page, making internet access at university, department of English, providing English students with internet access at the library until 09:00 P.M, and motivating teachers to have a Facebook account to access the university official Facebook page for the sake of communicating with their students and distributing academic content to them.

### **Methodology**

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The data obtained are analyzed quantitatively as when the frequency of each answer from the multiple –questions was considered. Other data are analyzed qualitatively and that concerns the open-ended questions suggested to both students and teachers. The mixture of both methods enabled me to reach reasonable conclusions about the academic use of Facebook at University. The author used as well observation as another tool for this study. He created a second Facebook account and became a member of L2 English students Facebook group page. That was done on purpose to observe my students' usage of Facebook to share academic resources.

The study was conducted at Mostaganem University, Department of English During the first Semester of the academic year 2016/2017. The targeted population of this study has been primarily L2 English students of Mostaganem University as well the teachers of the same university. The total number of the sample included 106 L2Students and 20 teachers. To examine students' academic usage of Facebook, data were gathered by a paper-based questionnaire. A copy of each

questionnaire was provided to all students attending my methodology lecture, which they were asked to complete anonymously and return to me at the end of the session. The questionnaire consisted of 12 multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions. Questions included internet access during school days, whether having or not a Facebook account, the different purposes behind their Facebook use, the frequency of logging to Facebook account, being or not a member of L2 Facebook page, the frequency of students' interaction via Facebook, sharing and receiving academic content via Facebook and their frequency. Students were solicited to state the modules in which they received academic content from their teachers and classmates. Students were as well asked to evaluate Facebook use to share and receive academic resources and whether they recommend it or not. The last question concerned student's agreement with some suggested solutions to improve academic Facebook usage.

English department teachers of Mostagnemen University took as well part of my study since they play a major role in the learning process. A paper-based questionnaire was provided for all the 55 teachers as it was sent via email. Only 20 teachers answered. The survey contained the same questions as the students' because views from both sides were mandatory to my study. One question was excluded from the teachers' questionnaire because it concerned students only.

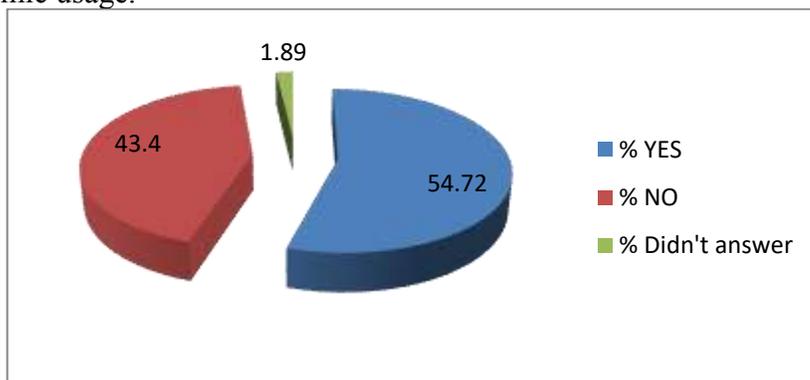
### Data analysis

Analysis of both questionnaires was done manually, and the results are in the form of percentages. Some questions were selected to create graphs of both students' and teachers' answers. Open-ended responses were as well considered to support the study's findings.

### Findings

#### A-Student's questionnaire

The results were gathered during the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017. The results of the first question are presented in the form of a figure. The result of the first issue confirms our first hypothesis about the obstacles that prevent students from using Facebook for academic purposes that not all students have internet access during school days. As a result, providing students with internet access during school days would certainly bolster Facebook academic usage.



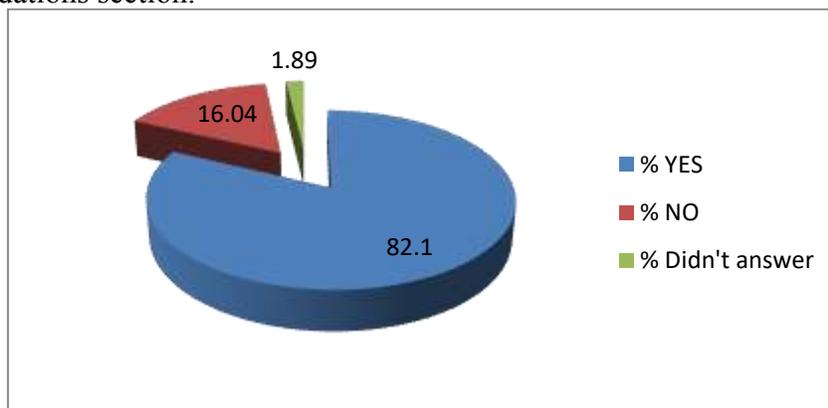
**Figure1 Students' internet access**

About the second question that was intended to know whether students have Facebook accounts or not, 94% of students responded that they have Facebook accounts while only 6% reported that they have not any Facebook account. This confirms that university students do use Facebook. Concerning the reasons behind students' Facebook use, 07% reported that they use it to

socialize, 4% said they use it for academic purposes and 81% indicated that they use it for both socialization as well as academic goals. This indicates that the first function of Facebook which is socialization is not the only reason behind students Facebook use; Students' Facebook use is extended to fulfill academic tasks.

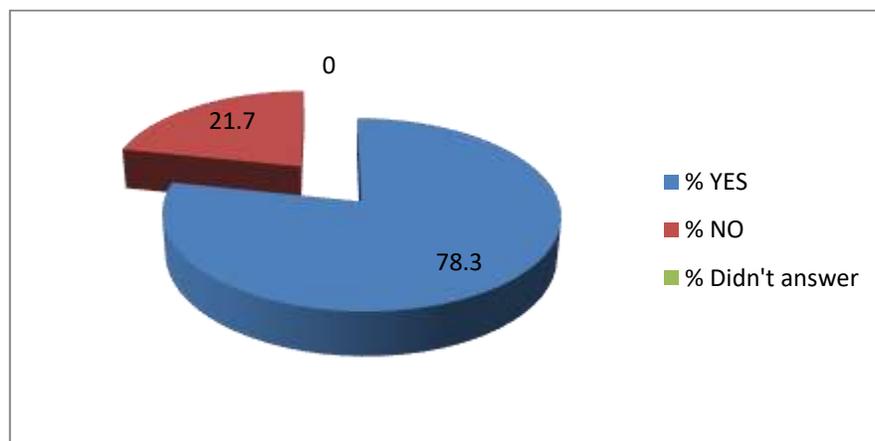
When asked about students' Facebook frequency, 82% use it daily, 15% use it weekly, and 2% use it monthly. Students consult their Facebook frequently, so the academic content that is shared online can be accessed as well daily. Concerning their membership in L2 Facebook group, 86% said they are members and only 15% stated that they are not. This shows that the majority of students are members of L2 Facebook group, so any academic content that is distributed in this group can be accessed by the majority of L 2 students. About how often they consult their Facebook group, 50% said they do it daily, 28% weekly, 3% monthly, 4% never and 13% of students' sample did not answer this question. Students were asked as well whether they frequently interact with their classmates via Facebook or not. 62% answered with yes and 33% said no. 3% of the sample did not respond.

The next figure shows that 81% of the surveyed students receive academic content via Facebook. This confirms the utility of such a platform to distribute information that is academic-based and such a use should be, therefore, sustained by measures that are going to be discussed in the recommendations section.

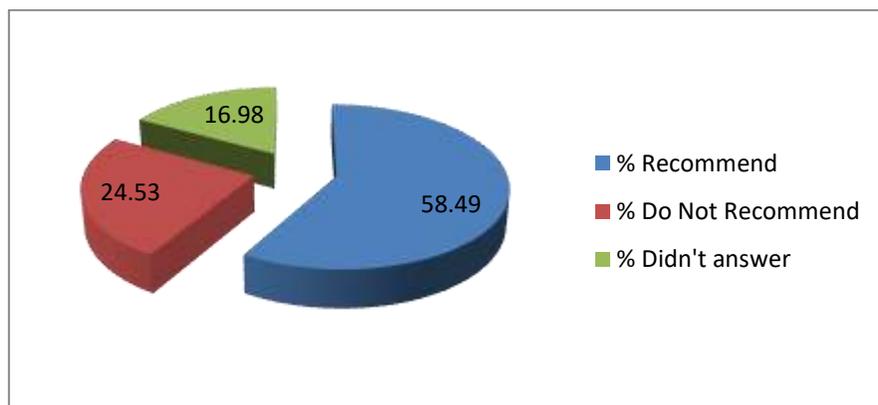


**Figure2 Percentage of students who receive academic content via Facebook**

They were asked as well who send them academic content via Facebook. 2% said that such a content is sent by teachers, 60% said it is sent by their classmates, 21% said both send it and 17% did not answer this question. This indicates that the academic content that is shared on Facebook is done mainly by their classmates; teachers are rarely involved in such a sharing. When asked how often academic content is sent via Facebook, 42% said it is frequently done, 38% said rarely and 19% did not answer. Question number 11 which was an open-ended one asked them to state the modules in which they receive academic content. 75% said they receive academic content via Facebook in modules like: Linguistics, Grammar, Written expression, Civilization modules, translation, Methodology, and phonetics. Some students stress that sharing academic content via Facebook happens especially during exams time.



**Figure 3** Students who consider Facebook as a good means to receive academic content

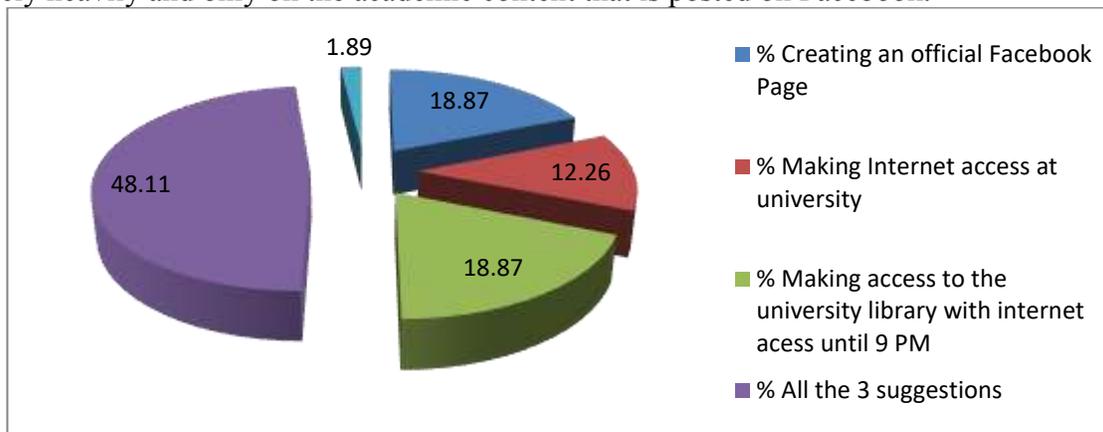


**Figure 4:** Students who recommend using Facebook for academic purposes

There are students who recommend using Facebook for academic purposes; however, others do not. The ones who do support it argue that Facebook is an easy way to receive academic content. It is time-saving, helpful, accessible everywhere, as it is a fast way to receive from teachers information about recommended books and lessons. This confirms my second hypothesis. They add that Facebook is used to share lectures and homework with their classmates. Furthermore, there exist some pages on Facebook that help students improve their English. For them, Facebook can be excellent space to exchange ideas and suggestions about academic matters. Some students even do follow scientists and scholars on Facebook. They consider Facebook a trustworthy source because the person who sends the academic content is known.

Other students do not recommend using Facebook for academic purposes because not all students have internet access during school days. They add that Facebook lacks scientific credibility. One of the surveyed students shed light on an important issue that the significant number of notifications prevents students from noticing all the academic content shared via Facebook. Because of that, they miss significant shared academic content shared on Facebook. Another student consider that it is unfair to post academic content on Facebook because sharing

such a content on Facebook will encourage absenteeism in lectures and students who do not attend will rely heavily and only on the academic content that is posted on Facebook.

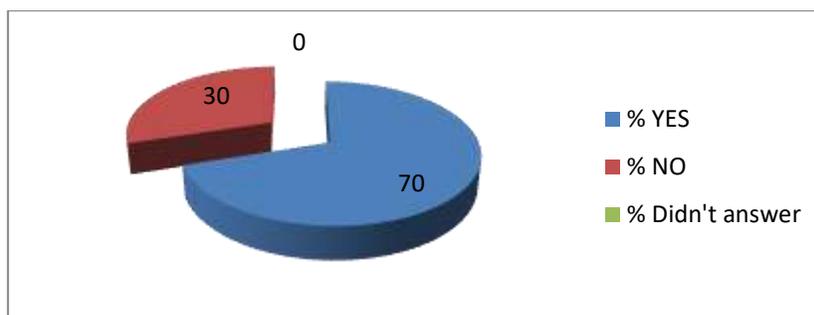


**Figure 5 Students’ opinion about ways of improving academic Facebook usage**

Students agreed with the questionnaire' suggested solutions for sustaining Facebook use for academic use; some students suggested some other interesting suggestions like increasing internet speed at university, and integrating the internet into classes to teach students how to do research on the internet. However, another student stated that the use of Facebook for academic purposes should be with caution because such a site may contain dangerous content. As a result, the students suggested deleting advertisements and any inappropriate Facebook content from students’ Facebook groups and University Facebook pages and replacing them with compelling academic content and activities. Other ideas were suggested like encouraging teachers to be involved in students’ Facebook community, using Facebook to stay in touch with international students, making PCs with internet access available in amphis and each student should be provided with one, and creating a community on Facebook to facilitate exchanging academic content on Facebook.

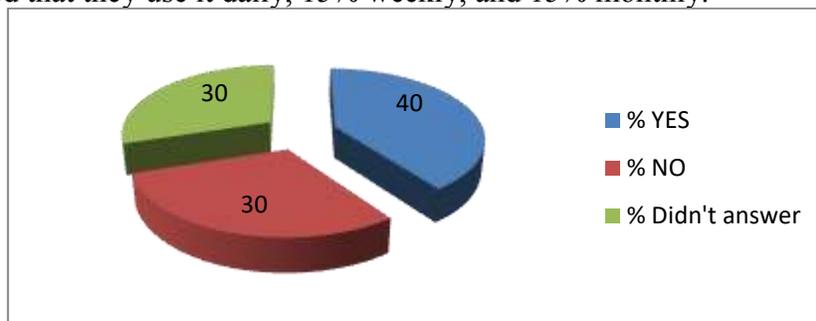
**B- Teachers' Questionnaire**

Teachers were asked whether they have internet access during working days or not. 65% said they have internet access, 30% stated that they do not have. Figure 6 confirms my hypothesis that not all teachers have a Facebook account for a reason or another, so this may make it even harder to use Facebook for academic purposes.



**Figure 6 Percentage of teachers who have Facebook accounts**

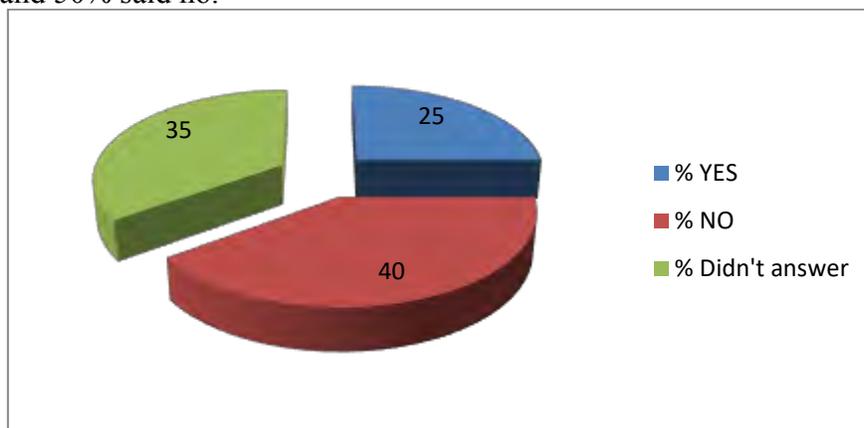
The teachers who have Facebook accounts were asked the reasons for using such a platform. 5% said they use it to socialize, 20% said they use it for academic purposes, and 60% said it utilized for both socialization and academic purposes. When asked about the frequency of their Facebook use, 40% stated that they use it daily, 15% weekly, and 15% monthly.



**Figure 7 Percentage of teachers who are members of their students' Facebook group**

Less than a half of the study's teacher participants are members of their students' Facebook group. This implies that sharing any academic content via Facebook can be difficult if not impossible. So the teachers can be encouraged not only to have a Facebook account but also to be members of their students' Facebook group to facilitate any academic exchange.

The teachers who are members of their students' Facebook group, were asked how often they consult it. 10% said they ask it daily, 25% weekly, 5% monthly and 20% stated that they never do. When they were asked whether they interact frequently with students via their Facebook group, 20% said yes, and 50% said no.

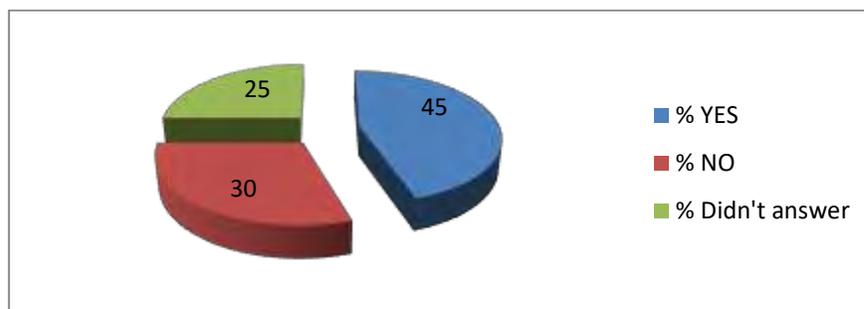


**Figure 8 Percentage of teachers who send academic content to their students via Facebook**

The study's teacher participants rarely share academic content on Facebook, and this confirms my first hypothesis. The academic usage of Facebook cannot be improved if teachers do not frequently share academic-based documents.

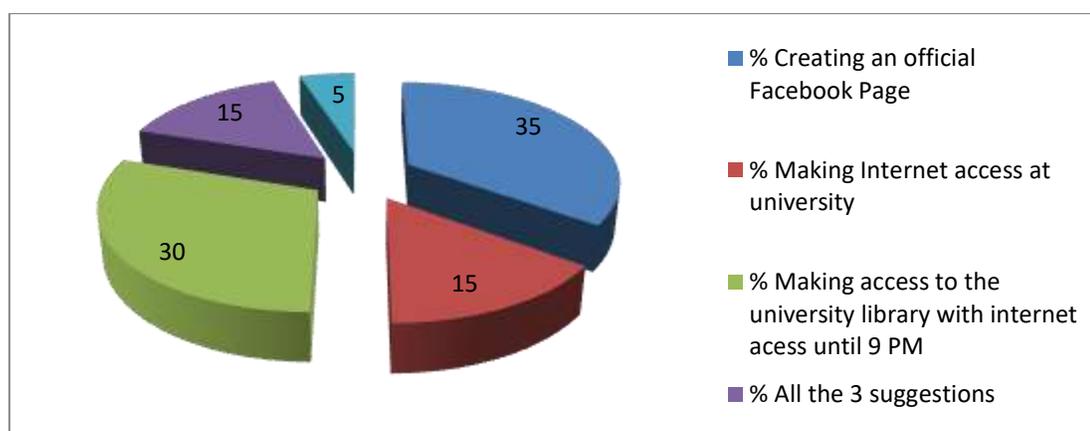
The teachers who send academic content to their students were asked about the frequency of such an online activity. 10% said they do it frequently, 20% said rarely and 70% did not answer because they either do not have a Facebook account or they do not use Facebook for academic purposes. In Question number 10 teachers were requested to state the modules in which they send academic content to their students. 06 teachers answered, who represent 30% of the sample, and

they reported that they send academic documents via Facebook in modules like: phonetics, literature, cultural infographics facts, linguistics, oral expression, E-learning, and methodology. They said they send as well homework handouts. When asked whether Facebook is a good means to share academic resources with students, 50% responded with yes and 30% replied with no.



**Figure 09 Percentage of teachers who recommend using Facebook for academic purposes**

The teachers who recommend using Facebook for academic purposes contend that Facebook can be an efficient educational tool among many others. Teachers can post feedback, assignments and even upload handouts. They add that Facebook is the fastest way to share knowledge and answer students' inquiries. It can help them realize the positive benefits of Facebook rather than use social media to kill time. On another hand, Facebook can be used to deliver homework with its correction since not every task can be done during tutorials or lectures. Teachers argue, on another hand, that Facebook is the space where students spend most of their time. Students sometimes feel lazy to check their emails, but they will certainly waste time on Facebook. Thus teachers should cease the chance to send academic content on Facebook. This confirms my hypothesis that Facebook facilitates sharing documents and exchanging ideas.



**Figure 10 Teachers' opinion about ways of improving Facebook academic usage**

Teachers agreed with the questionnaire's suggested solutions to improve Facebook academic usage. One of the teachers suggested another alternative which is creating a closed Facebook group administered by a teacher to keep order in the group and facilitate faculty and student's academic exchange.

The findings above confirm the connective theory that Facebook, as an example of a digitalized technology, helps students create networks in the form of groups within the platform in an organized way. Students maintain the cycle of their knowledge growth through their access back to the groups created on Facebook. Their common goal groups can help them promote the flow of information that is well-organised. Connectivism stresses learning through collaboration. Facebook is a suitable platform for students to learn through collaboration.

### C- Observation of L2 students' Facebook page

The name of L2 English students is called "Second Year English Mostaganem Section1/Section2". It is a close group which requires membership request. The group is described by a student as follows "Hi Boys and girls; I created this group to share sessions, Lessons, and information...thank's for your attention"I am a member of my L2 Facebook. Group, and I have been a participant observer. My observations confirmed what was advanced in both students' and teacher' questionnaires; thus, they support findings above. The following remarks of L2 Facebook Group were highlighted:

- 1- Students share with their classmate's PDF documents that concern modules like grammar, methodology and phonetics.
- 2- They share classes already tackled or future ones.
- 3- They share teachers' posted notes (taken by a camera) at the department.
- 4- They respond positively to their friends' requests and they help each other in private as well as in public.
- 5- The majority of the sharing is done by students.
- 6- Only a few teachers post documents on L2 Facebook group.
- 7- Students' transmit their teachers' messages in the form of publications.
- 8- Students do not have only post-academic content, but they also post the departments marks and exams' timetables.
- 9- When it was exams time, a student asks each other to share lessons of all modules. This confirms that traffic in students' Facebook group during exams is higher than any other time.
- 10- They put each other's username in comments to inform their friends that there is a new post from their classmates or teachers.
- 11- When I shared academic content in my students' Facebook group, my students responded positively as it was shared widely.

### Discussion

The aim of this investigation was to evaluate the extent to which Facebook can be an effective means to distribute academic content to L2 English Mostaganem students. The results of this study indicate that Facebook can be an efficient addition to technology-based educational tools. A well accepted online platform like Facebook can be adapted to deliver academic content the same as traditional e-learning systems do.

Facebook is a social networking site that is well accepted by university students, and the majority of the present surveyed students have a Facebook account. Additionally, high rates of Facebook use among school students have been noticed. This significant use indicates that Facebook is well received by students and offers opportunities for university teachers to provide

their students with academic content taking advantage of online platforms they are familiar with it. On another hand, the majority of the present study students accept using Facebook for educational purposes. The surveyed students anticipated learning benefits by creating a community on Facebook to facilitate exchanging academic content of Facebook, as well as encouraging teachers to be involved in students' Facebook community. The last finding confirms the aforementioned theory "Connectivism" which stresses learning through a system of networks.

The results of this study indicate that students are well receptive of Facebook educational use because it is an easy way to receive academic content. It is time saving, helpful, accessible everywhere. Because Facebook is available in all technology advanced devices like tablets and smartphones, students appear to be interacting with it frequently. Facebook, as a consequence, can be a convenient environment in which academic content can be added to a space that students are often utilizing.

Half of the teachers, taking part of this study, accept the integration of Facebook as one of their educational tools. They posit that Facebook is a useful way to post homework, courses and feedback. According to them, Facebook is the fastest way to deliver academic content to university students. However, the other half of the surveyed teachers do not recommend using Facebook for educational matters, and that can constitute an obstacle to students who want to take advantage of the different educational benefits Facebook may offer.

The findings of this study confirmed that students' Facebook academic use is hindered because not all of them have internet access. To enhance Facebook educational usage, solutions have been suggested. As a way of example, creating an official university Facebook page would encourage students and teachers to interact academically. However, other alternatives like making internet access at university and making access to the library with internet access until 09 P.M would facilitate students' access to the academic content already shared on Facebook. Students suggested other solutions like creating a community on Facebook to interact with each other and to contact other international universities, as well as encouraging teachers to be members of this community (group). One of the surveyed teachers recommended creating a closed Facebook group administered by a teacher to facilitate academic exchange. The group must be closed to protect the organization's privacy and it must be managed by a teacher to maintain order in the group.

One of the study's limitations is that not all L2 students attend lectures and tutorials. As a consequence, distributing a questionnaire to every L2 students was not possible. The other limitation is that not all teachers answered my survey. So a wider response among teachers would be more beneficial to the study. So avenues for future research would include larger population, enabling all students and teachers of all the other branches of Mostaganem University to take part of the study to generalize findings. Furthermore, a comparative study between traditional e-learning platforms and similar Facebook functions should be undertaken in order to figure out the most efficient platform for students academic engagement and learning.

### **Conclusion**

Facebook is used by both students and teachers so it can be an interesting tool to enhance the educational resources of university courses. The findings of the present study indicate that students and teachers agree with integrating Facebook into their academic world and are aware of

the educational benefits that Facebook offers an efficient 'students to student' and 'student to instructor' communication and an enhanced academic exchange. Despite the fact that the use of technology of the kind is well received, students still find difficulties in benefiting from the educational functions of Facebook. Thus, teachers can assist their students by embracing the latest technology like Facebook to promote learning. Another factor that must be considered is internet access. To help students access academic content posted on Facebook, they must be provided with internet access at the university during the twelve hours of the day.

#### About the author:

**Amel Ghermaoui** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University. Mostaganem, Algeria. She holds a PhD in American Civilization from the University of Oran2. Her main interest focuses on social media studies in the Algerian as well as American contexts. She published a number of articles and participated at conferences related to social media studies. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5493-3971>

#### References:

- Adebiyi, M. & Ogunlade, O. (2011). Development of a Social Networking Site with a Networked Library and Conference Chat. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Computing and Information Sciences*, 2(8), 396-401
- Akyıldız, M. & Argan, M. (n.d). Using Online Social Networking: Students' Purposes of Facebook Usage at the University of Turkey. Retrieved from <http://www.aabri.com/LV11Manuscripts/LV11094.pdf>.
- Alemán, A. M. M. & Wartman, K. L. (2009). *Online Social Networking on Campus. Understanding What Matters in Student Life*. New York: Routledge.
- Boswell, W. Social Media: What is it? (January 2014). Retrieved from [www.about.com](http://www.about.com).
- Boyd, D. (2014). *It's complicated. The social lives of networked teens*. United States of America: Yale University Press.
- Boyd, D. & Ellison N (2007). Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-mediated communication*. 13 (1), 210-230.
- Chang, C.W., & Heo, J. (2014) Visiting Theories that Predict College Students' Self-disclosure on Facebook. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 30, 79-86.
- Chen, B., & Marcus, J. (2012). Students' Self-presentation on Facebook: An Examination of Personality and Self-construal Factors. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 28, 2091-2099.
- Duke, B., Harper, G. & Johnston, M. (2013). Connectivism as a Digital Learning Theory. *The International HELT Review*. Special issue, 4-13.
- Horváth, G. (2014). From Museum Walls to Facebook Walls. Gizela Horváth, Rozália Klára Bakó and Éva Biró- Kaszás. Oradea (Ed.), *The Third Argumentor Conference. Ten Years of Facebook*. (pp.73-88). Romania: Partium&Debrecen University Press.
- Irwin, C., Ball, L., Desbrow, B. & Leveritt, M. (2012). Students' perceptions of using Facebook as an interactive learning resource at university. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*. 28(7), 1221-1232.
- Laeed, Z. (n.d). Social Media in Algeria. New Spaces for Democratic Changes and Political Participation. Retrieved from [www.academia.edu/](http://www.academia.edu/).
- Lam, L. (2012) An Innovative Research on the usage of Facebook in the Higher Education context of Hong Kong. *Academic Publishing International* 10(4), 377-386.

- Meziani, S. & Hemche, A. (2017) The Academic Usages of Social Networks among Master2 EFL Students at Tlemcen University: Case of Facebook. University of Tlemcen Faculty of Letters and Languages. Retrieved from <http://dSPACE.univ-tlemcen.dz/handle/112/8956>.
- Ouaj, S. (2016). The Role of Social Media Networking Sites in Sustaining University Students' distant learning. *The Eleventh Conference of learning in the Era of Electronic Technology*. Lebanon, 113-134.
- Park, N. & Lee, S. (2014). College Students' Motivations for Facebook Use and Psychological Outcomes. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*. 4, 601-620.
- Subrahmanyam, K. & Smahel, D. (2012). *Digital Youth. The Role of Media in Development*. New York: Springer.
- Taprial, V. & Priya, K. (2012). *Understanding Social media*. N.p: Varinder Taprial and Priya Kanwar Bookboon Press.
- Valenzuela, S., Park, N. & Kee, F. K. (2008). Lessons from Facebook: the Effect of Social Network Sites on College Students' Social Capital. the 9<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism. Retrieved from <https://online.journalism.utexas.edu>.
- Valenzuela, S., Park, N., & Kee F. K. (2009). Is There Social Capital in Social Network Site: Facebook Use and College Students' Life Satisfaction, Trust, Participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 14, 875-901.
- Webb, L. M., Wilson, M. L., Hodges, M., Smith, P. A., & Zakeri, M. (2012). Facebook: How College Students Work it. *Social Media Usage and Impact*. Noor El Deen, Hana S., Hendricks, John Allen (Ed.). Maryland: Lexington books. 3-22.
- Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008). Identity Construction on Facebook: Digital Empowerment in anchored Relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 24, 1816-1836.