



Using a Ubiquitous Digital Platform to Teach English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

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Abstract: Teaching English for specific purposes is sometimes quite a daunting challenge for most of the teachers in any part of the world despite their personal motivation, expertise and availability of the best of the resources. With the rapid encroachment of digital technology on all fields of academic teaching and learning, it becomes all the more incumbent for educators to have effective strategies to incorporate and exploit the ubiquitous and popular digital platforms to teach their “digital native” students to have better results. Considering the paramount influence of these digital platforms and social media, this study aims at exploring the potent effect of Facebook as one of the pervasive digital platforms to teach ESP to Saudi students at university level. The experiment established several findings of interest which led to the conclusion that ubiquitous digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp do have a revelatory potential to ameliorate academic and professional learning.

Keywords: Digital Platform; Social Networking; Facebook; Students; Learning; ESP; Higher Education

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of technology in every field of life has become a universal slogan. Despite its ambivalent effect on academic teaching and learning, the incorporation and exploitation of technology is at its highest demand level around globe. It seems to be a race against time. The general consensus among teachers and students is, the more technological your educational and academic environment, the more successful you are in an ever changing world (Gulek & Demirtas, 2005; Spires et al., 2008). With this given scenario, it is not at all surprising that Saudi students also use these digital platforms excessively. For them, the use of these platforms comes in various shapes and forms, from IMS and emails to social networking involving blogs, microblogs, wikis, podcasts, videos and RSS feeds. The popularity of social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Bebo, Twitter, Friendster, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, MySpace and Instagram has been taking the attention and the focus of young Saudis by storm (Askool, 2013; Morrison, 2010). A typical answer to a question such as “what is your favourite pastime?” is “my social space!” which is enough to explain the passionate level of interest that these young individuals have for their personal

presence and social preferences. The students spend a lot of their precious time on these social networking sites (SNS) which can also be used more effectively to achieving their academic goals. Most of them cannot even visualize their lives without online social interactions. For some, this attachment reaches such an extent that it can easily be described as an obsession. This complex relationship between the individual and technology also has its influence on the entire social spectrum of human life. Educators need to innovate new teaching and learning methodologies to engage learners in meaningful activities involving these digital platforms.

The basic objectives of this experimental research are: (1) to gauge the shifting trends in teaching and learning styles and their effect on Saudi students; (2) to utilize Saudi students' excessive interest in technology and social networking websites in a constructive direction that makes them feel more connected with their academic subjects; (3) to appreciate the level of interest, focus and response of Saudi ESL learners towards ESP; (4) to expose students to the most ubiquitous social networking site, Facebook, from a purely academic and professional perspective; and (5) examine the impact of modulating the traditional teaching methodology by incorporating new teaching and learning strategies.



2. BACKGROUND

Digital platforms such as social networking sites, wikis, e-books, blogs and virtual communities have been used in improving learning through interaction, participation, collaboration and information and knowledge sharing (Mason, 2006; Selwyn, 2009; Tapscott & Williams, 2010). Many different SNS support such activities either directly or indirectly. A report titled 'Facebook Statistics' by the Statistic Brain Research Institute (2014) revealed that with over 1.31 billion active users worldwide, Facebook has become the most popular social networking site, and 48% of its users access the platform every day. Facebook offers opportunities to users for searching friends, chatting online, working in groups, collaboration, playing games, self-presentation, exchanging personal information, socializing, information sharing, creating a friends' list, photo albums and entertainment (Mazman & Usuel, 2010). Hence, this encourages researchers to explore the use of the Facebook in educational and instructional contexts as a potentially powerful idea for providing peer feedback and establishing interactions with students (Mason, 2006). Many researchers have investigated its potential pedagogical use and its integration into the learning and teaching environment (Manca & Ranieri, 2013; Duffy, 2011; Cheung et al., 2011; Mafdge et al., 2009). Since the majority of Facebook users are aged between 18 and 25 years old, with a major proportion being the university students (Bumgarner, 2007), Facebook stands out as one of the platforms to be used as a useful educational tool providing active participation and collaboration.

Many studies undertaken by distinguished researchers have revealed that Facebook is the most popular social networking site among students (Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2011; Hargittai, 2007; Madge, et al., 2009; Selwyn, 2009). It has been reported that it can have a significant impact on a student's performance (Madge et al., 2009; Lampe et al., 2006). Yu et al. (2010) presented three findings about engagement on Facebook: positive contribution towards self-esteem, university life and performance efficiency. It offers educational value to both students and teachers. To students it may foster positive relationships among peers of similar ages and interests (West et al., 2009; Kabilan et al., 2010), transfer of knowledge (Madge et al., 2009), quality of learning (Pasek & Hargittai, 2009; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010), cognitive and social competencies (Christofides et al., 2009; Ross et al., 2009), interpersonal intelligence and critical thought (Lampe et al., 2008), and consolidate self-confidence and self-esteem (Bosch, 2009). From the teachers' perspective, we see that Facebook contributes to the credibility of teachers engaged in contemporary student culture (Kabilan, 2010), maintain pre-established relationships (Bosch, 2009; Lewis & West, 2009; Pempek et al., 2009; Tosun, 2012; Young & Quan-Haase, 2009), is a means to provide constructive educational outcomes (Pempek, 2009), offers a differential pedagogy (Hew, 2011), integrates diagnostic

formative assessment (Pasek & Hargittai, 2009), accounts for human behaviour by using Facebook in learning activities (Roblyer, 2010), creates novel educational settings on a social network (Selwyn, 2009), promotes course related materials and discussions (DeSchryver, Mishra, Koehler & Francis, 2009; Larue, 2012), promotes the student as an interacting partner (Schwartz, 2009) and develops knowledge and skills in order to perform efficient didactic activities (Hew, 2011).

These and other similar studies have explored the issue of how Facebook may be incorporated within the educational context. However, very few attempts have been made to explore and exploit its educational value for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether FB can be used as a useful and meaningful learning environment to support, enhance and/or strengthen learning of the English language for specific purposes. This study aims to contribute significantly to this field, and enable educators and researchers to comprehend the potential value of digital platforms such as FB for ESP teaching and learning.

B. FB as a tool to teach English

Educational experts acknowledge that technology has brought about a dramatic revolution in the lifestyle of individuals across the world. This new digital age has brought with it significant changes to both the teaching and learning experience at educational institutions around the world. As students move away from traditional learning methods and incorporate more and more technology into their daily lives, teachers are faced with the task of effectively engaging the attention of this new generation of technology obsessed students, or "Homo Zappiens" (Veen 2007). Thus, it remains important to exploit these digital learning environments to teach ESP to our Saudi students improve the quality of their knowledge, skills and professional acumen to meet the ever-growing challenges of the 21st century. This will also be beneficial for those Saudi students who may not succeed in the traditional teaching environment.

Facebook has been used at higher education institutions to support, enhance and strengthen language skills in teaching English (Kabilan et al., 2010). The authors conducted a research and found that the Facebook platform was popular among students for learning, and suggested that instructors should clearly define the objectives and outcomes at the onset of such activities. Blattner (2009) has argued that FB can be exploited for authentic language interaction, and can be instrumental in enhancing student motivation and improving the performance of English language learners. Yancey (2009) presents his findings related to the use of FB, blogs and online forums to motivate students undertaking writing practice, and transforming them to become better writers. One piece of research on the use of Facebook has shown powerful effects on second/foreign language teaching and



learning (Teclhaimanot, 2011). Kitsis (2008) has reported that online discussions created engagement in electronic homework assignments as students showed greater effort, knowing that their peers read their work and depended on them for help.

Moreover, keeping in mind its significance in the work environment, the importance of ESP for Saudi university students for academic purposes cannot be ignored by any academic. Saudi Arabia has been on the path of modernization and industrialization for the last several decades. There is a growing demand for higher standards of education for everyone to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Technological and industrial development requires professionals and experts who are well-trained in their fields. They not only need general English for communication purposes, but also ESP, EOP, etc., to work independently and professionally in an ever-growing and competitive global environment. The Saudi students have the most difficult challenge of developing command over the different genres of the language in order to execute their professional commitments.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the instrumentality of Facebook for teaching ESP to Saudi students for several significant reasons. First of all, teaching English language for specific purposes has become a crucial issue in research and among educators of languages and researches etc. Students from different fields need to learn English language to serve their purposes and fulfil their needs. Of course, these fields will include students of medicine in general, dentistry, biology, microbiology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, geology, engineering, architecture, accounting, business administration and management, tourism and archaeology, psychology (Alduais, 2012).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Participants

The participants in this study were male and female students registered in the preparatory year at the University of Dammam and included three experimental groups and two control groups. Approximately 57.3% of the entire sample (N = 162) were students in the experimental group, and the remaining 42.7% belonged to the control group. The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 25 years. The study involved students from the health track and science track. Both the experimental and control groups were taught the same material for the same number of hours each day for the duration of the experiment, with the Facebook-related activities for the intervention group being carried out during the lectures. The very objective of this study was to assess whether students exposed to Facebook would demonstrate better engagement with and understanding of the subject material than those who were not. A Facebook group was created to underpin the students' engagement and post

relevant subject specific material. Forming a group, rather than 'friending' students, helps segregate personal interaction and professional support (Teclhaimanot & Hickman, 2011). All of the students in the experimental groups were asked to create a new individual Facebook account, and could then join the special group created by the teacher. An email was sent to the students offering the opportunity to engage with the group, explaining its aim and lifespan, and guidelines for usage. The study was carried out for a period of four consecutive weeks. The teachers taught the prescribed syllabus to all these groups. However, the lessons for the Facebook groups were thoroughly supplemented by a series of additional subject specific videos (YouTube) and other reading comprehension passages and articles, both by the teacher and students. The module-specific postings were therefore an integral part of the study. Occasionally, students posted incorrect information and were subsequently guided to look for pertinent information. The objective was to promote critical thinking and raise subject related understanding. The students were asked to watch the videos and read the articles, and comment upon them. They were also required to post their ESP related assignments and do a peer review. Students were also regularly involved in class discussions about the postings on Facebook. The group opened on day one of the study week, seven days prior to students' undertaking the post-test.

B. Instruments

The data collection instruments consisted of triangulated approach. Firstly, a pre-survey was used as an instrument to assess the student's interest in the use of Facebook from the very outset of the research, followed by a post-survey at the end of the research. An anonymous survey was designed to investigate the students' response to the use of Facebook and its potential for specific academic purposes. The questionnaire included 25 items, as shown in Appendix 1. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of a background probing of participants' age, gender and year of study. The second part of the questionnaire contained various constructs, comprising of items enquiring on the students' use of FB. The construct used Likert scales of 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. A subset of the construct was derived from Arteaga (2014), which emphasizes the educational aspects of Facebook. The construct included 'perceived usefulness (PU)', 'work related (WR)', 'daily activity (DA)', 'resource sharing/collaboration (RSC)', and 'traditional learning techniques (TLT)'. The items within the construct were modulated to suit the objectives of this study.

Secondly, the research was supplemented by four weeks of extensive teaching of the different modules to the two groups, in order to appreciate their responses towards Facebook as a tool to teach ESP. The intervention group was aided with module specific postings on



Facebook, both from the teachers and the students. A pre-test post-test strategy was adopted to quantify the differences in academic achievement between the control and experimental groups.

Finally, it was supported by qualitative research interviews to gather in-depth information about the participants' experience, and further validate their responses towards the end of this study by offering participants the opportunity to comment on the use of FB and its impact on academic achievement. This data was collected from 25 questions and analysed thematically looking for key comments that clustered around the various themes under investigation.

C. Analysis

Data analysis was done both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data were recorded in terms of means, percentages, t-tests and correlation. The data were analyzed using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

To analyze the description of items in the construct, mean scores, percentages, t-test and correlation were employed to describe students' views on FB as a social, collaborative and learning environment.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings obtained from the study are divided into three subsections: first, in terms of means and correlation, a statistical analysis of the subjects' responses to the pre- and post-Facebook survey. Second, a t-test that displays the difference between the means of constructs was conducted to examine the relationship between the pre- and post-survey response. Similar statistics were obtained for pre-test and post-test to measure the effectiveness of Facebook or otherwise on student academic performance. Finally, the qualitative data were collected towards the end of the study by offering participants the opportunity to comment on the use of FB and its impact on academic achievement.

A. Pre and Post Facebook Survey

According to the results, there are no substantial differences between the pre-survey and post-survey responses for the control groups. This is as per our expectations, since the control groups followed conventional teaching methodology during this study. However, an analysis of their responses reported in Appendix B reveals some interesting details. In the pre-survey, nearly half the students from the control group did not perceive Facebook as a useful (PU=55.84%) and versatile platform to view, share and post educational material (RSC=48.32%), and they maintained the same viewpoint about Facebook in the post-survey (PU=53.88%, RSC=47.64%). In general, the students did not view Facebook as a useful platform for resource sharing and collaboration. Also, most of the students

stated that, in general, they do not use Facebook to communicate with their classmates about class assignments, projects and tests (Pre WR=52.72%, Post WR=53.28%), but largely agreed with the idea of using Facebook to contribute interesting and relevant material to the ESP course (Pre TLT=68.56%, Post TLT=68.6%). The students strongly felt that they did not have enough opportunities to utilize their smart devices in the classroom (Pre & Post TLT1=55.2%). Furthermore, most of the students also felt that the incorporation of social networking into the ESP courses might make them more interesting and engaging (Pre TLT5=79.4%, Post TLT5=81.2%). The students' responses to questions from the daily activity (DA) construct also revealed that Facebook is not the most widely used social networking platform, with most of the respondents stating they do not use Facebook on a daily basis to communicate with their contacts (Pre DA=48.16%, Post DA=45.84%). Overall, the mean responses for each of the five constructs remained largely the same for both the pre-survey and post survey, with both also demonstrating a high positive correlation between the two responses. The high correlation for all of the constructs is unsurprising, since we expect the participants of the control group to provide broadly similar, if not exactly the same, responses in both the pre-survey and the post-survey.

The responses of students in the experimental groups were significantly different to those in the control groups. There was also a substantial difference between pre-survey and post-survey responses, unlike the case of the control groups. In the pre-survey, 52.6% of students agreed that they found Facebook to be a versatile method of sharing information easily with their contacts, and the percentage of students with this view increased to 67.5% after the experiment was carried out. Responses to questions in the work-related construct also displayed a similar trend (Pre WR=58.2%, Post WR=68.6%). Initially, a very small number of students (46.8%) stated that they use Facebook regularly to communicate with classmates and share course-related material. After the experiment, a substantially larger number (57%) stated that they use Facebook for this purpose. Likewise, the percentage of students who felt that teachers should incorporate Facebook into the ESP course increased significantly from 71.2% in the pre-survey, to 82.2% in the post-survey. While only 52.6% of students were initially in favour of the idea of Facebook as a platform for resource sharing, the post-survey result of 67.3% reflects a much greater level of interest and receptiveness to this idea. For questions from the traditional learning and teaching construct (TLT), the pre-survey responses of the experimental groups were similar to those of the control groups. Many students (TLT4=69.8%) felt that there were too few opportunities to use their smartphones and tablets in the classroom, and that the incorporation of Facebook would lead to a more interesting learning experience for them (TLT5=71.2%). The post-survey



carried after the experiment showed that the number of students (TLT=82.2%) in favour of integrating social networking into the ESP course was significantly higher than in the pre-survey, indicating the overall positive response of students towards the inclusion of Facebook in academic activities (Pre TLT=62.4% Post TLT=68%). This is further reflected by an overall increase in the mean

responses of students from the pre-survey to the post-survey in questions across each of the five constructs. This general increase in the value of the mean response for each of the five constructs signifies the students' more favourable perception of Facebook as an academic platform after the experiment was carried out. These conclusions are further validated by the fact that there is

Table 1: Correlations of Control Groups Pre and Post Surveys Means (N=70)

Construct	Correlation	Significance
Mean Perceived Usefulness (PU)	0.314	0.008
Mean Work Related (WR)	0.458	0.000
Mean Daily Activity (DA)	0.200	0.096
Mean Resource Sharing/ Collaboration (RSC)	0.139	0.250
Mean Traditional Learning Techniques (TLT)	-0.173	0.152

Table 2: Correlations of Experimental Groups Pre and Post Surveys Means (N=94)

Construct	Correlation	Significance
Mean Perceived Usefulness (PU)	-0.042	0.691
Mean Work Related (WR)	-0.018	0.864
Mean Daily Activity (DA)	-0.122	0.242
Mean Resource Sharing/ Collaboration (RSC)	-0.041	0.692
Mean Traditional Learning Techniques (TLT)	-0.076	0.467

very little correlation (Table 1) between the pre-survey and post-survey responses of the control group.

Considering the experimental group (N=94), the pre- and post-survey shows that the mean for the entire construct increased significantly, showing the participants' faith in the usefulness of Facebook for work related and daily activities. We found statistically significant correlations among all five constructs when we compared pre- and post-survey mean scores (Table 2).

Pre-survey scores were significantly correlated to post-survey scores. These scores were negatively correlated, indicating that, as the students in the experimental group started using the Facebook for ESP learning, their viewpoint shaped favourably towards its use in all five areas considered in the survey's constructs. This trend was also evident at the conclusion of this study, with students having higher mean scores after the Facebook exposition. It also confirms that after the introduction of Facebook into their learning activities, a higher percentage of the students agreed that Facebook could be utilized for resource sharing and learning.

B. Pre-test and Post-test Analysis

As stated earlier, the pre-tests and post-tests were carried with the view of quantitatively investigating the impact of Facebook activity on the academic performance of students. Analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores for the control and experimental groups reveals several clear trends. Firstly, we can see from Table 3 that the mean score of the experimental group for the pre-test (67.56) was significantly lower than that of the control group (73.68). The mean scores for both the experimental and control groups were significantly higher for the post-tests (79.34 and 81.33, respectively); however, the experimental group students showed a much greater improvement (17.44%) than the control group (10.38%). There is also a significantly higher correlation between the pre-test and post-test scores for the experimental group compared to the value for the control group. It can be inferred from this that Facebook activity led to an improvement in the overall academic performance of students in the experimental group.



The mean score for students in the experimental group increased after exposure compared to the control group. This increase was statistically significant (<0.01) according to a paired t-test comparison of pre- and post-test results (Table 4). Hence it may be concluded that exposure to Facebook contributed significantly towards students' learning and academic achievements.

In addition, it can also be seen from Table 5 that the mean scores of the science students for both the pre-test and post-test (66.99 and 79.18, respectively) are considerably higher than those of the medical students (35.29 and 46.43, respectively). It is also clear from these data that the female students demonstrated a greater improvement in their mean scores compared to the male students. In an overall analysis, we observe that the mean

Table 3: Means of EG and CG groups for Pre and Post Tests

Construct	Mean
EG_pre_test	67.56
EG_post_test	79.34
CG_pre_test	73.68
CG_post_test	81.33

Table 4: Correlations and t-test of Experimental and Control groups for Pre and Post Tests

	Correlation	t-test		
		df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
EG_pre_test	0.664	72	-9.110	0.000
EG_post_test				
CG_pre_test	0.416	70	-5.517	0.000
CG_post_test				

Table 5: Paired Sample Statistics for pre & post-test – Experimental Group

Major	Test	Mean	Correlation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
MED	Pre_test_score &	35.29	0.913	-7.028	23	0.000
	Post_test_score	46.43				
SCI	Post_test_score	66.99	0.655	-9.796	69	0.000
	Pre_test_score &	79.18				
Both	Pre_test_score &	58.89	0.881	-11.825	93	0.000
	Post_test_score	70.81				

score of the students increased, supporting the potential value of Facebook for academic achievement. Also, there is a statistically significant difference before and after Facebook intervention, and this difference is not due to chance ($\text{sig}=0$).

C. Qualitative Analysis

After the four-week long activity, many students from each of the experimental groups were interviewed in order to validate their post-survey responses. The students were asked to provide feedback on their perception of Facebook as a useful educational platform, as well as its benefits and drawbacks from a work-related perspective. They were also asked to provide their opinion about

Facebook in enhancing peer interaction and academic collaboration, as well as comparing this method of teaching to conventional teaching and learning techniques. A significant proportion (60%) of the male students said that they did not see Facebook as a useful addition to the traditional class activities. In general, these students stated that Facebook tended to be a distraction for them and they felt that this had a negative impact on their overall academic performance. In contrast, nearly all of the female students (90%) found Facebook to be a useful educational platform. However, all of the male and female students (100%) stated that the activities and content posted on Facebook enhanced their understanding of the subject matter. In particular, students remarked that watching the subject-specific videos posted by the



instructor helped to reinforce the concepts explained in the class and was an effective method of helping them revise material for tests and examinations. All (100%) of the male students also stated that watching these subject-specific videos was extremely helpful to them in understanding difficult subject material and medical terminology. Nearly of the female students (90%) also stated that they felt that the subject-specific videos, in particular, had helped to greatly enhance their understanding of the subject. Some of the female students (20%) also said that watching the videos helped to improve their accent and pronunciation.

Overall, the students also felt that Facebook helped to enhance group work and resource sharing. Many of the male students (60%) stated that they had never used Facebook as a platform to share educational material with their classmates before this activity, whereas the rest (40%) said that they actively used Facebook to ask questions and share old examination questions with their classmates before this activity began. Of the female students, the majority of them (80%) stated that they found the opportunity to share material with their classmates on Facebook useful for their overall learning experience. Specifically, these students stated that they saw the opportunity to evaluate other students' work posted on Facebook as being beneficial in helping them to improve the quality of their own assignments. Some also commented that they felt that Facebook provided them with an opportunity to display their work to other students, which they did not have before. In particular, many students (both male and female) said that they liked the opportunity to interact with their classmates on Facebook in a less formal and more relaxed manner. They also appreciated the ability to access material easily and conveniently from their mobile devices at any time. A few (20%) of the male students remarked that they found the material posted on Facebook to be more useful than class notes, since it provided them with an opportunity to quickly review key points later. When asked to compare this teaching methodology to traditional teaching techniques, however, the responses were diverse and considerably more interesting. Although the majority of the male students (60%) stated that Facebook was better, a significant proportion (20%) said that they felt that Facebook would only be useful if the material was explained sufficiently clearly in the class. Some students (20%) also felt that they were satisfied with traditional teaching techniques and that the incorporation of Facebook was detrimental to their learning experience and an unnecessary addition to the class material. In contrast, nearly all (90%) of the female students thought the inclusion of Facebook improved their learning experience compared to traditional teaching and learning techniques, while 10% of the students felt that the activities on Facebook were unsuitable for all courses.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The results and statistical analyses of this research have led to the conclusion that students can use social networking sites actively and effectively for collaborative academic learning and development. Also, they find it easier to provide their feedback on the learning process and teaching methodology in a timely, productive and professional manner. Such experiences allow them to interact with their peers and teachers with a greater interest and response, which is not the case in a traditional classroom environment. Moreover, students also utilize their smart devices more constructively to enhance and enrich their academic knowledge. Finally, students find it easier to interpret the technical aspects of ESP and its profound relevance and significance in relation to their chosen field of study. Above all, the Saudi students learned to respect and appreciate other people's opinions in an unbiased and objective manner when it comes to professional related issues.

A. *Suggestions for approaches to syllabus design*

It remains a known fact (Hyland, 2002) that it is an extremely challenging task for even the most competent and professional teachers to teach ESP to low-level ESL students at university level. It is therefore suggested, in light of the statistical findings of this research, that the syllabus designed for ESP should be incorporated with enough visual and explanatory material. The qualitative interviews of the students indicated the fact that students, who used Facebook, where relevant, comprehensible, subject specific videos were posted, understood difficult technical concepts more easily. Also, they reported that the availability of such posts helped them to repeat and review them at their own convenience. Similarly, the ESP syllabus should offer more ground for professional discourse among students and teachers. In making the arrangements for such a syllabus, those concerned must take into account all the explicit and implicit factors that might affect the teaching and learning of such a technology based language syllabus. It must be designed by keeping in mind the realistic assessment of such students at the preparatory college level.

B. *Future Directions*

Future research requires further exploring the role of the instructor in the use of Facebook for academic activities, because the critical role of the teacher cannot be ignored at any stage of experimentation. Other factors such as teachers' motivational attitude and seriousness of purpose remain crucially important in conducting any kind of experimental study. It is in the hands of a successful professional teacher to modulate any assistive technological tools such as Facebook and translate any routine teaching activity into a meaningful and useful experience for students. Although the teacher is supposed to allow a process of independent learning and exploring on the part of students, he or she should be always available to offer explicit and implicit guidance to novice



learners, so they do not become lost in the thick woods of teeming data and instructions.

Future research may also explore differences in the responses of male and female students towards the exclusive use of Facebook for academic purposes. It could also explore the effect of group work with Facebook or other collaborative activities carried out in a traditional classroom environment. Researchers might use Facebook

as a digital platform to evaluate the writing skills of their students and make a comparative analysis of traditional writing versus digital writing using Facebook. Another interesting idea could be to gauge the level of interest student's show towards Twitter versus Facebook for communicative purposes. Researchers could examine factors that may influence students to prefer either one (or none) for active communication.

Appendix A. Questions used in the study

Construct	Variables	Survey items
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	PU1	It is easy to view, post, and share content on Facebook.
	PU2	Facebook is a versatile platform that allows us to do several things.
	PU3	Facebook is the most convenient method to stay in touch with the people I know.
	PU4	Facebook has helped me to improve and maintain my social relationships.
	PU5	I have access to Facebook at any time and any place.
Work Related (WR)	WR1	I use Facebook to communicate with my classmates about homework assignments, projects or quizzes.
	WR2	There are several educational groups and resources available on Facebook.
	WR3	Teachers should use Facebook to improve classroom discussions and communicate information with students.
	WR4	I feel bored with traditional classroom activities and assignments and find the idea of online activities and discussions more appealing.
	WR5	Facebook enhances group and team work among students.
Daily Activity (DA)	DA1	I use Facebook on a daily basis and frequently check for updates using my smartphone.
	DA2	Facebook allows me to express my thoughts, feelings and emotions easily and openly.
	DA3	I feel more comfortable interacting with people on Facebook than I do in real life.
	DA4	I use Facebook to seek my friends' opinions about several issues.
	DA5	I regularly check Facebook to get up-to-date information about what my contacts are doing.
Resource Sharing/ Collaboration (RSC)	RSC1	Sharing content and interacting with other students on Facebook can help me achieve a better understanding of the subject.
	RSC2	I regularly share work-related material with my classmates using Facebook.
	RSC3	I can contribute more resources and interesting course related material using Facebook that would not be possible in the classroom.
	RSC4	Students can discuss projects and other issues more openly and freely using Facebook.
	RSC5	Content posted on Facebook is more useful than class notes or handouts.
Traditional Learning Techniques (TLT)	TLT1	I feel that I do not get enough opportunities for class participation in the traditional classroom.
	TLT2	Learning from books is more effective than learning through the use of digital content.
	TLT3	I do not get enough opportunities to share my work with my classmates and help them.
	TLT4	There are very few opportunities to use my smartphone/tablet in the classroom.
	TLT5	I feel that the incorporation of social networking in ESP courses will make them more interesting and engaging.

Appendix B. Pre and Post Survey Responses

		Experimental Group Response											
Construct	Variables	Pre-Survey Response						Post-Survey Response					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	PU1	7.77	16.50	26.21	36.89	12.62	3.30	3.16	7.37	10.53	45.26	33.68	3.99
	PU2	6.80	15.53	21.36	48.54	7.77	3.35	3.16	6.32	8.42	64.21	17.89	3.87
	PU3	18.45	44.66	18.45	14.56	3.88	2.41	9.47	33.68	17.89	30.53	8.42	2.95
	PU4	14.56	35.92	21.36	24.27	3.88	2.67	7.37	29.47	24.21	32.63	6.32	3.01
	PU5	10.68	19.42	18.45	44.66	6.80	3.17	4.21	14.74	6.32	62.11	12.63	3.64
Work Related (WR)	WR1	32.04	30.10	13.59	20.39	3.88	2.34	8.42	41.05	13.68	30.53	6.32	2.85
	WR2	7.77	19.42	37.86	27.18	7.77	3.08	2.11	6.32	32.63	46.32	12.63	3.61
	WR3	13.59	30.10	21.36	24.27	10.68	2.88	8.42	8.42	13.68	55.79	13.68	3.58
	WR4	9.71	20.39	17.48	33.98	18.45	3.31	6.32	12.63	11.58	45.26	24.21	3.68
	WR5	8.74	23.30	39.81	21.36	6.80	2.94	5.26	14.74	22.11	47.37	10.53	3.43



Daily Activity (DA)	DA1	32.04	36.89	13.59	13.59	3.88	2.20	14.74	24.21	6.32	36.84	17.89	3.19
	DA2	20.39	29.13	26.21	23.30	0.97	2.55	13.68	20.00	21.05	30.53	14.74	3.13
	DA3	25.24	32.04	13.59	25.24	3.88	2.50	15.79	27.37	15.79	30.53	10.53	2.93
	DA4	24.27	31.07	18.45	22.33	3.88	2.50	5.26	20.00	17.89	44.21	12.63	3.39
	DA5	23.30	30.10	19.42	19.42	7.77	2.58	8.42	27.37	12.63	38.95	12.63	3.20
Resource Sharing/ Collaboration (RSC)	RSC1	16.50	26.21	31.07	19.42	6.80	2.74	6.32	11.58	20.00	43.16	18.95	3.57
	RSC2	26.21	32.04	24.27	16.50	0.97	2.34	6.32	29.47	22.11	31.58	10.53	3.11
	RSC3	18.45	26.21	29.13	18.45	7.77	2.71	3.16	10.53	30.53	41.05	14.74	3.54
	RSC4	19.42	22.33	29.13	26.21	2.91	2.71	4.21	20.00	25.26	43.16	7.37	3.29
	RSC5	11.65	33.01	36.89	15.53	2.91	2.65	5.26	16.84	25.26	41.05	11.58	3.37
Traditional Learning Techniques (TLT)	TLT1	17.48	39.81	16.50	21.36	4.85	2.56	13.68	30.53	18.95	30.53	6.32	2.85
	TLT2	5.83	32.04	23.30	26.21	12.62	3.08	1.05	30.53	20.00	33.68	14.74	3.31
	TLT3	7.77	33.98	26.21	23.30	8.74	2.91	7.37	29.47	18.95	38.95	5.26	3.05
	TLT4	5.83	19.42	22.33	25.24	27.18	3.49	5.26	13.68	14.74	40.00	26.32	3.68
	TLT5	7.77	10.68	25.24	30.10	26.21	3.56	4.21	6.32	9.47	34.74	45.26	4.11

		Control Group Response											
Construct	Variables	Pre-Survey Response						Post-Survey Response					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	PU1	12.86	12.86	40.00	27.14	7.14	3.03	18.31	14.08	38.03	22.54	7.04	2.86
	PU2	12.86	15.71	32.86	30.00	8.57	3.06	15.49	21.13	28.17	33.80	1.41	2.85
	PU3	25.71	41.43	20.00	10.00	2.86	2.23	35.21	38.03	19.72	7.04	0.00	1.99
	PU4	20.00	32.86	24.29	21.43	1.43	2.51	21.13	25.35	30.99	21.13	1.41	2.56
	PU5	10.00	22.86	20.00	38.57	8.57	3.13	11.27	16.90	21.13	40.85	9.86	3.21
Work Related (WR)	WR1	34.29	37.14	20.00	8.57	0.00	2.03	39.44	35.21	11.27	11.27	2.82	2.03
	WR2	14.29	14.29	50.00	18.57	2.86	2.81	12.68	15.49	50.70	16.90	4.23	2.85
	WR3	22.86	31.43	22.86	14.29	8.57	2.54	33.80	23.94	23.94	14.08	4.23	2.31
	WR4	8.57	24.29	28.57	24.29	14.29	3.11	5.63	8.45	28.17	45.07	12.68	3.51
	WR5	11.43	31.43	35.71	20.00	1.43	2.69	23.94	12.68	43.66	16.90	2.82	2.62
Daily Activity (DA)	DA1	38.57	30.00	14.29	14.29	2.86	2.13	39.44	29.58	14.08	14.08	2.82	2.11
	DA2	17.14	37.14	25.71	14.29	5.71	2.54	25.35	30.99	23.94	19.72	0.00	2.38
	DA3	21.43	44.29	25.71	5.71	2.86	2.24	29.58	28.17	25.35	15.49	1.41	2.31
	DA4	20.00	31.43	21.43	27.14	0.00	2.56	28.17	38.03	19.72	12.68	1.41	2.21
	DA5	18.57	34.29	21.43	22.86	2.86	2.57	28.17	29.58	14.08	25.35	2.82	2.45
Resource Sharing/ Collaboration (RSC)	RSC1	21.43	22.86	41.43	11.43	2.86	2.51	29.58	19.72	36.62	12.68	1.41	2.37
	RSC2	28.57	37.14	30.00	2.86	1.43	2.11	39.44	29.58	22.54	8.45	0.00	2.00
	RSC3	24.29	21.43	44.29	10.00	0.00	2.40	23.94	23.94	42.25	8.45	1.41	2.39
	RSC4	18.57	22.86	44.29	12.86	1.43	2.56	23.94	22.54	29.58	18.31	5.63	2.59
	RSC5	20.00	20.00	51.43	7.14	1.43	2.50	19.72	22.54	42.25	12.68	2.82	2.56
Traditional Learning Techniques (TLT)	TLT1	14.29	22.86	35.71	27.14	0.00	2.76	8.45	35.21	29.58	25.35	1.41	2.76
	TLT2	5.71	21.43	31.43	22.86	18.57	3.27	8.45	15.49	26.76	32.39	16.90	3.34
	TLT3	5.71	37.14	18.57	31.43	7.14	2.97	12.68	35.21	8.45	38.03	5.63	2.89
	TLT4	2.86	4.29	11.43	35.71	45.71	4.17	5.63	1.41	14.08	35.21	43.66	4.10
	TLT5	5.71	2.86	15.71	40.00	35.71	3.97	4.23	5.63	14.08	32.39	43.66	4.06

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