Benefits of Facebook Usage (as a Web 2.0 Application) in Foreign Language Instruction in Higher Education: A Meta-Analysis Study

Rania Muhammad Qassrawi & Samih Mahmoud Al Karasneh

Published online: 02 Mar 2023.

Submit your article to this journal ⬀

View related articles ⬀

View Crossmark data ⬀

*Corresponding author: Rania Muhammad Qassrawi, TEFL Department of Languages and Translation, Birzeit University, BïrZayt, Palestine
E-mail: rqassrawi@birzeit.edu

DIGITAL HUMANITIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Benefits of Facebook Usage (as a Web 2.0 Application) in Foreign Language Instruction in Higher Education: A Meta-Analysis Study

Rania Muhammad Qassrawi[1]* and Samih Mahmoud Al Karasneh[2]

Abstract: Using technology and social networking sites in education has become a variable that should be considered and utilized by educators to cope with learners' needs and demands in the era of the technological revolution, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aimed at reviewing and analyzing the benefits of using one of the social networking sites (Facebook) in foreign language instruction, particularly teaching and learning English at higher educational institutions. A meta-analysis qualitative approach was followed as thirty-three studies were reviewed, summarized and synthesized based on predetermined criteria and procedures. The findings revealed five main roles and benefits that Facebook as a Web 2.0 technology can have in foreign language instruction, which were: (a) the impact of using Facebook on adult learners' engagement; (b) the impact of using Facebook on improving college students' academic performance and achievement; (c) the role of using Facebook in supporting cross-cultural awareness and collaborative learning; (d) the role of using Facebook in enhancing the interactive and communicative learning; (e) the role of using Facebook in immersing students in a meaningful learning experience. Accordingly, some conclusions and recommendations were suggested.

1. Introduction

Education and technology have become inseparable in the era of digitalization where the world has been experiencing drastic changes and burdens, especially in higher education (Parusheva et al. (2017); Chakchouk and Stefania (2019); Symonenko et al., 2020). When a trendy version of technology named Web 2.0 was announced in 2005, it was described as a new generation of the World Wide Web due to being utilized in education (O'Reilly, 2005b). Through this trend, a new participatory web was presented with more user-centered engagement, as users became able to edit, create and share information in a dynamic usage (Media, 2007). Web 2.0 technology and applications have been also designed for social interaction so that learners can communicate in real-life contexts on a synchronous basis. Hence, this technology was established by being aligned with diverse types of Web 2.0 technology and applications that can be integrated into education (Anderson, 2012), especially social networking sites and media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, and Instagram. As an application of Web 2.0 technology, Facebook has been regarded as one of the influential social networking sites that have been widely spread nowadays. It was launched in

2004 by Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard University and targeted networking people (Minocha, 2009). Through the use of this platform, users can be engaged and allowed to interact socially and communicatively in an informal and meaningful context.

By integrating this application as a Web 2.0 platform in education, multiple benefits can be achieved, particularly in teaching adults (Andragogy). It was specified that adult learners need to be taught in a more learner-centered environment with being granted more independence over their learning (Blaschke et al., 2021; Blaschke & Hase, 2019), and this can be provided by using Web 2.0 technology in teaching (Boileau, 2011; Parusheva et al., 2017). In other words, integrating the applications of Web 2.0, such as Facebook, may give learners a platform to gain knowledge and solve problems critically with being self-directed and intrinsically motivated (Naqvi & Parvez, 2019).

At higher education institutions, the use of Web 2.0 applications was suggested as a technique that can meet the characteristics and the learning needs of adult learners, since students can be allowed to establish their online personal learning environments (PLEs; Blaschke et al., 2021), so that they can build an online community, share knowledge, bridge social contacts and celebrate the independence over their learning with interacting easily with their classmates through using this handy technology (Devi et al., 2019; Merriam, 2001; Parusheva et al., 2017). Besides, it was also suggested that using Web 2.0 technology in teaching at colleges and universities may provide adult learners with an opportunity to express their thoughts outside the classrooms; accordingly, they can become more engaged in the learning process (Devi et al., 2019). In a sense, adult learners through using Facebook in instruction as a Web 2.0 technology can be empowered to find a broader scope and independent community, especially as the demographics of social media presented by Duggan and Brenner (2012) revealed that 71% of higher education students have been Facebook users.

Using Web.2.0 in language teaching and learning has become one of the highly suggested modern methods in higher education, as this trend may provide multiple applications and tools which are reachable and effective in fostering students' four language skills (Barrot, 2018; Symonenko et al., 2020). For more engagement of foreign language learners, it was recommended by Omaggio Hadley (2001), for example, to provide an authentic context of the target language that submerges the learners in a similar context of the real environment so that they can acquaint a meaningful experience that promotes their thinking skills and language proficiency. Thus, integrating Facebook formally in teaching foreign languages started undoubtedly to occupy the researchers' attention, since students can enlarge their contacts with native speakers of the foreign language and can communicate in a real context using synchronous or asynchronous methods of interaction (Devi et al., 2019).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, higher-education institutions have been in search of tools and methods to sustain the teaching-learning process remotely. Universities and colleges; therefore, have strived to devise and use methods that had to be hybrid with technology to maintain effective teaching methods, especially through teaching foreign languages as this can be one of the priorities of the workplace. Although different programs and tools have been suggested to be utilized at such institutions, some students tend to be demotivated and frustrated in foreign language online classes. This has been observed directly through the researchers' experience, who work at higher education institutions. Additionally, despite a few studies that have been conducted and reviewed the uses of the Facebook App (i.e. Barrot, 2018), there were not any Mata-analysis studies that analytically presented the benefits of using this application regarding foreign language teaching in higher education. Therefore, this current meta-analysis study aimed at reviewing the benefits of applying one of Web 2.0 applications (Facebook) in the context of foreign language teaching considering the characteristics of adult learners (Caruso, 2018).

1.1. Research question

The main question that guided this investigation was:

RQ1: What are the benefits of using Facebook as a Web 2.0 application in foreign language instruction among EFL university students?

This question embraced other sub-questions, which were:

(a) What are the impacts of using the Facebook App on foreign language learners' engagement?
(b) What are the impacts of using the Facebook App on foreign language learners' academic performance and achievement?
(c) What are the impacts of using the Facebook App on enhancing foreign language learners' cross-cultural awareness and collaborative learning?
(d) What are the impacts of using the Facebook App on enhancing foreign language learners' interactive and communicative learning?
(e) What are the impacts of using the Facebook App on enhancing foreign language learners' immersion in a meaningful learning experience?

2. Method

The current study followed a qualitative meta-analysis design; a type of research that attempts to synthesize the results of several studies on a specific topic (Fraenkel et al., 2018). The procedures followed in this analysis were based on Cooper (1998), such as selecting studies in a two-step process that considered all the potentially relevant peer-reviewed articles and listing them according to similar procedures and selection criteria, which were as follows:

- Formulating the problem, defining the variables then stating the relationship between them (e.g: Web 2.0 applications, Facebook, benefits of Facebook usage, and using Facebook as a Web 2. Application in foreign language instruction).
- Conducting the literature review based on certain criteria and using search terms, such as "Facebook as Web 2.0 technology"; "Facebook use in foreign language teaching"; "Facebook/ benefits/ Facebook in foreign languages/Facebook impacts/ Facebook in adults education/ Facebook and higher education"
- The selection criteria were as follows:

(a) The selected studies must have been completely related to using Facebook in teaching, particularly in foreign language teaching (English) for adult learners.
(b) The studies must have been published in scientific peer-reviewed journals.
(c) The studies must have adopted different research designs (descriptive, quasi-experimental, developmental … etc)
(d) The studies must have been published between 2010 and 2021 to obtain more recent results as this application has been established in 2004.

- Conducting data evaluation, analysis and interpretation were performed qualitatively using a code sheet where each study was categorized in terms of the participants and context, the purpose of the study, the design and the findings.

2.1. Data analysis

To answer the main research question regarding the benefits of integrating Facebook in foreign language teaching among higher-education institutions, a sum of scientific peer-reviewed articles was reviewed, summarized, and evaluated. Applying the predetermined criteria reduced the number of adopted studies to thirty-three (33). The studies were analyzed and classified by topics related to the benefits of using Facebook in foreign language teaching among adult learners in

terms of five main themes which were foreign language learners' engagement; academic performance and achievement; cross-cultural awareness and collaborative learning; enhancing foreign language learners' interactive, communicative learning as well as their immersion in a meaningful learning experience.

2.2. Trustworthiness

The instrument that was used in this study was at first a code sheet, where each study was categorized in terms of the participants and context, the purpose of the study, the design and the results. Then, a checklist was developed by the researcher. In this checklist, all the reviewed studies were categorized into five sections that aimed to reveal the benefits of using Facebook in foreign language teaching in higher education. Importantly, this checklist was validated by being exposed to a jury of experts. Besides, the reliability was also confirmed by using inter-rater evaluation of some studies that were included and excluded in the current investigation.

3. Findings and discussion

To answer the study's main question regarding the benefits of using Facebook in foreign language teaching, particularly English at higher-education institutions, the reviewed articles were summarized, synthesized and evaluated based on five main themes. These benefits were listed in Table 1 below.

As displayed in Table 1, (33) studies were reviewed and categorized into five main themes. Nine of the reviewed studies were synthesized regarding the benefits of using Facebook in enhancing students' learning and engagement. Besides, regarding the benefits of using Facebook in improving students' academic performance and achievement, nine studies were listed. In the respect of reviewing the benefits of this application in promoting cross-cultural awareness and collaborative learning, five studies were integrated. Moreover, five studies were synthesized in the context of discussing the benefits of Facebook in enhancing interactive and communicative learning. Regarding the fifth theme, it was related to the role of using Facebook in enhancing students' meaningful experience as it this was displayed in the other five studies. These findings will be detailed in the following section.

3.1. The impact of using the Facebook application on adult learners' engagement

It was stated that merging students in an informal social learning environment can be so beneficial in gaining values, shaping attitudes, building knowledge and skills and creating lifelong learners. In a study conducted by Mohamad (2011), the effectiveness of using Facebook as a social networking application in promoting students' motivation and comprehension was explored. Sixty students from different rural schools in Penang, Malaysia, were selected to participate in the questionnaire. The obtained findings revealed students' positive attitudes towards using social networking sites, such as Facebook, in teaching and E-learning environments. In the same vein, Pilgrim and Bledsoe (2011) claimed that integrating Facebook into teaching English resulted in more engaged students outside the classroom. Ivala and Gachago (2012), moreover, confirmed that using Facebook and blogs with university students engaged learners and motivated them. The participants were university students and lecturers, who used Facebook and blogs in their teaching. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with the university instructors and their students. The interview themes were related to utilizing Facebook and blogs in teaching and learning, the context of this integration, challenges and whether students' learning and engagement were enhanced. In the findings, the researchers concluded that the appropriate implementation of Facebook and blogs had a significant role in enhancing university students' engagement in the academic context, either with face-to-face or off-campus activities. Accordingly, some suggestions for better implementation were listed.

Likewise, Mbodila et al. (2014) examined the effect of social networking sites, especially Facebook, on students' engagement and collaboration. The participants were university students in South Africa. Based on the semi-structured interviews conducted with students at the beginning

Table 1. The benefits of using Facebook App in foreign language teaching	
Themes	**Articles**
1. The impact of using the Facebook application on adult learners' engagement	Pilgrim and Bledsoe (2011),
	Mohamad (2011),
	Ivala and Gachago (2012),
	Mbodila et al. (2014)
	Espinosa (2015),
	Sanad (2016),
	Karim et al. (2018),
	Zachos et al. (2018),
	Fithriani et al. (2019).
2. The impact of using Facebook on improving college students' academic performance and achievement	Blattner and Lomicka (2012),
	Wasanasomsithi and Students. In International Conference on Artificia Suthiwartnarueput (2012),
	- Ghareb and Sharif (2015),
	- Espinosa (2015),
	- Montoneri (2015),
	- Moghavvemi et al. (2017),
	- Sirivedin et al. (2018),
	- Karim et al. (2019),
	- Yotyodying et al. (2021).
3. The role of using Facebook in supporting cross-cultural awareness and collaborative learning.	Wang (2012);
	- Mbodila et al. (2014);
	- Kim et al. (2016);
	- Özdemir (2017);
	- Deng et al. (2017).
4. The role of using Facebook in enhancing interactive and communicative learning.	Blattner and Lomicka (2012),
	Lantz-Andersson et al. (2013),
	Aysun and Sona (2017)
	Akbari et al. (2017),
	Ulla and Perales (2021).
5. The role of using Facebook in immersing students in a meaningful learning experience.	Grgurovic (2010);
	Kabilan et al. (2010);
	Ab Manan et al. (2012);
	Nurmy (2017);
	Jumaat et al. (2019).

and at the end of the module with integrating Facebook, it was revealed that Facebook significantly increased students' engagement and collaboration, and it was recommended to embrace social networking sites in teaching. Moreover, Espinosa (2015) analyzed the possibility of blending conversational online teaching using the Facebook application in English classrooms. Eventually, the researcher suggested multiple benefits of this integration, such as having more involved students. Therefore, proper procedures for applying Facebook in English classes were presented.

In the same context, Sanad (2016) investigated the students' perspectives and attitudes towards using the Facebook application in teaching and learning. The participants were 29 undergraduate students who have experienced learning and teaching through Facebook and face-to-face sessions. The obtained data were collected by conducting interviews and administering a questionnaire. The results demonstrated positive attitudes of students towards using Facebook

in teaching. Facebook-like environments were described by Zachos et al. (2018) as useful and engaging educational contexts that facilitate students' involvement and enhance their motivation. Besides, Facebook was also considered a useful Web 2.0 tool that supports learners' learning. Likewise, Martin and Karim et al. (2018) also stated that such online environments would result in more motivated and satisfied learners who feel less isolated while using online strategies and courses.

Additionally, using Facebook in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) was suggested to be a useful educational application that can involve students in reading, writing and other learning activities. Fithriani et al. (2019), for example, researched the effectiveness of using Facebook in an advanced English writing class at an Indonesian university. In a case-study approach, EFL university students' perspectives and attitudes were surveyed through a questionnaire, interviews and their Facebook discussions. The Findings indicated that the participating students perceived using Facebook in writing classes as a useful tool that promotes their confidence, communication skills and participation as well as using Facebook were described as a technique that can develop EFL learners' competency, especially in writing skills.

In summary, using Facebook can have a positive impact on engaging and motivating adult students towards learning a foreign language, as this can increase synchronous interaction and contact among students and instructors by offering more opportunities for cooperation among learners. Facebook can also involve students more in active learning, and it can provide them with feedback on their progress so that they can meet their needs in the learning process based on the seven principles suggested by Chickering and Gamson (1987) regarding engaging students in higher education.

3.2. The impact of using Facebook on improving college students' academic performance and achievement

Facebook was described as a technological tool that creates an efficient educational context and which can positively affect students' learning and academic performance. Blattner and Lomicka (2012), revealed that after using Facebook in teaching English, the communicative skills, as well as the reading and writing performance of the twenty-four participants, were enhanced after conducting an experiment asking students to write postings and interact with other classmates. Similarly, Wasanasomsithi and Students. In International Conference on Artificia Suthiwartnarueput (2012) investigated the effect of using Facebook on the grammar and writing competencies of EFL university students. The data were obtained through pre-post tests and interviews. These tests were mainly related to analyzing and evaluating students' explanations of their posts on Facebook. The findings revealed a significant difference between students' performance in the pre-posttest. This difference was in favor of the post-test, which demonstrated that Facebook could promote students' English grammar. Besides, the results showed that students' writing competence was also improved; accordingly, they became more motivated to utilize Facebook in foreign language teaching.

In the same context, Ghareb and Sharif (2015) investigated the positive and negative impact of using Facebook on college student's social and academic performance. The participants were one hundred and ten university students. The findings revealed a significant impact on student's performance, particularly social and communication skills. Likewise, Espinosa (2015) studied the effects of integrating Facebook as a social networking site in teaching and learning the English language. It was concluded that using Facebook in language instruction can facilitate learning and teaching and improve students' academic achievement, so it was recommended to be blended with face-to-face instruction.

In addition to that, Montoneri (2015) explored the advantages of using social networking sites as well as assessing their effect on students' motivation and scores. The participants were thirty-two university students from Taiwan who were enrolled in the European Literature course. During the first semester, the participants were taught using conventional instruction. After that, in

the second semester, they were taught by blending multimedia and Facebook. The data collection was conducted by administering an online questionnaire. The students' responses in the first and second semesters were compared, and the instructor's academic evaluation in the two semesters was also considered. The findings revealed an improvement in students' reading and writing skills.

Similarly, Moghavvemi et al. (2017) researched the effect of using Facebook on students' academic performance. The participants were six hundred and seven undergraduate and postgraduate students from the University of Malaysia. The data were collected by administering a questionnaire. The findings revealed that using Facebook had a positive impact on students' academic performance. Accordingly, some suggestions were listed for the proper usage of this tool. Additionally, Sirivedin et al. (2018) investigated the effectiveness of using Facebook on English language writing and learning. The participants were four hundred and forty-seven Thai English teachers. A mixed approach was used to analyze the obtained data. The observations, in-depth interviews, a questionnaire, teachers' reflections and the pre-posttest were used. The results revealed that Facebook can improve learners' writing skills, particularly accuracy, meaningfulness, clarity, and relevance. The results also displayed that using Facebook has also enhanced teachers' fluency, confidence, value, and self-esteem.

Karim et al. (2019) investigated the effect of using Facebook on university students' academic performance. Correlation analysis has been performed. The results indicated a relationship between using Facebook and multitasking on students' academic performance. Moreover, Yotyodying et al. (2021) examined the benefits of using Facebook on students' academic achievement in distance learning. In this study, quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used, where the time spent using Facebook as well as the utilities offered was measured by students' achievement. Two hundred and four universities participated in this study. It was concluded that Facebook usage for studying purposes, especially for resource sharing can assist students to meet their learning needs; consequently, their academic achievement can be enhanced.

3.3. The role of using Facebook in supporting cross-cultural awareness and collaborative learning

Facebook use was highlighted previously (Mohamad, 2011) as a tool that can assist students' acquisition of skills, attitudes and values in an informal context, in which students can be engaged and involved in interactive learning. It was also declared that using Web 2.0 tools can engage students in collaborative learning. In the context of teaching foreign languages, Wang (2012) investigated the effectiveness of using Facebook in improving university students' cross-cultural collaboration in Taiwan. This study targeted college students who were engaged in a project between Taiwan and the United States. It also aimed at exploring Facebook as a cross-cultural platform that can affect students' social interaction in learning English as a foreign language. The obtained data were collected by analyzing students' reflective essays as well as by conducting a survey. The findings showed that Facebook, as a Web 2.0 application, can be an effective platform for building cross-cultural collaboration in an authentic context of the target language. Moreover, improving the intercultural competence of EFL students has become one of the goals that became possible to be achieved through using Facebook in education. This was confirmed by Mbodila et al. (2014) who stated that using social networking sites, especially Facebook, can immerse students in more engaging and collaborative learning.

Kim et al. (2016) researched students' attitudes towards an international multi-course and collaborative project using Facebook, and the impact of this usage on students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation was also studied. Ninety-two participants were enrolled in Fashion Merchandising courses from the United States and South Korea. The findings revealed that students demonstrated enjoyment in the project, particularly through demonstrating cultural understanding and feedback provision among the international groups. Accordingly, it was recommended to integrate social

networking sites, such as Facebook into the curriculum. Similarly, Deng et al. (2017) investigated enhancing cross-cultural discussion between two universities (Hong Kong and Taiwan) using Facebook and Moodle as online platforms. Facebook was used for informal course-related discussions. The findings revealed that the participating students believed that online discussions are valuable for sharing different perspectives and enhancing cross-cultural understanding.

In the same vein, Özdemir (2017) investigated the effectiveness of integrating Facebook in teaching English on the intercultural communicative competence of EFL students. Quantitative and qualitative method (mixed) was conducted to obtain data. Pre-post scale for intercultural effectiveness was administered, parallel with semi-structured interviews and the participants' essays. The findings revealed that intercultural instruction, through using Facebook, positively affected students' cross-cultural competence. It was also concluded that group discussions using Facebook were more effective than conventional classroom discussions. In the findings, students also indicated positive attitudes towards this type of instruction.

To conclude, Facebook as a transcontinental application can promote students' awareness about the culture of the target language, as learners can interact with native speakers of the foreign language in a virtual authentic reality or context. This can develop one of the main foreign language competencies towards their proficiency which comes in line with the hypotheses listed by Omaggio Hadley (2001). Although Facebook use was investigated widely in teaching English, studies related to cross-cultural collaboration in foreign language teaching were few.

3.4. The role of using Facebook in enhancing interactive and communicative learning

In terms of teaching and learning languages, Facebook was described as an application that can enhance cooperation and collaboration among students. In Blattner and Lomicka (2012), twenty-four American and French college students were involved in a study to investigate their viewpoints towards using Facebook in a language course. The collecting data was conducted by asking students to write their postings and to interact with other postings in English. The study showed results that demonstrated how this activity had improved students' communicative skills in English. Likewise, Lantz-Andersson et al. (2013) investigated in a case-study design how learners can create interactive environments by using Facebook as a social networking site, especially in language teaching and learning. This study sprang from a sociocultural perspective, and obtained data were ethnographically collected from Facebook groups in English classes. The findings indicated that social networking sites, such as Facebook, can enable students to cross boundaries and create spaces of collaborative learning. These can also give learners a platform to construct a public and personal environment, where they can communicate, interact, and expand their network. Through Facebook usage, moreover, students became able to create contacts and share interests communicatively.

Regarding students' communication and collaboration, Aysun and Sona (2017), also researched the effectiveness of using social media, such as Facebook, in enhancing collaborative learning. Turkish University students were engaged in this study, where they were asked to respond to an online survey. The study has concluded that using such social media can significantly improve students' engagement and communication. Moreover, it was stated that integrating Facebook also can have a positive impact on collaborative learning. Therefore, the researchers have recommended blending such tools in teaching and learning due to their several educational benefits. Besides, Akbari et al. (2017) confirmed that the usage of Facebook can provide users with online peer feedback, which is a constructive form of feedback, and it can positively influence students' performance more than in face-to-face environments due to the ease of communication and the absence of emotional factors and anxiety.

Similarly, Ulla and Perales (2021) researched the use of Facebook groups in teaching English in thirty-three universities in Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews and a survey questionnaire. The results indicated that although students faced some technical issues, such as internet connectivity, they believed that Facebook-closed groups provided them with a handy method to contact their classmates and educators. It was also revealed that

using Facebook groups was a learning platform in which they were able to retrieve academic sources and share them with other students. It was also suggested that Facebook can be used as an alternative to the Learning Management System in language teaching if universities do not embrace such systems.

3.5. The role of using Facebook in immersing students in a meaningful learning experience

In an informal context, using Facebook was described by Grgurovic (2010) as a teaching strategy that can merge language learners with a meaningful experience and allow them to interact in a natural setting. Besides, it was suggested by Kabilan et al. (2010) that Facebook application use in teaching English can enhance the development of students' English language skills, as they can chat and hold video conferences with native speakers of the language synchronously. Additionally, it was asserted that meaningful learning can be positively correlated with comprehension. Kabilan et al. (2010) described Facebook as a popular social networking application that can enhance students' language learning by merging them in an informal and meaningful context. This can be achieved by playing games or talking and writing in an authentic environment. In this study, the participants were three-hundred undergraduate university students from Malaysia. The data collection has been performed by administering a survey. The results indicated that using Facebook in English language teaching and learning can facilitate meaningful learning. Though, this utilization should be conducted with prescribed learning objectives and with determining outcomes to achieve such purpose successfully

Ab Manan et al. (2012), for example, investigated the possibility of blending Facebook into the conventional teaching of the English language. Thus, thirty undergraduate students enrolled in a diploma program at one of the public universities in Malaysia participated in this investigation. The study was initiated by creating a closed-Facebook group, and the participants were invited and added by their teacher. During this experiment, students were exposed to two types of activities in teaching English; conventional (face-to-face) and online activities using Facebook. The findings indicated that Facebook can be utilized in teaching English by blending this application in conventional classes. This can participate in creating more exciting and meaningful learning.

In addition to that, Nurmy (2017) confirmed that Facebook can be used not only for socializing with friends and families, but it can also be utilized as a medium to improve students' English vocabulary, writing and speaking as well as reading skills according to the participating students from Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab and Dakwah, since Facebook can provide learners with English materials, and they can contact easily with foreign people abroad in a meaningful context. In the same vein, Jumaat et al. (2019) confirmed that using Facebook in teaching and learning can increase the interaction between students and their instructors by creating an online social learning environment. It was also asserted that through student-teacher interaction and while using Facebook, meaningful learning can be shaped which motivates and engages students consequently.

To conclude, using Facebook in language teaching can offer students an opportunity to interact with English native speakers in a real-life and meaningful context, which may be positively reflected on their English competence and make their language performance more natural. These results were consistent with previous studies, such as Manit and Jeong-Bae (2022).

4. Conclusion and recommendations

The originality of this investigation can be evident as it can provide foreign language teachers and educators worldwide with a background frame that they can refer to in adopting one of the social networking applications in their teaching practices, especially as remote learning and teaching have become a trustful option in the Covid-19 post-era. In addition to that, it can be regarded as a primary and basic study that researchers can refer to while conducting developmental studies and when designing instructional programs after testing and experimenting with these benefits in different research designs. Overall, the results of the current research indicated that using Facebook in higher education as a Web 2.0 technology can have multiple benefits and can be advantageous and can provide multiple benefits, such as enhancing students' engagement, improving students' academic performance and achievement, supporting learners' cross-cultural

cogent ··arts & humanities

awareness and collaborative learning, promoting interactive and communicative learning and immersing students in a meaningful learning experience. Thus, foreign language instructors and teachers are invited to use Facebook as a web 2.0 technology due to these benefits. Besides, researchers are urged to conduct more research efforts with interventions to examine the benefits of this usage in enhancing all language skills.

Author details
Rania Muhammad Qassrawi[1]
E-mail: rqassrawi@birzeit.edu
ORCID ID: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9699-6599
Samih Mahmoud Al Karasneh[2]
[1] TEFL Department of Languages and Translation, Birzeit University, BīrZayt, Palestine.
[2] Department of Education, University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE.

References
Ab Manan, N. A., Ashaari, A., & Pandian, A. (2012). Utilizing a social networking website as an ESL pedagogical tool in a blended learning environment: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(1), 2–9. http://ijsse.com/sites/default/files/issues/2012/volume%202%20issue%201%20Jan%202012/paper%201/Abstract%201.pdf

Akbari, E., Simons, S., & Naderi, A. (2017). Peer feedback in learning a foreign language on facebook. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 17(2), 1–16. https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume17/5-Peer-Feedback-in-Learning-a-Foreign.pdf

Anderson, P. (2012). *Web 2.0 and beyond principles and technologies*. Chapman and Hall/CRC Press.

Aysun, B., & Sona, M. (2017). The effects of social media use on collaborative learning: A case of Turkey. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 18(1), 96–110. https://doi.org/10.17718/tojde.285719

Barrot, J. (2018). Facebook as a learning environment for language teaching and learning: A critical analysis of the literature from 2010 to 2017. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 34(6), 863–875. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12295

Blaschke, M., Bozkurt, A., & Cormier, D. (2021). Learner agency and the learner-centered theories for online networked learning and learning ecologies. In *Unleashing the power of learner agency* (pp. 1–13). EdTech Books.

Blaschke, L. M., & Hase, S. (2019). Heutagogy and digital media networks. *Pacific Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning*, 1(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.24135/pjtel.v1i1.1

Blattner, G., & Lomicka, L. (2012). Facebooking and the social generation: A new era of language learning. *Alsic*, 15(1), 1–36. https://doi.org/10.4000/alsic.2413

Boileau, T. (2011). "*The effect of interactive technology on informal learning and performance in a social setting*". Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 3479477). Wayne State University.

Caruso, J. (2018). Toward understanding the role of web 2.0 technology in self-directed learning and job performance. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 11(3), 89. https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v11i3.10180

Chakchouk, M., & Stefania, G. (2019). *Human learning in the digital era*. UNESCO.

Chang, C., Pearman, C., & Farha, L. (2012). Second language acquisition: Implications of web 2.0 and beyond. *Critical Questions in Education*, 3(2), 1–13. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1047008.pdf

Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin*, 39, 3–7. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.37219914708

Cooper, H. M. (1998). *Synthesizing research: A guide for literature reviews (applied social research methods)*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Deng, L., Chen, Y., & Li, S. (2017). Supporting cross-cultural online discussion with formal and informal platforms: A case between Hong Kong and Taiwan. *Research and practice in technology enhanced learning* (pp. 1–16). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-017-0050-z

Devi, K., Gouthami, E., & Lakshmi, V. (2019). Role of social media in teaching – learning process. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6(1), 93–103. https://weldoneproject.eu/assets/howtoget_weldone/ppts/O3_WELDONE_Ex_6_3.pdf

Duggan, M., & Brenner, J. (2012). *The demographics of social media users. Pew research center's internet & American life project*Retrieved June 13, 2020, from http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/02/14/the-demographics-of-social-media-users-2012/

Espinosa, L. F. (2015). The use of facebook for educational purposes in EFL classrooms. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(11), 2206. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0511.03

Fithriani, R., Dewi, U., Daulay, S. H., Salmiah, M., & Fransiska, W. (2019). Using facebook in EFL writing class: Its effectiveness from students' perspective. *Social Sciences*, 3(19), 634–645. file:///Users/bayan/Downloads/4892-Article%20Text-21465-4-10-20190826.pdf

Fraenkel, J., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. (2018). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Ghareb, M., & Sharif, H. (2015). Facebook effect on academic performance and social life for undergraduate students of university of human developments. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Research*, 3. http://ijmcr.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Paper21811-820.pdf

Grgurovic, M. (2010). *Technology-enhanced blended language learning in an ESL class: A description of a model and an application of the diffusion of innovations theory* [Doctoral dissertation]. ERIC. (ED524949).

Ivala, E., & Gachago, D. (2012). Social media for enhancing student engagement: The use of facebook and blogs at a university of technology. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 26(1), 152–167. https://doi.org/10.20853/26-1-156

Jumaat, N., Ahmad, N., Samah, N., Ashari, Z., & Ali, D. (2019). Facebook as a platform of social interactions for meaningful learning facebook as a platform of social interactions for meaningful learning. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 14(4), 151–159. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v14.i04.9363

cogent ··arts & humanities

Kabilan, M., Ahmad, N., & Abidin, M. (2010). Facebook: An online environment for learning of English in institutions of higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *13*(4), 179–187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2010.07.003

Karim, S., He, H., Mallah, G. A., Laghari, A. A., Madiha, M., & Bolliger, F. (2018). Engagement matters: Student perceptions on the importance of engagement strategies in the online learning environment. *Online Learning Journal*, *22*(1), 206–222. https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v22i1.1092

Karim, S., He, H., Mallah, G., Laghari, A., Madiha, H., & Larik, R. (2019, July). The impact of using facebook on the academic performance of university students. *International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Security*, 405–418. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24271-8_37

Kim, H., Byun, S., Choi, S., & Lee, K. (2016). The use of facebook in international multi-course collaborative projects in fashion merchandising curriculum. *Fashion, Industry and Education*, *14*(1), 40–49. https://doi.org/10.7741/fie.2016.14.1.040

Lantz-Andersson, A., Vigmo, S., & Bowen, R. (2013). Crossing boundaries in facebook: Students' framing of language learning activities as extended spaces. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, *8*(3), 293–312. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11412-013-9177-0

Manit, W., & Jeong-Bae, S. (2022). Enhancing Thai secondary school students' English speaking skills, attitudes and motivation with drama-based activities and facebook. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *16*(1), 41–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2020.1853134

Mbodila, M., Ndebele, C., & Muhandji, K. (2014). The effect of social media on student's engagement and collaboration in higher education: A case study of the use of facebook at a south African university. *J Communication*, *5*(2), 115–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/0976691X.2014.11884831

Media, O. (2007). "Web 2.0 summit 2011". UBM TechWeb & O'reilly conferences, October 17-19, 2011", San Francisco. Retrieved June 15, 2020, from http://www.web2summit.com/web2011/public/content/about

Merriam, S. B. (2001). Andragogy and self-directed learning: Pillars of adult learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *89*, 3–13. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.3

Minocha, S. (2009). *A study of the effectiveness use of social software to support student learning and engagement*. JISC. University of Bristol.

Moghavvemi, S., Sulaiman, A., Azliza Aziz, A., & Wai, P., (2017). The impact of facebook usage on academic performance. *International Conference on Research and Innovation in Information Systems (ICRIIS)*, Langkawi, 1–5. https://www.grin.com/document/277559

Mohamad, R. (2011). The effectiveness of social networking applications in E-learning. In Y. Wang (Ed.), *Education management, education theory and education application. Advances in intelligent and soft computing* (Vol. 109, pp. 79–85). Springer.

Montoneri, B. (2015). Impact of students' participation to a facebook group on their motivation and scores and on teacher's evaluation. *The IAFOR Journal of Education*, *3*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.3.1.04

Naqvi, T. F., & Parvez, J. (2019). Considering heutagogy as an innovative approach for skill development. *Socialsci Journal*, *3*, 1–7.

Nurmy, A. R. (2017). Facebook as A medium in English learning as foreign language at Iain Pontianak. *At-Turats*, *11*(1), 48–57. file:///Users/bayan/Downloads/869-2449-1-SM%20(1).pdf

Omaggio Hadley, A. (2001). *Teaching language in context* (3rd ed.). Heinle & Heinle.

O'Reilly, T. (2005b). *What is Web 2.0. design patterns and business models for the next generation of software*. Radar O'Reilly. Retrieved June 15, 2020, from http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html

Özdemir, E. (2017). Promoting EFL learners' intercultural communication effectiveness: A focus on facebook. Computer assisted language learning. *Education Resources Information Center*, *30*(6), 510–528. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2017.1325907

Parusheva, S., Aleksandrova, Y., & Hadzhikolev, A. (2017). Use of social media in higher education institutions – an empirical study based on Bulgarian learning experience silvia. *TEM Journal*, *7*(1), 171–181. https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM71-21

Pilgrim, J., & Bledsoe, C. (2011). Learning through facebook: A potential tool for educators. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *78*(1), 38–42. f1eedf57117f7f5f1997eb8b0c664706.pdf

Sanad, H. A. E. (2016). EFL students' perceptions and attitudes towards facebook as an educational learning tool. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, *5*(9), 15–25. https://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v5(9)/version-3/C0593015025.pdf

Sirivedin, P., Soopunyo, W., Srisuantang, S., & Wongsothorn, A. (2018). Effects of facebook usage on English learning behavior of Thai English teachers. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, *39*(2), 183–189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kjss.2018.03.007

Symonenko, V., Zaitseval, N., Vynogradoval, M., Osadchyi, V., & Sushchenko, A. (2020). Application of ICT tools in teaching American English for computer science students in the context of global challenges. *Journal of Physics. Conference Series*, *1840*(2021). https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1840/1/012048

Ulla, M., & Perales, W. (2021). Facebook as an integrated online learning support application during the COVID19 pandemic: Thai university students' experiences and perspectives. *Heliyon*, *7*(11), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e08317

Wang, C. (2012). Using facebook for cross-cultural collaboration: The experience of students from Taiwan. *Educational Media International*, *49*(1), 63–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/09523987.2012.662625

Wasanasomsithi, P., & Students. In International Conference on Artificia Suthiwartnarueput. (2012). Effects of using facebook as a medium for discussions of English grammar and writing of low-intermediate EFL students. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *9*(2), 194–214. https://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/v9n22012/suthiwartnarueput.pdf

Yotyodying, S., Dettmers, S., Erdal, K., & Onkmann, K. (2021). Educational usage of facebook and academic achievement in distance university students: Mediated by basic needs satisfaction. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10804-9

Zachos, G., Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, E., & Anagnostopoulos, I. (2018). Social media use in higher education: A review. *Education Sciences*, *8*(194). https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci8040194

cogent •• arts & humanities

Cogent Arts & Humanities (ISSN: 2331-1983) is published by Cogent OA, part of Taylor & Francis Group.

Publishing with Cogent OA ensures:

- Immediate, universal access to your article on publication
- High visibility and discoverability via the Cogent OA website as well as Taylor & Francis Online
- Download and citation statistics for your article
- Rapid online publication
- Input from, and dialog with, expert editors and editorial boards
- Retention of full copyright of your article
- Guaranteed legacy preservation of your article
- Discounts and waivers for authors in developing regions

Submit your manuscript to a Cogent OA journal at www.CogentOA.com