Some Libyan EFL University Instructors' Beliefs and Practices of Integrating Facebook in ELT

معتقدات واستخدامات بعض أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية بالجامعات الليبية للفيسبوك في تدريس اللغة

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Abstract:

This study investigates the beliefs and practices of fourteen Libyan EFL university instructors of integrating Facebook in language teaching and learning. A qualitative approach of investigation was employed and the data was collected through an open-ended questionnaire sent to the instructors via FB messenger. The results revealed that all the participants liked the idea of integrating FB in their teaching and they all reported their useful and successful experiences of this integration. However, lack or poor internet, time convenience, lack of knowledge and skills of using this social network, privacy and disclosing identities issues, and female students and instructors reluctance in joining FB mixed groups were reported as influential challenges in limiting the usefulness and effectiveness of using FB in Libyan universities. Nevertheless, the improvement in internet service in Libya and the increasing popularity of FB among university students and instructors should encourage them to effectively use it for academic purposes. It is certainly a useful educational tool and its integration can help in creating more interactive teaching and in developing more learner autonomy.

Keywords: Facebook – integration- ELT

ملخص البحث :

تبحث هذه الدراسة في معتقدات واستخدامات عدد أربعة عشر أستاذا من أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية بالجامعات الليبية لتطبيق الفيسبوك في مجال تدريس وتعلم اللغة، وتم تجميع بيانات هذه الدراسة عن طريق استبيان مقالي تم إرساله عبر تطبيق الماسنجر في الفيسبوك، وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة اقتناع كل المشاركين في الدراسة بالفكرة وتأكيدهم على تجاربهم الناجحة في استخدام الفيسبوك في تدريسهم، كما أشار كل المشاركين لوجود بعض العوائق التي تحد من الاستخدام الفعال لهذا التطبيق في الجامعات الليبية: مثل ضعف الانترنت وعدم ملائمة الوقت وضعف مهارة استخدام

هذه ألشبكه والخصوصية وتردد بعض الطالبات وأعضاء هيئة التدريس من العنصر النسائي في المشاركة في مجموعات الفيسبوك المختلطة، ولكن التحسن الملحوظ في سرعة الانترنت وزيادة الإقبال على استخدام الفيسبوك بين أساتذة وطلبة الجامعات في ليبيا سيشجعهم على استعماله لإغراض أكاديمية، وهكذا يعتبر الفيسبوك أداة تعليمية فعاله وتطبيقه سيؤدي إلى زيادة التدريس عن طريق الحوار والتشجيع على استقلالية المتعلم.

الكلمات الدالة : فيسبوك — دمج — تدريس اللغة الانجليزية

Background of the Study:

Internet becomes very influential and important in all aspects of life including education. Social networks play an important role in promoting communication and socialization among higher educational institutions. In a survey including 600 university students about the reasons for using social networks, sharing learning experiences and research findings and academic networking at national and international level were reported as main reasons (Hussein, 2012). Using these social networks involves offering students the opportunity to find and use online information and share their ideas and resources with other language learners. It also increases teacher-student communication during and after class-lecturing hours. Hence, there is an ongoing change in the nature of the teaching and learning processes and in students' perceptions of these processes. For example, in the context of language teaching and learning, using the internet has been growing dramatically during the last few years.

Facebook is one of the most popular networks used in communication , entertainment and education. its proper integration in education can help in motivating students (Lam, 2012). Hussain (2012:642) surveyed university students about their use of social media including Facebook, Linked in, Twitter, Web Blog, and Google Group and found that facebook was the most popular and frequently used one. Facebook is considered as a platform for generating authentic interaction for students with their classmates and instructors and it can be used as an interactive learning resource   (Irwin et al, 2012). It is also seen as a powerful digital tool for promoting second language learning which requires students participating actively in a learning community (Mitchell, 2014). Most importantly, the increasing number of students who use FB and its role in enhancing students' motivation and participation, there is a promising need for utilizing it in supporting language learning (Omar, et al 2012; Mazer et al, 2007; Ríos & Campos, 2015).

Research provided evidence about the improvement in students' overall interest in language learning through the application of facebook (Jones & Shao, 2011; Shih, 2011; Wang & Vasquez, 2012). This has led many language teachers to use Facebook in developing their teaching methods (Lockyer & Patterson, 2008). Nsir (2014) reported that Libyan EFL teachers were interested in integrating social media in education and were found positive about developing themselves professionally through joining online communities. EFL students were also found positive about using Facebook as an educational tool for facilitating English language learning (Espinosa,2015). These advantages have led researchers to emphasize the importance of integrating social networks into teaching and learning in order to provide students with authentic learning experiences (Yunus & Salehi,2012). Despite all these advantages, it is very important for students to use the applications of FB in supporting traditional classroom teaching but not as a substitution for it.

However, introducing this social network and encouraging university instructors and students to integrate it in ELT may be faced with serious challenges (Zaidieh, 2012; Couillard,2012); especially in the Libyan context-the context of this study. Further research is still needed and recommended to identify the challenges of integrating FB in language teaching and learning (Yunus & Salehi,2012). This study therefore attempts to explore the beliefs and practices of fourteen Libyan EFL university instructors of using this platform for academic purposes. It also involves the researcher's reflection on his experience in using this network for the same purpose.

Literature Review:

This section defines Facebook and discusses the aspects of integrating it in language teaching and learning. It also explains the challenges that might face this integration and reports some research findings conducted about this issue in different contexts.

Definition of Facebook:

Recently there has been an increasing interest in using social networks as efficient platforms for academic purposes at university and this has led to redefining learning through overcoming the constraints of face to face communication (Omar, et al. 2012; Eren, 2012; Mahmud & Wong,2012; Nsir,2014; Yunus, M. & Salehi, 2012; Espinosa, 2015). Among other social networks, FB has become the choice of university students. Baker (1999) defined facebook as a network connecting students indirectly to the learning community and an important component of their education. FB was first used in 2004 by a group of students at Harvard

university and then it became the largest social community worldwide (Couillard, 2012). Later in 2005, an online version of FB for high school students was created; and today anyone can have a FB account. Recently, FB celebrated its 10th anniversary with its 1.23 billion users (kiss,2014).

Aspects and Benefits of Integrating FB in ELT

Learning is one of students' life aspects in which they frequently use facebook. Lam (2012:380) believed that facebook can enhance students' motivation to learn through 'interaction benefit', 'communication benefit', 'social relationship benefit' and 'participation benefit'. Shih (2011) referred to the benefit of using facebook in developing interaction and collaboration between students inside and outside classrooms. Espinosa (2015) discussed the practical uses of facebook in EFL classrooms including sharing class blogs, posting new words, vocabulary review, sharing resources and materials , online discussions and posting students' journals . He added the chance provided for the teachers to access valuable educational apps such as 'Booktage' 'Language Exchange', and 'Flash Cardlet'. McBride (2009) believed that students' can be motivated through facebook engagement to perform useful language experiences and tasks which can lead to developing their communicative skills and autonomy. Terantino and Graf (2011) referred to the opportunity offered through this platform for target language casual conversations and for promoting collaboration between instructors and students. Zaidieh (2012) added the advantage of flexible learning and repeated information for students. Moreover, authentic meaningful learning experiences and target language practice in less a controlled manner are also provided through FB (Yunus & Salehi ,2012; Espinosa,2015). Lam (2012) pointed out the possibility for downloading learning materials and submitting assignments. This indicates the consensus among the scholars about the possibility of successful integration of FB in different aspects of language teaching and learning.

The literature provides sufficient evidence about the usefulness of integrating facebook as an educational tool in language teaching and learning. The Findings of Alarabiat and Al-Mohammad (2015) revealed that FB was the most popular social network among the 451 university participant students and that 'social activities' and 'entertainment' were the primary motivators for them to create and use FB accounts. Some of them were found using FB for academic purposes and believed that their communication skills were im-

proved through using "Facebook group" as an educational tool for specific courses. Omar, et al. (2012) found his 31 EFL participants positive for using FB in sharing information. 50 Libyan EFL teachers were also found positive about integrating FB in language teaching and learning (Nsir, 2014).

The qualitative content analysis applied to their 14 EFL Arab university students written paragraphs conducted by (Razak & Saeed,2015) revealed the positive impact of online interactional exchanges and responses on improving students' writing quality. Similarly, the results of Lam (2012) indicated that students' motivation in learning was promoted by communication, debate, social relationship, and participation in FB groups. 48 EFL Turkish university students were also found positive about using FB activity as a supplement to language classrooms (Eren, 2012). 90% of the Pakistanian university participant students in Hussain's study (2012) used FB for exchanging academic activities and sharing learning experiences with their colleagues and international community. An evidence was provided by Mahmud and Wong (2012) about the usefulness of incorporating FB as instructive devices in L2 classrooms for enhancing students' reading and writing skills, expanding their social circles and improving their communication skills. 43 Malaysian ESL university students perceived FB as an effective tool for improving their writing skill as it helped them in ideas generation (Yunus & Salehi,2012). Mitchell (2012) also reported the successful experience of his seven ESL students in using FB for communicating with friends in English and their native languages and for improving their English ability and cultural competency. Similarly, over 90% of the 70 students from Costa Rica who participated in the survey carried out by Ríos and Campos (2015) liked the idea of using facebook for course contents review. Due to all these benefits, and to the positive attitudes held by university students about FB integration (Irwin, et al, 2012), Espinosa (2015) proposed it as a promising tool for promoting interaction among EFL teachers and students.

The review above provides a clear evidence for the successful experiences of EFL students and instructors in integrating Facebook in language teaching and learning in different contexts. This should encourage other EFL students and university instructors to use this social network and to benefit from its features and applications in promoting and developing language teaching and learning. However, careful consideration should be given to any possible challenges or difficulties that may face this integration.

Challenges of Integrating FB in ELT

The integration of Facebook could raise some challenges for students and instructors. Couillard (2012) reviewed the literature about the problems of using FB by students and reported "online predators, rebelling students, too much teacher disclosure, and unwilling students as serious issues . Lam (2012:384) referred to teachers' concerns about using facebook including 'multiple identities', 'privacy and security issue', and 'the original purpose of facebook as a social networking platform rather than an online learning platform'. Espinosa (2015) warned from the risk of posting inappropriate information by students or teachers. Zaidieh (2012:18-20) considered ' privacy', 'miscommunication', 'real friendship', 'taking-up time', and 'convenience and accessibility' as major challenges. Whelan's (2005) participants rated privacy troubles as the main issue for the FB users. This was also emphasized by Petronio (2002) who was concerned about posting personal details. Students' interest in using facebook applications may cause some classroom management troubles and this may lead teachers to avoid applying these applications in classrooms (Morris & Millen, 2007). It can also make the relationship between teacher and students somehow "tricky" (Ríos, & Campos,2015:255). Moreover, the amount of explanation and clarification students receive through facebook is less than what they receive through face-to-face interaction which involves using physical clues like 'tone and body language' and immediate feedback (Yunus & Salehi 2012). Another issue is regarding students who face difficulty in expressing their views and ideas in writing as the interaction through FB is typically written. The variation in the acceptance of using Facebook due to cultural considerations is another important factor for consideration(Cheung et al. 2011). Moreover, students may lose their interest as a result of spending long time working on the computer in learning materials without any audio or visual effects. It is also very likely that some students misuse facebook for academic disengagement as reported by (Hussain, 2012:641) or using their native language (e.g. Arabic) while communicating through FB (Espinosa2015). This does not help in achieving the main purpose of integrating this social network in language classrooms regarding the development of students' communication skills in the target language. Due to similar reasons and drawbacks of using social networks in learning English by Bangladeshi university students, Anwaruddin (2012) concluded his research findings by emphasizing that the disadvantages of this experience outweigh the advantages. This was

confirmed by Wang, et al (2011) who reported that their 70 college participant students spent many hours in using FB but there was a negative aspect of this use. These challenges have led many language teachers to be 'too rigid' about the integration of social media in their classrooms (Yunus & Salehi, 2012).

Nevertheless, educators can follow certain procedures for overcoming the problems of using FB and "with time and the right technique, Facebook could become a valuable tool for the educational system" (Couillard , 2012:12). Mazer et al (2007), for example, suggested monitoring materials posted by students and keeping these materials strictly professional (Munoz & Towner, 2009). Professors are recommended to create profiles different from their personal pages and to make joining FB an option for students not an obligation (ibid). They could also create "Facebook Office Hours," or set times for chatting and allowing students to contact them for academic purposes (Couillard , 2012). Nevertheless, teachers must keep on using FB with caution (Mazer, et al, 2007; Couillard, 2012).

The challenges reported in the above review represent a serious issue that may limit or sometimes prevent EFL instructors from using facebook for academic purposes. However, holding positive beliefs about this idea can motivate the instructors to continue their attempts for utilizing the many features and applications of this platform; especially if they receive support from their institutions.

The research review above did not reveal any local research addressed the issue of integrating Facebook in language teaching and learning in the Libyan education system. The value of this study therefore lies in its attempt to draw the attention towards this important issue.

Methodology:

This study adopted a qualitative approach of investigation in identifying the beliefs and practices of fourteen EFL university instructors towards integrating facebook in language teaching and learning. These instructors were teaching English in different Libyan universities including Sabratha, Zawia, Marghab, Misrata, Tripoli and Benghazi and were purposefully selected as they had the experience of using this social network for academic purposes. As they all were connected with the researcher through FB, the instructors were intentionally contacted via facebook messenger and were asked to answer these questions:

a- What do you think about integrating Facebook as an educational tool in language teaching and learning?

b- In what aspects do you think EFL teachers can effectively integrate Facebook in their teaching?

c- What challenges may EFL teachers face in their integration of facebook?

d- Please report briefly about your personal experience in using facebook for educational purposes. Give Examples.

Applying this research design provided satisfactory data for answering the research questions of this study. Numbers from 1 to 14 were assigned to the completed versions of the participants' questionnaires. The analysis of the instructors' responses yielded the following results.

Results:

The analysis of the participants' answers revealed their positive beliefs towards using facebbok in language teaching and learning. Below are some extracts from their responses to the questions:

• **What do you think about integrating Facebook as an educational tool in language teaching and learning?**

This question was asked to elicit data about the participants' beliefs regarding using FB for academic purposes.

Instructor(7) wrote:

FB has proved to be an effective tool which needs to be utilized for teaching and learning especially in language materials which generally include audiovisual and communicative aspects.

Instructor (2) wrote:

Definitely, integrating FB in classroom teaching can be very effective. Not only as a teaching tool, FB can also be a motivational factor during the teaching/learning process

Instructor (8) Wrote:

I think Facebook is a good educational tool since all students are obsessed by digital technologies; particularly SNSs. Since FB is the dominant social media in Libya, I think it can contribute positively to education.

Instructor (11) wrote:

Fcaebook is useful and teachers can make use of it in many activities that

relate to different courses

Instructor (3) wrote:

This will help both teachers and learners to build more connections and increase their chances to exchange their ideas and thoughts in relation to different aspects of language teaching and learning.

Instructor (1) wrote:

I believe it is a very useful tool because many students like to use FB and find it enjoyable. It became accessible and help them to learn and benefit while you are at home, office or even street.

All the participants' responses emphasized their acceptance and interest in this idea. Interestingly, their positive beliefs were reflected in their practices and successful experiences of integrating FB in their teaching as shown in their responses to this question:

Please report briefly about your personal experience (If any) in using facebook for educational purposes. Give Examples.

All the participants had experiences in using facebook for educational purposes. Below are some of their experiences:

Instructor (5) wrote:

I used to use FB group for UG students and another for PG students. My students in both groups and I used to post lecture material, seminar presentations, language videos, links to course materials. I also receive student assignments and answers to any given tasks.

Instructor (9) wrote:

I have used FB only for announcement and posting course materials

Instructor (11) wrote:

My own experience in Facebook is very rich, as I am a member in many different groups. As well as I've created many groups and pages for different purposes. Among these groups and pages are My Easy English, Academic Research, Educational Forum (a group and a page), My Readings, Zliten Cultural Forum, Translated, The Translator, Translation of Proverbs, اقرأ – زليتن, Arabic Defense Society, etc. The aim of these groups and pages is to spread and raise the culture of education and raise the senses of many disciplines.

Instructor (6) wrote:

I always use FB for contacting with my students. I always post course instructions and materials on FB groups we create for this purpose

Instructor (8) wrote:

I often use it to share sites which address issues related to ELT. I use it when I want to share my thoughts and ideas in ELT with those who are interested in the same area. I often use it to make announcements related to the courses I teach or when I want to interact with individual students.

Instructor (12) wrote:

it was an interesting experience to use FB as an educational tool. Last September an educational group was created with help of some friends for language learning and translation. The group now has more than 7000 members from different countries and with various levels of education. The members' feedback was encouraging. Academic discussion and sometimes debates are are created on different related issues and we all benefit from one another; especially students who benefit a lot from educational posts, tasks and discussion. So closed groups can be created by the teacher to post tasks, help or clarify points and get quick response and discussion in a pleasing environment.

The successful experiences reported by the participants represent a clear indication about the usefulness of this integration. It was important to identify the instructors' views about the aspect of language teaching and learning in which FB can be integrated.

• **In what aspects do you think can EFL teachers effectively integrate Facebook in their teaching?**

This question was asked to explore the instructors' beliefs about the possible aspects of language teaching and learning in which FB can be integrated. The participants reflected on their experiences and suggested different ways for this integration. Below are some of their ideas about this issue:

Instructor (13) wrote:

It is really a good way of maintaining a classroom discussion ongoing. Everybody can log and post stuff about a task, presentation, or assignments. It can also be used in some modules which can depend on both direct and indirect communication like grammar, writing, reading comprehension and translation.

Instructor (10) wrote:

A Facebook group can be created for each course at the beginning of the term. The members of the group are the students registered in the course. Instructions given by the teachers can be posted. Exercises can also be there. Discussions can be activated, opinions can be given. Works can be submitted according to the instructions given by the teacher. The group can play the role of a virtual classroom.

Instructor (9) suggested:

EFL teacher can integrate Facebook in writing aspects and reading as well. I think that listening can be added since the teacher can upload videos or any listening activities. Also the features of Facebook like comments, like and share offer the students the opportunity to interact and make comments in English. Thus, it promotes autonomous learning. Further, I think that an EFL teacher can use Facebook in speaking aspects. As an EFL teacher, I will use Facebook to test speaking abilities for students. For example, I can post a question on the Facebook page I create and each student should send me a voice recorded message (the answer). This may give me the opportunity to evaluate the student's language abilities and students may have less anxiety issues.

Instructor (8) wrote:

Instructors can create groups with their learners to post their teaching materials in advance . They can also get in touch with their learners at any time regardless of time and place.

Instructor (13) Suggested:

 Accessible educational study groups can be easily created and immediate posts of tasks, discussion and response can be granted.

Analyzing the participants' responses to this question indicated that they all believe in the usefulness of creating FB groups for interaction between students and between students and their instructors, for posting relevant materials, for sharing resources, for ongoing discussion and for providing feedback. Two of the participants added the possibility of benefiting from the features of FB in assessing students' writing and oral skills. Clearly, they all experienced successful integration of this network in their teaching; despite the challenges they face.

• What challenges EFL teachers may face in their integration of Facebook?

Identifying the views of the participants about the challenges and problems they faced in their integration of FB was also another focus in this study . Their responses to the question above emphasized the existence of some issues and obstacles that need to be carefully considered in this process. Below are some of their responses to this question:

Instructor (5) reported

- *Not all students have (or not allowed to have) access to the FB or even to the internet.*
- *Fear (or lack of confidence) to write in English.*
- *Teachers may not have their students online at once unless previously arranged*

Instructor (4) added

• *Internet devices (smart phones and other portable devices)*

• *Knowledge of use*

• *Time convenience for students and teachers*

• *Culture can also be a challenging factor when it comes to the outskirts*

Instructor (12) wrote:

Some students, females in particular, have no direct access to Internet in general. Others feel shameful or are really afraid of having a Facebook account, so they cannot use their real names for their accounts. Many of them have no real connection to Internet as their only way to connect is their mobile phones. There are also some technical troubles, e.g. how to upload a file, how to edit a post or a comment. Currently, a big issue is the unplanned power failure which represents a big problem for different activities.

Instructor (14) wrote:

the poor internet connection speed, time, weak technological infrastructure in the universities, and unavailability of (Internet, Smart phones or computers) to some students.

Instructor (6) wrote:

The availability of internet access for both teachers and learners. The skills needed to effectively use the Facebook as an educational too.

The participants' responses reflected their awareness about the challenges that hinder the integration of facebook in teaching and learning and they reported about their own experiences of these challenges. They all agreed that poor internet service and infrastructure facilities represent the main obstacles. They also considered privacy and students' misuse of this platform as other serious issues for consideration.

Discussion:

Identifying the beliefs of teachers towards educational innovations provides a clear indication about their acceptance or rejection of these innovations. Holding positive beliefs towards any idea or practice leads teachers to adopt and implement them in classrooms. The popularity of facebook among both university students and instructors makes its integration into teaching and learning a possible and promising practice. Despite their awareness of many challenges which could hinder this integration, the participant instructors were all positive and they emphasized the importance of utilizing social networks in creating learning platforms for students. They considered their students' acceptance of integrating facebook in their language courses as a motivational factor for language learning. Other ESL learners liked this idea as well as reported by all the 43 participants of Yunus and Salehi (2012), by the 48 undergraduate students who participated in Eren's study (2012), by the 90% of the 600 students participated in Hussain's study (2012) and the 94,28% of the participants of Rios and Campos (2015). The same belief was also shared by many scholars (Eren,2012; Couillard ,2012; Irwin, et al.,2012).This popularity makes "students are constantly on social media" (Espinosa ,2015: 2206) which helps the teachers in integrating facebook in their courses. All the participants share the same wish of the participants of (Hussain, 2012) regarding institutions use of social networking sites for strengthening classrooms. The practices of the participants of this study matched and reflected their beliefs about the usefulness of using fcebook for academic purposes. This was one of the questions this investigation was set out to answer.

It is not sufficient for language teachers and instructors to like any particular idea or practice without understanding how to utilize or implement them effectively. There are different aspects of language teaching and learning where the utilization and integration of facebook is possible. The participants suggested different ways for this integration. They believed that creating facebook

pages and groups which allow students and instructors to communicate and interact about teaching and learning issues represents a very useful practice. Other researchers reported similar ideas (Yunus & Salehi, 2012; Omar et al , 2012; Zaidieh,2012; Mahmud & Ching ,2012E; Espinosa, 2015). These different ways of using facebook in language teaching and learning offer the instructors the opportunity to vary their strategies and activities which increase their students' interest and motivation. They make students enjoy spending time with their groups in answering exercises, watching learning videos and involving in online discussion. These opportunities can help in improving students' language skills (Eren, 2012).

However, the integration of facebook in education can be faced with many challenges. Although some of these challenges may differ from one context to another, others seem to be universal. It is necessary for both instructors and students to be aware of these challenges so that they can cooperate together to overcome them. The challenges reported by the participants include : lack or poor internet, lack of internet devices, time convenience, knowledge and skills of facebook. use, cultural considerations, especially for female students and instructors and lack of confidence in writing or commenting on posts in English.

Regarding, the lack or the poor service of the internet which seems to be a contextual challenge, recently there has been an improvement in speed and scope of coverage as now most of the areas in the country have internet coverage. Yet, the service price is still high and many Libyans cannot afford the money for installing internet into their homes. It is important to mention that neither universities nor schools are provided with internet access and students need to find their own ways for connecting to the internet (Abushafa, 2014). This problem is linked to the economical crisis and the state of instability in the country and it is expected to be solved as soon as these issues are over. Meanwhile, if considering the number of students who cannot connect with groups and instructors, it is only possible to use facebook as a supplementary educational tool not a basic one. Zaidieh (2012) also reported similar challenges. The participants were concerned with the lack of skills and knowledge of using facebook for some of the university instructors. Some of the teaching staff members at Libyan universities do not know how to integrate technology in their teaching and they lack the administrative support for developing the

technical skills required for using it (Emhamed & Krishnan, 2011; Abukhat-tala, 2016). Espinosa (2015:2209) emphasizes that "if teachers do not try to learn more about the multiple uses of all these online tools like Facebook, it won't be possible to engage and motivate students because they are ahead of teachers in the use of technology". The technical skills required for using face-book can be developed through short training programmes or seminars. However, this needs to provide classrooms with the necessary equipments for this training which seems to be unlikely at the present time. The participants' were also concerned about time convenience and this can be arranged through set-ting regular online contact hours. Moreover, much of students' time on facebb-bok is often spent in chatting with friends and therefore teachers should note the negative impact of the " distractions by other features of fcebook such as FB chat, games and other applications" (Yunus & Salehi, 2012).

Cultural issues vary from one context to another (Elmasry, et al, 2014) and all the participants in this study highlighted some cultural considerations which they think are influential in their context. In some areas in Libya, it is not socially accepted for female instructors and students to have facebook ac-counts; and even if they manage to open accounts they can not disclose their identities. This conservative tendency was also shared by the Egyptian and Qatari college students who participated in Elmasry, et al. (2014) study. This does not help in promoting instructor-student communication or in creating FB groups for academic purposes as instructors need to identify the students' identities so that they can assign them feedback, clarification, comments, as-signments or marks. Using closed FB groups for students who are enrolled for a particular course may encourage students to use their real names in order to be identified by their instructor. The researcher had a similar experience when the majority of his female students joined a closed FB group for one of the courses and they sent their real names through the FB messenger and it was easy to communicate with them either individually or as a group.

The discussion above indicates that the idea of integrating facebook into language teaching and learning in Libyan universities still represents a new experience and not all instructors and students are ready for this integration. The universities are also not provided with appropriate infrastructure for ap-plying online learning.

Conclusion:

This study was conducted to investigate the beliefs and practices of fourteen Libyan university instructors of integrating facebook in language teaching and learning. Facebook is a useful platform for promoting instructor-student communication and for developing learner autonomy. EFL university instructors can use facebook groups for sharing their course materials and assignments with students. They can also use it for connecting with other academic staff members from national and international universities where they can exchange ideas, information and resources. Moreover, English language Journals and conferences have FB pages where they post their updates and therefore the instructors can be informed about these updates through joining these pages. As the university instructors like the idea of integrating FB into language teaching and learning and as most students spend a considerable part of their time on FB, it is worth thinking about how to promote this integration among all Libyan EFL university students and instructors. It is also necessary to provide universities with internet facilities for students and instructors' access. Identifying the instructors' successful and effective integration of FB in language teaching and learning is a complementary research needed for better understanding of this process.

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