The Nature of the Facebook Group Learning Environment: Insights from University Students

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the inherent features of the Facebook learning environment that were identified by university students enrolled in an English for Academic Purposes course. The presented case study is based on students' subjective theories that have been reconstructed from semi-structured interviews and diaries. The research material involves qualitative data acquired from thirty-four university students. The identified characteristics relate to four areas, namely motivation, distraction, security, and structure. The dominant strengths and weaknesses of the discussed learning environment are singled out.

KEYWORDS

1   INTRODUCTION

Multimodal didactic approaches that blend classroom interaction with a learning management system (LMS) are widely used in higher education settings. These electronic systems are certainly valuable tools, as they help teachers to organize the course and curriculum, serve as a storage for digital study materials, provide a platform for different types of activities, and allow various forms of interaction, feedback, and assessment. In our teaching experience at the tertiary level of formal education, however, we often come across various students' complaints about these tools. They are mostly related to their rigidity, outdated and complicated user interface, or improper functionality. These problems made us think about adopting an alternative blended-learning model in which face-to-face instruction is supported by an e-platform that is appealing, similar in functionality, and tightly connected to students' lives.

To use a Facebook group as a substitute for a traditional Moodle course was a choice based on social constructivist theories which reflect the ongoing changes in the ways how digital natives learn. Furthermore, as it is a dynamic environment, it "challenges the learners […] to provide original and creative solutions for learning" (Meishar-Tal, Kurtz & Pieterse, 2012, p. 37). These reasons have provided a solid ground for the application of this tool into the English as a foreign language (EFL) learning process. But how do students view the language learning environment of a Facebook study group? That is the principal question that is addressed in the paper.

2   LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last decade, authors have continually researched the potentials of Facebook groups for the higher education English classroom. The researchers discuss the topic from two (often) intertwined perspectives, namely intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic. However, the former is marginalized in this report, and we focus on the latter in terms of motivation, stresslessness/stressfulness, distractibility, and structure.

The research indicates that Facebook groups adopted as supplements to English as a foreign language (EFL) courses are viewed as suitable language learning platforms that can positively influence students' motivation to learn English (Romano, 2009) and their overall attitudes towards this activity (Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010; Al-Shehri, 2011). A limited number of studies point to the audience of the Facebook group as an important factor affecting EFL students' engagement in writing activities. Sun (2010) and Yunus, Salehi & Chenzi (2012) noted that foreign language learners often become more motivated and engaged in tasks focused on writing because of the extended exposure of their writing output. On the other hand, research also shows that students' motivation to learn English either was not visibly affected (Simpson, 2012) or vanished after the novelty faded (Hsu, 2013).

This alternative learning platform can create a safe environment where the students can produce English without any "pressure". This assumption is in line with Simpson (2012) and Small (2014) who agreed that social networking sites enable EFL learners to be more self-confident and relaxed while they use the target language, since such electronically-mediated communication can suppress the inhibiting factors of direct, inter-personal communication. Hsu (2013) concluded that the environment was perceived as "pressure-free", because the EFL learning process took place in a closed Facebook group with a limited number of members.

Facebook is often criticized for its negative impact on students' academic performance (e.g. Pasek, More & Hargittai 2009; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Paul, Baker & Cochran, 2012), with the distraction aspect being seen as one of the main causes of this undesired influence. Facebook's potential to distract learners from their educational objectives seems to be a relevant topic also in foreign language education, since Yunus et al. (2012) and Bani-Hani, Al-Sobh & Abu-Melhim (2014) agreed that students might not focus on learning English when they are utilizing Facebook.

Another potential drawback of Facebook groups adopted in EFL education is related to students' difficulties with following group postings. Students concentrate on the group posts in a limited way due to their hectic daily schedule (Razak, Saeed & Ahmad, 2013) or tiredness caused by exam preparation (Hsu, 2013). Furthermore, the dynamic, non-hierarchical organization of the group was seen as a serious disturbance, as it brought difficulties with orientation and retrieval of content (Meishar-Tal, Kurtz & Pieterse, 2012). However, the non-static nature of Facebook content triggers active participation (ibid.).

3   RESEARCH STRATEGY

The aim of the paper is to identify how university students perceive the EFL learning environment created on a Facebook group platform. A qualitative case study was designed to gain insight into this complex problem, while it examines students' perspectives and uses two sources of data, namely semi-structured interviews and diaries.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews with university students were used as a primary data source. The role of this data collection method in the presented case study was to obtain an interviewee's subjective response to a known situation or experience. Following the model presented by Scheele & Groeben (1988), this rich inventory of one's personal perceptions, views, beliefs, opinions, and attitudes is in our study covered by the umbrella term subjective theory. We use the semi-structured interview to reconstruct participants' subjective theories of the EFL learning environment provided by the Facebook group. Pre-interviews (conducted after the first contact with the Facebook group) and post-interviews (conducted after the study experience with our blended learning model) were used to get more reliable and valid data.

Semi-structured student diaries presented a secondary data source; i.e., they were supplemental and subordinated to the interviews. The method of diary studies was used to further validate the pre-/post-interviews, to track potential discrepancies in the data, and to illuminate otherwise hidden contexts of students' EFL learning activities and progress.

Data Analysis

The first step of the analytic process was based on identification of items relevant to our research in the interview transcripts and their categorization with codes. The preliminary code labels emerged from the raw interview data. Since coding is dynamic (Benaquisto, 2008), the initial codes were further refined and reconceptualized. This process resulted in creating the final analytic framework.

Due to the above mentioned supplemental role of student diaries, we applied the developed coding system in their analysis too. The diary entries were processed by seeking out connections, phrases, ideas, or actions related to the interview analytic framework. However, some codes remained interview-exclusive.

Sample

Undergraduates from a mid-sized, public university (n=34) participated in the research. The participants attended the "English for Academic Purposes 1" (EAP 1) elective course and agreed to use its Facebook module. The research sample included student teachers (n_1=22) and students of the "Occupational Safety and Health" study program (n_2=12), while those who enrolled for the course in summer 2016/2017 are labelled with "a" and those who were enrolled in the course in winter 2017/2018 are labelled with "b". Random sampling was used to select seventeen students for the interviews, while the duration ranged from 17′46″ to 50′30″. All research participants (n=34) kept diaries. These textual records were submitted on a weekly basis and covered an eight-week period of the EAP 1 course. The research material contained 606 written entries.

4   FINDINGS

Motivation

We identified different ideas related to the motivational aspect forty-seven times in the data. The highest frequency of reoccurrence implies that the ability to affect motivation is a significant feature of this alternative EFL learning environment.

From the fifteen participants who perceived the Facebook group as motivating, thirteen attached the group audience to motivation. *The students marked each others' English writing output, with members' ability to see students' work as the source of the group's motivational effect.*

Students 17a, 10b, 14b, and 18b stated that the EFL performance of more proficient group members motivated them to do their best. In one of her pre-interview responses, student 17a valued the opportunity to compare her EFL proficiency level with others and noted that "it pushes me towards improvement". Student 10b claimed in his diary (and also in both interviews) that postings from more proficient students and their expressive ability motivated him "to do [his] best in learning English". When student 14b read a post from a more proficient classmate, she was "definitely not satisfied with [her] level of English" (pre-interview). On the other hand, it motivated her to maximize her learning effort. The initial interview with student 18b uncovered that: "It motivates me when I see comments from more proficient classmates or yours in which you explain something". Later, she explained that "I was motivated, because I did not understand everything, but I wanted to".

Students 2a, 4a, 7a, 13a, 14a, 18a, 8b, and 9b were motivated by others' work. Student 2a replied in the pre-interview that after she had seen "that everyone wrote something, it was not like pressure, but rather something that made [her] want to write a comment". Similarly, student 7a explained in her response that she ignored an extra task at first, but after she had seen that nearly every member had commented on it, she asked herself: "Am I going to be the last one again? Are they better than me?". Then, she also wanted to complete the given extra task. However, "it was not pressure; it was motivation", as she explained in a diary entry. Student 8b responded in the post-interview that it was motivating for him to see other students completing extra tasks "not just with a few words, but they wrote five or six sentences [...]. You could see the effort behind it". Influenced by others' comments, student 18a "tried to post more complicated sentences and not just some simple ones" (pre-interview), while student 13a "tried writing more" (post-interview).

Student 9b seemed to be motivated by the creativity of others' work. He praised some of the added postings (assignments completed by others) and admitted in the interviews that their originality and creativity "motivated [him] to perform better next time". In the initial interviews, students 4a, 13a, and 14a agreed that comments from the group members were motivating, as they aided in writing their own. In case they did not understand something, students 4a and 14a viewed how others completed an assignment. For student 13a, it was motivating that she could "use something from their sentences and then reformulate [her] comment in some other way".

Besides the motivational effect of others' work, student 7a also mentioned in the diary that she tried to do her best due to the fact that the audience could see her EFL output. Consistently, student 5b noted in one of the interviews that as her posts were visible to other students in the group, she "focused on correct grammar" and was forced to think about English. She "was motivated to do it correctly, so [she] would not have to feel ashamed".

A group of ten interviewees connected motivation with extra points (that could be earned by completing optional tasks in the Facebook group). Students 2a, 4a, 10a, 5b, and 10b agreed that the opportunity to get extra points for extra activities in the Facebook study group was motivating. For example, student 4a replied: "when I know that I can get something additional for my activities, it motivates me". From the perspective of student 10a, motivation was embedded "in the chance to get some points that can help in getting a better grade". Students 7a, 13a, 18a, 9b, and 14b, on the other hand, did not perceive the chance of earning extra points as motivating, but the extra point itself as motivating. In the post-interviews, students 9b and 14b characterized the extra points as "definitely motivating". Student 13a noted initially that "it was both others' comments and extra points that motivated [her]". "Sometimes [she] completed an extra task only to get a bonus point", as she admitted in the post-instruction interview.

Four research participants felt that the Facebook group itself is motivating. Student 9b appreciated "that the group motivated [him] to use English in a more practical way". It was highlighted again in the post-interview, that the study group "was motivating mostly due to the opportunity to use English in practical contexts". Student 14b viewed the EAP 1 course as "more interesting and motivating than traditional seminars" thanks to the Facebook module. Dealing with English on a social network increased student 20b's motivation to learn the foreign language. "It motivated [him] to learn vocabulary and grammar". Moreover, Student 7a recorded in her diary that the Facebook group implanted a more positive attitude towards English.

Two interviewees added that daily contact with English enabled by the Facebook group is motivating. Student 10a was motivated, because she "used English regularly, almost daily, not only once a week". Student 8b promoted the group to "a part of [his] everyday life". It was motivating for him, since he could be in contact with English on a daily basis.

In one case, *an interviewee underlined the motivational effect of regular homework / extra tasks.* Student 14a praised the given tasks, as they "motivated [her] to do something". She did not complete them "only to get the points".

Distraction

The distraction potential is another important characteristic of the language learning environment created on Facebook, since it was recognized forty-three times in our data. In our case study, the participants (n=17) expressed mixed opinions, while the negative views prevail.

Five participants assigned the distraction potential to private messages. The initial interview with student 4a revealed that she would prefer replying to a friend's message to doing homework in the group. In the post-interview, she said that after a few weeks she used to turn off chat while doing homework, as it would otherwise take her hours instead of minutes. In her diary, however, she admitted that completing homework on Facebook took her sometimes longer than she expected, because she was distracted by private messages. Student 10a replied to the pre-/post-interview question in a similar manner. She faced

a dilemma "whether to do homework or chat and loose twenty minutes" (pre-interview). After the study experience, the same person noted that she started to chat with someone while doing homework from English, and "ten-minute work turned into two hours". Student 16b, who participated only in the pre-interview, stated that "the distraction factor is definitely present there", while he advised others to turn off chat when doing homework in the Facebook group. Although students 2a and 7a had rejected the group's potential for distraction from EFL learning in the initial interviews, they later admitted that private messages had distracting effects. In her diary, student 2a wrote the following entry: "It took me longer to do homework when someone messaged me".

Three students perceived the Facebook group itself as having negative effects on concentration. Student 14b replied in both interviews that the study group is "very distracting". A deeper context was presented in her diary: "The presence of the study group on Facebook seems disturbing on its own. My point is that we can receive messages, be notified about new postings, and this distracts me from learning English". She also acknowledged several times spending thirty minutes doing homework instead of ten due to the mentioned distracters. After experiencing the discussed mode of EFL instruction, student 12a concluded that the Facebook study group "has definitely distracted her attention". Her negative perception (expressed in the post-interview) is further explained in the following diary entry: "I couldn't concentrate on my task on one hundred percent. While working on homework, I could see when someone sent me a message or I just heard the sound of something new happening there. It was disturbing in any case. Another example is when we had a task to write our answers in comments. It was even more disturbing and tempted me to surf on Facebook". In the post-instruction interview, student 18a noted that the group was a bit distractive from time to time. However, it is not clear from her data within what setting.

Another *two students admitted that being present on Facebook delays doing homework.* Student 13a mentioned in the pre-interview: "Somebody had posted something on my wall, so I viewed it. Then, I returned to writing my comment, but something appeared in our study group. It took me almost half an hour until I started to do homework, but I had logged in to Facebook with the intention to do homework". Her post-interview response also clearly reflects this code, as she noted that she viewed posts in other groups and consequently had to start doing homework all over again. In the diary, the same participant concluded that she would delay doing homework if something new happened or appeared on Facebook. The post-interview with student 9b uncovered another particular situation in which using Facebook had put EFL learning aside. While doing homework (answering a tricky job interview question), the student learned that his favorite ice hockey team had lost a match. He wanted to know why, so he read an article and watched a video on his Facebook wall. The student added that "such things collided with doing homework in the Facebook group", and consequently he started to work in the group at 1:00 a.m.

Although negative subjective theories are dominant, *seven interviewees mentioned that the Facebook group is a non-distracting environment for learning English.* It seems that these students were able to separate school (EFL learning) from private life (chat with friends) and thus did not feel distracted. In the pre- and post-interview, student 17a claimed that she "always did homework before reading messages". She focused on her duties first and then on personal matters. Another student (18b) replied in both interviews that she did homework first and then continued communication with friends. Similarly, student 20b noted: "When I work in the Facebook study group, I do my homework first and read messages after I'm done. When I start doing something in the group, I finish it, because I want to get rid of it". Student 8b claimed that he can separate personal matters from academic duties, and thus was not distracted. If too many friends messaged, he simply disabled chat, completed the given task, and only "then returned to personal things". Student 5b stated: "I wouldn't let anything distract me from focusing on homework". In the post-interview, she explained that she simply did not pay attention to private messages while doing homework. Student 14a was also consistent in both interviews and stated that: "I continue with my personal matters after completing Facebook homework" (pre-interview). "In case I receive a message, I reply after completing the task. I'm not interested in anything else, when I'm focused on doing homework" (post-interview).

Student 10b offered no specific details in the interviews besides saying that the Facebook group "has no potential for distraction from EFL learning".

Security

We identified thirty-nine responses thematically related with students' perceptions of how relaxed or stressed they felt in the discussed language learning environment. The data (collected from seventeen students) communicated mixed perceptions of this EFL learning environment, although the positive ones dominate.

Thirteen interviewees felt that the Facebook group provides a stress-free environment for EFL learning. Ten interviewees were consistent in their pre- and post-interview responses. They inclined towards the view that the Facebook group allowed them to use English without being "pressed". Students 2a, 4a, 7a, 10a, 14a, 8b, 10b, 14b, 16b, and 20b did not perceive anything negative related to the group audience. Student 14a mentioned that the Facebook group was "collective". Students 2a, 4a, 7a, 8b, and 14b described the group as "relaxed". Students 2a, 4a, and 14b were also not afraid of making mistakes. They did not think about other group members being able to see their work. For example, student 4a stated: "Doing homework on Facebook was more relaxed than writing an essay on a sheet of paper. It was absolutely natural for me. I was not afraid that someone could see my mistakes in my posts. I wasn't stressed at all". Student 8b added that the study group was not only relaxed but also suitable for his EFL learning. He explained that: "When you stand in front of the class, there is this noise, someone laughs or talks, and it affects me negatively. Facebook is different, as there are no such things but just the "raw" opinion".

Students 17a, 18b, and 5b agreed that it was not easy to add posts in the study group at the beginning of the course. However, the post-interviews revealed that these students later perceived the study group environment as pressure-free for EFL learning. Student 17a "was afraid of making mistakes", as they were visible to the group audience (pre-interview). According to the second interview, she was not aware of any pressure in the Facebook group and considered it an "opportunity to improve" her English. Furthermore, "it became natural" for her to add posts in the study group. Similarly, student 18b felt "kind of pressure", because everyone could see her postings (pre-interview). Later, she did not feel any pressure while using English in the study group, and she "wasn't interested in others' opinions" (except for the teacher's comments). Student 5b noted that it was "more difficult and doubtful" during the first three weeks. In the post-interview, the environment of the Facebook group was described as "safe and stress-free". The same person added that she did not notice any irregular uses of English such as informal abbreviations or slang.

Four students (4a, 14a, 14b, and 18b) also *defined the Facebook group as a secure environment for EFL learning*. In three cases, the participants praised the teacher's decision to make the group private and closed. Students 4a and 14b knew that only their classmates (and not their Facebook friends) could see them working in the study group and thus felt secure. Similarly, student 18b liked the fact "that the group is only related to the students who are its members". A different sense of security was recognized in the post-interview with student 14a. She admitted to feel more confident and secure in the Facebook group (focused on writing) than in contact classes (focused on speaking).

Four participants viewed the Facebook group as a stressful environment for EFL learning. In her diary, student 1a noted that she "felt tension in the EAP 1 Facebook group". However, a deeper context is lacking in her data. The interviews with students 13a, 18a, and 9b revealed that the "pressure" stemmed from the audience (although they perceived it as motivating too). Student 9b mentioned that: "A posted comment is a presentation of my skills in English, and it is embarrassing for me to make a beginner mistake like the one with 'do' and 'does'. [...] my work is visible to everybody in the group, and they see my mistakes. It doesn't matter whether they are visible to a closed group of people or to public. The pressure is caused by the ability of the audience to see my work". Student 13a said that she was under pressure while using English. Later in the post-interview she mentioned that: "I've checked homework five times before posting it in the group, but still I've found some mistakes after it was online. I didn't like it". Her diary offers further explanations. Most importantly, it was unpleasant for this student to add a posting in the group, as others

could read it. However, she also admitted to "have problems with commenting on things" while using Facebook for personal matters. Student 18a maintained a consistent point of view throughout the whole semester. In particular, she explained that: "When I chat with an American, I focus on making no mistakes. If I make some, I feel a bit ashamed. It is nearly the same in the group".

Structure

Ideas related to the organization of the Facebook group were recognized twenty-eight times among thirteen participants. The analyzed data again reflect mixed results, with a considerable dominancy of negative views.

Nine participants noted that the Facebook group was a chaotic environment for EFL learning. Students 12a, 2b, 7b, and 17b perceived the EAP 1 Facebook group as disorganized. In his diary, student 7b simply noted that "it was difficult to orientate in the group". Student 12a recorded in her diary that "the page seemed quite chaotic" and "the posts were disorganized". In her post-interview and diary, she highlighted difficult orientation in the group as a problem. It was mentioned, that she "missed some comments or [teacher's] tasks" (post-interview). Sometimes, she "did not even notice that there was an assignment to accomplish" (diary entry). She further explained that "every time someone posted something in the group, it automatically popped up at the top of the page and it was complicated to find the task when everybody was already posting homework. That's why I couldn't fulfil every task". According to her diary, student 2b could not easily locate a file, and she "had to scroll down the wall of the Facebook group in order to find the vocabulary list from a seminar". The student also recommended an improvement. She would have arranged files from individual seminars into folders. Student 17b labelled the study material as "a bit disarranged", and "it took [him] some time to find the requested study material related to schooling in English-speaking countries".

Five students (3a, 5a, 14a, 5b, and 18b) agreed that the study group became confusing after it contained more postings. For student 3a it was sometimes difficult to match the homework task with the corresponding file or comment. In her diary, she suggested that a file should also contain a comment with the task. In one of the diary entries, student 5a complained that sometimes she felt overwhelmed by the amount of group posts and "could not easily find the one she was looking for". Student 14a stated (in the post-interview and diary) that she had lost orientation and felt confused after more posts were added in the group. In the post-interview, student 5b replied: "Later, orientation in the group and finding comments and files became problematic. I didn't remember the file names, so I couldn't find them via the search bar". Very similarly, student 18b wrote in her diary that "after the group contained numerous posts, it was difficult to find the older ones". She added that she did not know about the "search this group" function during the semester.

Four research subjects viewed the Facebook group as an organized environment for EFL learning. In her diary, student 18a considered "quick content navigation" as one of the group's benefits. In the post-interview, student 9b compared the study group with a literature course in Moodle and concluded, that it was not as time-consuming to look for study materials in the group as it was in the Moodle course. In particular, "it took [him] eight minutes to get to the study material from Realism [in the Moodle course], but only one minute to locate a file in the Facebook group". He added in his diary that it was easy to find the required (even older) posts in the study group. Though there was no trace of related data in the initial interview, student 14b later said: "The group was easy to navigate. I simply typed the key word in the search bar each time I had to find something. Each file also included a detailed description". The post-interview with student 10b uncovered that the EAP 1 course Facebook group was "easy to navigate". In his diary, he also appreciated its structure. Furthermore, he "was not annoyed by scrolling down the page in order to find older posts".

Tab. 1 The nature of the Facebook group learning environment

Categories	Times occurred	Codes	Times occurred + source
I.) Motivation	**47x**	*a.) the group audience is motivating*	**27x** (I: 23x; D: 4x)
		b.) extra points are motivating	**12x** (I: 12x)
		c.) the group itself is motivating	**5x** (I: 4x; D: 1x)
		d.) daily contact with English is motivating	**2x** (I: 2x)
		e.) regular homework / extra tasks are motivating	**1x** (I:1x)
II.) Distraction	**43x**	*a.) a non-distracting environment for EFL learning*	**16x** (I: 16x)
		b.) private messages are distracting	**12x** (I: 8x; D: 4x)
		c.) presence on Facebook delays doing homework	**8x** (I: 3x; D: 5x)
		d.) a distracting environment for EFL learning	**7x** (I: 5x; D: 2x)
III.) Security	**39x**	*a.) a stress-free environment for EFL learning*	**30x** (I: 30x)
		b.) a stressful environment for EFL learning	**5x** (I: 3x; D: 2x)
		c.) a secure environment for EFL learning	**4x** (I: 4x)
IV.) Structure	**28x**	*a.) a chaotic environment for EFL learning*	**19x** (I: 6x; D: 13x)
		b.) an organized environment for EFL learning	**9x** (I: 3x; D: 6x)

Legend: I.) Motivation - a wider category used to cover related ideas; **47x** - codes related to the category appeared forty-seven times in the data; ***the group audience is motivating*** - a more precise code is used to cover similar ideas; **27x** (I: 23x; D: 4x) - the code was recognized twenty-seven times in the data (23x in the interviews and 4x in the diaries)

CONCLUSION

According to the subjective data (and frequency of occurrence), motivational character was the most significant (and for EFL education also the most beneficial) attribute of the Facebook group learning environment. The strongest source of motivation was the audience of the Facebook group. Less proficient students attempted to approximate the EFL performance of more proficient group members. Other students were motivated by peers' work, particularly by creativity, effort, complexity, and assistance. The audience could also access students' EFL writing output, and this motivated students to deliver an error-free outcome, thus encouraging autonomous learning. The Facebook group itself also affected students' motivation in a positive way, since it contained regular and extra assignments, presented an unusual model of instruction, and enabled the research participants to earn extra points and use English daily and meaningfully. Moreover, the group implanted a more positive attitude towards the English language.

The unwanted distraction effect turned to be the second most important feature of the Facebook group environment (when considering the frequency of occurrence in the data). A majority of the research participants who provided an insight into this topic via their subjective data felt distracted. They connected this distractibility with private messages, notifications, wall posts, and presence on Facebook. As consequence, they spent longer time or delayed doing homework. On the other hand, a smaller group of participants was not distracted by anything related to the Facebook group. First, they focused on doing

homework/studying and then moved to private matters. In other words, they separated academic duties in the study group from their virtual private life on this social networking site.

The group was also perceived as a stress-free language learning environment. Moreover, some of the students added a sense of security to its relaxed nature. However, a minority felt a sort of pressure or stress that was bound with the group audience. Particularly, it stemmed from exposing students' EFL output (potentially filled with mistakes) to others. We can deduce from the data that the group audience seems to be a significant factor that not only influences students' motivation to learn the target language but can also stress the students when they produce it.

Nearly one third of the students described the Facebook study group as a chaotic EFL learning environment. The dynamic structure caused confusion and problems with completing assignments or orientation. On the other hand, some research subjects viewed the Facebook study group as an organized language learning environment. Based on their subjective theories, it was easy to use, quick to navigate, well-structured, and time-saving.

From an overall perspective, the motivating and stress-free nature of the discussed learning environment was viewed as a significant benefit for the EFL learning process, but the threat of obstructing it by distraction and disorganization caused that the Facebook group was not perceived as an outstanding language learning environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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