

## **Prospective English language teachers' experiences in Facebook: Adoption, use and educational use in Turkish context**

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### **ABSTRACT**

There has been an increasing attention given to the role of social networking in educational settings. Teacher education is not an exception to this, for teacher education is approaching social media on two fronts: a) application to enhance learning in the process of teacher preparation or professional development b) applications in classrooms where teachers are expected to use social media with learners. The study set out to investigate whether Prospective English Language Teachers' (PELTs) Facebook adoption processes had an impact on their educational use of Facebook and whether PELTs' purposes of Facebook use had an impact on the educational use of Facebook. The findings revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between "Facebook adoption" and "educational use of Facebook". Likewise, "purposes of Facebook users" were found to be positively associated with "educational use of Facebook". "Facebook adoption" had a relatively significant effect on "educational use of Facebook", while "Purposes of Facebook usage" had a relatively low effect on "the educational use of Facebook". Subsequent to a one semester-experience on Facebook, the student teachers seemed to feel that social networking should be employed in their learning contexts because it offers more interesting learning experiences.

**Keywords:** *Social Networking, Facebook, Prospective English Language Teachers, Adoption, Purposes of Facebook Use, Educational Use of Facebook.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social media is getting more and more popular because of the increasing number of Internet users through a two-way interaction. In relation to educational settings, not only does social media alter traditional modes of teaching/learning but also it contributes to the effectiveness of the learning process. More specifically, social media offers the following: new opportunities for learners to take control of their own learning and to access their own customized information, resources, tools and services, more collaborative ways of working, community creation, dialogue and sharing knowledge, a setting for learner achievements to attract an authentic audience (Richardson, 2008). In this regard, it is essential for teachers to improve their own teaching competencies by employing new technologies and encouraging their students to employ these new technologies more actively and independently outside the classroom (D'Souza, 2006). It is a sine qua non mainly because their students—are highly likely to step into the classroom with increasingly more developed web literacy than their teachers.

As far as social networking is concerned, Abbitt (2007, p. 1) states that "there has been tremendous growth in the popularity of websites focusing on social activities and collaboration". Since SixDegrees was introduced in 1997 as the first example of social networking sites, the sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Cyworld, and Bebo have attracted the attention of millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). From 1997 to 2001, there were several attempts. To exemplify, AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, MiGente, LiveJournal, and Cyworld allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles so

that users could identify friends on their personal profiles. Four of the largest non-professional sites that dominate social networking in the English-speaking world now are MySpace, Facebook, Friendster, and Orkut.

A great many research studies have been done to scrutinize social networking by specifically looking at variables such as purposes of Facebook usage (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), Facebook usage profile (Dba & Karl, 2008), time spent on Facebook (Pempek, Yevdokiya, & Calvert, 2009), effects of Facebook use on college adjustment (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2011), effects of Facebook use on sociability and social capital (Keenan & Shiri, 2009), effects of Facebook use on learning performance (Sanchez-Franco, Villarejo-Ramos, & Martin-Velicia, 2011), educational usage of Facebook (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010; Albayrak, 2012), the impact of social networking on second language writing (Chen, 2012; Dixon, 2012), effect of online social networking on student academic performance (Paul, Baker, & Cochran, 2012), PELTs' perceptions of the use of Facebook (Atmaca, 2013), college students' views on Facebook (Anderson, 2014), and foreign language learners' interactions with their teachers on Facebook (Omar, Embi, & Yunus, 2012; Aydın, 2014).

As is easily observed in the brief history of social network sites given above, they have had a huge impact on the way people live, which leads educators to make use of social networking in their own contexts and researchers to do various studies. In this regard, the study set out to investigate whether Prospective English Language Teachers' (PELTs) cebook adoption processes had an impact on their educational use of Facebook and whether PELTs' purposes of Facebook use had an impact on the educational use of Facebook.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING: DEFINITIONS, BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES**

It was Boyd (2003), who first described social networking as “software applications that support the development of social connections between individuals and groups within a community”. Very similarly, Barlett-Brag (2006, p. 3) viewed social networking as “the range of applications that augments group interactions and shared spaces for collaboration, social connections, and aggregates information exchanges in a web-based environment”. As is seen in both definitions, the bottom line is that social networking is based on the assumption reality that individuals interact with each other in shared spaces for collaboration that allows the exchange of information. Taking a further step, Boyd (2008, p. 211) described social networking sites as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, to articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and to view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”.

Ajjan and Harsthone (2008) listed benefits of social networking sites in educational settings. First, it enhances students' learning. Second, it facilitates the interaction between the teacher-students, and students-students. Third, it makes students more motivated for the classes. Fourth, it develops students' writing skills. Finally, the use of social networking makes it easier for students to get involved in the learning process. Related to those benefits, some research studies (Norris, 2002; Resnick, 2001) postulate that social networking sites are very influential in fostering connections between participants, thereby supporting a wide range of relationships. Mazer, Murphy and Simonds (2007) looked at the effects of computer-mediated teacher self-disclosure on student motivation, affective learning, and classroom climate. The research concluded that teacher self-disclosure might lead students to get to higher levels of anticipated motivation and affective learning and create a more comfortable classroom climate. Ajjan and Harsthone (2008) found that those social networking tools increased students' learning, the interaction between students and teachers, and the integration of various applications into learning processes. Yet

another study conducted on the use of Facebook by college students underlined five crucial aspects of social networking: reflecting university experiences, sharing practical information, sharing academic knowledge, sharing pictures and links, and creating new connections with others (Selwyn, 2007a, 2007b).

As for the challenges, social networking sites have received a lot of criticism from their users worldwide. According to Lacy (2009), the negative effects of popular social networking especially Facebook are seen on individuals such as short attention spans, sensationalism, inability to empathize and a shaky sense of identity among children. Similarly, Derbyshire (2009) believes that social networking websites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter are causing alarming changes in the brains of young users. She argued that exposure to computer games, instant messaging, chat rooms and social networking sites could leave a whole generation with poor attention spans.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

"While some educators feel that this is an invasion of the students' privacy by labeling this creepy treehouse practice", others feel that it is an intelligent use of current technologies in the classroom (Mendez, Curry, Mwavita, Kennedy, Weinland & Bainbridge, 2009, p. 1). Teacher education is approaching social media on two fronts: a) application to enhance learning in the process of teacher preparation or professional development b) applications in classrooms where teachers are expected to use social media tools with learners (Albion, 2008). In this respect, Voithofer (2007) argued that teaching through social networking could result in greater awareness for pre-service teachers about the technical and pedagogical characteristics of educational technology, the social aspects of educational technology, and how to think about emerging technologies in relation to teaching. Saunders (2008), on the other hand, indicated that Facebook helped shape personal and vocational identity of student teachers as well as enabled them to construct a network of teachers in a very cooperative sense. English and Duncan-Howell (2008) examined the use of Facebook by student teachers over a period of time. They aimed at investigating the possible dimensions of using Facebook during their teaching practice in terms of adoption, positive and negative aspects, and the interaction between learners. Such characteristics of social networking may "allow teacher education programs to provide better integration and continuity across multiple courses" (Voithofer, 2007, p. 16). Teacher education programs consider adopting such campus-based social networking sites as safer and more convenient options to free access sites (Özkan & McKenzie, 2008). In consistent with the changing landscapes of instruction in the 21st century, social networking has become an inevitable supporter of the learning process in teacher education by encouraging today's students to internalize their methodological knowledge.

## **FACEBOOK**

Facebook today is used especially by university students as social glue. Facebook is regarded as an educational tool because of its beneficial qualities such as peer feedback it enables, goodness of fit with social context, and interaction tools (Mason, 2006). From an educational perspective, it is the social aspect of Facebook that makes it fun and speeds up the learning process. Students constantly communicate about their lives, opinions, interests, and schoolwork. Two-thirds of the students in one study were "comfortable" with faculty on Facebook (Hewitt & Forte, 2006) and another study found that 39 % of college students surveyed wanted regular on-line discussions with faculty (Fischman, 2008). As far as pedagogical advantages are concerned, Facebook provides instructors with means by which students can help and support one another whenever necessary. Facebook also increases both teacher-student and student-student interaction in the

form of web-based communication. In a similar fashion, students can use Facebook to contact classmates about questions regarding class assignments or examinations as well as to collaborate on assignments and group projects in an online environment. Social networking allows students to glimpse instructor profiles containing personal information, interests, background, and their friends, which can enhance student motivation, affective learning, and classroom climate (Heiberger & Harper, 2008; Munoz & Towner, 2009). Gross and Acquisti (2005) believe that Facebook, among online social networks, stands out for three reasons: its success among the college crowd, the amount and the quality of personal information users make available on it, and personal identification of information. Accordingly, Facebook is of interest to researchers in three respects: a) as a mass social phenomenon in itself b) as a unique window of observation on the privacy attitudes c) the patterns of information revelation among young individuals (Gross & Acquisti, 2005).

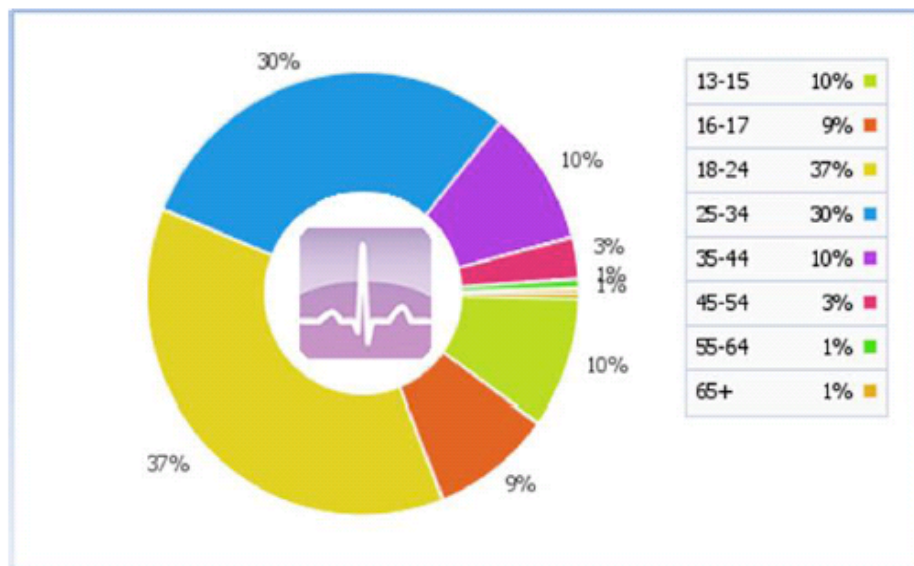
### FACEBOOK IN TURKEY

Facebook is a real phenomenon in Turkey. According to November 2012 statistics, 830.540 Turkish speakers signed up to Facebook (Figure 1). This means a yearly increase of 3.44% of the total Turkish Facebook population reaching over 24 million.

#	Country	Gain [abs]	Change [%]	#	Country	Gain [abs]	Change [%]
1.	United States	3 221 600	+2.19%	11.	Taiwan	592 760	+7.10%
2.	Indonesia	1 675 860	+5.27%	12.	Thailand	565 520	+8.40%
3.	India	1 513 720	+8.95%	13.	South Korea	538 960	+23.21%
4.	Mexico	1 267 860	+6.95%	14.	United Kingdom	521 820	+1.80%
5.	Brazil	1 208 600	+14.13%	15.	Malaysia	513 620	+5.46%
6.	Germany	936 980	+6.85%	16.	Italy	503 220	+2.83%
7.	Turkey	830 540	+3.44%	17.	Poland	477 880	+10.78%
8.	Russia	800 240	+25.68%	18.	Colombia	454 320	+3.86%
9.	Philippines	777 680	+4.11%	19.	Spain	435 120	+3.57%
10.	France	713 960	+3.49%	20.	Argentina	415 820	+3.40%

**Figure 1:** Top Growing Countries on Facebook in November (socialbakers)

People from all walks of life use this social networking in Turkey. As of November 2012, there are 30,473,280 registered users of Facebook in Turkey. Most of these users (62%) are between 18-34 years old (See figure 2 below). Of all Turkish users, 64% are male, while 36% are female. Furthermore, it is observed that young people between 13-17 show great interest in Facebook. Each registered user has approximately 189 friends on his profile and they spend at least one hour on Facebook a day.



**Figure 2:** Use of Facebook in Turkey by Age Groups (socialbakers)

As far as educational settings in Turkey are concerned, there has been a tendency towards the use of social networking. Obviously, there is a wealth of research on this issue as well (Akyıldız & Argan, 2010; Arıkan, 2009; Aşkar, 2011; Balçıkanlı, 2010; Baran, 2010; Bicen & Çavuş, 2010; Dönmüş, 2010; Ergenç, 2011; Kayrı & Çakır, 2010; Keleş & Demirel, 2011; Mazman, 2008; Usluel & Mazman, 2009; Mazman & Usluel, 2010, 2011; Çelik, 2012). Mazman (2008) investigated the adoption process of social networks and their usage in educational contexts. Using a survey design method, she concluded that Facebook adoption and purposes of Facebook usage together accounted for 50 % variance of educational usage of Facebook. In other words, the research indicated that Facebook was recognized as a social networking tool in educational settings. Taking a further step, Usluel and Mazman (2009) offered a model based on social networking tools. Instead of adopting merely one perspective, they took certain dimensions namely social factors, ease of use, benefits and innovations, image, facilitative factors. Arıkan (2009) investigated the rationale behind prospective English language teachers' use of social networking sites (SNSs), the linguistic and pedagogical outcomes of their SNSs activities and to what extent their SNSs activities affect their perception of other cultures and groups.

The results of the study indicated that most prospective English language teachers do not consider SNSs activities pedagogically beneficial. Mazman and Usluel (2010) designed a structural model explaining how users could utilize Facebook for educational purposes. 50% of educational usage of Facebook could be accounted for by user purposes as well as the adoption processes of Facebook. Furthermore, Facebook adoption processes could explain 86% of all user purposes. Finally, while Facebook adoption processes explained 45% of its educational usage, it could explain 50% of variance in educational usage of Facebook when the user purposes were added into the analysis. Bicen and Cavuş (2011) investigated the Internet usage of students and social network sites that were preferred by the participants. Using a survey of 52 undergraduate students, the study concluded that Live Spaces and Facebook social network sites were preferred by the participants. Kayrı and Çakır (2010) examined the educational use of Facebook. Using a semi-experimental setup, the researchers examined the students on Facebook for 14 weeks and later they were given three different measurement tools. The study concluded that the attitudes of the students towards educational use of Facebook and their views

of the site were heterogeneous. Balçıkanlı (2010) investigated the effects of social networking on pre-service English teachers' metacognitive awareness and teaching practice. Using a mixed research design, the researcher concluded that the social networking site namely Facebook had a huge impact on pre-service English teachers' metacognitive awareness and teaching practice. Mazman and Usluel (2011) investigated individual usage purposes of social networks with a focus on the possible differences between females and males. Using 870 Facebook users who responded an online survey designed by the researchers, the study concluded that significant differences were found between genders in terms of the factors viz social factors, ease of use, benefits and innovations, image, and facilitative factors. Akyıldız and Argan (2010) investigated how much, why and how students use Facebook and their impact on education and social interaction. Social, daily and educational purposes were measured via a questionnaire administered to 1300 undergraduate students. Purpose statements related to social and daily activities had a higher score than educational and school-related purposes' statements. Keleş and Demirel (2011) conducted an application of Facebook as a social network with undergraduate students in formal education to investigate this application period in terms of students' interaction with other students and lecturers as well as the content of the course. The results of the study showed that Facebook assisted course facilitated the aspects like sharing and cooperation; accessing to the lecturer; visualizing the course content for some students. Çelik (2012) looked at how and why student teachers use Facebook and came up with various uses in different settings. As most research indicates, there is a growing interest in the use of social networking in educational settings in Turkey. Thus, there should be an investigation of whether there is a correlation between Facebook adoption processes and educational use of Facebook on the one hand and between purposes of Facebook use and educational use of Facebook on the other, which constitutes the purpose of this study.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Questions

Using a group of Facebook users (N=606), Mazman and Usluel (2010) proposed a structural equation model consisting of three latent variables namely "Facebook adoption", "purposes of Facebook use" and "educational use of Facebook". The research questions of this study, **which employed a survey design**, were formulated in light of these variables as follows.

RQ1) Do PELTs' Facebook adoption processes have an impact on their educational use of Facebook?

RQ2) Do PELTs' purposes of Facebook use have an impact on educational use of Facebook?

RQ3) Do PELTs' experiences on Facebook have an impact on their teaching skills?

### Setting and Participants

The participants are 113 student teachers studying in the English Language Teaching Department (ELT) of Gazi University, **Turkey**. The ELT Department offers students a four year program on teaching English as a foreign language. The first year of the program focuses mainly on linguistic and teaching skills, while the following years includes methodology classes such as Approaches in ELT, Methodology in the Area of Specialization I, Methodology in the Area of Specialization II, Teaching Foreign Language to Children, Testing and Evaluation in English. Further, students in this program are required to take applied courses namely School Experience and Teaching Practice. They have the chance to put their theoretical knowledge into practice in

the School Experience and Teaching Practice courses. The sophomores who took part in this study were enrolled in the class entitled “Language Acquisition” in the fall semester of 2011-2012 academic year.

**Table 1:** Demographic profiles of the participants

Item		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	96	85.0
	Male	17	15.0
Age	18	1	0.9
	19	3	2.7
	20	42	37.2
	21	44	38.9
	22	17	15.0
	23	2	1.8
	Missing	4	3.5
Frequency of Facebook usage	Several times a day	59	53.2
	Several times a week	45	39.8
	Several times a month	7	6.2
	Missing	2	1.8
Length of stay in Facebook	Less than 15 min	6	5.3
	Approximately half an hour	35	31.0
	Approximately an hour	36	31.9
	1-3 hours	26	23.4
	More than 3 hours	8	7.1
	Missing	2	1.8

As seen in table 1, most of the participants were female (85%). Their ages ranged from 18 to 23 years (20 years- 42%, 21 years- 44%). As for the frequency of Facebook use, most of the participants used Facebook several times a day. Their length of stay in Facebook varied between half an hour and 3 hours.

### **Student Teachers' Roles**

The participating student teachers had to do several things during the study. Just before they started to use Facebook for educational purposes, the researcher met them and introduced the study to them. In this meeting, the researcher gave a brief presentation on Facebook, and the study itself. The educational values of Facebook were shared with the participants. The researcher underlined the following points: 1- Each participant should open yet another Facebook account spared only for the use with the participants. 2- They should also open an account in Scribd ([www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com)) 3- They should write weekly reflections on the course to upload their reflections each week. 4- They should make comments on each other's reflections on Facebook. After the study was introduced to the participants, the semester began and participants attended the class. As time went by, the students wrote their reflections on Facebook. When the students covered “Social Interactionism”, they were expected to answer four questions on “Social Interactionism”. The researcher, (the instructor of the class at the same time), read their reflections and made several comments to start a discussion about the specific topic of the session. The student teachers often asked questions about what they thought they did not

understand. This was mostly carried out through chats on Facebook. Each week the students and the instructor determined an appropriate time beforehand to meet online so as to discuss the topic of the week.

### Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument including 3 latent variables namely “Facebook adoption”, “purposes of Facebook usage” and “educational usage of Facebook” (Mazman & Usluel, 2010) was used to collect the data for this study. The instrument includes demographic information about the respondents including participants’ frequency of Facebook use and length of time spent in Facebook. The “Scale of Facebook Adoption” component contains 22 questions on how users feel about Facebook in general. The second component, “Scale for Purposes of Facebook Use”, includes 11 questions inquiring the respondents’ purposes in using Facebook in their daily lives. The final section, “Scale for Educational Use of Facebook”, is concerned basically with the educational usage of Facebook.

Piloting is an essential part of any quantitative research and “any attempt to shortcut the piloting stage will seriously jeopardize the psychometric quality of the study” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 75). It is widely acknowledged that researchers have to pilot their instruments and procedure before launching their actual projects. This crucial point led the researcher to plan every single stage of designing, piloting and administrating the study. Therefore, the questionnaire was piloted with fifty randomly-selected student-teachers from the same population to make sure that the participants understood the items clearly and was found to be highly reliable ( $r=0,86$ ). (see table 2 for detailed results of the reliability analysis).

**Table 2:** Reliability Analysis of the Instrument

	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
<b>Variable I-</b> Facebook adoption	<i>0.879</i>
<b>Variable II-</b> Purposes of Facebook use	<i>0.775</i>
<b>Variable III-</b> Educational uses of Facebook	<i>0.927</i>

The values vary from 0.77 to 0.92, which indicates that the inventory was observed to display high alpha scores. Subsequent to the reliability analysis, the instrument was applied to participating student teachers through Facebook.

### Interviews

The main purpose of the interviews was to have a deeper insight into the educational use of Facebook. In order to answer the third research question focusing specifically on PELTs’ experiences in Facebook in educational settings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a group of PELTs ( $n=25$ ). As Dörnyei (2003) suggests, it is often recommended that the questionnaire design phase be preceded by a small-scale qualitative study. Group interviews are widely used to provide information on the relevant points and issues. In addition to this, in the literature, one can easily see a lot of research studies using group interviews, for they may help to reveal consensus views, generate richer responses by allowing participants to challenge one another’s views, and may be used to verify research ideas or data gained through other methods.

The interview questions went through different processes and were revised before they were used to collect the data for the study. First of all, five questions were formulated on the basis of



the previous studies (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010; Sanchez-Franco, Villarejo-Ramos, & Martin-Velicia, 2011). Dörnyei (2003) believes that in the process of writing questions some external feedback is indispensable especially when an initial item pool is prepared. With this in mind, these five questions were sent off to two experts on social networking in educational settings for content/construct validity. In accordance with the suggestions made by these experts, it was decided that two questions would be enough to answer the research question. Field-testing, which is an integral part of questions writing is “piloting the questions at various stages of their development on a sample of people who are similar to the target sample for which the questions have been asked” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 112). These two questions were piloted with ten PELTs. The implementation of the questions revealed that these two questions were clear enough for the participants to respond properly.

### Data Analysis

SPSS v.18.0 was used to analyze data in this research. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to prove the significance of the variables. Stepwise regression is designed to find the most parsimonious set of predictors that are most effective in predicting the dependent variable (Hurvich & Tsai, 1990). We used aforementioned variables as regressors, and educational usage of Facebook as regress. As for the interviews, there are several steps that need to be considered during the analysis of qualitative data. These steps include transcription, coding, and description of data, as well as data analysis (Gass & Mackey, 2000).

The qualitative data were analyzed by the researcher. The constant comparative method, which derived from the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), was used for the analysis of data. Accordingly, the first step was the coding of the data while the second step was the categorization of the data. Both of these studies were carried out by the coder independent from the researcher. The coding process revealed a reliability of over 80% in coding and categorization. The initial studies regarding analysis of qualitative data were mostly based on categorizing the data collected immediately. This process was fulfilled mostly by reading the data many times until the discovery of some underlying themes.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study set out to investigate whether PELTs' Facebook adoption processes had an impact on their educational use of Facebook and whether PELTs' purposes of Facebook use had an impact on educational use of Facebook.

**Table 3:** Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis (n = 113)

	Unstandardized $\beta$	Standardized $\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	.744	-	2.170	.032
Facebook Adoption	.442	.401	4.124	.000
Purposes of Facebook Use	.287	.307	3.56	.002

*Dependent variable: Educational uses of Facebook*  
*R<sup>2</sup> = .407; Adjusted R Square = .395*

As is easily seen in table 3, there was a significant and positive relationship between “Facebook adoption” and “educational use of Facebook” ( $r= 0.442$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Likewise, “purposes of Facebook” was found to be positively associated with “educational use of Facebook” ( $r=0.287$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). “Facebook adoption” had a relatively significant effect on “educational usage of Facebook” ( $b=0,42$ ) while “Purposes of Facebook use” had a relatively low effect on “educational use of Facebook” ( $b=0.287$ ). In other words, hypotheses 1 and 2 were confirmed through the statistical analysis.

The first research question is concerned with the impact of Facebook adoption on educational use of Facebook. According to Mazman and Usluel (2010), there are five factors that may affect Facebook's adoption in educational settings. Defined as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his other job performance” (Davis, 1989) usefulness plays a key role in Facebook's adoption, which is also related to various opportunities Facebook offers. Ease of use, which is defined as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort” (Davis, 1989), is another important component of Facebook's adoption. The third factor, social influence, is defined as “the individual's internalization of the reference groups' subjective culture, and specific interpersonal agreements that the individual has made with others, in specific social situations” (Thompson, Higgins, & Howell, 1991). In this regard, Facebook plays a prominent role in maintaining social relationships with others in a social community. Facilitating conditions defined as “the objective factors found in the environment that observers agree to make an act easy to accomplish, provision of support for users in the case of need or in the case of difficulties and also easily controlling environment according to own mind” (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003), are an essential aspect of the adoption process, which is greatly linked to Facebook due to its help menus or support services.

The final factor in the adoption process of Facebook is community identity which is described as “an individual's identification with the group in the sense that the person comes to view himself or herself as a member of the community, as “belonging” (Dholakia, Bagozzi, & Pearo, 2004). This factor is highly critical because Facebook is a platform where users can communicate with each other, share a lot of things such as ideas, resources, materials, and carry out discussions. In line with the assumption that students constantly communicate about their lives, opinions, interests, and schoolwork, the student teachers in this study reported that Facebook was used as an effective educational tool in their learning contexts. This finding is in tune with those of the studies of Hewitt and Forte (2006) and Fischman (2008), who simply indicate that social networks can provide numerous other pedagogical advantages to both teachers and students in addition to high usage rates and technological advantages. In a similar fashion, social networking tools have been praised for their educational value and potential and are heralded for their capacity to encourage student motivation and engagement (Thorne, Black, & Sykes, 2009).

As for the second research question whether there is a correlation between purposes of Facebook use and educational use of Facebook, purposes of Facebook use had an effect on the educational use of Facebook, as table 3 shows. There are several research studies indicating why Facebook is used by people. To exemplify, Stutzman (2006) believes that Facebook is being used for wasting time, learning about others, maintaining social communication, following updates about friends, school or class. Furthermore, Lockyer and Patterson (2008) explain that Facebook users can share personal information through their profiles, visit others' profiles to get information about them, upload, tag and share multimedia content and initiate or join groups of common interests or pursuits. In a very recent study, Nadkarni and Hoffman (2011) claim that there are two primary needs that drive people to use Facebook (1) the need to belong and (2) the need for self-presentation. According to Mazman and Usluel (2010), there are three basic reasons for people to use Facebook. First, social relations, to Mazman and Usluel (2010), are one of the most crucial aspects of Facebook use. People with similar interests form various groups. Second, “work relatedness” concerns professional purposes which include accessing information,

supporting their work in progress and sharing projects, materials, resources etc (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). Research suggests that social networks allow for direct access and interaction with large numbers of people and communities, encourage collaboration and discussion of course material, and promote immediate sharing and development of written, audio, and visual content (Rosen, 2010). Finally, daily activity may be considered wasting time, keeping updated about what's happening around one's social circles, having fun, playing games or joining groups in Facebook.

As for educational usage of Facebook, Mazman and Usluel (2010) propose that there are three factors that influence it. First and foremost, communication contains activities to facilitate and practice communication among students and their instructors, class discussions, comprehension of announcements about classes and courses, departments or schools, delivery of homework and assignments by teachers, informing about resources and links related to courses. Secondly, collaboration includes exchanging ideas, sharing information and working together on similar interests. According to Selywn (2007a), social networking sites provide opportunities for members to open up spaces for collaborative learning. Finally, resource/material sharing which is greatly linked to exchanging ideas and information, includes several activities such as exchanging multimedia resources, videos, audio materials, animated videos, resources and documents. Facebook increases both teacher-student and student-student interaction in the form of web-based communication. Moreover, Facebook keeps instructors informed about their students' assignments, upcoming events, useful links, and samples of work outside of the classroom. Students can use Facebook to contact classmates about questions regarding class assignments or examinations as well as to collaborate on assignments and group projects in an online environment.

These findings are in tune with those of the studies conducted by Lockyer and Patterson (2008), and Aijan and Harsthone (2008). More specifically, Lockyer and Patterson (2008) found that social networks created numerous opportunities for students to interact with each other in a graduate course. Similarly, the research conducted by Aijan and Harsthone (2008) concluded that student-student interaction was created through a social networking site in educational settings. Building on the face-to-face teacher-student relationship, social networking allows students to glimpse instructor profiles containing personal information, interests, background and friends which can enhance student motivation, affective learning, and classroom climate (Heiberger & Harper, 2008; Munoz & Towner, 2009). In terms of classroom climate, Baran (2010) asserted that the students who used Facebook as a formal instructional environment reported that the use of Facebook contributed to altering the patterns of teaching and learning as well as to knowing classmates better, which was related to effective classroom climate. As table 3 displays, both "Facebook adoption" and "purposes of Facebook use" had an impact on "educational use of Facebook". However, in Mazman and Usluel's research (2010), educational use of Facebook was more directly explained by "purposes of Facebook use" than "Facebook adoption". In our study, though, "Facebook adoption" seemed to have a greater effect on "educational use of Facebook" than "purposes of Facebook use". This finding correlates with those of previous studies specifically in terms of usefulness (King & He, 2006; Ngai, Poon, & Chan, 2007). Those who adopt Facebook for its usefulness find the use of social networking beneficial in educational settings.

### **Interview Results**

As mentioned above, in order to understand the impact of Facebook adoption and purposes of Facebook use on the educational use of Facebook, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a group of PELTs (n=25) in five groups. The main purpose of the interviews was to take a deeper insight about the educational use of Facebook. The first question was based on student

teachers' experiences in social networking. The following views were related to the first question which was "What kind of things did you experience while using social networking in educational settings?"

*"It was really different. I should say extraordinary mainly because Facebook is something I can not live without. Seeing that I use it at my university was just great" (Student Teacher C).*

*"I really enjoyed reaching the presentations online. When I was listening to the instructor, I was taking notes. But when I had the presentations in hand, I could easily make a better connection about the topics" (Student Teacher F).*

In relation to the second question which was "How did you find the use of social networking in educational settings?", the student teachers had the following views.

*"Very useful! There are two basic reasons for this. First, it was interesting to use Facebook in educational settings. Second, it really contributed to communication between me and the instructor" (Student Teacher K).*

*"Facebook gave me a lot of opportunities that I could hardly have. For example, we had a chance of discussing some topics in the class. This way I thought I had a better understanding of relevant topics clearly" (Student Teacher L).*

One can easily gather from the student teachers' remarks that they enjoyed the use of Facebook in an educational setting. Most participants regarded the use of social networking namely Facebook as effective and interesting because it was not something they did not do very often in their regular classes. Another important finding emanating from the assignments easily interviews was that Facebook helped student teachers reach classroom materials such as presentations and class notes. More importantly, the student teachers benefited from the use of Facebook in terms of technological skills. Voithofer (2007) argued that teaching through social networking and social media could result in greater awareness for pre-service teachers about the technical and pedagogical characteristics of educational technology, the social aspects of educational technology, and the use of emerging technologies in teaching. Much in line with Voithofer's arguments the participants of the study found this experience interesting and useful because they were given opportunities to develop their capacity to use web technologies in learning environments. As seen above, the remarks simply indicated that the student teachers really benefited from the use of Facebook.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study set out to investigate whether PELTs' Facebook adoption processes had an impact on their educational use of Facebook and whether PELTs' purposes of Facebook use had an impact on educational use of Facebook. The findings revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between "Facebook adoption" and "educational use of Facebook". Likewise, "purposes of Facebook" was found to be positively associated with "educational use of Facebook". "Facebook adoption" had a relatively significant effect on "educational use of Facebook" while "Purposes of Facebook usage" had a relatively low effect on "educational use of Facebook" ( $b=0.287$ ). Furthermore, student teachers seemed to feel that social networking should be employed in their learning contexts because it creates a more interesting learning experience.

The study itself has revealed three important implications. On the basis of the findings of this research, using social networking in pre-service language teacher education can offer direct benefits to both teacher educators and student teachers. It is also emphasized that this may help student teachers develop their reflective skills to look at their own teaching practices more constructively. The results may also be of relevance to teacher educators in better understanding

the potential contribution of social networking to not only student teachers' metacognitive awareness but also teaching practice. More broadly, these findings confirm the usefulness of using social networking in pre-service language teacher education. Social networking can be considered to be an effective way of promoting metacognitive awareness, specifically reflective practice in teacher education. This can be achieved if use of social networking can be embedded as a part of student teachers' professional development. It is highly believed that student teachers develop this interactive tool to support their own Professional career upon the completion of their BA education. Johnson and Templeton (2011) indicate that the 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers need to be prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century kids, who are themselves competent users of social media. That is to say, they should adjust their teaching competencies in order to keep up with the changing landscapes of the current technological innovations. This is in line with the assumption that if ESL teachers have to use technology effectively with their own students, they must use it for learning when they are already students (Kamhi-Stein, 2000). In relation to this, ELT programmes should modify their syllabuses in such a way as to materialize the aforementioned ideas.

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## APPENDIX

### QUESTIONS USED DURING THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- 1- What kind of things did you experience while using social networking in educational settings?
- 2- How did you find the use of social networking in educational settings?
- 3- Did the use of social networking contribute to you teaching skills? If so, in what ways?

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