Acknowledgments

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who made this project possible:

Many thanks go to those who showed enthusiasm about the project and did actually offer me their Facebook chat records that made it all happen.

Thanks to my supervisor, Mrs. Hassina, for scanning each and every corner in this thesis. Her genuine generousness and constant support are profoundly appreciated.

Thanks to my dear friend and sister Imene Goui whose passion toward Discourse Analysis, and knowingness in digital computer skills accomplished this work.

Thanks to my teachers who inspired me all along, especially the model teacher Mr. Bashar and Mr. Turqui.

Thanks to Dr. Hammoudi, my teacher of methodology, for all the invaluable suggestions he provided over this work.

Many thanks go to Dr. Bodomo Adams from the University of Hong Kong who provided me with the updated resources I needed and never failed to respond to my inquiries via e-mail.
ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the impact of the internet and new technologies on written English. It considers both theoretical and empirical aspects of writing in Computer-mediated communication (CMC). Theoretically, it reviews research on the impact of different mediums on writing, introduces the new medium of CMC with particular focus on Facebook, then it reports the linguistic properties of computer-mediated writing found in previous research. Empirically, it analyzes Algerian EFL learners’ writings in a computer-mediated situation, namely Facebook chat. The assumption is that writing in Facebook chat, and by extension all modes of CMC, is different from the traditional norms of formal English. In testing this, the present research examined how orthography, grammar, and vocabulary were practiced by Algerian EFL learners in CMC, and compared them to both standard writing and speech. The results revealed that writing in CMC is a hybrid of formal standard writing and speech. However, the tendency was more toward informality and speech, especially in the typographical features that were used creatively to convey paralanguage.

Key words: Computer-mediated Communication, Facebook chat, written English
List of Abbreviations

Async CMC : Asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication
BBS: Bulletin Board System
CMC : Computer-Mediated Communication
CMD : Computer-Mediated Discourse
CS : Common Speech
EAP : English for Academic Purposes
EFL : English as a Foreign Language
E-language :Electronic language
E-mail:Electronic mail
FF : Female to female conversation
FM : Female to male conversation
f-t-f : Face to Face
FW : Formal Writing
IM : Instant Messaging
IRC : Internet Relay Chat
MM : Male to male conversation
MUD : Multiuser Domain
SMS: Short Message Service
Sync CMC : Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication
WWW : World Wide Web
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