Chapter 6
Facebook Comparison Research: Faculty and Student Perceptions of Social Media for Foreign Language Courses

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ABSTRACT
This chapter discusses the adoption of the social networking site Facebook for use in foreign language courses. By comparing university faculty and student perceptions, the study presented aims to determine if faculty and students view the potential of using Facebook for foreign languages differently. It also aims to determine if there is specific reasoning behind the current relative lack of use of Facebook for foreign languages. Data was collected via faculty and student surveys modeled after the work of Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, and Witty (2010) in addition to follow-up interviews. The survey responses from the foreign language faculty (n=29) and students (n=152) indicate that both faculty and students utilize Facebook for personal use; however, the nature of this use varies. In addition, although students are more likely to have used Facebook previously for academic purposes than were the foreign language faculty members, there were mixed results in both groups concerning the use of Facebook for foreign language courses. Last, the results of follow-up interviews reveal that both faculty and students feel there is an array of potentially useful tools available on Facebook for language learning and teaching; however, faculty indicated a need for further training to implement these tools in their teaching. Based on these findings, the chapter ends with a discussion of practical implications and directions for future research.

INTRODUCTION
The widespread use of social networking sites such as Facebook has revolutionized the way many people communicate for personal, commercial, and educational purposes including those related to language learning. In particular, Facebook offers several methods for communication, multiple languages, access to multimedia, and most students already know the platform. It also addresses several defining characteristics of the digital natives as described by Prensky (2001) including the need for receiving information at
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With such popularity and unique characteristics that could support language use in general, and as students become increasingly more connected through social networking sites, it is important for language educators to explore how sites such as Facebook can be utilized to support language learning. Over the past few years there have been several reports of using Facebook for foreign language education including, but not limited to Blattner and Fiori (2011, 2009), Blattner and Lomicka (2012), Damron (2009), Li (2012), Mills (2011, 2009), Mitchell (2012), Reinhardt and Zander (2011), Roberts (2009), Terantino (2012), and Terantino and Graf (2011). Among the few research-based projects examining the effects of utilizing Facebook for language teaching and learning some have reported benefits including establishing a sense of community (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Damron, 2009; Mills, 2011; Terantino, 2012), developing socio-pragmatic competence (Blattner & Fiori, 2009), increasing motivation and learner engagement (Mills, 2009; Terantino, 2012), and developing writing skills in the target language (Roberts, 2009; Terantino, 2012).

As noted, there is an emerging field of research, which accounts for several positive effects of implementing Facebook in foreign language courses. So, why do most foreign language educators still not utilize Facebook? As Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, and Witty (2010) point out, in education there is often a “disconnect between tools preferred by students and those used by teachers.” Furthermore, this disconnect carries over to the gap between students’ learning needs and what instructors are capable of doing pedagogically. Often, when it comes to adopting new technologies for instructional purposes, “students are willing; faculty members are not” (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010). The purpose of the study presented in this chapter is to verify this statement with foreign language faculty and students.

To accomplish this feat data were collected related to faculty and student personal and academic uses of Facebook. Then, the focus of the chapter shifts to determining whether the faculty and students felt it would be advantageous to utilize Facebook in foreign language courses and if so, which tools they felt would be potentially useful. Ultimately, these groups of perceptions were compared to determine significant differences. The specific research questions, which guided the study, were as follows:

1. What is the nature of Facebook personal use by foreign language faculty and students? How do these uses compare?
2. What proportion of the faculty and students has used Facebook in higher education? How do these uses compare?
3. What is the nature of the faculty and student perceptions of using Facebook to support foreign language coursework? How do these perceptions compare?
4. What Facebook tools do faculty and students feel might be useful to language teachers and students? How do these feelings compare?

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Social Networking

Social media sites, such as Facebook, provide a means of communication that is highly accessible to users across the globe. Many social networking tools allow people to connect with other users through the exchange of profiles, status updates, photos, and videos. For example, the Facebook revolution began in 2004 when Mark Zuckerberg