Social media language

This drawing shows an example of how a classroom might link to other places and people in a mobile pedagogy (original artwork by Martyn Ford).

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“Re-wilding” language education (Little & Thorne, 2017)

Today in Digital Media Literacy at the ESL House, I had my students do the activity where they look up new words on Instagram to understand them in context. It went super well so I wanted to let you know!
“Re-wilding” language education

Though, having people search on Instagram in real time is playing with fire haha 😬 …

… Because a lot of Instagram users hashtag high-frequency words in order to get more likes (even words that have nothing to do with the photo), some pictures that showed up were unrelated, especially in a semi-inappropriate way. For example, there was a picture of a scantily-clad model when we searched #adventure… stuff like that. It was fine with the older IESL students, but might have been a problem with younger students. Of course, I checked the words beforehand, but I should have selected lower-frequency words.
Objectives

- Affordances for learner investment and community engagement
- Answer with strategies for overcoming the main hesitations about social media use in the language classroom
- Situating social media activities within the 6 ecosystems of MALL
  - Technological requirements
  - Institutional challenges
  - Sociocultural challenges
  - Affordances for the various parts of the acquisitional ecosystem
  - Affordances for various language skills
- Affordances for becoming multilinguals
• Language enters the classroom through the teacher(‘s choices)
• Learners comprehend, practice, produce language

• Language enters the classroom through the learners(‘ phones)
• Teacher guides collaborative sense-making and engagement with language
Already familiar to learners

Figure 5. Most popular app categories for personal use (N = 1,181)
Constructs from SLA research

- Giving learners agency (Kukulska-Hulme, 2013)
- Motivation is a matter of (Ushioda 2013):
  - Choice and autonomy
  - Personally meaningful casual learning
- Learning in the exact same conditions as use (Lightbown, 2008)
Hesitations

What are your fears and concerns about using social media in the language classroom?

- Respond at PollEv.com/thorsawin918
- Text THORSAWIN918 to 22333 once to join, then text your message

No responses received yet. They will appear here...

Poll Everywhere
Upgrade to enable moderation

Be the first to like this.
Privacy Hesitations → Solutions

• Have conversations explicitly about privacy with learners – provide an anonymous forum to hear concerns
  • We rarely have these discussions even about our Course Management systems – access often disappears.

• Use vetted social media explicitly for language learners (HelloTalk, Tandem)

• Publish class-facing findings to blogs that can be closed to a select group of learners
  • Anything available to the general public should ethnically have the chance to be corrected and polished

• Be included as a teacher in any in-group multiparty chats (WhatsApp, WeChat number)
Privacy Hesitations → Solutions

• A common task as a class, let learners choose the media and account they want

• If common media, choose one where it easy to create and switch to an alternate account (linked to junk email account, or student email account)
  • Tasks to be completed in pairs/groups, displayed in class, involving production/interaction
    • Twitter (easy to create, harder to switch) 😊
    • Instagram (easy to create, easy to switch) 😊
    • Facebook (hard to create, hard to switch) 😞
  • Tasks involving individual research alone can use primary account

• Teach learners how to take and edit screenshots, both on their phone and on PC/Mac
  • Can edit out personally identifying/incriminating information in screenshots
Accountability Hesitations → Solutions

- Have learners document findings by uploading/sharing
  - Screenshots of what they found
  - Copied-and-pasted examples of language
  - Reflections:
    - One thing they learned
    - One thing they still don’t understand
    - One thing to try/look for in the future
- Create exercises around authentic social media data
  - Examples of present-tense verbs → rewrite in past tense
  - Fill in a conjugation chart with contextualized examples
- “Outside interaction” grade (x%) 
  - Learners compile evidence of interaction (in person, phone call, social media)
  - Learners write a reflection on what they have learned in terms of language, culture, language acquisition
6 Ecosystems: Is it worth doing MALL?

**Pedagogical ecosystem**
*What pedagogical functions are improved?*
(Grading, attendance, writing, interaction, presentations, qualitative feedback, review, brainstorming…)

**Institutional ecosystem**
*What stakeholders need to be involved?*
(Co-teachers, parents, parallel sections, administrators, technologists, journalists, school board members, …)

**Technological ecosystem**
*What other technologies are required?*
(Bandwidth, wifi, headphones, speakers, installed keyboards, plugs, batteries, projectors, adapters …)

**Acquisitional ecosystem**
*What aspects of language acquisition are provided?*
(input, output, interaction, feedback, pattern-finding, sense-making, negotiation, gap-noticing…)

**Linguistic ecosystem**
*What language skills are covered?*
(reading, writing, listening, speaking, presentation, interaction, interpretation, grammar, vocabulary, linguaculture, pronunciation…)

**Sociocultural ecosystem**
*What ideologies facilitate/hinder?*
(privacy, teacher’s role, standard language, disclosiveness, gender…)

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Affordances | Hesitations | Technological Ecosystem | Institutional Ecosystem | Sociocultural Ecosystem | Acquisitional Ecosystem | Linguistic Ecosystem | Multilingual Media
What needs to be in place first?

- If social media homework, ensure access to spaces with WiFi to conserve bandwidth
- Have a way to project findings that students send in (from phone, from laptop)
- If induction, use shared documents (Google Docs, Hypothesis) – where learners can upload and annotate their findings

Teach the following technical skills

- Setting the language for an account
- Searching using hashtag functions (Instagram & Twitter) vs. regular search (Twitter, Messenger)
- Screenshot (taking, editing, emailing, sharing)
- Switching keyboards on phone
- Uploading sound & video files

Technological ecosystem

*What other technologies are required?* (Bandwidth, wifi, headphones, speakers, installed keyboards, plugs, batteries, projectors, adapters …)
Who to get on board?

- Language program chair
- Co-teachers
- Policies for when & how devices will be used
- Learners – how do they want you to deal with inappropriate findings? Language variation?
- Parents – what are their concerns?

**Institutional ecosystem**

*What stakeholders need to be involved? (Co-teachers, parents, parallel sections, administrators, technologists, journalists, school board members, …)*
What to discover?

• A survey of learners’ own concerns/preferences (content-based instruction)
• Present results of survey anonymously/grouped
• Notice how different groups use social media different in the target language ← overt attention and discussion
• Learners chose whether to use primary or alternate account, which media

Sociocultural ecosystem
What ideologies facilitate/hinder? (privacy, teacher’s role, standard language, disclosiveness, gender…)

What are the affordances of social media for:
- Input
- Intake
- Communicative Need
- Output
- Feedback?

Acquisitional ecosystem

What aspects of language acquisition are provided? (input, output, interaction, feedback, pattern-finding, sense-making, negotiation, gap-noticing...)
Linguistic ecosystem

What language skills are covered? (reading, writing, listening, speaking, presentation, interaction, interpretation, grammar, vocabulary, linguaculture, pronunciation…)

• Pronunciation:
  • Search for alternate spellings (informal pronunciation)
  • Search for words containing letter combinations representing new sounds (<dsch>, <th>)
  • Use the microphone function in a WhatsApp or iMessenger conversation

• Grammar:
  • Conjugation charts filled with social media posts
  • Fill out a conjugation chart inductively
  • Search for relative frequencies of word orders (# or frequencies) of found examples
**Linguistic ecosystem**

*What language skills are covered?* (reading, writing, listening, speaking, presentation, interaction, interpretation, grammar, vocabulary, linguaculture, pronunciation…)

- **Extensive Reading:**
  - Articles lined in twitter that are hashtagged with a certain topic
  - Canvas social media for meaningful quotes/poems/short stories

- **Vocabulary:**
  - Social media data on flash cards
  - Composing social media posts that use new vocabulary, modelled on others’ posts containing those words
  - Gathering expert knowledge - “What is the difference between X & Y?” “Where/when would it be not appropriate to say X?” “What does the word X make you think of?”
Linguistic ecosystem

What language skills are covered? (reading, writing, listening, speaking, presentation, interaction, interpretation, grammar, vocabulary, linguaculture, pronunciation…)

• Language variation:
  • Look for and map [geotagged] examples of regional variants (i.e. “good morning”)
  • Hunt for and diagram secondary senses of a word (i.e. “ill” “wicked”)
  • Follow very formal and very informal Twitter accounts – what language variants are formal, neutral, informal?

• Vocabulary:
  • Social media data on flash cards
  • Composing social media posts that use new vocabulary, modelled on others’ posts containing those words
  • Gathering expert knowledge - “What is the difference between X & Y?” “Where/when would it be not appropriate to say X?” “What does the word X make you think of?”
Doubled monolinguals or multilinguals?

• Eva: С днем рождения, Jin li na!!! :
• Lena: 시에 시에 형사모~ ^^
• Eva: it's 홍!ㅋㅋㅋ
• Lena: copri :-) 홍사모 ^^
• Eva: haha well... not yet, not yet ^_____^
• Lena: half way tho!~~~^^
What to do with multilingual social media posts?

- We don't really get to see each other だけど、oki boundの人たちに会う時、全然久しぶりに感じないんだけど😊
- "Que lindas. Les Mando un beso! Love you girls."
- "Hello! Hej! I'm happy that just YOU are following me❤ Nu är jag 1002 gånger förvånad över att så många följer mig 😊😊😊"
- Ce weekend, profitez pleinement de l'hiver en allant faire de la raquette entre amis. This weekend, take full advantage of the winter by going snowshoeing with your friends.
- "no waayyy, du solltest (Facebook Name) markieren"
- "I'm always inspired when I visit my mother's childhood home. It's a testament to her strong spirit and willingness to work hard for a better life. I owe all my accomplishments to her suffering and selflessness. Poco a poquito crece el frijolito."
- "Meilleur Papa-Noël 😊 ! GREAT TIMES!!! Prends-moi à nouveau sur tes genoux :* wut?"
- Natalia Cordova @YOSOYCORDOVA - #FRIDAKAHLO Mi hermana siempre a mis espaldas!!! She who lived, loved & fought like no other! You are here today! #womensmarch @womensmarch
Summary

• Social media has many risks, but the affordances outweigh the risks if:
  • Privacy is addressed head-on
  • Use as a hypothesis-generating and hypothesis-testing space

• Interaction is perhaps the most helpful use of social media, but can be used for all parts of the acquisition process

• Not just for informal four-skill interaction:
  • Extensive reading and listening
  • Pronunciation
  • Grammar
  • Vocabulary

• Models authentic language, including authentic multilingualism – of the kind they are least likely to find in formal academic settings