Social media in language teaching:

flickr  YouTube  Twitter  Facebook

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AGENDA

- Defining social media
- Social media in EFL classroom
- Focus on 4 social media platforms:
  1. Flickr
  2. YouTube
  3. Twitter
  4. Facebook
- Considerations (caveats & limitations)
- Social media practices impact on teaching & learning
DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media are internet-based sites + services that promote social interaction between participants.

Examples: discussion forums, blogs, wikis, podcasting, social network sites, content-sharing sites, virtual worlds

social media
→ content published by anyone; distributed across potentially large-scale audiences.

traditional mass media
→ one-to-many broadcasting mechanism (e.g. TV, radio, print newspapers).

(Page et al. 2014: 5)
**DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA II**

Social media

- diverse forms
- different genres
- genres in specific ways
- diverse channels + text types

**Web 2.0**
- economic, social, technological trends
- next generation of internet in late 2004
- collaboration, participation, openness, network effects (Musser et al. 2007)

**Social media**
Web 2.0 innovation

(Page et al. 2014: 5–6)
DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA

Interactions between people: participation structure
– dialogic + collaborative potential
– sender + recipient of message interact directly within short time frame

Purpose + activity: interactions exchange information
activities, feelings, breaking news, gossip, other discourse genres (e.g. jokes)

Participant characteristics + self disclosure
display info about member’s id in the form of a profile page

(Page et al. 2014: 12–15)
DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA

Media as mode: channels of communication + media richness

- Texts produced by technology
- Semiotic resources (images, movement, sound, words)
- Blurring of spoken + written modes

Media as technology: message format

- Social media technological characteristics
- Technologies to transmit messages (mobile phones, tablets, laptops)

(Page et al. 2014: 15–18)
AFFORDANCES

- Enabling + constraining nature of modes + media → affordances.
- Term by James Gibson applied in media + CMC studies.
- Websites organised in certain ways to do certain things: search for navigation buttons, click highlighted texts, hover cursor over pictures (Myers 2010: 21).

  e.g. Skype – potentialities of audiovisual display + two-way channel of communication (Page et al. 2014: 18).

**Affordances** are the ways in which we understand elements of an environment in terms of their use.
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM

Millions of people now use social media to interact, collaborate, network, entertain themselves. (Warschauer & Grimes 2007)

Social media = indispensable component of many students’ daily + academic lives. (McBride 2009)

Application of social media in many L2 learning contexts has transformed pedagogy, curriculum design, the conception of language learning, even the research in this field. (Wang & Vásquez 2012)
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: BENEFITS

- Learning environments: embedded in students’ lives, comfortable, relaxed, collaboration-oriented, community-based, compelling, enjoyable.
- Interaction + collaboration + output in target language.
- Learners’ favourable attitudes to pedagogical use of social media → increased interest + motivation in language learning.
- Audience awareness (own + other’s position as audience)
- Increased cultural knowledge + cultural competence

(Davies 2006; Wang & Vásquez 2012; Sherman 2013)
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: BENEFITS II

Technology + communication skills.

Improvement in social relationships.

Open to new or diverse views.

Critical thinking skills.

Multimodal instruction stimulates students with various learning styles.

Students relate learning to their life + experiences.

(Davies 2006; Wang & Vásquez 2012; Sherman 2013)
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: BENEFITS III

- More **flexibility** than f2f interactions. Students don’t face same turn-taking constraints: **opportunities** to have floor are balanced + **visual record** of language interaction helps them negotiate meaning. They take on **roles** less likely to take on in other kinds of interactions (e.g. student as teacher). Choices made in online interactions **encourage future participation**.

- Online “conversations” are different in some ways, social media provide excellent models for **how language is actually used**. Students see authentic language ranging from casual conversation to academic discourse.

(Davies 2006; Lee & Lien 2011; Wang & Vásquez 2012; Sherman 2013)
flickr

- Photo-sharing site to upload, display + share photos
- Launched in 2004
- 87 million active users (March 2013)
- 3.5 million new images uploaded daily (March 2013)
- Photographs = central but also interaction through various writing spaces (titles, captions, tags, comments)
IN EFL CLASSROOM

Extensive database of license-free images (NB: copyright!) for teachers to download as pedagogical resources.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/elpics/sets/
2) Rich array of writing spaces around photo support different kinds of language teaching + learning activities.
3) Deepening of global understandings within local space of Flickr. Students with projects on international cultures may use Flickr’s keyword search function to look for pics + info about other countries.

4) With teacher’s guidance, students can interact (by leaving a comment) with people from other parts of the world + learn about their languages + cultures. No need to divulge any personal info.

(Davies 2006: 217; Richardson 2006: 101–109; Barton & Lee 2013: 156)
- Based around video sharing, commenting, viewing.
- Founded in 2005.
- More than 1 billion unique visitors each month. Over 6 billion hours of video watched each month. 100 hours of video uploaded every minute (YouTube 2014).
- SNS, not site for only uploading videos (Burgess & Green 2009) relationships btw video uploaders + viewers.
- Primarily video-based site but rich in writing spaces (subtitles, annotations, commenting)

www.youtube.com/yt/playbook/annotations.html
IN EFL CLASSROOM

- YouTube = excellent database of multimedia content which promotes **autonomous, student-centred language learning**.
- Its multimodal affordances are especially valuable for language learners of all sorts to **practice speaking, writing + listening**.
- YouTube as **supplementary tool**: show short clips to introduce difficult subject matter, illustrate a point, review important points taught, close lessons.
- Students may be asked to hold **oral discussions** on the content of a video on YouTube (before or during class).

(Brook 2011: 40; Barton & Lee 2013: 156–157)
YouTube IN EFL CLASSROOM

- Teachers may **record** and **host** their lessons on YouTube for students to review after class.

- Teachers may encourage students to make their **own videos** as an **assignment** + share them on YouTube.

- **Annotation** (by self + others) + **comments** encourage students to evaluate content of videos → **interactivity** through writing outside class.

- **Fansubbing**: new literacy practice → production of subtitled video recordings (fansubs) + their distribution via internet by amateurs or fans (fansubbers).

- **Subtitling** activities: students use language to learn sth else (using software, vocabulary on selected clips etc.). **Cultural elements – communication – cognitive processes.**

  (Benson & Chan 2010: 4; Barton & Lee 2013: 156–157; Costales 2014)
Πήρα τα τελευταία πιτόγυρα.

Θέλετε να σας βάλω λίγο Πάριο.
Teachers can find lesson plan ideas on YouTube → videos of teachers presenting effective lessons. These resources stimulate in ways that simply reading about lesson plan ideas or hearing about them during professional development cannot.

(Jones & Cuthrell 2011: 81)
Microblogging = the writing of short messages on the web designed for self-reporting, about what one is doing, thinking or feeling at any moment. (Barton & Lee 2013: 38)

- Launched in 2006.
- Originally developed for mobile phones.
- 140-character text updates (‘tweets’) to a network.
- 284 million monthly active users | 500 million Tweets sent per day (Twitter 2014)
- Public figures + celebrities
Key writing space = the tweet

prompt + text box

mentioning

@ sign + username

hashtags

keyword that marks theme or topic of a tweet

retweet

participants repost tweets through their accounts
WHY TWITTER IN EFL CLASSROOM?

- Easily accessible from almost everywhere. Students can practice at any time by sending + receiving tweets on PC, mobile phone etc.
- Students can decide how much time they spend reading + writing tweets. Essential for busy students.
- Suitable for any level of English. Students can choose a topic + grammatical structure fitting their level.
- It helps integrate students who could not attend classroom.

(Borau et al. 2009)
Twitter in EFL Classroom

Backchannel = supplementary media running in parallel to some main form of communication.

1) Create an official course account
   (different to your professional or personal Twitter account)

   - Real-time updates: notices about administrative/procedural issues (e.g. cancellations), corrections to material, changes of venue etc.

   - Sharing resources: by ‘following’ experts, institutions, publishing houses + relevant resources (e.g. links) posted by teacher + students.

   - Encouraging student engagement: students are asked to answer questions or respond to a resource presented in class.

(Zappavigna 2014)
TWITTER IN EFL CLASSROOM II

- **Encouraging student bonding**: to organise meet-ups to work on group tasks + presentations + to socialise.

- **Encouraging real-time focus**: students are asked to answer questions via Twitter at certain points during lesson. They are also invited to **live-tweet** as a way of focusing attention on particular material.

2) **Teach students how to tweet**
Show students what an effective tweet looks like. Indicate kinds of tweets you hope they will produce + kinds of material they might share.

(Zappavigna 2014)
TWITTER IN EFL CLASSROOM III

3) Ask students to use semi-anonymous accounts
   @students’ initials + lesson time (e.g. @MZH13A).

i. Avoiding personal sharing via students’ existing personal accounts.

ii. Ensuring that material they post as part of lesson isn’t linked to their main account/online identity.

Main course account needs to ‘follow’ students’ accounts.

4) Use a warm-up activity

- Getting students familiar with using Twitter + create sense of shared experience within course.

- Activity should not involve sharing material that is personal.

(Zappavigna 2014)
5) Use hashtags
Aggregate + delineate discussions.

6) Link backchannel to HW assignment + assessment
Encourage students not involved in participating in Twitter.

7) Encourage live-tweeting at specific moments
Ask students to imagine they were media commentators live-tweeting from a professional event.

8) Display some tweets in class
Students excited if their tweets are featured in class (e.g. in parallel screen, tablet etc.).

(Zappavigna 2014)
Launched in 2004.
- Originally for communication among Harvard students.
- 864 million active users worldwide (Facebook 2014)
- Most popular among people aged between 26–34.
- Structured around user profiles (Timelines).
  Layout + functions modified + redesigned many times.
- Key writing space is status updates (or posts).

(Barton & Lee 2013: 38)
▪ Traditional **synchronous** + **asynchronous** forms of CMC interaction in one space.

▪ **Commenting** feature → mini discussion forums.

▪ Users share **photos** + create albums ≠ Flickr → different affordances.

▪ Facebook photos → known **audience**
  Flickr → much wider + global audience, strangers

▪ Friends can communicate **privately** (email, chat).

▪ **Like Button** → connection to external sites

(Barton & Lee 2013: 38–39)
Many students do not want their teachers to be friends on Facebook.

Facebook Group function facilitates teacher-initiated or student-initiated teaching + learning activities.

Group administrators can make content private + available to only members with approval to join → relatively private + safe course or class-based platform (Barton & Lee 2013: 158).

Students may also set up private Groups without teacher’s initiative to discuss assignments + organise projects (English & Duncan-Howell 2008).
1) Setting up a Facebook group
Create Facebook group before each course.

2) Putting up announcements

- Text, hyperlinks, pictures + videos on Wall.
- Wall allows participants to share resources + get feedback from others.

(Lee & Lien 2011; Wang et al. 2012)
3) Sharing course resources
Course materials in any format (text, ppt, PDF). Feature exclusive to Group area of Facebook is Docs allows members to compose + share text-based documents. // Wikis

4) Organising weekly tutorial sessions
Event function to organise weekly course materials. In each course, weekly materials are uploaded to event. Carefully choose profile pic to represent topic of that session. Set access to the event to ‘open’ so that students can access page without request.

(Lee & Lien 2011; Wang et al. 2012; Barton & Lee: 187)
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: CHOICE CONSIDERATIONS

- Newness + affordances of social media = tempting + attractive

**Which social media platform to use?**

1) Teachers’ reflection on their experience with educational technologies.

2) **Students’ preference** (e.g. through quick survey) (Barton & Lee 2013: 159).

- Pick a platform + see whether it enhances students’ learning experience + offers engagement in class. **Start small, test the waters + increase your use as you go** (Vie 2014).

- Understand students’ knowledge + their informal uses of social media (Barton & Lee 2013: 158).
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: TIME & SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

- Concepts of time and space in school-based lessons can be very different from those in interpersonal communication among friends.

**Example**
Private Facebook chat is often nested + **multitasking** is taken for granted.
≠ School classes organised into individual sessions which do not match with temporal + spatial flexibility in chatting.

(Barton & Lee 2013: 158)
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: TECHNOLOGICAL/EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

▪ Facebook **blocked** by schools as a behaviour management strategy (Vie 2014).

▪ Videos routinely **deleted** from YouTube + may suddenly become **inaccessible** (Brook 2011: 43; Jones & Cuthrell 2011: 82).

**http://www.saveyoutube.com**

▪ Have a plan for students who **don’t own mobile devices** (laptop, smartphone). Consider how these students will be able to use social media venues + investigate options for borrowing devices (Zappavigna 2014).
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: NECESSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- Whether or not schools want, and are ready, to acknowledge students’ out-of-school + innovative practices in digital literacies (Lewis 2007).

- Institution you work for may think social media is time-consuming or burdensome (Vie 2014).

- Students won’t see the value of using social media in class (Vie 2014). Parents too.
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

▪ Students may post inappropriate or off-topic videos, photos, posts, tweets.
▪ Students may post inappropriate or derogatory comments on others’ posts.
▪ Other social media users could make inappropriate comments on students’ posts (trolling, cyberbullying).
▪ Concern about students’ privacy as they broadcast their content to millions users over the Internet.

(Brook 2011)
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EFL CLASSROOM: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS II

- **Careful lesson planning.** Clear objectives, goals, instructions + expectations for a final product → students will remain focused.

- **Classroom management.** Give students five minutes at the beginning of class period to watch videos of their choosing on YouTube, for example, while attendance + other classroom business completed so they will not be tempted to get diverted later in the class period.

- **Familiarity with social media privacy settings.** Adjust settings to avoid unwanted comments from others → ensure that privacy of both students + school is maintained.

  (Brook 2011)
Students need to be aware of the growing importance of commercial influences in the context of social media – often invisible to the user.

‘Safety’ aspect: students need to know when they are being targeted by commercial appeals, and how info they provide can be used by commercial corporations.

Awareness of global role of advertising, promotion + sponsorship, and how influence nature of available info.

(Buckingham 2007: 48)
IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRACTICES ON LANGUAGE TEACHING & LEARNING

1) Autonomous language learning
Language learning initiated by students + under their control. It takes place in authentic situations → autonomous language learning. **LEARNING BY DOING** → actively, effectively, enjoyably through medium of their choice.

2) Understanding students’ everyday practices
Drawing on activities which reveal what students do outside classroom + understanding nature of online practices.

creativity + superdiverse nature of such platforms

Language as social practice
thinking + talking about language + literacy = valuable in class

(Barton & Lee 2013: 160–163)
3) Understanding teachers’ practices
Teachers vary in knowledge + confidence with new technologies. In deciding about pedagogical uses of social media → be reflexive + reflect upon their own relationships with social media in + outside classroom.

Re-negotiation of relationship btw teacher’s + students’ knowledge
Acceptance of + respect for students’ expertise in some areas

Teacher’s multiple identities (teacher, researcher, active social media user) shape their linguistic practices + forms of participation when interacting with students online. Member of students’ online discourse community. Friendly + pleasant learning environment.

(Lee & Lien 2011; Barton & Lee 2013: 160–163)
4) **Awareness of students’ changing practices**
Technologies + their use change rapidly. What works one year on a lesson may be inappropriate next year. Teachers + students can research these changing practices. Ongoing + longitudinal observations of students’ digital practices inside + outside classroom.

5) **New pedagogies for new times**
Teachers bring in new technologies to function within existing practices, see further possibilities through social media affordances, start to use the media for new purposes → **new practices**.

(Barton & Lee 2013: 160–163)
Activities based on Web 2.0 characteristics: **new forms of collaboration**, **joint production**, and **knowledge creation**

These approaches challenge contemporary education to **change**.

Need to develop pedagogy where **online is central** and not just to boost existing practices.

**What goes on in classroom is intimately bound up in what goes on outside it.**

(Barton & Lee 2013: 160–163)
Thank you!