ESL Student Perceptions of the Value of Facebook in the IEP Classroom

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Abstract

Social network sites (SNSs) like Facebook have become commonplace in the lives of young adults around the world. Technological tools like Facebook can provide opportunities for ESL students to become involved with English-speaking communities outside of the language classroom. However, it is unclear what value these students might place on Facebook in relation to their English learning, especially within the context of an intensive English program (IEP). This paper presents the results of surveys about perceived value of using Facebook and the Internet by ESL students as well as qualitative data analysis of class discussions, journal responses, and interviews with ESL students in an IEP. The purpose was to explore how ESL students in an IEP perceive the value of Facebook in learning English in general as well as within the context of the academic language classroom. The results of the data analysis included student perceptions related to improving English skills, motivation, confidence, and attitude toward Facebook and learning English.

Introduction

Social network sites (SNSs) have become an integral part of teenage and adult life. The prevalence of SNSs in recent years is obvious. According to a recent Pew study (Duggan & Smith, 2013), the number of U.S. adults reporting that they use social-networking sites has risen from just 8% in 2005 to 73% in 2013. The greatest number of users included adults age 18 to 29 with a reported 89% of Internet users in this age group using social-network sites. Internationally, about three in ten people polled in a 2012 Pew study said they use social-network sites with the number of users among participants aged 18-29 being higher than the other age brackets. However, in nations such as the U.S., Britain, Czech Republic, Russia, and Spain about half of all adults now use Facebook and other social sites (Global Attitudes Project, 2012).

The use of SNSs as part of the daily routine is more and more common. With approximately 757 million daily active users worldwide, Facebook might be the predominant SNS. It might be important for ESL students to be active members of the Facebook community because it could help them acclimate to college life, build American friendships, and experiment with English (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). While most of these studies focus on SNS use among Americans, little research has been done related to ESL students and how they perceive these sites to be valuable to their English education and life in the United States.

Literature Review

Whether students are from the United States or other countries around the world, they are growing up in a context that differs from previous generations of learners. According to Tapscott (1998), the generation commonly known as "Millennials" or "the

Net Generation" is made up of natural collaborators. Due in large part to the availability of technological tools in their daily lives, learners in this generation often participate in online communication in the form of chats, multiuser games, and email. Tapscott explains that students who subscribe to this way of daily life might benefit from a student-centered approach to learning that is customized and collaborative. Tapscott also explains that many Millennials learn by collaboration, both with their teacher and with each other.

Tess (2013) described Selwyn's (2010) advocacy for three interrelated concepts to motivate the use of social media in U.S. higher education: (1) the apparently changing nature of the student who comes to the university highly connected, collective, and creative; (2) the changing relationship between students and knowledge consumption and formal education; and (3) the de-emphasis of institutionally provided learning and emergence of "user-driven" education. According to Tess (2013), McLoughlin and Lee (2010) commented on the affordances and principles of social media as a pedagogical choice. They argued that one of social constructivism's (Vygotsky, 1978) primary tenets—that learning is conversational in nature—could be addressed through social media use. They also suggested that social media could promote participation, learner self-direction, and personal meaning construction.

In these perspectives, the learner is the center of the classroom, and the teacher's role is to facilitate learning (Nunan, 1999). At the center of the classroom environment, learners make decisions as to what and how to learn. Instructors may be able to facilitate second language acquisition by maximizing the number of opportunities for interaction in the language classroom. Research on the relationship between

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instruction and language acquisition has led to the belief that learners gain proficiency best when there is a combination of instruction focused on form and communicative opportunities for learners to engage with the target language (Swain, 1985; Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Spada, 1990; Doughty, 1988 as cited in Nunan 1999).

The output hypothesis by Swain (1985) emphasizes the interaction among learners in L2 acquisition. In short, the output hypothesis claims that the act of producing language is part of the language acquisition process. Learners can use their understanding of the target language while interacting with others to co-construct new meaning. In their examination of interaction between French language students, Swain & Lapkin (1998) found that dialogue served as both a means for communication and a means for language learning and knowledge construction about the L2. Together with the view by Doughty (1988) which states that focus on meaning and form can lead to language learners noticing the gap between their knowledge of the L2 and native-like proficiency, Swain & Lapkin reinforce a perspective of L2 acquisition that advocates for maximizing the number of opportunities for learners to interact in the L2 within a context that focuses on meaningful communication.

In a study that examines the characteristics of good language learners, Rubin and Thompson (1983) suggest that efficient language learners exhibit a number of traits that include: being creative and experimental with language, making their own opportunities for using the target language inside and outside of the language classroom, and learning different styles of speech and writing to vary their language according to the formality of the context. In addition, Dornyei (2005) discusses a number of individual characteristics which influence language learners that include: personality,

ability/aptitude, motivation, learning styles, language learning strategies, self-esteem, anxiety, creativity, willingness to communicate, and learner beliefs.

If second language acquisition can be promoted by giving learners ample opportunities to use English inside and outside of the classroom, and good language learners experiment with the target language and make opportunities to practice the language outside of the language classroom, it could be said that the emergence of social network sites (SNSs) has opened a door to target language use opportunities inside and outside of the classroom that may not have existed prior to the advent of the Internet.

Boyd & Ellison (2007) define SNSs as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system,"(p. 211). They also suggest that people participate in mediated communication when non-mediated opportunities are not available, differentiating online and offline relationships. In a response to boyd & Ellison, Beer (2008) explains that daily life and communication are increasingly being mediated by technology, via a plethora of mobile and wireless devices, and it might not be necessary to differentiate between online and offline relationships in the same way boyd & Ellison suggest.

Of the SNSs available to users, Facebook (FB) currently appears to be the dominant site. Created by Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard University in 2004, the site has approximately 757 million daily active users. Of the current FB users about 80% of them are outside of the United States and Canada. ("Facebook Press Room Statistics," n.d.).

FB allows users to connect with other users via the "friend" function. Users are also able to create and join groups based on interest, location, and any other number of factors. FB allows users to communicate in real-time chat, private messages (similar to email), or by publicly posting messages on a contact's wall. Users are able to share not only text, but also video, pictures, and other media files.

In a study of U.S. student perceptions of FB use in the language classroom, Blattner and Lomicka (2012) found that their students in an intermediate French FL classroom responded favorably to using FB to facilitate discussion in classroom activities. While their students favored using FB, the features they utilized in an academic context were limited to discussion forums. In a study by Yunus et al. (2011), Facebook was used to facilitate a collaborative writing process among ESL learners in Malaysia. They found that participants thought FB groups were useful for brainstorming before writing. However, despite any perceived benefits, the majority of participants still preferred to have discussions in class instead of in the FB group.

Blattner and Fiori (2009) posited that FB could be used to foster positive relationships among L2 learners, to enhance the credibility of teachers engaged in contemporary student culture, and to provide immediate and individualized opportunities to interact and collaborate with peers, instructors and native speakers of a variety of foreign languages. They also suggested that the integration of FB into the language classroom in a pedagogically sound way could enhance a sense of community among learners and impact the development of socio-pragmatic competence in language learners. Blattner and Lomicka (2012) suggest that the research related to using FB in the U.S. language classroom points to the positive and beneficial impacts associated

with using FB in the higher education classroom. It might be useful for ESL students to be active members of the FB community because it can help them acclimate to college life and build American friendships (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). A study by Mitchell (2012) also found that even if intermediate to advanced level ESL students from a large west coast university intensive English program were using FB for different reasons, five out of eight of the participants in the study said that using FB helped them improve their English.

However, Schwartz (2010) suggests that there may be hesitation on the part of instructors to integrate SNSs into their classrooms as the boundaries between professional and personal realms may merge. With any technological tool being used in the classroom, there are both potential benefits and potential drawbacks. Levy (2007) argues for a critical evaluation of the use of technological tools in the classroom. Even though a tool may be widespread, as is the case with Facebook, and accepted, the efficacy or value may not transfer to an educational setting. In the quest for pedagogically sound practices in the ESL classroom, the integration of SNSs and other tools should be examined in light of existing data and learner outcomes.

Reinhardt and Zander (2011) use socialization research methodology and the bridging-activities model (Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008) to explore the impact of instruction based on developing learner awareness of SNS use in an American intensive English program (IEP). Through critical and experiential awareness instruction in the ESL classroom, they found that SNS awareness instruction can promote and align with discourses that affirm English-as-an-international-language values and also promote learner-learner interaction inside and outside of the ESL classroom. They also found

that the use of FB in the IEP classroom could be rejected by ESL students if it conflicts with their home discourses that value more teacher-centered forms of education.

Kabilan et al. (2010) explored FB practices of English students at a university in Malaysia. Through student surveys, they found that their participants perceived FB to be valuable to their English education according to four categories: (a) motivation, (b) attitude, (c) improving English skills, and (d) confidence. They suggest that in order for the use of FB to facilitate language learning to be effective, instructors must plan projects that incorporate FB as a tool for socialization as well as a learning platform. They also suggest that instructors should make learning outcomes clear to students in order to allow them to actively participate in their own learning.

With regard to examining learner perspectives, Lomicka and Lord (2009) review previous research related to integrating technology into the language classroom that reveals four stages in the development and publication of such studies. The first stage examines potential benefits and drawbacks to any tool and whether adoption is viable. The second stage usually consists of anecdotal accounts of what teachers have done with a tool in their classrooms. The third stage, according to Lomicka and Lord, involves studies that seek to examine student or learner attitudes toward and perceptions of tools and learning language with the tool in question. The fourth stage includes publications about second language acquisition through use of the tool. McLoughlin and Lee (2007) also explain that it is necessary to acknowledge that the affordances of Web 2.0, social software, and other tools for learning are ultimately dependent on the views and perceptions of users (learners). If learners are the center of the classroom learning environment, it stands to reason that their perceptions of any given tool would likely

influence the chance of success in adopting that tool in the language classroom. Therefore, a necessary step in the integration of Web 2.0 technologies is to explore the perceptions of the learners themselves. This study seeks to explore the following research questions:

1) How do ESL students in an intensive English program perceive the value of using Facebook in learning English?

and

2) How do ESL students in an intensive English program perceive the value of using Facebook in a formal, academic setting?

Methods

Participants

The fifteen participants in this research study were international students in the Minnesota English Language Program Intensive English Program at the University of Minnesota. The students were all members of the Advanced Oral Skills class during the 2013 summer term. Their ages ranged from 18 to mid-30s, and they spoke a variety of first languages. They came from an array of home countries that included China (3), Saudi Arabia (6), Oman (5), and South Korea (1). Some of the participants had progressed through lower levels within the IEP while others had been placed into the advanced level at the beginning of the term through the IEP entrance exam. All of the students had previous experience using computers, and all but 3 students had been Facebook users prior to the class.

Instrumentation/Data Collection

The participants in this research study took part in a series of Social Networking Site (SNS) awareness instruction sessions and activities that were built into the class curriculum for the summer term. Each of the activities implemented in class was meant to develop student awareness of SNS-related social issues, technology use, SNS functionality, and popular SNS practices. In addition, the primary instructional goal for these class discussions and activities was to introduce SNS practice as a means for English use and building a learning community outside of the IEP classroom.

All members of the class gave their written informed consent to take part in this study, so data was collected from each member of the class during class discussions and homework assignments. The activities and instruction that took place as part of the class would have been implemented whether any formal research was taking place or not. Multiple discussions with the student participants occurred in which they were reminded that their participation in the study was voluntary, that their data would not be used in this study if they did not consent, and that any students who opted out of the study would not be penalized in any way.

The Advanced Oral Skills class in which this research took place included four days of class in a typical university classroom and one day per week in a computer lab designed to accommodate language learners. Prior to engaging students in discussion related to language SNS use, participants were asked to create a Facebook account if they did not have one and join the Facebook group (ESL 325 Summer Session) created by the instructor as a part of the class. A handout was provided to students with screen shots of each step of the sign-up process in an attempt to alleviate any frustration related to the logistics of activating an account.

The instructional activities and tasks implemented in this study are based on a study by Reinhardt and Zander (2011). Their ongoing project utilizes methods related to socialization research which include analysis of classroom discourse and learner coursework, as well as ethnographic techniques like surveys and interviews. They also use the bridging-activities model (Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008) and situated learning principles (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to inform their instructional choices. The bridging-activities model proposed by Thorne and Reinhardt focuses on achieving advanced language proficiency by incorporating both traditional, academic genres as well as more contemporary, technology-mediated ones in classroom instruction. The model supports developing learner awareness of common digital language conventions and analyzing these conventions to bridge in-class activity with the broader, everyday language use. Through teacher-mediated language awareness instruction, student exploration of language samples, and the use of contrastive analysis and data-driven learning, the ultimate goal, according to Thorne and Reinhardt would be achieving a high-level foreign language proficiency within an academic setting as well as intercultural and symbolic competence within a global community. While their research is longitudinal in nature, the project in the present paper took place over a six-week term, and it is much narrower in scope, seeking only to examine student perceptions.

The first activity implemented in the class included a survey of student SNS use. This task was meant to raise awareness of student practices with SNS and English use. In a recorded class session, students were asked to complete a survey about their SNS use that included items with a 5-point Likert scale (5=Strongly Agree to 1=Strongly Disagree) and a simple checklist of SNSs students might be exposed to in English and

their first languages. The SNSs included in this list were selected from an online search for "Top International Social Networking Sites," and while many of the sites were popular in the United States, there were sites from China, Turkey, and other nations on the list. The participants also had the opportunity to write in any other SNSs that they used but were not on the list provided. The questionnaire was intended to explore student SNS use, the reasons students were studying English, and their English use within social contexts outside the IEP classroom.

Following the completion of the questionnaires, students were asked to discuss their ideas in small groups and then with the larger class. The conversation was guided by the instructor to address the issues of English use inside and outside the classroom and SNS use. The discussion was recorded and transcribed. As part of their homework, students were asked to complete a journal assignment in which they responded to the prompts, "What is the purpose of Facebook? Why do you think people use Facebook?" and "Facebook is a useful tool for studying English. Do you agree or disagree? Why?" The journal writing task was intended to facilitate greater reflection on the topics discussed in class, as well as serving as a record of the students' perspectives and perceptions related to these basic SNS issues.

The second in-class activity related to SNS use focused on SNS current issues in the US and world media, which included privacy and social implications related to SNS use. The participants were asked to watch one of two TED Talk videos related to SNS use ("The Great Firewall of China" or "Connected…But Alone?") and answer a series of comprehension and critical thinking questions about the talks. As part of their homework, students were also asked to record summaries of the videos they watched.

Students then met in small groups and discussed their ideas before bringing their ideas to the whole class. The class discussion was guided by the instructor, recorded and transcribed for this study. In addition, participants completed an online survey which asked them to record their thoughts on three questions: "How could using Facebook help English students improve their English skills?"; "What kind of language do people use on Facebook?"; and "Do you think learning about this kind of language is valuable for students like yourself?" The reflection was intended to allow participants to view themselves in relation to SNS use and gain insight into the perceived usefulness of Facebook in particular.

Following the discussion on general SNS issues, students took part in an activity meant to raise awareness of specific English language use associated with Facebook. First, students were asked to find a series of language samples from Facebook. The types of language they were asked to find included: a native speaker and non-native speaker interacting, a native English speaker commenting on a picture or post, a non-native English speaker commenting on a picture or post, language that shows emotion, language that you don't understand, and language that you find interesting. The students took screen shots of the language samples and brought them to class for a discussion. They were also asked to reflect on two questions, "How are the language samples you collected similar and different to the language you use in face-to-face communication?" and "If you use Facebook or other SNSs in your native language, how does the language you use differ from the language you use in face-to-face communication?" The purpose of this activity was to raise awareness of the different language forms used in a SNS context and comparing Facebook-mediated language to

face-to-face language. Allowing the participants to bring in language samples that they encountered in an authentic SNS context was meant to facilitate a sense of agency in their own language exploration.

Participants took part in a small group discussion related to their language samples which was then discussed in a whole class discussion. The discussion was guided by the instructor to target awareness of genre differences among SNS contexts, classroom communication, and other face-to-face communication contexts.

The final element implemented in class as part of this research study was a Facebook gaming activity. Students were put into small groups and asked to explore a game on Facebook. The only stipulations were that the game needed to include some English, and all the students could play the game for free. The exploration culminated in small group presentations about the Facebook games. Each group presented information related to the strategies and rules of the game, the type of language used in the game, and the group recommendation with reasons supporting their position. The Facebook gaming activity was meant to facilitate further exploration into the functionality of Facebook.

In addition to in-class activities and instruction, four students took part in post-instructional interviews in which they discussed their ideas related to their learning goals, English use, and SNS use. The four participants who took part in the interviews were invited by the instructor/researcher because they expressed a variety of opinions during class discussions and journal responses. The participants also varied in age, country of origin, and gender. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. All

transcriptions were done literally and learner errors were not corrected as long as meaning could be inferred.

Data Analysis

The numerical survey results were recorded in a spreadsheet and each response was averaged to see where each statement fell along the "strongly agree" "strongly disagree" continuum. The survey results in which participants checked the names of SNSs from a list of popular sites was recorded in a spreadsheet and the sum of each SNS was calculated. The responses from each of the surveys the participants completed were entered into an Excel file and the average response for each statement being evaluated was calculated.

The class discussions, journal responses, and post-instructional interviews were reviewed using both inductive and deductive orientations. First, the data was examined and categories were created based on participant responses. The responses were first organized into the following categories based on this project's research questions: (a) Using Facebook to learn English, (b) Using Facebook in the language classroom. Responses were categorized with the "Using Facebook to learn English" code if they expressed situations or activities that the participants seemed to consider useful (or a hindrance) to learning English in general, not necessarily in the language classroom. Responses that expressed ideas related to situations and activities that the participants seemed to consider useful (or a hindrance) to the language classroom environment were given the "Using Facebook in the language classroom" code.

As data analysis continued, it seemed pertinent to re-examine the responses in light of previous research related to student perceptions of Facebook. Blattner and Fiori

(2009) postulated that Facebook may have useful impacts on the aspects of (a) students' improvement of language skills and (b) students' motivation, confidence and attitudes towards learning English. Kabilan et al. (2010) conducted a study examining student perceptions of Facebook and categorized their data according to the following themes based on Blattner and Fiori: (a) improvement of language skills, (b) confidence, (c) motivation, and (d) attitude. They sought to examine student perceptions of Facebook to learn English in a higher education setting in Malaysia. They categorized responses with the Improvement of language skills code when participants expressed a desire to interact with English by looking up the meaning of new vocabulary as well as practicing reading, writing, and general communication skills. They used the "Confidence" code when participants expressed an increase in their self-confidence and confidence in their language use from the opportunity to communicate in English in a non-formal context. The "Motivation" code was used when participants expressed the need to use English to participate in the FB communities because the desire to socialize via FB required them to use reading and writing skills. Finally, they used the "Attitude" code when participants described opportunities they took to understand and learn English through the various tools and features that are available on FB.

In this study, I have adopted these themes to categorize student responses. The following results and discussion reflect the survey data and qualitative data collected from participants in class discussions, journal reflections, and post-instructional interviews.

Findings

In the survey meant to examine the participants' Internet use in general as well as their views on using the Internet and Facebook, more specifically, in relation to their English education, the students were asked to rate each of the following statements on the five-point Likert scale: "I use the Internet on my phone." and "I use the Internet on my computer." Both average responses were 4.7 out of 5 which show that there is a high level of general Internet use by the participants. The participants were asked to check the social network sites they used regularly from a list. The sites with the highest number of users were: YouTube (11), Facebook (10), WhatsApp (7), Instagram (6), and Twitter (5). WhatsApp and other mobile applications with lower frequencies were added to the list by the participants while YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were included in the list provided.

Participants responded to three pairs of statements meant to examine their perceptions of using the Internet, and Facebook more specifically, in relation to their English education. Table 1 shows the average ratings for each of these responses.

Table 1 Participant Survey Prompts and Average of Responses	
The Internet is a valuable tool for learning English	4.571
Facebook is a valuable tool for learning English	3.642
The Internet is a valuable tool for talking to friends	4.642
Facebook is a valuable tool for talking to friends	4.357
Using the Internet is appropriate in the language classroom	4.214
Using Facebook is appropriate in the language classroom	3.571

It may be no surprise that participants agree with both statements related to the value of using FB and the Internet for talking to friends. Both statements received high average ratings. Participants appear to agree with both "Facebook is a valuable tool for learning English" and "The Internet is a valuable tool for learning English." However, their sentiments related to the value of using FB for learning English are more neutral than their sentiments about using the Internet. The average rating for "Using the Internet is appropriate in the language classroom" was 4.214, and participants responded with an average rating of 3.571 to the statement "Using Facebook is appropriate for the language classroom." Once again it appears that the participants agree with both of these statements, but their level of agreement is lower for the statement specifically about Facebook. It seems that participants agree that the Internet is valuable in the language classroom, but there seems to be some neutrality or skepticism about the appropriateness of using FB in the language classroom.

Improvement of Language Skills

Within the journal responses, class discussions, and post-instructional interviews, participants articulated a number of sentiments related to how FB is perceived to improve their language skills. Within this category, the responses could be further divided into the subcategories of (a) communication and (b) practice. Responses that seem to suggest participants were able to improve their English skills as a result of communicating via FB were included in the communication subcategory, while responses that articulated ideas directly related to practicing specific language skills on FB were put into the practice subcategory. The subcategories had some overlap, and many responses could be put into more than one category. Within the Improvement of

English Skills category there were also a number of responses that seem to reference awareness of register and audience through examining language used in FB interactions. These responses were included in the communication subcategory as they relate to more socio-pragmatic skills used in general communication. Table 2 shows sample responses categorized in this way.

Table 2
Categorization of Participant Responses: Improvement of Language Skills

Topic	Code	Response
Improvement of English Skills	Communication	"Facebook is a useful tool for studying English. Most Facebook user are American. We can easy to find that they *usually use English to communicate*. It can *improve our reading and writing skill*." (Student C Interviews)
	Practice	"Facebook has groups *support learning English language*. You can add these groups and *learn English*. For example, these groups contain *videos, conversations and teachers that you can learn from them*." (Student Journal Reflection)

Contributions to reflection journals, class discussions, and post-instructional interviews included statements like, "it's a great opportunity to make friends, who are native English speakers. Even though people use slangs more when they use Facebook more than anything else, but it's still great to be aware of these slangs. Because now days people use the slangs in everything in their days." Many participants

expressed the idea that being aware of slang might be beneficial for their overall understanding of English. One participant explained, "I think it is valuable, because it the same language that people use in their daily life." While another participant wrote, "I think it would be nice to learn the language which people use on Facebook because it's the most common language which people use these days." However, some participants articulated doubts as to the usefulness of learning about this type of informal language, "We have to use formal English in our classroom," so learning about slang and other informal, online language was not a priority for this respondent.

According to the survey data, the top three reasons the participants were studying English were: (a) to study at an American university, (b) to learn about American culture and society, and (c) to live/work in an English-speaking country. It stands to reason that participants whose chief goal is to study at an American university might not consider learning about informal language or slang a valuable part of their English education. While participants indicated that their primary goal is to study at an American university, they also specified that they want to learn about American culture and society, which undoubtedly includes language and communication outside of the academic classroom.

Participants also expressed ideas like, "We can easy to find that they usually use English to communicate [on FB]. It can improve our reading and writing skill." Another participant explained, "Facebook is a useful tool for studying English. It helps you to get English friends who maybe help you in learning English. These English friends speak with you in English on Facebook via chat. This chatting will help you to improve your chatting and writing skills. Also, Facebook has groups support learning English

language. You can add these groups and learn English." For these participants, there seems to be a connection between having the opportunity to communicate with English-speaking friends and improving their English skills overall. While the education background of each participant varied, it might stand to reason that those students coming from communicative language learning backgrounds would be more receptive and have positive perceptions of opportunities to practice and communicate in the target language in any medium. On the other hand, students whose educational background include instruction that values more behaviorist or cognitivist approaches would probably find the use of FB to facilitate communication as frivolous or a waste of time. As one participant explained, "Facebook can help us to study English sometime, but if we spend too much time on it, it also waste our time. For this reason, I would like to choose common way to study English." Because this participant views FB as a "waste of time" in relation to studying English and improving his English skills, he will likely not fully embrace the communicative opportunities afforded on FB. His perception of the value of using FB to learn English in general and in the formal, academic classroom is also probably quite negative as its use likely supports a student-centered, situated practice approach to language learning.

Within the subcategory of communication are a variety of responses from participants that seem to indicate a perceived value in communicating with native English speakers and foreign friends on FB in relation to improving their English skills. One participant explained, "By Facebook, students can contact to native speakers and talk and make friendship with them, so it helps them to use and practice their English." Another student expressed, "Talking and chatting with friends through Facebook can

improve the writing skills and can learn different cultures from each other." For both of these respondents, there seems to be a link between communicating with friends via FB and improving specific English skills. The positive responses seem to coincide with the notion that learning is a form of participation in a social world (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The participants were able to connect and communicate with students in their class, their instructor, other students at the university, and a wider FB community. The responses that spoke to the value of FB in facilitating the building and maintaining of relationships coincide with the survey data collected from the prompt "Facebook is a valuable tool for talking to friends," which received one of the highest average ratings. One of the participants made the connection between communicating in English on FB with native-speakers and improving English skills, "I agree with this view. Facebook is a useful tool for studying English. Most Facebook user are American. We can easy to find that the usually use English to communicate. It can improve our reading and writing skill." Whether most FB users really are American, this participant's perception is that there is an abundance of native English-speakers on FB.

Although participants used FB within the context of their academic class, and although their primary goals as expressed in the survey data collected and post-instructional interviews were to improve their English skills, it appears that a secondary goal of general communication with contacts could be present among participants while using FB. Students seemed to perceive value in relation to their language skills in sharing information and socializing with friends on FB. With a focus on meaning rather than form, students could be able to practice using English for authentic communicative purposes via FB. Perhaps with the use of FB students are able to satisfy their need for

socialization and the sharing of information while also practicing using English in an authentic context.

While many respondents expressed ideas like "FB helps you get native-speaker friends" and "communicate with native friends," there were also responses that articulated concern for privacy and legitimate relationship building. For example, one participant explained, "there are a lot of different ways to do that [learn English]. e.g. I can communicate directly with a native speaker person like with Tandem or using a lot of different site to read and comment on e.g. blogs…" This respondent was not the only one to express doubts about the usefulness of FB for facilitating communication and learning English. Another participant explained, "I think there is another ways that's more useful than Facebook, so, because if you log in Facebook, you will, first you will want to check what is happens with the new comments. And you will not like go to the sources fastly, so maybe that's affecting your time, you will not be, have time." It takes time and effort to effectively learn a language, and for some of the participants, time management was a distinct concern when it came to spending time on FB, whether it was within the context of the English classroom or not. For students concerned with time management, it seems that their previous experience using FB continues to influence their perception of its value in relation to learning English and the academic classroom.

While this study does not reveal any concrete divisions among participants when it comes to the relationship between demographics and perceptions related to the value of FB in learning English, it is interesting to note that there was primarily one Chinese student who repeatedly expressed his perception that FB is a waste of time. Further

inquiry would be needed to know for sure, but one could surmise that this student's perception could be based on his experience, or lack thereof, with FB in his home country. Since the Chinese SNS Renren (http://www.renren-inc.com/en/) is almost identical to FB in function, it seems reasonable that this Chinese student would prefer to use Renren and perhaps associates the value of that SNS with FB. Since Renren is primarily used by Chinese users in Chinese, its function as a facilitator of intercultural communication would most likely not exist for this Chinese student. With widespread censorship in China, social media seems to be generally less liberating than it is in other cultures. During class discussions, many students expressed ideas related to the government using social media to monitor citizens and people experiencing political and social consequences related to openly sharing opinions on social network sites. It could be that this particular student's perceptions are influenced by the political climate and censorship in his home country.

Motivation

As in the framework used in the Kabilan et al. (2010) study of perceptions, responses were included in the Motivation category if they expressed the need to use English to participate in and experience the benefits of interacting within the FB community. Within the category of motivation, the responses given by the participants seemed to fall within one of two subcategories: (a) cultural and social motivation or (b) language motivation. Participants expressed ideas about the ability for FB to help them learn about, discover, and share culture. Since they needed to communicate largely in English to share and learn about culture, participation in these interactions could be said to motivate learners to use English. The participants expressed a perceived value of FB for facilitating

friendships, networking, and communicating more broadly. Table 3 shows sample

responses categorized in this way.

Table 3		
Categorization of Participant Responses: Motivation		
Topic	**Code**	**Response**
Motivation	Culture & Social Relationships	"People use Facebook to discover the world." (Student Journal Response)
	Language	"There are some pages you can browse and practice your English. Also, there are people from many countries, so you can find friends and practice your English with them." (Student Journal Response)

Within the subcategory of cultural motivation, participants expressed positive

sentiments related to their interaction with other cultures through FB. While some

students expressed a perceived value in being able to form "easy worldwide

communities" with contacts on FB, other participants talked about how it is not possible

to share culture through SNSs in their home countries because everyone who uses the

sites are from the same culture. The participant who expressed this sentiment is from

China, and it could be interesting to note that he is the same participant who seemed to

perceive the challenges or drawbacks to using FB to improve English skills to outweigh

any potential value. While the ability to share one's own culture and learn about other

cultures, especially the culture of the target language, could be said to motivate

students to interact and communicate in the target language via FB, not all of the

participants seemed to perceive the value in those potential interactions. It might also

be interesting to note that for the students in this study, there seems to be a direct link between language and culture. When participants discussed the role of culture transmission via FB, they seemed to agree that culture can be shared through pictures, videos and other media on FB.

Within the subcategory of language motivation, participants expressed both positive and negative responses related to the use of casual, slang, and everyday language on FB. While motivation can be difficult to assess, and it is not the primary subject of this study, it is an interesting factor to consider when exploring learner perceptions of using FB to learn English. Responses were categorized within this subcategory if they expressed a desire to participate in FB communities in the target language. Learners who expressed a desire to participate in FB groups and other communication would undoubtedly need at least basic understanding of the reading and writing conventions associated with English on FB. As one participant explained, "people use very modern English on Facebook, which is really different than what students learn in the classroom. But it's nice chance to learn this kind of English though." In this response, the participant noticed the difference in English used in the classroom and in FB.

However, students also expressed a positive attitude toward learning about or being exposed to this type of informal language. In the language classroom, it is interesting to note how often students request to learn about English idioms and slang. While these forms of language are typically not primary learning objectives in the formal, academic English classroom, students seem to have an interest in being able to, at the very least, understand the informal language they encounter in their daily lives while

living in the U.S. The use of slang and informal language on FB could be said to be a motivating factor if students perceive their receptive skills related to this type of language to be valuable to their English education as a whole. As in the other categories, perceptions varied from learner to learner. During the post-instructional interviews, one student explained that she is "learning English because I want to learn English. I love like learning other languages. To be able to communicate with like more people." Seemingly, for this participant, the use of informal language on FB might be a motivating factor to interact with contacts in the target language outside of class because she will be able to communicate with and understand more people. While this voice may not be the prevailing one in the English classroom, it is an interesting perspective on the value of learning about and being aware of informal language on FB.

In addition to the use of slang or informal language and the ability to share culture via FB, some participants talked about the way they used FB during their group projects to connect with group members and organize their information. One student explained, "You can make your own groups and you can include the people that you want to. You can make conversations, meetings, and also, like when we are, we were making our yearbook, we didn't have any way to communicate with [our group members], only it was Facebook." Another student explained how her group would send messages to their group members on FB reminding them of meeting times and individual group roles. One participant explained, "I asked them to send the photo for me and then we share music so we all together listen to the music and decided which music is better." Another student described her role as the group organizer, "We took screenshots and shared it together, and because I was the organizer, I was always post

to them like in private message, 'Don't forget, you have to bring this tomorrow and you have to do this tomorrow, and don't forget to meet at Walter Library'." For these students, FB provided a means of communication and organization with group members working on projects as part of their academic class. Even though most of the group members in this particular group spoke the same first language, they seemed motivated to use English to communicate about tasks to be completed for their projects.

Attitude

Responses were included in the Attitude category if they described opportunities students took to understand and learn English through the tools and features available on FB. The participants expressed their attitudes about using FB to learn English, which do not necessarily speak to the participants' attitudes about learning English in general as a result of using FB, but about FB itself. The category of Attitude was divided into subcategories that included: (a) attitudes about learning English and (b) attitudes about using Facebook to learn English. Within these subcategories, both positive and negative sentiments were expressed. Some of the participant responses related to improving their English skills, but they could also speak to the general attitude toward learning English. For example, a number of participants expressed the idea that they could learn new vocabulary and communicate with speakers of English on FB, which shows a positive attitude toward learning English and interacting in English. One participant explained, "I think Facebook helps English students improving their English skill by making them to response to a chat or a comment which is written in English. So, they have to check their vocabulary, writing, and grammar skill to response." While responses put into this category are seemingly only indirectly related to student

attitudes about their language learning, the links between positive sentiments about improving language skills and the likelihood of participants having a generally positive attitude toward learning English were made, just as they were made in the Kabilan et al. (2010) study of Malaysian learners.

The participants expressed general opinions about the perceived usefulness of using FB in the English classroom. Participants relayed general sentiments like, "[FB is] useful in learning English" and "[FB is] helpful in studying English" without further explanation. One participant also explained, "It's easy to learn almost anything when you do it with someone sharing the same interests that you have and that is what friend on Facebook actually means. Learning English on Facebook makes it more fruitful than the old teaching methods, such as lecturing and exercises." In contrast, a participant in a post-instructional interview explained, "Like I think like sometimes these kinds of social network they have like a more negative effect towards learning because I think like a lot of people get addicted…I think if we do more and more practice and study by ourselves, it will be better." Overall, the perceptions of the value and attitudes toward using Facebook in the academic English classroom varied.

Learners who participated in this study expressed both positive attitudes toward learning English in general and using FB in the language classroom. It might be interesting to note that the participant who expressed a preference for using FB to learn English is the same participant who said she loves learning new languages and communicating with people. Overall, her individual attitude could be said to be quite positive. However, other participants expressed concerns for time management, once again. Further research of a longitudinal nature would need to be conducted to

ascertain whether or not the use of FB could positively (or negatively) influence student attitudes toward learning English.

Confidence

Responses were included in the Confidence category if they expressed an increase (or decrease) in self-confidence or confidence in using English within the informal FB context. Within the category of confidence, there were both positive and negative ideas expressed by the participants. Of the positive responses, participants conveyed that they could "feel more free using social media" and they felt "less shy to write things." They also mentioned things like "you can talk to anyone with confidence" and you can "overcome shyness" while participating in "easygoing communication." The often asynchronous nature of FB posts and comments might have contributed to an increased sense of confidence among the participants. By being able to consider possible responses and ensure correct understanding before posting, the asynchronous communication might encourage even shy learners to participate.

Although some participants expressed a greater sense of freedom while communicating via FB, other participants seemed to express somewhat different sentiments: "people will stereotype you based on mistakes," "people will judge you more than teachers," and "students can be shy to talk to native speakers." It seems that for some participants using FB created a safe space for communicating in English where even the shy students would be able to contribute to the discussion. However, other participants were unable to overcome the sense that they would be judged by native speakers. One student explained in the post-instructional interview that "usually when I use English, uh, I will be careful about grammar because the people in my home

country say he's now studying in America, so he should be professional in English, so that's why I should be careful about grammar and spelling and all stuff." Another participant explained how people might stereotype him if he makes mistakes while communicating online. The fear of being pegged "non-native speaker" by native speakers or "not perfect" by friends at home might inhibit these students' participation in online communication.

In addition to being concerned about the judgment of native speakers on FB, some participants articulated apprehensions related to seeing what FB friends are doing in their home countries. A participant in one of the post-instructional interviews explained, "sometimes it's just they show they are very happy or something, but maybe you work hard but think, 'oh, my god, they do something really fun.' so sometimes you feel not very happy about that…like you will be like a frustrated or something. For example, like right now we are trying to study English very hard. But like if I get on the Facebook, and I see my friends in China, they will graduate from university and they will get a job even though they will get married, and just feel like jealous." For this participant, using FB was a source of stress and emotional distress in the form of jealousy and frustration, which might inhibit him from having the confidence to effectively study English while using FB. This sentiment might coincide with a recent study conducted in Michigan where the level of happiness of students was examined in relation to their use of FB. The study found that students were subjectively less happy the more they used FB (Kross et al., 2013). With regard to responses within the confidence category, it seems that some participants found a sense of freedom and

confidence by being able to practice using English in FB with native speakers of English and other users on FB.

Discussion

At first glance participants were seemingly open, if not neutral, to using Facebook within the context of their Advanced Oral Skills class during the summer 2013 semester. Their survey results suggest that they perceive using the Internet to learn English and in the English classroom as a little more appropriate than the use of Facebook to learn English and in the English classroom. However, the survey results cannot point to a potential reason why the participants might feel this way. Through a closer examination of class discussions, student reflections, and post-instructional interviews, it began to be clear that student perceptions of the value of using Facebook in relation to their English education varied from learner to learner. Just as their general perceptions vary, the reasons for their sentiments also vary.

With regard to the first research question: *How do ESL students in an intensive English program perceive the value of using Facebook to learn English?*, the data analysis might suggest that participants perceived the value of using FB to be primarily related to the capacity for FB to facilitate authentic communication opportunities among members of the class and with native-speaking friends. Through these authentic communicative opportunities learners were able to practice both specific language skills, like reading and writing, and more socio-pragmatic skills, like communicating with audience and register in mind. The availability of these communication opportunities might motivate some students to use English via FB outside of class, while others might see the use of FB as frivolous and not worthwhile. Some participants seemed to find the

opportunity to communicate with English speakers via FB to motivate them to notice, learn about, and practice using informal language. While further analysis would need to be done to truly determine whether the use of FB helped students acquire informal language, it is the opinion of this researcher that some participants embraced the medium and practiced using the informal language discussed in class. Figure 4 shows a sample of student language produced after class discussion about the types of language used on FB. In this sample, she used the simplified form of "you" and the reduced form of "wanna" in a caption of a picture of a book cover.

Figure 4

Student
Although u wanna read it and enjoy it, u really can't understand what the conception is in it.

It might be interesting to note that during some of the class discussions students spoke about how writing on FB might be more similar to spoken English than written English when it comes to formality and grammar.

Some participants in this study found FB to increase their confidence and decrease inhibitions related to practicing their English with other students and native-speakers, while others felt the pressure of being a non-native English speaker in a medium perceived to be populated with native English speakers. The asynchronous nature of many of the features of FB may allow students to consider their language before responding to posts and comments, which could lead to an increase in motivation to participate in discussions and general communication. This feature of FB might be beneficial to the formal, academic English classroom if it allows students to experience a freedom of expression they might not experience in face-to-face

interactions. In addition, students have the ability to communicate with each other and other users with shared interests. With a focus on meaning rather than form, students might be able to satisfy part of their need to engage in meaningful communication with the target language. Perhaps as a supporting or supplementary tool, FB has the ability to create meaningful interactions among ESL students and other English speakers.

With regard to the second research question: *How do ESL students in an intensive English program perceive the value of using Facebook in a formal, academic setting?*, some of the participants seemed to perceive the value of using FB in a formal, academic setting to be primarily related to classroom organization and communication tasks among classmates. Students were able to communicate with each other regarding group work, homework, and in-class activities they might have missed. Some students mentioned the fact that FB is not only used in their language classes, but also in other university classes. As instructors embrace the organizational potential of FB, students might warm to the idea of using it in a formal, academic setting.

However, there are still barriers to the legitimacy and validity of using FB in a formal, academic setting that include the merging of personal and professional realms and unclear expectations and implications for learning outcomes. Within the specific context of the IEP language classroom, or any second language classroom, the added element of learner language goals and the type of language used within the medium contributes to the perceived validity of any tool. While it seems that FB could have the potential to connect students with their class in logistic, social, and language learning capacities, not all students would readily accept the use of FB in an academic setting without clear links between language learning objectives and their personal educational

goals. Perhaps with clear learning objectives and a transparent plan to achieve those objectives, students might find the use of Facebook to facilitate English learning in the formal, academic classroom to be more appropriate. Participant responses in this study could suggest that their neutrality to FB might stem from a lack of experience and guidance using FB for academic purposes; FB is just not perceived to be a viable tool for language learning for some students.

Implications

Student perceptions will likely vary no matter how pedagogically sound the implementation of Facebook into the language classroom may be. Until FB is seen as a viable medium for English instruction by instructors and students, sentiments will likely range based on student disposition and previous experience. Perhaps because the students in this study had previous experiences with FB that included difficulty managing time effectively, their perceptions of the value of FB in learning English and using FB in the language classroom are less than optimistic. What can instructors do to increase the likelihood that students view the use of FB as valuable to their English education?

In the future, awareness instruction could be explicitly aligned with program learning objectives in order to increase the validity of the tasks in the minds of the participants. For example, using FB within the context of an oral skills class might not be as acceptable to students as using it in a reading and composition course, as FB primarily deals in written communication. However, it might be useful to explore the ways the written language on FB is similar to spoken English, as participants pointed out during class discussions. With regard to the specific learning objectives for the

course in which this study was conducted, FB might lend itself to facilitate more in depth discussion in the classroom if used as a supplementary material outside of class. For example, one of the learning objectives for the course was "Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of and apply cultural concepts to think critically about own and U.S./local Minnesota communities." Some students perceived value in sharing their culture and learning about other cultures via FB, and these types of interactions might help students achieve this learning objective. Of course simply using FB to explore culture may not be enough. Perhaps through an integration of in class discussions, field trips, and out-of-class reflection via FB, students could gain a greater understanding of not only the local Minnesota culture, but also how it compares to their own culture and the culture of other students in class.

The majority of participants in this study were concurrently participating in an advanced reading and composition course. For this course, specific learning objectives might be more easily met via FB use. For example, a learning objective for the reading and composition course is "Students will be able to develop awareness of audience." In the class discussions, journal reflections, and post-instructional interviews, the participants expressed an awareness of difference in register and audience while using FB. Perhaps highlighting the online, SNS genre for reading and composition students could be a way to address this learning outcome with real world applications. While students are learning English to primarily participate in academic communities in the future, they will likely encounter less formal, online communities during their time studying at American universities.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include: the small sample of participants and the short period of implementation (six weeks). Ideally, awareness instruction would take place over a whole semester in order to allow participants to explore the functionality of FB in relation to their English education more fully. In addition, the participant surveys could be given at both the beginning and the end of the term to try to ascertain whether the instruction had any impact on learner perceptions. It might be interesting to explore the benefits of using Facebook as a language student and then provide participants with a treatment that attempts to raise awareness of these benefits. The combination of the limited instruction time and the lack of a follow-up survey following the instruction make generalizations difficult to make beyond this specific group of learners.

Conclusions

The qualitative data in this study supports the survey responses of students. Most of the participants agree that the Internet and Facebook are valuable tools for gaining exposure to English. However, their perceptions of the value of Facebook in learning English in an academic classroom are somewhat less enthusiastic. Student perceptions related to the use of FB in learning English and the formal, academic setting vary according to multiple factors. First, some students perceived value in using FB in relation to improving specific English skills, like reading and writing. However, other students did not express this same value. Perhaps with a clearer integration of program and course learning objectives students would be more likely to perceive FB as valuable to improving their English skills. It also seems likely that instructors would be more likely to perceive value in the use of FB to facilitate communication outside of the classroom if its use was more directly related to curricular learning outcomes.

In addition, students seemed to perceive value in the organizational potential of communication via FB, and it might be interesting to pursue this function further. Nevertheless, using new or unconventional tools to organize materials for class is something that takes time and energy on the part of instructors, and they might not be likely to embrace FB as such a tool with the presence of other learning management systems like Moodle or Blackboard. These tools are designed to cater to instructors in an academic setting, and it might come down to individual instructor preference when deciding what kind of tool to use to organize a class.

It is the belief of this researcher that FB has the potential to go beyond being a simple organizational tool for instructors and students, especially in the language classroom. However, without a clear integration of learning objectives and the willingness on the part of instructors to make those connections, FB might only serve as a useful tool for the intrinsically motivated learners who seek opportunities for communication and English practice outside of class. Perhaps with the support of awareness instruction and clear links to learning objectives, FB could serve as an avenue for English practice and communication outside of the language classroom. This study shows that student perceptions vary according to previous experience, and while this particular group of learners could be said to have been quite ambivalent about the role FB could play in their English education, there were only a limited number of participants who expressed decidedly negative perceptions of using FB. Perhaps with further inquiry that might include a longer implementation and clearer integration of curricular learning outcomes student perceptions might be changed.

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Appendix

Directions: Look at the social networking sites below. **Check** each site you use <u>on a regular basis</u>.

— Twitter   Other: _____

— MySpace   _____

— Youtube   _____

— Facebook   _____

— Tumblr

— Instagram

— LinkedIn

— Google+

— Pinterest

— Meetup

— deviantART

— Orkut

— Skyrock

— Bebo

— hi5

— Renren

— Kaixin001

— Weibo

Directions: Read each sentence below. Check each sentence that is true for you.

— I use social networking sites to meet new friends.

— I use social networking sites to keep in touch with old friends.

— I use social networking sites to learn English.

— I use social networking sites to study other subjects.

— I use social networking sites to play games.

— I use social networking sites to get news and information.

— I use social networking sites for another reason.

      o   What is that reason?

          _____

          _____

          _____

Internet Use Survey

<u>Directions</u>: Read each sentence and indicate how much or little you agree.

1. I use the Internet on my phone.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. I use the Internet on my computer.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I enjoy using the Internet.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. The Internet is a valuable tool for learning English.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. Facebook is a valuable tool for learning English.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. The Internet is a valuable tool for talking to friends.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. Facebook is a valuable tool for talking to friends.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. Using Facebook is appropriate in the language classroom.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. Using the Internet is appropriate in the language classroom.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Social English Use Survey

Directions: Read each of the following sentences and indicate how much or little you agree.
5= Strongly agree (very true)
4= Agree
3= Neutral
2= Disagree
1= Strongly disagree (not true at all)

1. I only speak English in my English classes (not at home or outside of class).

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. I speak English outside of my English classes.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I speak English with my friends in MELP outside of class.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. I speak English with my friends in my home country.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. I speak English with my family.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. I like to know what my friends are doing.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. I like to know what is happening where I live (in Minnesota/Minneapolis).

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Reasons for Learning English Survey

Directions: Read each of the following sentences and indicate how much or little you agree.
5= Strongly agree (very true)
4= Agree
3= Neutral
2= Disagree
1= Strongly disagree (not true at all)

1. I am learning English so I can meet people from other countries.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. I am learning English so I can learn about American culture and society.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I am learning English because I need it to get a good job.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. I am learning English so I can study at an American university.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. I am learning English so I can meet Americans.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. I am learning English so I can live/work in an English-speaking country.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. I am learning English so I can live/work in the USA.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

<div align="center">**CONSENT FORM**

Facebook Use in an Intensive English Program</div>

You are invited to be in a research study of Facebook use in the ESL classroom. You were selected as a possible participant because you are in ESL 325 Sect. 001. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Crystal Rose, Graduate Student, ESL Instructor, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is: I want to explore how the use of Facebook in our class affects the interaction we have and language we use. I want to learn more about what IEP students think about using Facebook in their ESL classrooms and how using Facebook impacts student interactions inside and outside of class.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
You will take part in classroom activities (surveys, class discussions, reflection journals, Facebook activities) *as usual*, but the information and language you produce will be further examined by the researcher (Crystal). Some of our classes (06/26, 07/03, 07/10) will also be video recorded so I can listen to our class discussions and analyze our interactions after class.

The information I will examine will be from regular class assignments and activities, so you will be required to participate like any other in-class assignment or homework. However, if you do not want to participate in this study, I will not include your responses to surveys or other information in my research analysis or final paper.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

In any study, there is a slight risk of a breach of confidentiality. Your class grade will not be affected by whether or not you choose to allow me to use your data in the study. There is no direct benefit to subjects who participate in this research.

The benefits of participation are: You may gain a better understanding of your perspective on the use of Facebook in ESL classes. You may also gain a better understanding of your learning by meeting with the researcher (Crystal) to discuss your interactions and perspectives further.

Compensation

You will not receive any payment for your participation in this study, but your work during class will be graded the same way our other class work is graded (based on rubrics and participation in the activities).

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Study data will be encrypted according to current university policy for protection of confidentiality. The recorded videos will be kept by the researcher (Crystal) for one year. No one else will have access to these recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is **voluntary.** Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota English Language Program, or your instructors. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. While it will be helpful in completing my research, *you do not have to agree to let me use your responses in my study.*

Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is: Crystal Rose. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at McNamara 147-1, 952-412-3256, rosex466@umn.edu.

If you would rather contact the researcher's adviser, you may contact Dan Soneson at Jones Hall CLA Center, 612-625-3865, soneson@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; 612-625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: **Your name:**
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☐   I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. ***I consent to participate in this study.***

☐   I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. However, ***I do not consent to participate in this study.***

_____

Signature of Investigator: _____   Date: _____