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Language Educators’ Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes

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Language Educators’ Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes

by

Alessandro Cesarano

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
College of Education & College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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May 3, 2018

Keywords: higher education, language education, qualitative study, technology, social media.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and to my friends who have helped me become a better person. Thank you all for your support and encouragement through the years.
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First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my major professor, Dr. John I. Liontas, for his unwavering enthusiasm, invaluable support, and his dedicated mentorship throughout my doctoral program and my dissertation. The completion of this study would not have been possible without his guidance.

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ABSTRACT

Technology has changed the way we communicate, teach, and learn. Today’s generation of college students has never known what it is like to be without a cell phone or a computer. Social media is an integral part of their lives. As technology evolves, so do students’ expectations for a learning experience. This experience goes beyond the traditional classroom boundaries’ constrains. Understanding how to take advantage of the pedagogical potential of new technologies is therefore essential for language educators. Broadly speaking, there is much discussion about the integration of social media in language education. However, little is known about how these technologies may work in the language classroom. While many studies focus on the pedagogical benefits, few studies have explored the experiences of language educators who use social media to enhance and transform the traditional learning environment. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media for pedagogical purposes. To gain a better understanding of language educators’ experiences in the use of social media, I interviewed a language educator at a large, public, research university, located in the Southeast of the United States. The primary data sources for this qualitative study consists of a semi-structured survey questionnaire, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, and a researcher reflective journal. Throughout the study, I analyzed the data to build on the respondents’ comments. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, I employed several techniques, including data triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, reflexive journaling, and creating an audit trail.
Study findings reveal that participants perceived social media as an instructional medium to blend informal learning into formal learning online, face-to-face, and blended environments, to facilitate a participatory culture, and to provide opportunities for students’ self-expression, self-reflection, and social interaction. Based on the findings, I offer recommendations for instructors, instructional designers, and policy developers. Finally, I address possible future research directions.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Technology has changed the way we communicate, teach, and learn. The current generation of college students has never known what it is like to be without a cell phone or a computer. Social media is an integral part of their lives. As technology evolves, so do students’ expectations for a learning experience. This experience goes beyond the traditional classroom boundaries’ constrains. Understanding how to take advantage of the pedagogical potential of new technologies is therefore essential for language educators today.

The last decade has seen a great deal of research and pedagogical experimentation related to the use of technology in second and foreign language education (Alexander, 2006; Blake, 2013; McBride, 2009; Richardson, 2010). In particular, a growing body of research shows an increasing interest in the integration of Web 2.0 technologies and social media (McBride, 2009; Mills, 2011; Richardson, 2010). However, little is known about how these technologies work in the language classroom.

While many studies focus on the pedagogical benefits of social media, and the factors that influence the adoption (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Blattner & Lomicka, 2012, Lamy & Zourou, 2013; Lomicka & Lord, 2009; McBride, 2009), few studies have investigated the experiences of language educators, who use social media for educational purposes to enhance and transform the traditional learning environment (Mills, 2011; Reinhardt & Zander 2011; Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013).
Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media for pedagogical purposes. Because of the nature of the research problem, I followed an exploratory case-study design, involving the use of in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, as the primary method of data collection. According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative case study requires the researcher to collect and analyze “multiple sources of information” (p. 62) so that a “holistic description and explanation” may be made available (Merriam, 2009, p. 29). This approach guided the process of data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation.

I addressed three exploratory research questions:

1. What do language educators perceive about the integration of social media in their language classroom?

2. What do language educators perceive are best practices in language teaching with social media?

3. In what ways do language educators use social media in their language classroom?

To gain a better understanding of language educators’ experiences in the use of social media, I interviewed a language educator, who attends a large, public, research university, located in the Southeast of the United States. The primary data sources for this qualitative study were a) a semi-structured survey questionnaire, b) face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, and c) a self-reflective researcher e-journal. Throughout the study, I analyzed the data building on the respondents’ comments. I then coded the data into categories, and I further analyzed the categories to identify key themes in the language educators’ experience. To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of data collection and interpretation, I employed several techniques, including data triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, keeping a reflexive
This chapter begins with an overview of the context and background to frame the study. I include a description of the problem statement, the statement of purpose, and the research questions. I also describe and discuss my own perspectives and assumptions. Moreover, I include a discussion of the proposed rationale and significance of this research study and definitions of the key terms used in the study. Finally, the chapter culminates with a brief closing summary.

**Background**

In this section, I discuss and explain the context and background that frames this study. Many studies indicate that the younger generation of college students, referring to those individuals born between the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, by growing up surrounded by digital media, displays significantly different learning styles from previous generations (Olbinger & Olbinger, 2005; Tapscott, 1998). Furthermore, several terms have been used to describe this generation of learners: *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001), *Net Generation* (Olbinger & Olbinger, 2005; Tapscott, 1998), and *Millenials* (Pedró, 2006; Zimerman, 2012).

Tapscott (1998) argues, “There is growing appreciation that the old approach [of didactic teaching] is ill-suited to the intellectual, social, motivational, and emotional needs of our new generation” (p. 131). This feeling is echoed by Prensky (2001) who asserts, “Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach” (p. 1).

Prensky argues that individuals born after the popularization of the World Wide Web in early 1990’s are *digital natives*, characterized as the first generation to grow up with pervasive technology. As natives, they have spent their entire lives surrounded by digital technologies.
Conversely, the term digital immigrants refers to those individuals born before the popularization of the World Wide Web in the early 1990’s. Being immigrants to a digital environment, they learn to adapt to that environment. As a result, the digital world is their sort of “second” language, and they utilize it differently than digital natives (Prensky, 2001).

Teaching digital natives is a challenge for most university educators today, especially when the educators belong to a different generation, where digital skills were adopted later in their lives. Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) contend,

Whether the Net Generation is purely a generational phenomenon or whether it is associated with technology use, there are a number of implications for colleges and universities. Most stem from the dichotomy between a NetGen mindset and that of most faculty, staff, and administrators. (p. 210)

How best to engage this generation of students has remained a thorny issue. For many researchers to date, the use of various Web 2.0 and social media technologies in the classroom has become the subject of much discussion and research (Duffy, 2008; Lomicka & Lord, 2009; Mason & Rennie, 2013; McBride 2009; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Many maintain that proper integration of social media can help educators meet the 21st Century students’ needs (Joosten, 2012; Richardson, 2010; Seo, 2012). By facilitating a learning environment based on social media, learners can move beyond the boundaries and limitations of the traditional classroom. Because of the open nature, ease of use, and support for effective collaboration and communication, social media technologies can greatly affect the second and foreign language learning environment in ways that demand further exploration and experimentation.

By adopting social media, language educators can enhance the learning experience for the current generation of college students, who, according to Prensky (2001), are considered to be digital natives. To contextualize the term, digital natives, it is critical that we first differentiate between the other two terms: Web 2.0 and social media. While scholars have not agreed on a
singular definition of Web 2.0, it is important to note that Web 2.0 is an umbrella term used to describe the second wave of the World Wide Web that facilitates information sharing, user-centered design, and collaboration (Alexander, 2006). According to Bruns (2008), “the World Wide Web has been radically transformed, shifting from an information repository to a more social environment, where users are not only passive receivers or active harvesters of information, but also creators of content” (p. 22). Indeed, according to Brown and Adler (2008), Web 2.0 technologies have “blurred the line between producers and consumers of content and has shifted attention from access to information toward access to other people” (p. 18).

For the purposes of this study, I align my view with Kaplan and Haenlein’s (2010) definition of social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” (p. 61). Examples of social media applications abound: video sharing sites, photo sharing sites, wikis, blogs, podcasts, and social networking sites (Solomon & Schrum, 2014). Without exception, these technologies are designed in such a way as to promote creativity, connections, social communities, and interaction. And while many traditional web applications focus on the delivery of content, social media applications, focus instead on social connectivity.

**Importance of the Study**

In this section, I articulate why this study is important and how it contributes to the larger body of literature about the integration of social media. The inquiry expands the body of literature and offers some relevant insights into the growing discussion on the role of social media in language education. In the study, I also highlight benefits to the students, educators, and institutions. Through a better understanding of the language educators’ experiences on the
integration of social media, better-informed decisions can be made by prospective language educators, as well as academic institutions.

I hope the current study may offer a contribution to the existing body of knowledge on social media and Web 2.0 technologies in language education and fill a gap in the literature by exploring language educators’ perceptions of their experiences. The inquiry might provide a better understanding of knowledge factors that facilitate or hinder the use of social media in the language classroom. Finally, the research may serve as the foundation for the further research on social media and Web 2.0 technologies in language education.

**Statement of Problem**

In this section, I describe the need for the study, the issue and the problem to be studied, and I situate it in a broader educational context. Nowadays, Course Management Systems (CMSs) such as Blackboard, Moodle, and Canvas, have become a standard in a great many university programs (Chapman, 2009). Nonetheless, these systems have their own sets of limitations: CMSs are expensive, access is limited to faculty members and enrolled students, and CMSs do not seem to drive students’ participation and collaboration (Godwin-Jones, 2012; Selwyn, 2007).

Cognizant of such limitations, social media offer alternative solutions that can complement the use of traditional CMSs. To this end, Richardson (2010) asserts that proper integration of social media can also help educators meet the 21st Century students’ needs by facilitating a learning environment that helps learners go beyond the boundaries and the limitations of the traditional classroom. In addition, these technologies have great potential in education due to their open nature, ease of use, and support for effective collaboration and
communication. In other words, by adopting social media, language educators can enhance the learning experience for the current generation of college students, who, as already presented, Prensky (2001) characterizes as digital natives.

Presently, there is much discussion about the integration of social media in language education (Greenhow & Lewin 2016; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Dron & Anderson, 2014; Joosten, 2012). However, little is known about how these technologies actually work in the language classroom. While many studies focus on the pedagogical benefits of social media, and the factors that influence the adoption (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Blattner & Lomicka, 2012, Lamy & Zourou, 2013; Lomicka & Lord, 2009), little attention has been paid to the experiences of language educators, who adopt social media for educational purposes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media. It is anticipated that, through a better understanding of the language educators’ experiences on the integration of these technologies, better-informed decisions can be made by prospective language educators, curriculum designers, and academic institutions to affect learners’ attainment of language and culture proficiency.

Research Questions

The following three exploratory research questions guided this study:

1. What do language educators perceive about the integration of social media in their language classroom?

2. What do language educators perceive are best practices in language teaching with
social media?

3. In what ways do language educators use social media in their language classroom?

Definitions of Terms

Some terms may be unfamiliar to readers. In addition, the meanings of specific concepts can vary depending on the context, theoretical framework, or field of study. In what follows, I define the most important terms used in this study to guide the reader.

**Blog**: Short for ‘web-log’, refers to websites that can function as ongoing journals with multiple entries, categorized with ‘tags’ for easy searching.

**CALL**: Refers to Computer-Assisted Language Learning.

**Computer-Mediated-Communication (CMC)**: Refers to communication via computers and includes many different forms of interaction using computers as tools to exchange text, images, audio, and video.

**Course Management System (CMS)**: Also known as Learning Management System (LMS) or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), refers to a software package that enables the management and delivery of learning content and resources.

**Digital immigrants**: Refers to individuals born before the popularization of the World Wide Web in the early 1990’s (Prensky, 2001).

**Learning Management System (LMS)**: see **Course Management System (CMS)**.

**Digital natives**: Refers to individuals born after the popularization of the World Wide Web in early 1990’s and characterized as the first generation to grow up with pervasive technology (Prensky, 2001).

**Personal Learning Environments (PLE)**: The concept of PLE refers to a selection of Web 2.0
and Social Media technologies, used to create a highly customizable web-based environment of learning resources, that are under learner control (Educause, 2009).

**Social Curation:** The collaborative sharing of web content organized around one or more particular topic (Rouse, 2018).

**Social Media:** Refers to “A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

**Social Networking:** Web sites and applications that allow people to connect with friends, family, and colleagues online.

**Web 1.0:** Refers to the World Wide Web during its earlier days.

**Web 2.0 technologies:** Online collaborative applications, tools, and services – for example, media-sharing sites such as YouTube, social networking sites such as Facebook, collaborative publishing tools such as wikis and blogs.

**Wikis:** Refers to “a website where anyone can edit anything anytime they want” (Richardson, 2010, p. 59).

**Virtual Learning Environment (VLE):** see *Course Management System (CMS).*

**Background and Personal Perspective**

My role as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification and self-assessment of my own personal values, assumptions, beliefs, notions, worldviews, and biases at the outset of the study (Creswell, 2013). As a researcher, I recognize my biases related to the purposes of this study are shaped by my personal teaching experiences as a language educator at an American university, as well as my experience as an earlier adopter of new advances in
instructional technology. My personal background may influence the way I understand the data and their interpretation. I recognize, therefore, the need to include a presentation of my educational and professional experiences to fully understand those of the participants in the study.

The reasons why I decided to write a dissertation on this topic are both personal and professional. First, as a language educator, I am aware that social media integration in the language education is considered a controversial research topic. Nevertheless, it is my passion to discover new ways to integrate technology to improve language education. During my graduate studies, I had the opportunity to broaden my horizons, by participating and conducting several research projects, involving the integration of technology in the language classroom.

I became interested in the fascinating field of qualitative research after taking a sequence of qualitative research methods classes, offered at my university. In particular, the sequence Qualitative Research in Education Part I and Part II seminars introduced me to the philosophy, ethics, and practice of conducting qualitative research in educational settings. I had the opportunity to deepen my knowledge by taking additional electives courses.

These courses further refined my understanding of qualitative research methods through the art of oral history, life history, and biography methods. I had the opportunity to practice archival collection, preservation, and digitization of interviews, content analysis, and arts-based approaches to representing lived experience. As a result, I developed a valuable set of skills, including interviewing, observing, journaling, narrating, analyzing, and interpreting data.

These courses gave me also an opportunity to discuss foundational assumptions and frameworks in qualitative research, to demonstrate how approaches to ontology, epistemology, and axiology inform research choices. Moreover, I had an opportunity to recognize the
uniqueness and distinctiveness of qualitative research in education, particularly in contrast to the positivist and post-positivist research tradition.

I became aware of the different approaches to validity, reliability, and positionality in qualitative research. By comparing and contrasting research designs such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, and narrative research, and by appreciating their advantages and limitations for research in education, I discovered there is not one right way to do qualitative research, but there are countless possibilities. In other words, I gained a holistic understanding of the qualitative research process and the nature of qualitative data.

I became aware of the philosophical debates about scientific inquiry, the philosophical assumptions behind different approaches to research, and the implications for research design and implementation. I explored my own positioning within these debates. I was able to identify my theoretical perspective, which guides my dissertation project. Finally, I developed an understanding of quality criteria for qualitative research and I practiced applying these criteria to evaluate good qualitative research.

The idea of incorporating social media into the foreign language classroom has stemmed from my desire to explore new educational opportunities and from my doctoral coursework in Applications of Technology to Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Education, at the University of South Florida. In this class, I was also able to explore and evaluate emerging web technologies for their use as instructional tools for student-centered learning. I had the opportunity to design language courses based on current foreign language pedagogy best practices, current learning theories, and instructional design principles. I learned how to take advantage of the most appropriate web-based tools to engage students.

In particular, I had the opportunity to explore the history, current trends, and issues
concerning the implementation of Web 2.0 tools and social media in language education. Furthermore, I also designed instructional materials incorporating the use of selected social media applications. I finally articulated issues concerning ethics, security, copyright, acceptable use, and personal safety. As a result, my personal, educational, and professional experience about language learning and teaching prompted me to focus on the integration of social media technologies in language education.

**Theoretical Perspective**

In this section, I articulate my theoretical perspective to situate myself as the researcher. As Creswell (2013) argues, “qualitative researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or worldview, a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide their inquiries” (p. 74). In this study, I adopted a naturalist, interpretive-constructionist perspective. This perspective is a combination of qualitative research philosophies that emphasize the importance of prior experiences and biases, how people individually interpret their experiences through these prior experiences, and how that interpretation determines their future actions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), “many qualitative researchers follow a naturalistic approach, often guided by a social construction approach that focuses on how people perceive their worlds and how they interpret their experiences. These researchers argue that people construct their own realities based on their experiences and interpretations.” (p. 3). At the core of the interpretivist perspective is the tenet that truth is contextual, depending on the situation, the people being observed, and even the person doing the observation.

**Dissertation Outline**

In Chapter 1, I discussed the purpose of the proposed study: to explore language
educators’ perspectives on their use of social media. In addition, I explained the theoretical perspective I adopted in this study. I also described how my personal, educational, and professional background contributed to my interest in the topic.

In Chapter 2, to situate the study in the context of previous research, I review and synthesize the literature relevant to Web 2.0 technologies and social media in higher education. I also discuss and clarify controversial definitions, and I give examples of the most relevant social media applications for language education. Moreover, I identify, where applicable, gaps in the professional literature to date.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology of the study. In this chapter, I situate the study within a particular methodological tradition, provide a rationale for that approach, describe the research setting and sample, and discuss data collection and analysis methods. In this chapter, I also provide a detailed description of all aspects of the design and procedures of the study. Moreover, I include a discussion around the eight areas: (a) rationale for research approach, (b) overview of research design, (c) description of the research sample, (d) methods of data collection, (e) analysis and synthesis of the data, (f) ethical consideration, (g) issues of trustworthiness, and (h) limitations of the study. The chapter ends with a brief closing summary.

In Chapter 4, I provide a presentation of the data collected, a description of the results of the data analysis, and the findings of the study. In this section, I include evidence from the survey and the interviews with informants to illustrate themes and findings. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research findings.

In Chapter 5, I review, analyze, and discuss, in light of the relevant literature, the findings of this study. In this chapter, I also outline the implications of the findings for pedagogy and
illustrate the potential impact for students. This chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

Finally, in the Appendices, I include supplementary material that may be helpful in providing a more comprehensive understanding of the study. For this reason, I supply all research instruments, as well as any relevant additional materials, such as IRB documents, member check, peer reviewer and auditor forms.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I set the stage for the study, situated the context and scope of the study, and informed the reader, providing a clear and valid representation of what will be found in the remainder of the dissertation. The purpose of this study is to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media. I anticipated that, through a better understanding of the language educators’ experiences on the integration of these technologies, better-informed decisions could be made by prospective language educators, curriculum designers, and academic institutions.

This introduction describes the content, scope, and organization of the review as well as the strategy used in the literature search. In this chapter, I review the available literature to date to contextualize the present study within the parameters of the professional discourse. The literature on Web 2.0 and social media in higher education has grown exponentially over the last ten years. In particular, this critical review of a range of literature sources addresses the integration of social media in language education.

For the purposes of presentation, I first provide an overview of what has been done in the past in the field of language education. I then discuss the importance of Web 2.0 and social media technologies in higher education. In particular, I discuss how the integration of appropriate pedagogies and social media can help create and support collaborative student and
faculty communities. And, finally, I reflect upon the impact of this new paradigm of knowledge creation and learning. The chapter culminates with a brief closing summary that provides a synopsis of the literature.

In Figure 1, I offer a graphic representation of the Literature Review Organization that visualizes the main concepts of this section, their importance, and their relationship to one another.

Figure 1. Literature Review Organization Map.
To look at the most important studies, I performed a search from 2008 to present, limited to English language, with the help of databases such as ERIC, Sage Full-Text Collection, JSTOR Education, and Google Scholar, using keyword and Boolean searches, on terms including Social Media, Web 2.0, higher education, language education, language teaching, language learning. The following are the inclusion and exclusion criteria followed for this review:

1. The study had to be an empirical study
2. The study had to focus on language teaching/learning
3. The study had to be published between 2008-2018
4. The study had to focus on higher education

I also included literature reviews, position papers, and other types of publications that are not empirical studies to provide a better understating of the phenomenon being studied. In order to keep the review as up-to-date as possible, I limited the selection to the past ten years (2008-2018).

Technology in Language Education

No discussion of language educators’ perceptions of their use of social media can be complete without first exploring what has been done in the past in the field of language education. Technology integration in second and foreign language learning is not a new phenomenon. In fact, computers have been used in the field of language education for more than three decades now (Chapelle, 2001). Levy (1997), defines Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as “the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning” (Levy, 1997, p. 1). Similarly, Egbert (2005) describes CALL as “learners learning language in any context with, through, and around computer technologies” (p. 4).
The use of computers in language education dates back to the 1960s. CALL has constantly been evolving since then in terms of both pedagogical changes and technological advances (Warschauer, 1996; Levy, 1997). When personal computers were first introduced in the 1970s, they were used primarily for drilling activities in language classes. CALL expanded in the 1980s and in the 1990s with the accessibility of personal computers for language learners. However, technology’s importance in the classroom is evident now more than ever (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

In fact, the introduction in the early 1990s of the World Wide Web (WWW) became a significant factor in the creation of a new global society, allowing new possibilities to learn, teach, and communicate, anywhere and anytime. In the New Millennium, the use of Internet enabled educators to create web-based language programs, thereby allowing students to use language in real context.

More recently, a new generation of technologies, capable of unleashing the power of the World Wide Web, has been introduced under the umbrella term of Web 2.0 and social media. As already noted, these social media brought an important shift in the way digital information is created, shared, stored, distributed, and manipulated. Whereas Web 1.0 was dominated by content provided in static pages, Web 2.0 applications have democratized the web by prioritizing user-generated content, ownership, and social connectivity. According to Wang and Vasquez (2012), the language learning environments afforded by Web 2.0 technologies have greatly broadened the scope of topics explored in computer-assisted language learning (CALL): from earlier research which tended to concentrate on the traditional four language skills, to more recent topics such as learners’ identities, online collaboration, and learning communities. (p. 1)

As technology evolves, so do students’ expectations for a technology-driven learning
experience. Understanding how to employ new technologies is, therefore, essential for foreign language faculty today (Simon, 2008). However, it is still important to remember that considerations for selecting and adopting social media technologies in language education are not different from those of selecting educational technologies in general.

More recently, Liontas (2002) pointed out the importance of careful technology integration: “Great technologies - if planned poorly and used unwisely - do not necessarily great vehicles for learning make” (p. 325). The point Liontas is making is an important one since technology integration has often been perceived in the field of language education as a sort of magic wand. Also, plenty of educators decided to jump on the bandwagon and adopt new technologies without planning or preparation. This argument is also a critical reminder that technology-enhanced instruction alone cannot guarantee success unless it is based on a sound alignment with the instructional goals.

Similarly, the report published by the Joint Information Systems Committee (2009) came to the same conclusion: “Whatever the technology or mode of delivery, learning should be the key objective, and pedagogy rather than technology should drive the decision making” (p. 9). In other words, technology should never be used in teaching for its own sake; it should always be used in service to specific learning goals.

**Web 2.0**

Broadly speaking, Web 2.0 has been examined for its potential as “new wave of innovation for teaching and learning” (Alexander, 2006, p. 33). There are numerous examples of Web 2.0 technologies, and the number is growing rapidly. However, for the purposes of this study, Web 2.0 refers to the development of new tools that are changing the way we use the
Internet, communicate and share information (Wang & Vásquez 2012).

It should be noted that there is no general agreement between educators, scholars, and researchers on what exactly is Web 2.0. In fact, Web 2.0 has been discussed in different ways such as, for example, as a technology (Franklin & Van Harmelen, 2007), as a second generation of web-based tools and services (Guntram, 2007), and as a community-driven online platform or an attitude rather than technology (Downes, 2005; Virkus, 2008). However, there is a general consensus over the fact that the term Web 2.0 was initially brought to a wider audience by O’Reilly in 2005:

Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of the platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an “architecture of participation”, and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences. (O’Reilly, 2005)

As already mentioned, it is also important to consider that the broad aim of Web 2.0 is to change the way in which user interacts with the World Wide Web, from passive consumers of information to active participants in the creation and generation of knowledge. Web 1.0 is, therefore, an expression established a posteriori, helpful to describe the early stages of the Internet, where content was static, and websites mainly resorted to the HTML language. In that context, and with limited available tools, there was no opportunity for users to participate in the construction of knowledge, making them essentially passive consumers of information. This leads to the common description of Web 1.0 as “read-only” Web.
Table 1. Comparison between Web 1.0 vs. Web 2.0. (adapted from O’Reilly, 2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web 1.0</th>
<th>Web 2.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web as Read-only</td>
<td>Web as Read-Write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web as Medium</td>
<td>Web as Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web of Techies</td>
<td>Web of Anyone willing to try</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web as Broadcast</td>
<td>Web as Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web as Static</td>
<td>Web as Dynamic</td>
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Web 2.0 and Higher Education

Web 2.0 technologies were not originally developed and conceived for teaching and learning purposes. However, as Richardson (2010) argues, Web 2.0 technologies have the potential to bridge the gap between students (digital natives) and educators (digital immigrants) “because by their very nature, they are relatively easy for anyone, native or immigrant, to employ in the classroom” (p. 7). Brown (2012) further claims that Web 2.0 technologies “can provide students with an arena in which to become collaborators in the generation of knowledge, rather than passive recipients of knowledge” (p. 51).

According to Holtzman (2008), integrating Web 2.0 technologies in classrooms adds a “personal” and “meaningful” aspect. Selwyn (2007) expands on this line of thinking, by arguing that the Web 2.0 attractiveness for educators lies in its ease of education-related interactions between students, often in an informal way. Similarly, Mason & Rennie (2013) argue that, by integrating Web 2.0 tools in the classroom, educators can create a more student-centered environment, in comparison with the traditional online classroom environment. The element of student centeredness and involvement in the learning process represents, therefore, the truly innovative nature of Web 2.0.
Social Media

The terms social media and Web 2.0 are often confused as synonyms. Moreover, they are often used interchangeably, and rarely is a clear differentiation made. However, while a variety of definitions of the term social media have been suggested, for the purposes of this study, social media are defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). I provide a visual representation of the aforementioned concepts in Figure 2. Similarly, in a recent publication, Joosten (2012) defines social media as “A virtual place where people share; everybody and anybody can share anything anywhere anytime” (p. 6). It is essential, therefore, to keep in mind the distinction between the term social media and the term Web 2.0. The distinction is not trivial. In fact, Web 2.0 refers to the technological and ideological platform on which social media applications evolve (Lamy & Zourou, 2013).

Social media are extremely popular. According to a recent survey on the use of social media in higher education, over 80% of faculty use social media, and 41% use social media in their teaching (Seaman & Tinti-Kane 2013). According to Grahl (2015), social media can be categorized into six different, but overlapping categories, which include: (1) social networks (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn); (2) bookmarking sites (e.g., Delicious, StumbleUpon); (3) social news (e.g., Digg, Reddit); (4) media sharing (e.g., Instagram, YouTube, Flickr); (5) microblogging (e.g., Twitter); and (6) blogging, particularly comments and forums.

There are several advantages using social media applications in higher education (Buzzetto-More, 2012; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Liu, 2010). One of the major advantages of using social media in the language classroom is the creation of a sense community (Blankenship,
Moreover, Rutherford (2010) points out that the use of social media can strengthen the relationship between students, classmates, and instructors. In addition, Dron and Anderson (2014) situate social media within the evolution of pedagogies in distance education, creating three generations of learning theories: behaviorist/cognitivist (pedagogies of instruction), social constructivist (pedagogies of construction), and connectivist (pedagogies of connection).

The above advantages notwithstanding, there are also several disadvantages. For example, educators have expressed concerns about the increased use of social media and user-generated content into the teaching and learning environment in higher education, including problems related to compliance with intellectual property rights, copyright law and privacy (Rodriguez, 2011). Selecting the right social media to adopt, in relation to the class instructional goals, are indeed decisions that must be approached with great care and reflection (Selwyn, 2011).

A comprehensive and detailed discussion of all the different types of social media applications is beyond the scope of this study. What follows is, therefore, a discussion of only the most relevant social media applications for language educators: Social Networking Services, Blogging Services, and Media Sharing Services.
Figure 2. The Big Picture.

Social Networking

Social Networking Sites (SNS) allow people to connect with each other around common interests, pursuits, and other categories. Users create a profile and join a network, which might be connected to where they live, what music they like, where they work or where they study. Some of the most popular social networking includes Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Google+. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define SNS 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).

Without doubt, the emergence and easy access of SNS have changed the way we communicate and interact with each other. During the last ten years, the popularity of online SNS has grown exponentially, attracting millions of users worldwide, and rivaling search
engines as the most visited Internet sites. Indeed, SNS have become an integral part of college students’ lives. Ellison and Boyd (2013) argue that a social network site is:

*a networked communication platform in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-level data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site.* (p. 158)

In a recent study, McBride (2009) claims that social networking, one of the most popular social media technologies, can enhance language learning by facilitating social interaction, collaboration, and sense of community. Educators interested in extending the students learning, beyond the boundaries of the classroom, towards a student-centered, meaningful, and contextualized experience can leverage on SNS. Similarly, Mason and Rennie (2013) consider the most relevant, interesting, and challenging aspects of social networking for higher education and provide practical advice for using social networking tools in course design.

There is a growing interest in online social communities for language teaching and learning (Blattner & Fiori, 2011; McCrea, 2011, Reinhartd, & Zander, 2011). In particular, research suggests that participation in online communities can be beneficial for foreign language learners (Lomicka & Lord, 2016; Reinhartd & Zander 2011). Adopting a situated learning perspective, Mills (2011) argues that social networking tools have the potential to extend learning beyond the boundaries of the classroom community.

**Facebook**

Facebook is the most famous, popular, and controversial social networking service. Launched in February 2004, as of January 2018, Facebook has over 1.4 billion daily active users and 2.13 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2018). More than half of users, access
Facebook on a mobile device and over 75% are outside of the United States.

Facebook’s mission is to “give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what is going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them” (Facebook, 2018). A national study conducted by EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research showed that 90% of undergraduate students used Facebook (ECAR, 2011).

Facebook is free, user-friendly, and flexible. Users must register before using the site, after which they may create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Some of the most significant features for educators are the opportunities to create educational groups and pages.

Facebook groups are online spaces where people can interact and share with others. Groups can be closed, open or private. A closed group is perhaps the best solution for educators. While the list of group members is public, the content of the group is private available only to members of the group. As a result, this feature helps protect the privacy of the students.

When a group member posts something new in the group, such as a link to an article, other members receive a Facebook message or text message with that update. For example, we can post a study question to a class project group. All students who are members would get notified. This represents an opportunity to extend learning beyond the limitations of the traditional online classroom. By using a Facebook group to complement the teaching material in online the classroom, we can provide students with more engaging learning opportunities. In addition, we can also improve the sense of community.

Facebook pages are opportunities for businesses, brands, and organizations to share their stories and connect with people. Educators can customize Pages by adding apps, posting stories,
hosting events and more. By posting regularly interesting materials, educators can engage their classroom. For example, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Online Community Facebook page is a social network devoted to members of the language education profession. In this virtual gathering place, participants are able to share information, best practices, and resources with a large number of their colleagues.

**Pinterest**

Pinterest is another popular social networking application. Ben Silbermann, Paul Sciarra, and Evan Sharp founded Pinterest in March 2010. As of January 2018, the site has over 175 million of monthly active users and over 100 million users from outside the US. Pinterest is a sort of visual “catalog of ideas”. It boasts more than 50 billion of Pinterest pins, and more than 1 billion of Pinterest Boards (Pinterest, 2018).

Pinterest can facilitate online content sharing and learning beyond the classroom (EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative, 2012; Liontas, 2017; Pearce & Learmonth, 2013; USC Rossier School of Education, 2018). There is a vast amount of different material published online. However, most of the times, for educators, finding and retrieving relevant pedagogical content can represent a true challenge.

Pinterest can offer a solution by facilitating the social content curation process and by simplifying the sharing of relevant course materials. For example, language educators can add relevant course materials to their Pinterest accounts using pins. A pin is a sort of visual bookmark, an image, a video, or a web page. Clicking on a pin takes us to the website where the pin was originally sourced. Educators can also have students design their own pin board on a
particular topic, have students “follow” pins saved by their classmates, and peer-review their own work (Poore, 2016).

**LinkedIn**

Founded in December 2002, LinkedIn differs from other social networking sites, as it focuses on people in a professional capacity from the business, industry, and public sector. As of January 2018, LinkedIn has over 500 millions users, including a total of 133 million LinkedIn users from outside the USA. Impressive numbers (40 million) of students and college graduates have profiles on LinkedIn (LinkedIn, 2018).

LinkedIn offers educators far more than a just website to post their curriculum vitae online. LinkedIn is one of the best platforms for educators to network and to interact with professionals in their field. Language educators can take advantage of LinkedIn by expanding their network, particularly with others educators in the teaching and learning profession. In particular, educators can use LinkedIn to stay informed and engaged in three main ways: (a) link up with their institution, (b) join a LinkedIn Group, and (c) follow thought leaders.

**Google +**

Google Plus is a social network platform founded by Google in June 2011. The service has been growing in popularity and it was given an overhaul in April 2012. Google+ makes use of the Google search engine, Google Profiles, and the +1 button (Google+, 2018). Some of its tools and features come from existing services and platforms, such as the Picasa photo storing and sharing platform. Some of the features are similar to other popular social networks and micro-blogging platforms.
Google+ is pretty straightforward to use. Google+ most relevant features include Circles and Hangouts. Circles are a convenient way of setting up personalized social circles, centered on work or personal activities. Rather than share all updates with an audience of hundreds or thousands, the service aims to personalize sharing with smaller groups. Hangouts are video chat and instant messaging. Educators can launch a hangout from their desktop or their mobile device. Hangouts also allow group chats with text or video for up to ten users (Poore, 2016).

**Blogging**

In 1997, Jorn Barger coined the term blogs (short for web-logs). Today the term refers to websites that can function as ongoing journals with multiple entries (Anderson, 2007). Blogs can range from topic-driven blogs, which focus on a single topic, or personality-driven blogs, which reflect the opinions of an individual (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008). Typically, entries are categorized with ‘tags’ for easy searching, and most blogs allow for reader comments. Blogger, Wordpress, and TypePad are but few examples of the most popular blogging platforms today.

Although blogs did not originate in education, they have been used in several ways to support students’ learning in face-to-face, blended, and online learning environments. “Blogs can be used as an instructional tool for communication, articulation, reflection, evaluation, and analysis” (Kitsantas & Dabbagh, 2010, p. 167). Moreover, blogs have great potential for language teaching, “because of their multimedia features, simple web publishing, interactivity, and ability to support cooperative and autonomous Learning” (Ahluwalia, Gupta, & Aggarwal, 2011, p. 30).

In particular, blogs’ educational affordances, such as their capacity to expand learning beyond the classroom walls, and to archive the learning process, are well documented in the
literature (see Carney, 2009; Churchill, 2009; Ducate & Lomicka, 2005; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Pinkman, 2005; Raith, 2009). Blogs can also be used to allow students to reflect on learning experiences or activities and to allow students to share opinions and resources. According to Weiler (2003), “Weblogs can become an extension of the classroom, where discussions and collaborations continue long after the bells have sounded and students have left for home. This makes Weblogs an excellent vehicle for student-centered learning.” (p. 74). In sum, blogs can be used in different ways: by students to create a individual blog or a portfolio of their work or by instructors to create a class blog to disseminate information (Poore, 2016; Richardson, 2010).

**Twitter**

Founded in July 2006, Twitter is the most popular micro-blogging platform. Millions of individuals, organizations, and businesses use Twitter on a daily basis to share information, commentary, descriptions of events, and highlight online and social media content (Twitter, 2018). Twitter enables users to send and read messages made up of 140 characters or less, called tweets, via mobile and web applications. Twitter has an estimated 200 million users generating more than 200 million tweets a day (Twitter, 2018). These impressive numbers show the relevance of Twitter on information and knowledge sharing.

Recent research (Antenos-Conforti, 2009; Bista, 2014; Bista, 2015; Blattner, Dalola, & Lomicka, 2016; Hattem & Lomicka, 2016; Lomicka & Lord, 2012; Lord & Lomicka, 2014; Tang & Hew, 2017) indicates that Twitter is becoming increasingly popular in language classrooms in higher education institutions, and that language educators integrated micro-blogging to achieve different educational goals, including to expand learning communities, to increase participation, and to boost engagement.
Media Sharing

Media-sharing services allow people to share videos, images, and slideshows. They also allow viewers to comment and share posted content. Some examples of the most popular services include *YouTube*, *Vimeo*, *Flickr*, and *Slideshare* (Franklin & van Harmelen, 2007). Media sharing services offer wide ranges of possibilities for incorporating video and image into language teaching, both in and out of the classroom.

In particular, photo sharing applications offer users the opportunity to contribute with photos, to join an online community platform, and to engage with fellow users. Incorporation of visual elements in language learning and teaching, as a stimulating way to engage learners, is not new. However, photo-sharing applications provide users access to an endless supply of visual, social and collaborative learning.

Video-sharing services allow language students and educators to watch video clips, short documentaries, lectures, and even upload their own videos. The concept of utilizing videos in the language classroom is not revolutionary, however, according to Terantino (2011), “the opportunity for student-created videos and social networking provided by YouTube presents a radical new approach to providing linguistic input and encouraging students to engage in the target language” (p. 15).

In the past decade, a growing body of research focused on investigating the use of *YouTube* for teaching and learning (Duffy 2008; Jones & Cuthrell, 2011; Snelson, 2011). Language educators can take advantage of the increasing potential for using video and digital images, in educational contexts either through classroom technology or students’ own devices (Duffy, 2008; EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative, 2006; Seo, 2012).
**YouTube**

YouTube has over a billion and a half monthly users, almost one-third of all people on the Internet. Each day, those users watch a billion hours of video, generating billions of views (YouTube, 2018). More than 30 million use YouTube daily and more than 5 billion is the number of videos shared to date. Another impressive number is that 80% of YouTube users come from outside of the U.S. and each day those users watch a billion hours of video. Unsurprisingly, YouTube is localized in 88 countries and across 76 different languages. More than 100 million people take a social action on YouTube (likes, shares, comments) every week. These impressive statistics show the importance of YouTube on information and knowledge sharing.

Educators can find instructional videos on YouTube EDU, a sub-section of YouTube that provides access to more than 500,000 educational videos from some of the most important universities and organizations such as Stanford University, PBS, TED, just to name a few. In YouTube EDU videos are organized by level, including videos dedicated to primary and secondary education, university, and lifelong learning. Many studies have documented the benefits of YouTube for video sharing activities to enhance language learning (Alhamami, 2013; Berk, 2009; Brook, 2011; Kelsen, 2009; York, 2011; Watkins & Wilkins, 2011).

**SlideShare**

Founded in 2006 with the goal of making knowledge sharing easy, SlideShare is the “world’s largest professional content sharing community” (SlideShare, 2018). SlideShare joined the LinkedIn family in 2012 and had since grown into one of the most popular websites for professional content. More than 80 million professionals trust SlideShare to learn about any topic
from subject matter experts. With over 18 million uploads in 40 content categories, it is today one of the top most-visited websites in the world.

Educators can refresh their knowledge from field experts (Poore, 2016). With over 35 categories and 18 million uploads, the platform hosts impressive amount of presentations, infographics, documents, and videos from experts in every field. SlideShare can help educators reach an audience interested in their content, build their reputation and, as a result, cultivate more professional opportunities (SlideShare, 2018).

**Theoretical Frameworks**

In this section, I provide a brief description of the theoretical context and its importance to the educational community. I also explore briefly the theoretical underpinnings of my study, along with a concise and focused literature review. A theoretical framework consists of concepts and existing theories used to situate and contextualize the study. In this section, therefore, I review theories and pedagogical approaches applicable to the understanding of social media related to language education. For the purposes of this study, I employ the concepts of *Situated Learning, Connectivism, Learner-Centered Teaching, Personal Learning Environments, and Informal learning* together with their definitions and reference to relevant scholarly literature, because they suit better the nature of the study.

**Situated Learning**

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), *Situated learning* is a model of learning in a *community of practice*. Learning should not be viewed simply as the transmission of abstract and decontextualized knowledge from one individual to another, but a *social*
process, whereby knowledge is co-constructed. The authors also suggest that such learning is situated in a specific context and embedded within a particular social and physical environment. This model recognizes that learning can take place outside the classroom and outside the formal relationship between teacher and learner.

**Connectivism**

The term *Connectivism* refers to a theoretical model of the process of learning formulated and developed by George Siemens and Stephen Downes. This model explains how individuals use Internet technologies to form “connections” to learn and share ideas. According to Siemens, “Connectivism is a learning theory for the Digital Age” (Siemens, 2004). Learning can happen across peer networks that take place online. An educator’s role is, therefore, to guide, to facilitate, and to support students’ learning.

Students are also encouraged to seek out information on their own online, to express what they find, and to share information around a connected community. Stephen Downes further argued: “... knowledge is distributed across a network of connections, and therefore that learning consists of the ability to construct and traverse those networks” (Downes, 2007, p. 1). As a result, this model may provide educators new insights into what it means to teach and learn using Web 2.0 and Social media applications.

**Learner-Centered Teaching**

The term *Learner-Centered Teaching* (LCT) refers to an approach to teaching that is increasingly being encouraged in higher education (Blumberg, 2008; Weimer, 2013). LCT does
not refer to a single teaching method, since it emphasizes a variety of different approaches that shift the role of the educators from *givers* of information to *facilitators* of learning.

In other words, “learner-centered teaching” is the opposite of the traditional “instructor-centered teaching” approach and it occurs when educators focus on students’ learning. As mentioned, with LCT students are no longer receiving and repeating information, since they take more responsibility for their own learning and, as a result, have a more active role. The educator is, therefore, a sort of coach whose goal is to encourage and facilitate students’ learning.

**Personal Learning Environments**

Over the past decade, personal learning environments (PLEs) have been offered as an alternative to more traditional environments, such as the learning management system (LMS) (Attwell, 2007; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010). The concept of PLE refers to a selection of Web 2.0 and social media technologies, used to create a highly customizable web-based environment of learning resources, under learner control (Educause, 2009). These technologies include blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other social media applications.

The PLEs approach relies upon an alternative student-centered view of learning, and differs from the traditional LMSs approach, based on an institution and formal view of learning. A number of researchers refer to this changing learning landscape as *pedagogy 2.0* and *learning 2.0* (Downes, 2006; McLoughlin & Lee, 2009). Learner-generated content enables students to create and share knowledge using Web 2.0 technologies and social media (Lee & McLoughlin, 2007). PLEs can be considered a technology, as well as a pedagogical approach, student-designed around each student’s goals or a learning approach “chosen by a student to
match his or her personal learning style and pace” (Johnson, 2011, p. 8).

**Informal Learning**

Informal learning has no dedicated setting, no defined content, timing, instruction, no set objectives or outcome, and it is not intentional from the learner’s perspective. It predominantly involves learning by experience, and includes language building, socialization, and play (Golding, Brown, & Foley 2009). Moreover, formal learning has some recurring features: occurs in official settings (a school, a college, a university), it is part of a defined curriculum, and has a planned structure, schedule, and objectives. Students are subject to formal assessment and evaluation.

As previously discussed, the landscape of language learning has dramatically changed, with the introduction of social media technologies in the classroom. Indeed, the Internet is becoming one of the major knowledge repositories for personal knowledge acquisition and informal learning (Jokisalo & Riu, 2009). By pushing for a proactive role of students in the creating knowledge, social media technologies are supporting the emergence of a learner-centered paradigm in informal environments (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). As a result, social media has the potential to bridge formal and informal learning through participatory digital cultures (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

**Summary**

In this chapter, I situated the study in the context of previous research, I presented a critical synthesis of empirical literature according to relevant themes, I justified how the study addresses a gap in the literature, and I outlined the theoretical frameworks of the study. I
organized this chapter by topic, from broad to narrow.

There is much discussion about the integration of social media in language education (Joosten, 2012; Selwyn, 2011). However, little is known about how these technologies work in the language classroom. While many studies focus on the pedagogical benefits of social media and the factors that influence the adoption, little attention has been paid to the experiences or perception or belief clarify of language educators, who adopt social media for educational purposes.

Undoubtedly, the field of the integration of social media in language education is expanding. Social media may help remove barriers, such as those between formal and non-formal education, the institution and the community and the educator and the student. However, investigation of the ways these aforementioned technologies may facilitate language learning, in the context of higher education, is still emerging and is often more speculative than empirically based. Indeed, the extent to which these technologies may foster a sense of community and facilitate both informal and formal learning is still indeterminate.

This review will date quickly, but I hope it provides a valuable summary of the current debate surrounding the implementation of social media technologies in language pedagogy and documenting progress to date. Without question, there is much to learn about methods, specific uses and the effectiveness of implementing social media technologies in language education courses.

In this chapter, I reviewed and synthesized a range of literature sources, concerning the integration of social media at the higher education level. I first provided an overview of Web 2.0 and social media, including Web 2.0 and social media controversial definitions, and I offered concrete examples of the best applications for language learning. Then, I discussed how the
integration of appropriate pedagogies and social media could help to create and support collaborative student and faculty communities. Finally, I considered and I reflected upon the impact of this new paradigm of knowledge creation and learning. Lastly, I identified gaps in the literature. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology of the study.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter I situate the study within a particular methodological tradition, I provide a rationale for selecting a specific approach, I describe the research setting, and I discuss data collection and analysis methods. In this chapter, I also provide a detailed description of all aspects of the design and procedures of the study. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study is to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media for pedagogical purposes.

Because of the nature of the research being pursued, this dissertation followed a qualitative exploratory case-study design that involves the use of in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews as the primary method of data collection. This approach guided me in the process of data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. To gain a better understanding of language educators’ experiences in the use of social media, I interviewed one language educator at a large, public, research university, located in the Southeast of the United States. The primary data sources for this qualitative study consisted of a) a survey; b) face-to-face, semi-structured interviews; and c) a self-reflective researcher e-journal.

Throughout the study, I analyzed the data to build on the participants’ comments. I then coded the data into categories to further analyze them so that the key themes in the language educators’ experience can be identified. To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of data
collection and interpretation, I employed several techniques, including data triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, keeping a reflexive journal, and creating an audit trail.

To understand this phenomenon, the study addressed three exploratory research questions:

1. What do language educators perceive about the integration of social media in their language classroom?

2. What do language educators perceive are best practices in language teaching with social media?

3. In what ways do language educators use social media in their language classroom?

In this chapter, I describe the study’s research methodology and I delineate the research questions, design, and method. I also include a discussion around the eight areas: (a) rationale for research approach, (b) overview of research design, (c) description of the research sample, (d) methods of data collection, (e) analysis and synthesis of the data, (f) ethical consideration, (g) issues of trustworthiness, and (h) limitations of the study. The chapter ends with a brief closing summary.

**Rationale for Research Design**

In this section, citing appropriate methodological literature, I describe and discuss (a) the research tradition (qualitative research) and (b) the research methodology (case study) with a rationale for their suitability regarding addressing the research questions.

Qualitative research refers to inductive, holistic, and process-oriented methods used to understand, interpret, describe, and develop a theory on a phenomena or setting. “Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret,
phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 4). Moreover, the researcher gathers an understanding of the participants’ experiences from the realities that surround them (Hatch, 2002).

The goal is, therefore, to understand the social setting that is being studied, in order to obtain a holistic view of the relationships within the system (Janesick, 2016). Furthermore, qualitative research methods are best suited for understanding participants’ perspectives of “the meaning of the events, situations, and actions they are involved with and of the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 17).

Creswell (2013) asserts: “Qualitative research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data” (p. 4). Creswell (2013) also argues that a qualitative researcher: “builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.” (p. 15). More specifically, for Denzin and Lincoln (2018) qualitative researchers “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 2).

Broadly speaking, qualitative studies share common key elements, such as (a) a naturalistic and emergent design, (b) an active researcher involvement, (d) an holistic perspective, (e) a unique case orientation, (f) an inductive analysis approach, (g) and an emphasis on the researcher self-reflexivity. (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Janesick, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

I conducted this exploratory study in a natural setting and I relied upon an emergent design. In other words, I developed a tentative research plan and timeline and I made necessary
adjustments as needed. Given my genuine interest in gaining a deeper understanding of a specific phenomenon, I analyzed participants’ perceptions through the use of multiple sources of data and inductive data analysis. In this study, I was the main instrument (Creswell, 2013; Janesick, 2016) and not only I acknowledged my presence, but I also considered my engagement in this study as an asset.

In this section, I discuss the reasons why I chose an exploratory qualitative case study as research approach. Because of the nature of the a priori questions, I employed an exploratory case-study approach. A case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. For Merriam (2009) a case study is “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 40).

A qualitative case study requires the researcher to collect and analyze “multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2013, p. 62) so that “holistic description and explanation” are available (Merriam, 2007, p. 29). Similarly, Yin (2018) defines a case study as “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence” (p. 3). This study seeks to gain a better understanding of language educators’ experiences in the use of social media applications for pedagogical purposes. Therefore, a case study approach provides the logical framework that best supports the purpose of this study.

According to Merriam (2007), “a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (p. 19). In light of the nature of such exploration, I aimed at an in-depth understanding of a particular case in a specific context.
According to Stake (1995), three are the main types of case studies: *intrinsic*, *instrumental*, and *collective*. *Intrinsic* case studies focus on a case that is unusual and is of particular interest to the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). *Instrumental* case studies focus on a particular issue that may be generalizable. The primary purpose of an instrumental case study is to help advance understanding (Stake, 1995). *Collective* case studies include more than one case “in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (Stake, 1995, p. 437). Case studies can be further divided into three categories: *explanatory*, *descriptive* and *exploratory* (Yin, 2018). In an *exploratory* case study the focus is usually a single case or a limited number of cases (up to 10) and the purpose is to understand an emerging phenomenon. Due to the nature of the *a priori* questions, I decided to employ an exploratory case study approach to guide me through the process of data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation.

**Overview of Research Design**

The following table summarizes the specific steps I employed to carry out the study.

**Table 2. Overview of Research Design.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I conducted a selected review of the relevant literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I obtained approval from the university IRB to proceed with the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I contacted potential research participants by email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I then sent the survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I conducted and recorded semi-structured in-depth, face-to-face interviews with the selected participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I transcribed the interviews verbatim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I then proceeded with the analysis of the interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I employed member checking to clarify the answers from the participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I conducted follow-up with peer reviewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I created an audit trail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Setting

In this section, I define and justify the setting for the research investigation. I conducted the study on the campus of a large, public, research university, located in the Southeast of the United States. To maintain the confidentiality, I used pseudonyms throughout the study.

The Sunshine University (pseudonym) is one of the nation’s top public research universities and enrolls approximately 50,000 students. The institution offers more than 80 undergraduate majors and 130 graduate, specialist, and doctoral degree programs under 14 colleges. The Sunshine University is also home to nearly 5,000 international students from 145 countries and it offers more than 600 registered student organizations, including academic, professional, special interest, and multicultural groups.

The College of Education is nationally ranked and has more than 2,444 enrolled students in bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs. With more than 13,500 education degrees awarded, the College of Education has graduated the second largest number of educators in Florida over the last ten years. The College of Education of the Sunshine University offers many interdisciplinary degrees programs and provides graduate students the resources needed to become educational leaders, researchers, and scholars. Students work along with faculty and carry research projects (USF, 2018).

Being the largest department in the College of Education, the Department of Teaching and Learning offers several teachers’ certification programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels including elementary education, special education, early childhood education, physical education, reading/literacy education, English education, and TESOL/second language acquisition. The department is home to 47 full-time faculty members (USF, 2018).
Participants

In this section, I explain and justify the sample used and how I selected participants. I also describe the characteristics of the sample and provide other pertinent demographic information. I purposively selected the participants for this study. They consist of language educators, who are using social media applications for pedagogical purposes.

For the purposes of this study, I adopt Patton (2015) definition of purposeful sampling: “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry... Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding” (p. 264).

The potential participants were:

a) Language educators teaching in higher education
b) Language educators using social media as pedagogical tools
c) Language educators willing to be interviewed in a qualitative case study

I contacted each participant by email, and I determined a convenient location and time for the interview. Before the interview, I asked the participants to sign a consent form. The online survey respondents were eighteen adult doctoral-level students enrolled in the TESLA (Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition) at a large university in the Southeast (United States of America).

TESLA is a unique interdisciplinary program in the College of Education thanks to its innovative design, curriculum, and delivery (Liontas, 2018). Doctoral students are selected from a competitive local, national, and international talent pool. Upon admission, TESLA students become part of the TESLA family. Students gain valuable experience in teaching, curriculum
innovation, and scholarly inquiry. They also present their research at local, state, regional, national, and international conferences.

TESLA doctoral students work in cohorts, progressing through the core coursework together and forming lifelong friendships with peers. To provide students a support system, a membership in a supportive community of peers, and opportunities for social interactions, doctoral students established a graduate student organization. Courses are designed to promote greater interaction between students and faculty and to initiate students into the culture of professional collaboration.

The participants of this study were TESLA doctoral students and language educators with experience in teaching at the university level. Due to my own educational experience of studying to become a language educator, as well as my personal work experience as a language instructor, I decided to focus on this population. The respondents had a language working experience ranging from 2 years to 35 years, with an average experience of 20.7 years. All of them graduated from universities and obtained Master’s degrees. For the present study, I changed all names to provide confidentiality to all participants.

**Data Collection Instruments**

In this section I describe and justify all data collection methods, instruments, and procedures, including how, when, where, and by whom data were collected. The primary data sources for this qualitative study consists of (a) a survey questionnaire, (b) face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, and (c) a self-reflective researcher e-journal. The data collection process started after obtaining the university institutional review board (IRB) permission to conduct the study, and it lasted one semester.
Following a brief pilot test of survey clarity, relevance, length, and format, I distributed an online survey to the graduate students enrolled in the TESLA doctoral program (formerly known as Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology, SLA/IT doctoral program) at a large, suburban, research, public university in the South East (USA).

After receiving the study approval by the university’s Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), I e-mailed a letter of request to participate in the dissertation study (Appendix D: Recruitment Email) to forty-seven potential candidates. In the letter, I described the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the procedures to ensure confidentiality. I invited the potential candidates to complete the online survey, by including the link to the survey on SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com), a popular and user-friendly online survey development cloud-based software, with each e-mail invitation (Appendix D: Recruitment Email). I also provided the details for informed consent on the survey and completion indicated the participant’s consent.

I asked the participants to provide their best answers based on their best judgment and accumulated language-teaching experience, after having obtained the IRB permission to conduct the study (see Appendix A). I gave respondents about three weeks to complete the online survey. I assured all the respondents the answers were confidential. A total of eighteen surveys were completed (a thirty-eight % response rate).

I originally intended to schedule follow-up interviews with three purposefully selected participants over a three-week period starting on August 30, 2017. However, after the survey, I reached a new decision and I decided to shift the focus on a single case study.

The interviews provided the most in-depth information by telling the story in the voices of the participant. First, to ensure confidentiality throughout the study, I created pseudonyms for
the participants and the university. Second, to keep participants’ names private, and, at the same time, still be able to refer to them as real people, I kept the participants’ name first letter. Third, to safeguard the data collected during the study, I saved all files electronically on my personal computer. Fourth, participants completed the online survey questionnaire on a secured website. Lastly, I conducted all interviews in my office.

**Survey Questionnaire**

A survey questionnaire presents some advantages: it is flexible, easy to administer, and cost-effective (Fink, 2013; Fowler, 2014). Web-based surveys present some strategic advantages over traditional paper-based surveys. First, they have the same strength as paper versions, allowing respondents to take their own time to complete the survey. Second, online surveys are cheaper. Third, they are faster than traditional surveys. Finally, they can be administered remotely via online and mobile devices. I designed and I pilot-tested an online survey using SurveyMonkey.

The survey questionnaire included an initial page, which explained the purpose of the research study and the procedures. Once participants read, fully understood the consent form, and agreed to voluntarily participate as a subject in the research, they were able to access the survey, by simply clicking the button labeled next. Survey questionnaire answers were automatically saved in the SurveyMonkey database, and SurveyMonkey notified in real time the researcher, once the project received responses.

The survey included a mix of closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions were made of check boxes, where respondents could select one response from a range of possible answers. Open questions allowed respondents to fill in a text box with as much information as
necessary. I arranged the survey questions into three sections. Section 1 - Demographic Information. In this section I included some general close-ended questions about the profile of the respondents such as age, teaching experience, and technology experience. Section 2 - Social Media Evaluation. This section was the central part of the survey and I included open questions regarding their personal opinions, experiences, and views about social media use in the language classroom. Section 3 - Post-Survey Interviews. In this last section I included a question about the willingness to be interviewed at the participant convenience.

**Interviews**

The purpose of interviewing is to understand the experiences of other individuals and how they interpret those experiences (Seidman, 2013). This method of data collection is appropriate for this study, since my goal is to explore how language educators perceive their use of social media applications for pedagogical purposes. Furthermore, interviews are a major part of any qualitative research work. According to Kvale (1996) “interviews helps to understand the world from the subject’s point of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p. 1).

Interviews can be *structured, semi-structured, or unstructured*. Due to the nature of the study, I employed semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a pre-determined set of open-ended questions, with the opportunity for the interviewer to further explore particular themes or responses (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Rubin, & Rubin, 2012). In other words, a semi-structured interview does not limit respondents to a set of pre-determined answers.

Based on the review of the literature, I developed an interview protocol in advance. This
protocol was consistent with the type of interview to conduct and provided me data that answered the research questions. I included in the protocol various types of questions with different levels of specificity. I started with grand tour questions, in other words broad questions, which invite an open-ended response. I also included focusing questions, to ask for more specific responses. I finally used probes, along with focusing questions, to prompt responses, when the interviewee had some difficulty responding, or when I needed clarification (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Rubin, & Rubin, 2012).

During the interview itself, I started with the broader questions and worked towards more specific questions as needed, in case the interviewee tended to give only short, non-descriptive answers to the broad questions:

*Grand tour question*: Tell me about your experience teaching language courses.

*Focusing question*: How do you choose social media for your courses?

*Question with probes*: In what ways do you employ social media?

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) further discuss and explain the different kinds of interview questions qualitative researchers may employ, such as introductory questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct questions, indirect questions, structuring questions, and interpreting questions.

The semi-structured, face-to-face interviews took up to 30 minutes. I digitally audio-recorded the interviews utilizing the iPhone application Voice Memos (see Appendix L). I then conducted member checking follow-up interviews, to discuss and to ask the participant to elaborate on what stated in the first interview. Follow-up interviews served two purposes: (1) to give the participant an opportunity to provide feedback about the first interview; and (2) to allow me to expand and verify descriptions, ensuring a proper reflection of the descriptions.
I followed the interview protocols included in Appendix F. Besides, I further reflected on the interviews to enrich the data sources. I also conducted a pilot test with participants that have a similar background to those that have participated in the study. To sum up, the following Table 3 summarizes the specific steps I followed:

Table 3. Instrument Preparation Procedure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I prepared the survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I prepared the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I pilot tested the instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I selected and contacted the sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I conducted the interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Researcher Reflective Journal**

Journal writing affords enhanced reflexivity of a researcher, mediation, dialogue, and awareness of the researcher’s “unconscious self” (Janesick, 2016). In addition, it allows the researcher to complement other techniques of data collection and helps the researcher realize him/herself as a research instrument in the process of qualitative inquiry (Janesick, 2016). Moreover, the reflective journal allows researchers to describe their feelings about conducting research in this area of study.

According to Morrow and Smith (2000), the use of a reflective journal adds rigor to qualitative inquiry, as the investigator is able to record his/her reactions, assumptions, expectations, and biases about the research process. Janesick (2016) also suggests journal writing as a sort of member check of the researcher’s own thinking. In other words, a research journal is critically important in documenting the researcher’s personal research journey, and in validating the authenticity of research data collected (Etherington, 2004; Ortlipp, 2008).
For these reasons, I recorded my own views, decisions, thoughts, insights, doubts, and experiences during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation phases in a researcher’s reflective journal (a sample of the journal is provided in Appendix I). In particular, thanks to my researcher’s reflective journal, I was able to (a) keep a detailed history of my research process as it unfolds; (b) track the development of my research skills and understanding; (c) provide a context for reflecting on my research; (d) have an overview of my study progress over time; (e) provide a sort of reference point; (f) increase transparency to my study and finally (g) clarify my thoughts and feeling. I recorded thoughts and experiences in the form of a researcher reflective journal on Microsoft Word for Mac. I choose this format since it is more practical and manageable. Finally, I included samples of my researcher journal writing in the appendix.

Data Analysis

This section describes and justifies all methods and tools used for analysis of data. Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data (Janesick, 2016). In qualitative research, data analysis stage is simultaneous and intertwined with data collection (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, ongoing data analysis took place throughout the study. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define qualitative data analysis as: “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (p. 145).

In other words, the challenge of qualitative analysis lies not only in making sense of large volume of data, but also in reducing the amount of raw data, in identifying what is significant and, finally, in communicating the essence of what the data may or may not reveal (Patton, 2015).
Data Organization and Preparation

In this section, I explain how I organized, reduced, and prepared raw data. I collected data from the participants and stored the data on my personal, password-protected computer. I organized and analyzed the data in chronological order. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) qualitative data analysis is “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (p. 145).

Qualitative researchers tend to use inductive analysis of data (Janesick, 2016; Patton, 2015). I based, therefore, the analysis of interview transcripts on an inductive approach geared to identifying patterns in the data using thematic codes. According to Patton (2015), “the patterns, categories, and themes of analysis emerged out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (p. 390).

Data Transcription

Transcribing was the most time-consuming and tedious part. I transcribed the interview verbatim right after the recording. It took me on average 3 hours for each interview. I used the latest version of VLC media player, a free and open source cross-platform multimedia player. I was able to play the interview and slow down the speed of the recording without affecting the quality of the audio. I have to admit it is not a particularly hard task, provided one has a quality recording material. Listening many times the interview also helped the transcription process.

Coding

I was new to the field of coding and interpreting. I read several qualitative analysis textbooks, asked for suggestions to my peers, and then I came up with my decision: thematic
analysis. All questionnaires, interviews, and researcher journals went through the same process of coding. I coded data using Microsoft Word for Mac OS. The qualitative responses were subjected to thematic content analysis using standard qualitative procedures. The analysis of the data was therefore inductive, building on the respondents’ actual comments. According to Hatch (2002), “Analysis means organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories” (p. 148).

For each response, I identified each question’s key points. I then proceeded to code data into categories. Saldaña (2016) defines coding in qualitative inquiry as: “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). Then I decided to analyze each question across all responses to identify categories in that particular area of the participant’s experience. I then further analyzed all the categories to identify major themes in the participants’ overall experience. Finally, I further examined all the categories to identify key themes in the language educators’ experience. As Marshall and Ross, (2016) contend, “Identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together is the most intellectually challenging phase of the analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavor” (p. 114).

The data analysis process is notoriously complex, laborious and time-consuming. Moreover, qualitative data analysis requires a specific set of skills, patience, and creativity. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the term “thematic analysis” refers to the “method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (or themes) within data.” I followed the procedure summarized in Table 4.
**Table 4.** Thematic Analysis Six-phase Framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Become familiar with the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Generate initial codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Search for themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Review themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Define themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Write-up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reporting**

By reading again the entire interviews and by expanding some section of my study, I was able to better organize my thoughts. It took me several weeks to revise the final version of the study because, even if I was overall satisfied with the outcome, there was still plenty of room for improvement. In the future, I would like to further refine my reporting skills and qualitative writing process. My goal is to gain confidence and acquire competence in my academic writing abilities and how professional writing initiatives connect to the personal self as shown in Richards and Miller, (2005).

**Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis**

Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA) software packages allow researchers to organize and analyze different types of qualitative data in a systematic and rigorous manner (Bazeley, 2013). CAQDA can be used to facilitate analysis in several ways such as: (a) Making notes, (b) Writing up, (c) Editing, (d) Coding, (e) Storing data, (f) Searching and retrieving data, (g) Data ‘linking’, (h) Memo-ing, (i) Performing Content analysis, (l) Displaying data, (m) Drawing and verifying conclusions, (n) Building theory, (o) Mapping data graphically, and (p) Writing reports (Weitzman 2000).
Issues of Trustworthiness

In this section, I explain and discuss measures taken to enhance the study trustworthiness. In the traditional/positivist research paradigm the quality of quantitative research is evaluated based on criteria of validity, reliability, and objectivity. Qualitative research, on the other hand, rests on a different set of philosophical assumptions about the nature of truth and the limitations of research. Trustworthiness, therefore, represents a crucial aspect of qualitative research. It is worth noticing that trustworthiness has been further divided into the concepts of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To increase the trustworthiness of research findings, I followed the framework presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Creswell (2013), by implementing the following techniques: (a) prolonged engagement, (b) triangulation, (c) peer debriefing, (d) providing thick description, (e) member checks, (f) compiling an audit trail, (g) clarifying bias, and (h) producing a reflexive journal. Below I provide a description of how I employed each technique in this study.

(a) Prolonged Engagement. Spending prolonged time in the field is essential in order to build rapport and mutual trust with research participants and to ensure quality data. I stayed in the field for ample time, collected enough data, and interviewed enough participants, to provide the basis for sound interpretations of the findings. I have spent seven years at the same institution where I conducted the study. During this time I have developed an in-depth understanding of the study phenomenon. I had the opportunity to work closely with language educators and instructional designers, to discuss the study, exchange ideas, and obtain constructive feedback that helped me to build a stronger study.

(b) Triangulation. Triangulation is an important technique that utilizes multiple data sources, multiple informants, and multiple methods to confirm or validate research findings.
Triangulation “involves the use of multiple and different methods, investigators, sources, and theories to obtain corroborating evidence” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 239). Data triangulation, in other words, refers to the use of multiple data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 2015). One of main reason why I collected multiple data sources to answer each research question was for the sake of triangulation, which, as a result, increased the credibility of the research results.

(c) Peer Debriefing. Peer debriefing is another method to facilitate the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Padgett, 2008). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe peer debriefing as: “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical sessions and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). Peer debriefing, therefore, refers to the discussion of my own interpretations with another qualitative researcher not directly involved in the study. This peer was a doctoral candidate in the College of Education of a university in the South East of the United States, with experience as a qualitative researcher. I took advantage of this opportunity to further strengthen the validity of the data collected.

(d) Providing Thick Description. Thick description refers to a detailed description of a phenomenon that includes the researcher’s interpretation, in addition to the observed context and processes. Thick description is critical to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Further, Creswell and Miller (2000) explain: “the purpose of thick description is that it creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feelings that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study” (pp. 128-129). I therefore provided a detailed description of the study setting, context, and participants to provide the reader a complete, comprehensive, and holistic picture of the study.
(e) *Member Checks*. Member checking refers to the process in which the researcher asks participants to read the transcripts of data and check if the researcher’s interpretation of the data, provided by the participants, is accurate (Janesick, 2016). Guba (1981) argues that with this technique “data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences and groups from which data are solicited” (Guba, 1981, p. 85). I asked the participant to check my descriptions and interpretations, as I collected, analyzed, and interpreted the data. This process provided me with participant’s feedback, on the appropriateness of my interpretations and descriptions of their perspectives and, as a result, increased the trustworthiness of the study.

(f) *Compiling an Audit Trail*. An audit trail is another way to increase trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry and to add methodological rigor to a research study. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), “an audit trail is established by researchers documenting the inquiry process through journaling and memoing, keeping a research log of all activities, developing a data collection chronology, and recording data analysis procedures clearly” (p. 128). For this reason, a doctoral candidate in the College of Education of a university in the South East of the United States, with experience as a qualitative researcher, had online access to my self-reflective journal and audited it periodically. In addition, I provided, in Appendix C, evidence on how I conducted the study and form my interpretations.

(g) *Bias clarification*. The issue of bias in qualitative research is an important one. Creswell (2013) argues, “Qualitative researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or worldview, a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide their inquiries” (p.74). In order to disclose any possible biases, I presented in Chapter 1 a complete review of my personal, professional, and educational background. As a researcher, I acknowledged that my biases,
related to the purposes of this study, are largely shaped by my personal teaching experiences, as a language educator at an American university, as well as my experiences as an earlier adopter of new advances in instructional technology.

(h) Researcher Reflective Journal. As already explained, I included a researcher reflective journal, as another additional powerful technique to improve the quality of the data. Moreover, to further increase the trustworthiness of this study, I self-reflect critically regarding “assumptions, worldviews, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation” (Merriam, 2009, p. 229). The ongoing process of self-reflection was also essential to situate myself within the context of my inquiry. Finally, keeping a reflective journal helped me to identify the steps for data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting.

The Researcher

This section informs the reader what the researcher brings to the study and discusses how researcher experience and perspectives are related to the problem. In other words, in this section, I describe how my personal, educational, and professional background contributed to my interest in the research topic.

My name is Alessandro, and this is a brief story of my academic journey. I was born and raised in Milan, Italy. I graduated from the University of Milan in 2003 with a B.A. in Language and Literature. In 2005 I received a Master in Foreign Language Education, from the University of Rome. That year, I spent my summer traveling through Spain, and I fell in love with the language, the culture, and the lifestyle. In 2006, I moved from Milan to Málaga, Andalusia, Spain, to pursue a degree in Spanish language and culture. Following my studies in Spain, I decided to move to the United States of America. I spent the first two years studying and
teaching at the University of Virginia, and in 2009 I earned a Master of Arts degree in Italian Studies.

Presently, I am a doctoral candidate in the Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology (SLA/IT) program at the University of South Florida (Tampa, FL). I chose this doctoral program because I have a passion for languages, for teaching, and for educational technologies. Since I started the doctoral program, I have aimed to provide our students with new and exciting learning opportunities. For this reason, I decided to integrate a selected number of Web 2.0 technologies and social media into my own instruction, to foster a student-centered learning environment, where technology is used to support student learning, engagement, and a sense of community.

While studying for my doctoral degree in the SLA/IT program at USF, I also taught ESOL courses to pre and in-service teachers, and Italian language at the University of Tampa. During my doctoral studies, I have presented at various local, state, regional, national and international conferences. My academic interests intersect in the broader fields of teacher education, instructional technology, and qualitative research.

Over the last decade, my students and I have been experimenting with the use of Web 2.0 technologies and social media applications. In particular, I have conducted several pilot studies in the Spanish/Italian classes I taught for the World Language Department at the University of Virginia and the University of South Florida. The students’ positive feedback has strengthened my belief in the use of social media technologies for language learning purposes.

At the time of conducting the study, I was employed as an adjunct language instructor and I was a doctoral candidate at the Sunshine University. As an instructor, I have gained valuable experience teaching undergraduate students. My job has included planning daily
lessons, creating tests, quizzes and assignments, assessing students’ progress, holding regular office hours, attending staff meetings, and collaborating with my colleagues.

Over the years, I have developed a student-centered approach to teaching languages that makes the language classroom an engaging and challenging environment. One of the most valuable features I bring to the classroom is my own experience living and studying abroad. My students not only learn how to speak, read, and write in a foreign language; they also experience the sounds, sights, and tastes of a foreign culture.

I also believe in being a reflective practitioner and keeping a “teaching journal” on a regular basis. Thus, I believe that my teaching experience, combined with my course work and research background in qualitative research, along with my genuine enthusiasm for teaching languages and culture to adults in both face-to-face and on-line environments, have an impact on the inquiry process.

In all phases of the implementation of the study, I was an active instrument, collecting data and constructing understandings in a natural setting (Janesick, 2016). Indeed, in qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the main instrument (Creswell, 2013; Janesick, 2016). In my role of researcher, I designed the instruments; selected participants; conducted, recorded, and transcribed interviews; kept my own reflective journal; analyzed data, interpreted and reported them.

**Ethical Issues**

In this section, I discuss the ethical considerations I addressed in this study, shedding light on how I protected participants’ rights and how I followed conventions of research ethics and the institution IRB (Institutional Review Board) procedures. I conducted this study according
to my university IRB standards for research involving human subjects. I provided the study participants a copy of the informed consent form, which explains the purpose of the research.

Participation in this study was voluntary and there was no remuneration or compensation. I made clear that participants could refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. The answers to both the survey and interview questions remained confidential. No personal information was identified in this study. I did not collect data related to race, or ethnicity.

To help protect participants’ confidentiality, I masked the names of people, places, and research site though the use of pseudonyms. There were any risks for the participants. I stored all data in a password-protected electronic format. I use the findings of this study for scholarly purposes only. The input, provided by the participants, helped me understanding language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media.

At my university, investigators must participate in a foundations course for the protection of human subjects before any involvement in human subjects research. In addition, researchers must get recertified every two years from the date of the initial certification in human research protection education. Researchers can take advantage of the certification process by taking the USF Foundations Course, the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) Refresher Course or another USF Institutional Review Board (USF IRB) approved program. I attach the certificate of completion for the mandatory investigator education in Foundations in Human Researcher Protections at USF in Appendix L, in Appendix A the study IRB approval letter, and the consent form in Appendix B, following the template provided by the USF Institutional Review Board (IRB).
Limitations and Delimitations

In this section, I identify and discuss the study limitations and delimitations. Hancock and Algozzine (2017) define limitations as “factors that may affect the results of the study that are generally beyond the control of the researcher” (p. 77). In other words, limitations are external conditions that constrain the study’s scope and may affect its outcome. The proposed study contains certain limitations; some related to the qualitative research and others related to this specific study design.

I followed a qualitative case study research approach, involving the use of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015), as the primary method of data collection, to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media. It is limited to one participant, because of the time constraints involved in interviewing and subsequent data analysis.

One limitation is related to the ability to understand the participants’ perspectives, since social media is rapidly changing. Therefore, the same participant might have different perspectives from the survey to the interview. Against the backdrop of this rapidly changing context, I did my best as a researcher to capture the ideas of the participants.

In contrast, delimitations are characteristics used to limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study (Creswell, 2013). In other words, delimitations are conditions that the researcher intentionally imposes to narrow the scope of a study. A number of boundaries were set for the present study to permit a thorough, yet focused examination of the phenomenon of interest.

Delimiting factors include the choice of objectives, the research questions, theoretical perspectives adopted, and the population investigated. First, the participants for this study were
language educators, who adopted social media technologies for pedagogical purposes in their own instruction, while attending a large, public, research-oriented, suburban university in the Southeast. Second, the participants were educators enrolled in a specific doctoral program, with a particular emphasis on language education and instructional technology. This factor could produce different responses and ideas compared to other educators who may not be comfortable or confident with educational technology.

Another delimitation was the choice to focus only on the most relevant social media applications for language educators: Social Networking Services, Blogging Services, and Media Sharing Services. In particular, I decided not to include in my study other popular social media applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, because it goes beyond the scope of this study.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, I identified the following assumptions.

(a) I employed appropriate inclusion criteria in selecting the sample and, therefore, I assured that the participants have all experienced the same phenomenon of the study.

(b) Participants had a sincere interest in volunteering in the study.

(c) Participants completed the online survey questionnaire and responded to the interviews honestly and, therefore, their answers reflect each participant’s thoughts, feelings, and perceptions.

(d) Participants understood the terms, concepts, and vocabulary used in the study;

(e) The data, consisting of an open-ended questionnaire, individual interviews, and a reflective researcher journal provided enough evidence to support the findings of this study; and finally,
(f) The data interpretation accurately reflected the perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of the participants.

Summary

In this chapter, I situated the study within a particular methodological tradition, provided a rationale for that approach, described the research setting and sample, and described data collection and analysis methods. I explained why a qualitative exploratory case study was the most appropriate approach to answer the research questions guiding this study. In this section, I also described and justified the selection of the research setting. In addition, I also explained and justified the participant’s selection.

Moreover, I also outlined ethical considerations pertaining to participants, shedding light on how I protected participants, including conventions of research ethics and the institutional review board process. In addition, I addressed the steps I have taken to ensure rigor throughout the study. Finally, I identified and discussed the study limitations, delimitations, and assumptions.

In the next chapter, I organize the results of the data analysis procedure and I report on the study’s main findings. In Chapter 5, I address the conclusions of this study and discuss possible pedagogical implications for policy and practice, as well as for further research.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In Chapter Four, I provide a presentation of the data collected, a description of the results of the data analysis, and the findings of the study. In this section, I include evidence from the survey questionnaire and the interviews with informants to illustrate themes and findings. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research findings.

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media for pedagogical purposes. Because of the nature of the research pursued, this dissertation employed a case-study design that involved the use of a survey, followed by semi-structured, face-to-face interviews as the primary method of data collection. The following exploratory research questions guided this study:

1. What do language educators perceive about the integration of social media in their language classroom?

2. What do language educators perceive are best practices in language teaching with social media?

3. In what ways do language educators use social media in their language classroom?

Data Analysis and Findings

There are different ways of presenting data and findings in a qualitative case study. In this section, I present the findings in clear narrative form using plentiful verbatim quotes, and
“thick description.” I first present data from each source, in other words, the data from the survey questionnaires, followed by data from the interviews in the next section. Then I combine and integrate what I have discovered in the following section, using findings from all my data to address each research question. Data included (a) answers to a survey questionnaire, (b) interview transcripts (see Appendix I for interview questions) and (c) a self-reflective researcher e-journal.

Survey

I arranged the survey questions into three sections. Section 1 - Demographic Information. This section included some general close-ended questions about the profile of the respondents such as age, teaching experience, technology experience. Section 2 - Social Media Evaluation. This section was the central part of the survey and included open-ended questions regarding their personal opinions, experiences, and views about social medial use in the language classroom. Section 3 - Post-Survey Interviews. This last section included a question about the willingness to be interviewed at the participant’s convenience.

Section 1 - Demographic Information.

The first section included some general close-ended questions about the profile of the respondents such as gender, teaching experience, technology experience. The first question is about participants’ gender. Of these participants, 72.22% (13) were female, and 27.78% (5) were male.

The second question is about participants’ age. Participants’ ages ranged from 21 to over 50 years: the majority (44% or 8 participants) were between 30 and 39, followed by between 21
to 29 years (22.22% or 4 participants), 40-49 (16.67% 3 participants), 50-59 (16.67% 3 participants). None was above 60 years old. The average age for the entire group was 40 years.

The third question is about participants’ language teaching experience. Regarding their language teaching experience (Question 3), 61.11% (11 participants) reported presently teaching English/ESL. 27.78% (5 participants) selected other and then specified (2 specified Arabic, 1 Japanese, 1 Indonesian and 1 none at the time). An equal number of participants taught German, and Other languages (5.56% or 1 participant). The forth question is about participants’ language teaching experience. The following Figure 3 shows the answers provided.

![Figure 3. Survey Answers to Question 3.](image)

For the fourth question, respondents reported having an average of 5 years of combined teaching experience. Participants’ teaching experience ranged from under 1 year to over 20 years: the majority (44% or 8 participants) reported an experience between 1 and 5 years, followed by 6-10 years (33.33% or 6 participants), under 1 year (11.11% or 2 participants), 11-15 years (5.56% or 1 participant), over 20 years (5.56% or 1 participant).
The fifth question is about participants’ social media in their personal life experience. Regarding their experience with social media in their personal life, the majority (100% or 18 participants) reported using YouTube, followed by Facebook (88.89% or 16 participants), Google + (66.67% or 12 participants), Pinterest (55.56% or 10 participants), LinkedIn (55.56% or 10 participants), Twitter (50.00% or 9 participants) Blogs (44.44% or 8 participants), SlideShare (16.67% or 3 participants). The following Figure 5 shows the answers provided.
Figure 5. Survey Answers to Question 5.

The sixth question is about participants’ social media in their professional life experience. In addition to their personal use of social media, language educators experience with social media in their professional life was also explored. The majority reported using YouTube (82.35% or 14 participants), followed by Facebook (52.94% or 9 participants) Blogs (41.18% or 7 participants) and Pinterest (35.29% or 6 participants), LinkedIn (41.18% or 7 participants), Google + (35.29% or 6 participants), Twitter (23.53% or 4 participants), SlideShare (11.76% or 2 participants). The following Figure 6 shows the answers provided.
Figure 6. Survey Answers to Question 6.

Section II - Social Media Evaluation

The second section asked participants to answer questions about their social media evaluation. Open-ended question provided the participants with the opportunity to give further feedback. The following three questions (Question 7, 8, and 9) yielded responses that merit further scrutiny. Findings are presented in clear narrative form using plentiful verbatim quotes, and thick descriptions to represent the participant’s ideas.

To visually scan participants’ responses and to spot trends in participants’ answers, I employed SurveyMonkey text analysis feature. “This function scans through the entire text of all of the participants’ open-ended responses, analyzing the terms’ frequency and applying specific linguistic rules, including stemming, clustering, and scoring words and phrases based on uniqueness” (SurveyMonkey, 2018).
In addition, this function allows me to visualize the most important words and phrases in a word cloud. The sizes of the words represent the frequency with which those words and phrases appeared in the text responses. The word dimension is related to the frequency of the word used by the respondents. Another important feature allows me to view the same words and phrases in an ordered format. In the list view included, the same set of most important words and phrases are displayed from most frequent to least, along with a bar chart (SurveyMonkey, 2018).

I employed this online tool as a way to organize and visualize the information, however, it is not meant to be a true analysis, since it is up to the researcher to gauge what elements of the data are relevant. This is done by carefully reading the comments and understanding the context in which they are sharing their insights.

Q7 Social Media has been defined by researchers as “A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). How would you define Social Media and why?

16 participants answered this question, and 2 participants skipped this question. The following chart shows the answer provided.
As indicated in Figure 7, ideas was the most important word/phrase with six occurrences (37.50%), followed by communication, with five occurrences (31.25%), followed by interact, with four occurrences (25%).

The idea of sharing and exchanging information is a common theme raised by participants in defining social media. Their answers are indeed similar. For example, one participant, Melody, reported: “My definition is simpler although I mostly agree with Kaplan and Haenlein. It is an internet-based means of sharing ideas and collaboration.” Another participant,
Alexa, explained: “Technology that facilitates the sharing and exchange of information. This explanation is very simple, but holds what technology means to me as an educator.”

Other participants also commented on the virtues of openness and sharing as benefits of using social media. For example, Zakaria perceived: “Social media is an ongoing and dynamic platform, supported by Web 2.0, allowing people to exchange ideas and information via multimedia features embedded on it.” Another participant, Albert, said: “Social media consists of tools that provide spaces for interaction among people and agencies, and they provide a reflection of society away from official influences.”

Unsurprisingly, another participant, Kelly, believed the term social media does not have a clear definition: “I think that it is hard to place one single definition on Social Media.” However, she agreed on the definition of social media as: “web-based tools and applications that allow users to interact, create, and share content and ideas.”

For Nicole, social media could be defined as a network to connect people together. She commented: “people from different countries can communicate with one another via social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. It’s also a way for us to get updated about latest news in the world and to share ideas/perspectives/information with just a click.” Another participant, Jennifer, gave a simpler definition, stating that social media are essentially: “tools that connect multiple people and have the potential to form social groups (friends; networks; etc.).” Finally, Peter gave a simple, straightforward, yet effective definition: “Social Media are websites or apps are platforms that enable us to easily interact with other people.”

In relation to the eight question, (Do you think it is important to integrate Social Media in the language classroom? Why or why not?) 16 participants answered this question, and 2 participants skipped this question.
As indicated in Figure 9, learning was the most important word/phrase with five occurrences (31.25%), followed by language, with four occurrences (25%), as well as think, with four occurrences (25%).

Figure 9. Question 8 Text Analysis.

When it comes to the importance of integrating social media in the classroom, there is general agreement between the participants. Social media/Web 2.0

Figure 10. Question 8 Word Cloud.
technologies are very popular, and the majority of undergraduate students use those tools in their daily life. Furthermore, Web 2.0 tools have great potential in education because of a) their open nature, b) ease of use, c) and their support for effective collaboration and communication.

Kelly thought it is important to integrate social media in the language classroom because: “it has become such a popular tool and can also easily connect students to other language learners around the globe as well as in their own communities.” Peter also mentioned the importance of social media, since they are: “a part of students’ lives these days and they are a potentially effective way to learn.” Jennifer made a similar suggestion and stated: “students are already familiar with many social media tools and they are usually easy to use.”

In general, participants agreed on the benefits. In particular, regarding potential advantages of social media, one participant, Nicole, mentioned: “it can help boost learners’ motivation to learn the language as a majority of young learners are familiar with and use social media a great deal on a daily basis. Further, it’s convenient to embed or attach multimedia learning materials or resources in the social media for the learners to get access to outside of the classroom.”

Another participant, Isabelle, mentioned the popularity of social media among college students and commented: “nowadays, almost everyone uses Social Media to interact with each other. I can use it to connect to my students, find resources for them; they can use Social Media to express their thoughts.” For Melody, the benefit of using these technologies is related to engagement. She said: “Social media is so much a part of the lives of college students that the course work may seem more relevant and appealing if its delivery includes social media.”

Another participant, Steph, highlighted, as another benefit, the contribution to the class’s sense of community: “In Deaf culture, utilization of Social Media is how word gets around for
events in the community and gives users and learners of ASL an opportunity to communicate that might otherwise not be there.” Kelly also expressed a similar feeling and explained that it is important to integrate social media in the language classroom because: “it has become such a popular tool and can also easily connect students to other language learners around the globe as well as in their own communities. Social Media is also a great way for language learners to practice their language in a less threatening environment than face-to-face environments, especially for beginner learners.”

Another participant, Jennifer, reported that another benefit of using social media in the classroom is related to students’ familiarity with these tools: “Students are already familiar with many social media tools, and they are usually easy to use.” Peter also added, “Social Media are a part of students’ lives these days, and they are a potentially effective way to learn.”

Despite this broad appreciation of the benefits of social media, there were some serious concerns. In particular, respondents expressed concerns over privacy and the use of a social space as a teaching space. For example, Nicole said: “… there are also concerns pertaining to privacy, digital identity, and social media as a distraction that teachers should take into careful consideration when incorporating social media in language classroom.” Kelly also expressed a similar concern and explained: “…there are also risks of using Social Media, like encountering trolls that might hinder language learners if not used properly.”

**Q9 Based on your pedagogical orientation and teaching experience, what kind of Social Media would you say should be integrated in the classroom and why?**

16 participants answered this question, and 2 participants skipped this question. The following chart shows the answers provided.
Figure 11. Question 9 Text Analysis.

As indicated in figure 11, students was the most important word/phrase with eight occurrences (50%), followed by Facebook, with seven occurrences (43.75%), followed by videos, with five occurrences (31.25%).

Figure 12. Question 9 Word Cloud.

In answering the ninth question, (Based on your pedagogical orientation and teaching experience, what kind of Social Media would you say should be integrated in the classroom and why?), the majority of the participants indicated that video sharing and social networking applications, in particular, YouTube and Facebook, were the two most useful applications that should be integrated in the classroom.
Rachel commented: “YouTube because it allows students to peak into another culture… Facebook/WhatsApp/Skype, because it allows students to connect with peers in different countries.” For Jennifer, Facebook can serve as a hub of information and exchange of comments (long or short). She stated: “FB is very versatile in the ways it can be used as well as the reach (closed or public, etc.).” Alexa also reported: “I’m a big fan of integrating videos in my classrooms so I would say YouTube.” Zakaria also explained: “YouTube and Facebook. Widely embraced by the public with various features such as videos, images, polls, and animations.” Albert added he prefers to use: “YouTube: opportunities for conferencing, speaking, explaining and learning. Pinterest: Provide spaces to share materials related to the content of teaching.”

For Kelly the best kinds of social media to integrate into the classroom include blogs, wikis, Facebook, and Skype. She commented: “as long as the parameters are set on each tool depending on the levels of students.” She further explained: “Blogs and wikis can provide an innovative platform for students to share their ideas with others and collaborate on projects. They can also feel a greater sense of accomplishment in their work if they can create something that can be shared with others online.” In addition, she also provided a rationale for integrating those selected tools. She added: “Facebook, I think, can be a good tool for learners to meet other language speakers and learners and share/post new ideas. Skype is also a great tool to connect learners across countries and build connections. I think Skype is a great way for language learners to practice their speaking skills as well as learn about others cultures and build friendships across the globe.”

For Isabelle, the most important social media include YouTube, Google Drive, Blogs and Twitter. She commented: “I have used YouTube to conduct Flipped Classroom, Google Drive to collaborate with my students, Blogs to share our thoughts and writing in a fun and engaging way,
Twitter to read various post when discussing current events.”

Another participant, Nicole, provided a long and detailed answer that merits further scrutiny. She reported she would support the adoption of Facebook in language classroom. She commented:

“Highly recommended activities would be integrating learning activities on Facebook to traditional class such as posting reading articles or video clips on a Facebook group and having students do some multiple choice questions to check their understanding. Students can also write and post learning journals about certain topics by using Facebook notes. Then, peer assessment is employed to foster cooperative learning and enhance students’ writing skills. Last but not least, it is helpful when students join actively in discussion groups in which they read articles, write summary reports as well as post meaningful comments on Facebook group’s page.”

**Q10 What do you think the role of the language educator should be with regard to Social Media integration in the classroom and why?** 16 participants answered this question, and 2 participants skipped this question. The following chart shows the answers provided.

![Figure 13. Question 10 Text Analysis.](image)

As indicated in Figure 13, social media was the most important word/phrase with eight occurrences (50%), followed by language educator, with seven occurrences (43.75%), followed by control, with three occurrences (18.75%).
Q10 What do you think the role of the language educator should be with regard to Social Media integration in the classroom and why?

As for the role language educators need to play with regard to social media integration in the classroom (Question 10), participants’ answers were grounded in well-accepted pedagogical practices. Many of the participants emphasized the importance of the role of the language educator as a facilitator of learning. Abigail expressed this feeling: “The role of the language educator should be facilitator of language learning in the classroom.” Other participants also express a similar idea. For example, Kelly also reported: “I think the language educator has a very important role with regard to Social Media as the facilitator and sort of protector of their students.”

Similarly Albert reported: “The language educator equipped with the knowledge of the latest trends in technology could be a facilitator that helps in creating an atmosphere for safe and useful interaction.” Zakaria expressed a similar feeling. He also perceived the role of a language educator as a facilitator. He commented: “Class will be more efficient and effective with teachers’ guidance, control, and demonstration.”

For Peter, students’ safety and privacy are the most important elements. He reported: “I think teachers have to help the students how to interact effectively and politely with their peers. Also, technology is not a panacea for learning, so the instructor will need to give a lot of thought as to how the Social Media can promote learning.” Similarly, Jennifer believed that the instructor...
who uses it should be very familiar with the tool, especially regarding its privacy/reach. She added: “The instructor should monitor the posts and the site in general in order not lose control of the class, especially for large groups or immature users, which could create a problem if used incorrectly (harassment, etc.).”

Likewise, Alexa said: “the language educator has to control Social Media and not let it control him/her. As a teacher, you should be in charge of what goes on in the classroom and not let Social Media take control and get carried away with it.” Similarly, Nicole reported, “It is also advisable that teachers and language educators have clear learning objectives and outcomes to design suitable and meaningful activities for certain group of learners with different proficiency levels, learning styles and learning strategies.” Kelly also added: “I think the language educator has a very important role with regard to Social Media as the facilitator and sort of protector of their students.” Since social media reaches beyond the classroom, issues of safety are both related about communication and interaction between students as well as their actions in social media, which may be viewed and/or followed beyond their intended audience.

Section III - Post-Survey Interviews

Q11 Would you be willing to be interviewed at your convenience?  
Sixteen participants agreed to be interviewed, and two participants skipped this question.

Post-Survey Semi-Structured Interview

I followed a purposeful random sampling procedure in the selection of the participant for the post-survey semi-structured interview. “For many audiences, random sampling, even of small samples, will substantially increase the credibility of the results” (Patton, 2015, p. 270).
Participation in the follow-up, face-to-face, semi-structured interview was voluntary and the answers remained confidential.

A witness randomly chose one participant from the pool of sixteen respondents willing to be interviewed (see Appendix G). Before the interview, I gave the study participant a copy of the informed consent form, which explains the purpose of the research. I asked the chosen participant to please read and sign the informed consent to participate in research involving minimal risk (see Appendix B).

This participant took part in a 30-minute interview session, which took place in my office. I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix F). This session consisted of the following procedures:

1. Participant and I met at a mutually agreeable time in the researcher’s office.
2. I explained to the participant the use of the Voice Memos application for iPhone (see Appendix M).
3. I sought permission from the participant to digital record the session. The participant agreed to have his/her session digital recorded.
4. I checked the equipment for possible malfunctioning, and I made the adjustments where needed.
5. At the end of the session, I thanked the participant for his or her time and participation in this study.
6. I labeled the recording for future identification.
7. I transcribed the interview verbatim as a Word document for subsequent data analysis.
8. I then conducted a member checking follow-up interview, to discuss and to ask the participant to elaborate on what he/she has stated in the first interview.
Interview Participant

The following section provides a description of the language educator. In particular, I describe participant’s educational background, reasons to become a language educator, and the personal contribution to the field. I also provide a brief description of the participant’s language teaching experience and a discussion of participant’s plans for the future.

Jennifer

Jennifer has an interesting educational and professional background. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Arts with a minor in Art History, a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Anthropology, and a Master of Science in TESOL and FLE. She tries to use her interdisciplinary background in her teaching and in her research.

The reason why she decided to become a language educator is simple: she was always interested in helping others with language. When she was a high school student in France, her Anglophone friends were not as strong in French as she was (some had no French language prior to moving to France), so she assumed the role as translator and facilitator even when she was just a fellow student. She had also taught English abroad during her undergraduate studies. She also taught in the Netherlands for a summer. For a few years, while temporary teaching at a public high school, a job of teaching French came to her. While unexpected, she found out that she loved teaching French. Later, she married a francophone and in teaching him English, she realized that she should be an ESL/EFL teacher. This is when she decided to return to school and get a Master’s.

She thinks that teaching a language is a way to open the eyes and viewpoints of someone else. It can make them see their own culture and country in new ways. In a more general sense,
she thinks it is a real missed opportunity that the US has such a low rate of native-born Americans who are able to speak more than just English.

Regarding her teaching experience, she has several years of experience in language education. She started teaching French for non-credit “community education”. Later, she taught higher levels in French Conversation. She also taught English in the same community education program, which had a very diverse mixture of student levels of competency, backgrounds, and student goals. She also taught English for Academic purposes at a university for a couple semesters before getting into the doctoral program. Finally, she taught TESL courses for pre-service teachers every semester for about six years.

She hopes to work abroad in the near future and to continue to focus on an interdisciplinary approach to language education. She would also like to get more involved in the art scene and start an alternative classroom for English language learning. Since she thinks it’s important for art institutions to have community outreach and education programs, she would like to create one involving ESL.

**Survey Responses of Interviewee**

The following are some representative points of view from the participant. Her responses to selected survey questions precede her follow-up interview comments in order to round her personal beliefs and assumptions. All quotes and other identifying details are used here with participant’ explicit permission.

Regarding the definition of social media in the language classroom (Question 7), there is no consensus on a specific definition of social media. The participant agrees on the lack of a single definition.
Q7 Social Media have been defined by researchers as “A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). How would you define Social Media and why?

Jennifer thinks is it hard to place one single definition on social media. She would define social media as: “tools that connect multiple people and have the potential to form social groups (friends; networks; etc.).” Regarding the importance to integrate social media in the language classroom (Question 8), Jennifer highlighted the benefits. Upon closer scrutiny, it becomes apparent that including social media in the classroom was perceived as an important way to enhance the learning process, given the popularity among college students.

Q8 Do you think it is important to integrate Social Media in the language classroom? Why or why not?

Jennifer thinks it may be helpful to integrate social media in the language classroom. She commented: “I do not think it is necessary, but, if done correctly, it may be useful. Students are already familiar with many social media tools and they are usually easy to use.” Regarding the kinds of social media language educators should integrate in the language classroom (Question 9), she indicated she would integrate YouTube, followed by Facebook, and Blogs.

Q9 Based on your pedagogical orientation and teaching experience, what kind of Social Media would you say should be integrated in the classroom and why?

Jennifer explained she prefers to use Facebook. She commented: “Facebook can serve as a hub of information and exchange of comments (long or short). FB is very versatile in the ways it can be used as well as the reach (closed or public, etc.).” As for the role educator needs to play with regard to social media integration (Question 10), participant’s answers were grounded in
well-accepted pedagogical practices and theoretical constructs about the integration of technology.

Q10 What do you think the role of the language educator should be with regard to Social Media integration in the classroom and why?

Jennifer thinks the language educator has a very important role with regard to social media as the facilitator and sort of protector of their students. She commented: “the instructor who uses it should be very familiar with the tool, especially in terms of its privacy/reach. The instructor should monitor the posts and the site in general in order not lose control of the class, especially for large groups or immature users, which could create a problem if used incorrectly (harassment, etc.).”

Interview Responses

The semi-structured interview took place face-to-face and took around 35 minutes, resulting in a total of 4,400-words. I followed the interview protocol included in Appendix F. Extensive samples of quotations from the study participant are included in the report. In particular, I selected the most poignant and most representative quotes of the research findings. In addition, by using participant’s own words, I aimed to build an accurate representation of the participant’s perceptions. Findings from the interviews corroborated the findings from the survey.

Can you tell me about your vision of technology in language education? (Question #1)

Regarding their vision of technology in language education, the responses of the participant indicate their underlying belief regarding the importance of technology integration in
language education. She values technology as very important and, furthermore, sees the integration of technology as a crucial step toward helping students.

Jennifer thinks technology is important for the field of language education. She commented: “Well, we live in a world filled with technology. The students that we have are very accustomed to using technology in their daily lives. Most of the time we can assume that if we’re using basic technology we don’t have to give them any particular special lessons. So, using technology in the language classroom is a very convenient and efficient way of reaching students. So, if this technology is useful and can enhance their learning and can make our lives easier, then it’s a technology that, you know, would be beneficial for education.” For Jennifer, technology will keep playing a major role in language learning and language teaching. She stated, “…in terms of a vision of technology, I foresee that in the future we’re only going to be using technology more and more.” She further explained “although technology is going to be used more and more in the future, I think there still needs to be some sort of human element that arranges the technology for the particular lessons.”

*What Social Media technologies have you adopted into your teaching? (Question #2)*

Jennifer used social media for personal, academic, and professional purposes. Technologies cited are user-friendly and engage students in collaborative learning. Jennifer is a big fan of YouTube and Facebook. Some other technologies mentioned in the interviews include Facebook and Pinterest. She reported, “I have used YouTube often. That’s helpful for both when I teach pre-service teachers as well as when I taught French and now when I’m teaching English language learners.” She also added, “For my own professional developments, I use Facebook for keeping up to date with articles about education, about conferences, about what other educators are doing, and to have a network with the other teachers.”
She further explained, “The program that I worked with, that I work at now, teaching English as a Second Language has a Facebook page. Now, they don’t use it for academic purposes. They use it to sort of document their social activities. But that actually is really nice, because it really helps to create a community among the international students who are, you know, speakers from all over the world.” She finally added, “Also, in addition to Facebook to keep up to date with what’s going on in academia, I also use Pinterest, as a way to organize my, could be handouts or it could be like images that I know I’m going to use in the classroom…”

How Social Media has affected the way you teach your courses? (Question #3)

From the responses given, it is quite evident Jennifer shares the belief that social media in the language classroom merits increased instructional attention. Using social media to connect with their students inside and outside of the classroom seems to be a thread that runs through all of her responses. She believed it is possible to facilitate and enhance students’ learning by extending the discussion beyond the classroom. Sharing knowledge is also considered an important part of learning.

In reporting how social media has affected the way she teaches her courses, Jennifer said: “Well, I think it encourages the students to be more interactive… like I said, the community of the classroom, especially at this English language institute I’m teaching at, where they use Facebook as a sort of social platform and a way to continue the learning outside of the classroom.” She further explained: “I did a project where they picked their own TED talk that they wanted to see. So, that was really a good way to make the class more student-centered, because they could pick the topics that they wanted and some of them picked some topics related to their field. Others just, you know, pick topics that are related to their home country. And so,
that way, it created a lot more diversity in terms of the content that we had in the class. We’re basically bringing in everything that’s going on in the world into the classroom.”

And finally she added: “When you have something in a book it just kind of feels outdated, but, when it’s online, you really feel like this is what’s going on right now. This is what’s happening, this is in the news. And you can really have, you know, students become more engaged and more active and basically, you know, it encourages curiosity. So, again, the idea that they’re learning beyond the classroom and they’re looking at ways of interacting online with either content or with each other.”

What is your philosophy on the integration of Social Media in the language classroom? (Question #4)

Upon closer scrutiny, it becomes apparent that Jennifer agrees on the importance of including social media in the language classroom. There seems to be general agreement on the role of the language educator as a facilitator of learning and on the importance of adopting a student-centered approach. Jennifer perceived social media technologies, which allows for an increased level of experiential learning, as having the potential to impact student learning. In addition, participant aligns her views with constructivist principles of building knowledge through active learning and reflection upon experience.

When it comes to her philosophical orientation on the integration of social media in the classroom, Jennifer thinks teaching should be student-centered, as much as possible. She commented: “Well, it creates a more student-centered approach. Also, there’s a lot more. Well, there’s student autonomy…” She further commented, “you know, when it’s online the idea of share-ability really helps to promote a sense of pride and ownership in their work. And also a sense of connecting with others in the world…” She also added, “I’ve always wanted to connect
with other classes and have that as something that students are able to, you know, to interact with other language learners.”

*So, how do you integrate social media into the language curriculum? (Question #5)*

When it comes to specific examples of the integration of social media in the classroom, Jennifer pointed out the importance of proving guidelines and setting realistic expectations. She reported: “So, for example, I did a project where students had to create a video and before the project I gave them examples of what the videos, you know, might look like and not just guidelines but, you know, giving them examples.”

*What is the impact of social media on your teaching style? (Question #6)*

Jennifer highlighted the benefits of keeping up with a generation of student that are already familiar with and use social media in their life. She perceived social media technologies have significant potential to (a) recreate the learning environment between student and teacher and (b) to encourage social and active learning that is learner-centered and informal. By integrating social media in their teaching practices, she perceived an increased sense of community, student collaboration, and participation.

Jennifer thinks social media use somehow impacts her teaching, since it makes her feel like a more engaging teacher. She commented: “Well, I’d like to think that the students are more engaged, that they’re more active learners.” She also added, “when you have that less formal interaction, you can then take their hobbies or their interests and incorporate that into the future content of the class to further the engagement and make it more interesting for the students.”

*Can you describe an experience that would highlight the benefits of Social Media integration? (Question #7)*
Regarding a specific experience that would highlight the benefits of social media integration, the importance of the student as content creator instead of just being passive consumer seems to be the common thread here. In addition to providing a favorable learning environment, social media were also perceived to provide added learning benefits. For instance, Jennifer reported that students could exercise their creativity creating and sharing relevant videos. In describing a specific experience regarding the benefits of this social media integration, Jennifer commented: “So, I had a project where you see a student had to come up with a project that was describing their cultural background. And the student was deaf. And so the student created a video that was completely silent. And she did her video using ASL, American Sign Language, to basically narrate her video. And I thought that was a really creative way to introduce what it feels like, you know, having the silent video.”

*What has been your greatest success with social media integration in the classroom? (Question #8)*

Jennifer stated, “I would say the TED Talks, using the TED Talks and having students do oral presentations. Some students will use the TED Talks and they’ll review the video multiple times, so, again, that’s that learner autonomy of being able to control the pace of their learning and gain confidence in terms of understanding the content.” She also added, “And, certainly you can make the learning more personal, because there’s so much content out there and you can really customize it in so many different ways.”

*What has been your greatest disappointment with social media integration in the classroom? (Question #9)*
Despite this broad appreciation of the benefits of social media, there were some serious concerns. Jennifer expressed concerns over privacy and security, as some of the major limitations for not pursuing further implementation of social media technology in the language classroom. Another limitation reported is time constrains. A common complaint among educators is that social media is time-consuming.

Jennifer commented: “Well, there’s certainly issues of privacy and, as we know, Facebook is going through a lot of privacy problems.” Regarding the opportunity to find solutions to this challenge, she added, “I think those issues can be overcome with pseudonyms and different ways to go around it.” She further added, “I think it’s important that students understand those settings.” Finally, she made it clear, “as an instructor who is using social media, you have to be able to understand how to also teach students how to use social media.”

I asked Jennifer in a follow-up if anything in her personal or professional experience changed between the survey questionnaire and the interview. She commented: “That’s a good question. I am not sure if anything really changed in the way I approach social media, but I am teaching language classes now (or again), instead of teacher education classes. As I told you in the interview, the EAP program where I teach has a Facebook page and the students often talk about it. I was unable to go on a field trip a few weeks ago, but the students were very excited about the images they posted while on the field trip and wanted me to go and see them. This gave me an informal, out-of-the-classroom opportunity to interact, in the target language, of course, with the students.”

Regarding privacy and data security issues, she further added: “With all the discussion nowadays about Facebook and privacy, I have really thought about the use of Facebook in academia… So, for example, with the student I teach now, I will only accept their requests for
social media connections once they graduate and are no longer my students.”

She finally commented: “So, I don’t think my views on using social media within the classroom has really changed, but I do think that social media definitely has a place in parallel with the classroom, either with students between students… Well, now, social media makes this a lot easier and there is much more diversity, which allows the student to use the opportunities for social media in a more authentic way”

As expected, both instruments employed in this qualitative exploratory case study, the Survey and the Post-Survey Semi-Structured Interviews, offered a better understanding about social media technologies and their place in the overall language education. The insights gained from the post-survey interviews, when triangulated with the information revealed by the survey, offer evidence about participants’ perceptions about integrating social media in the classroom. Participants’ comments highlighted in this exploratory qualitative case study, which started with open-ended surveys and then delved deeper during the interview, offered detailed responses from one participant. While the responses are only from one participant, the rich descriptions and examples adds to our understanding of how educators use social media.

Summary

In this chapter I presented the findings uncovered by this study. These findings are based primarily on the analysis of both the survey answers and the interview transcripts. I organized the findings according to the research questions. Data from the survey and the individual interviews revealed participants’ perceptions. I included extensive samples of quotations from participants in the report. By using participants’ own words, I aimed to build accurately representation of the
participants’ perceptions. Findings from the interviews corroborated the findings from the survey.

I presented the findings with the major themes that emerged from the data. In Chapter 5 I discuss the findings, draw conclusions based on examination of study results, and review of the relevant literature in the field. In Chapter 5 I also outline the implications of the findings for pedagogy and I conclude with suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of social media for pedagogical purposes. Because of the nature of the research being pursued, I followed a qualitative exploratory case-study design that involved the use of a survey, followed by semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. In this chapter I review, analyze, and discuss, in light of the relevant literature, the findings of this study. I also outline the implications of the findings for pedagogy. I finally conclude this chapter with suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

Initially, I hoped to interview multiple participants to obtained more perspectives; however, while I included the survey questionnaire data from each respondent, my focus in this research became a single case study of one participant. It became important to delve into perceptions of one participant to fully understand that each educator is unique and brings unique views. In the future, I hope to re-create this study and focus on another participant. Alternatively, re-visit the same participant to see how changes in technology have affected the way in which she uses social media in her professional contexts. Once I “got into” the story and the experiences of one participant, I found that each participant could contribute to the study much more than what I had initially anticipated. Therefore, taking the time to get to know each
participant is how I would like to proceed in future studies.

Integration of the findings has led to conclusions. I organized the conclusions by the exploratory research questions posed for this study:

1. What do language educators perceive about the integration of social media in their language classroom?
2. What do language educators perceive are best practices in language teaching with social media?
3. In what ways do language educators use social media in their language classroom?

*Research Question 1: What do language educators perceive about the integration of social media in their language classroom?*

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that language educators have a favorable perception of social media for pedagogical purposes and its potential on students’ learning. Participants reported that social media integration into teaching and learning is important for students and agreed that there are advantages to using social media in the classroom. The overall agreement is perhaps reflective of the language educators who participated in the survey and the interviews, reflective on the subjects they teach, and reflective of the types of students they teach.

The interview data, in general, supports the survey data. In other words, the interviewee overall perceive that social media applications have a pedagogical value since proper integration may allow students to feel more engaged in the learning process. The findings imply that language educators are receptive to the possibilities social media technology offers. Consistent with previous studies concerning educational uses of social media, participants had positive
perceptions about their experiences and identified benefits from integrating social media (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

The findings show that social media applications most frequently used in language instruction were YouTube and Facebook. This finding is consistent with Moran, Seaman, and Tinti-Kane (2011) report. Unsurprisingly, participants perceived YouTube as more beneficial in comparison with other tools, such as Facebook and Twitter. This social media application may be more suitable for classroom implementation due to its educational features. As explained in the literature review chapter, YouTube EDU provides educators a wealth of valuable educational resources, such as videos across all disciplines, academic lectures, and lessons from across the world.

In addition to providing a favorable learning environment, participants claimed that another opportunity is represented by the possibility of better student support and engagement. When used effectively, social media applications may promote learning by facilitating communication and information sharing (Mcloughlin & Lee, 2010; Selwyn, 2010).

Participants also reported some disadvantages. As some of the significant limitations for not pursuing further implementation of social media in the language classroom, respondents expressed concerns about social media safety, privacy, security, and intellectual copyrights. Privacy is becoming indeed an issue that deserves further scrutiny and attention (Wired, 2018). Another limitation reported is related to time constrains. This seems to be a common complaint among the participants.

*Research Question 2: What do language educators perceive are best practices in language teaching with Social Media?*
As for the role educators need to play with regard to social media integration, participants’ answers were grounded in well-accepted pedagogical practices and theoretical constructs about the integration of technology. There seems to be general agreement on the role of the language educator as a facilitator of learning and on the importance of adopting a student-centered approach.

Language educators (both the survey respondents and the interviewee in this study) perceive that social media, when properly integrated, can support student engagement, collaboration, and self-managed learning by creating a platform for meaningful, natural discussion and this finding is in line with other studies previously conducted (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010; Selwyn, 2010). Collaboration has become increasingly important in the way we learn, and many language classes are starting to reflect this shift.

Language educators also perceived that social media offers the students media-rich interaction with course material outside the four walls of the traditional physical classroom that allow students to take control and manage their own learning. These findings are broadly harmony with those of researchers such as Greenhow and Lewin (2016). Language educators (both the survey respondents and the interviewee in this study) perceive that is essential to ensure social media use aligns with the stated learning outcomes of the course and learning activity. Moreover, participants recommended communicating why and how social media tools are to be used in the course and what is expected from students. Another best practice is related to the promotion of students’ and peers’ connections in social media environments, to facilitate the sharing of their work and learning from each other.

Additionally, participants recognized and valued the learning benefits of using social media technologies in language education, supporting earlier claims of the pedagogical rationale

Research Question 3: In what ways do language educators use Social Media in their language classroom?

Participants perceive the opportunity to shift from a teacher-centered classroom to a learner-centered classroom as an affordance of proper social media applications integration. The findings of this study also suggest that language educators perceive social media integration as beneficial to creating an engaging learning environment. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Lomicka and Lord (2016). This finding also aligns with the view put forward by Wang and Vasquez’s research (2012), which shows one of the major benefits of using Web 2.0 tools is the creation of a “favorable learning environment”.

Concerning its impact on student engagement, the findings revealed that language educators believe that social media use helped to create learning environments characterized by greater student involvement and engagement. Language educators also perceive that social media may facilitate the creation of a more student-centered learning environment in their courses. Students can create their own content and build their own meaning (social-constructivist pedagogy). Students and educators can also create communities to enhance learning (situated learning). Students and educators can share content and ideas that lead to more authentic learning contexts. Students and educators can create personal learning environments and networks that contribute to a process of lifelong learning (personal learning environments and informal learning). These findings are broadly in line with those of researchers who use social media for educational purposes to enhance and transform the traditional learning environment (Mills, 2011; Reinhardt & Zander 2011; Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013).
Social media technologies bring new roles, new pedagogies, and new approaches to today’s language education. The role of a language educator in relation to learners has also changed. Students are nowadays more involved with the learning process and more invited in taking an active role. This idea is reflected in the tenets of the student-centered approach. Social media implementation helps to provide an individualized approach to teaching by taking different learners needs into account. Language educators who appreciate and align their views with this approach seem to be more inclined to bring social media applications in their classroom.

Participants use social media to facilitate group discussion and collaboration. Participants also use social media as an instructional medium to blend informal learning into formal learning environments (Deng and Yuen, 2010; Manan, et al., 2012; Velestsianos & Navarrete, 2012). Additionally, participants use social media to facilitate a participatory culture among students (Brady, et al., 2010; Junco, et al., 2010; Manan, et al., 2012) as well as providing opportunities for self-expression, self-reflection, and social interaction (Deng & Yuen, 2010; Velestsianos & Navarrete, 2012) in traditional, blended, and online learning environments.

In sum, the study found that the participants viewed the importance of using social media technologies in language teaching to: (a) help find and share educational resources, (b) provide collaborative learning opportunities, (c) promote knowledge sharing, (d) facilitate communication and feedback between students and educators, (e) encourage students’ interaction and community building, and (f) support innovative teaching methods.
Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the present study have implications for language pedagogy. In describing the study pedagogical implications, I discuss how my research might benefit or be used by professionals in my field, as well as those in related disciplines. I designed this study to gain insights into language educators’ perceptions on using social media in the language education classroom at the higher education level.

As shown, language educators use social media for both personal and academic purposes. Educators further perceived that proper social media integration might have a positive impact on their students’ academic engagement. Based on these findings, several recommendations emerge, including implications for pedagogy in practice and priorities for future research studies.

Social media technologies may promote learning as perceived by participants in this study. Moreover, social media technologies may allow learning to take place anywhere inside or outside of traditional language learning spaces and the physical walls of the traditional classroom. The key to successful integration of social media might be replacing existing learning/educational technology with ideal learning environments that allow students to take control and manage their own learning. The use of social media technologies may provide important sharing and collaboration opportunities for language learners.

Besides, proper social media applications integration may offer alternative solutions to complement the use of traditional CMS as a tool for sharing course information. Furthermore, social media may also help educators meet the 21st Century students’ needs (Richardson, 2010) by facilitating a learning environment that may involve learners beyond the boundaries and limitations of the traditional classroom.
Moreover, proper integration of a selected number of social media applications may also increase communication and connectivity between students, students and educators, and educators. For example, students may share resources, ask questions, collaborate, and discuss. Educators, on the other hand, may send out reminders to students, post, and share relevant course-related information. They may also allow collaborate between each other and share teaching resources.

As a language educator, I am interested in a more student-centered, meaningful, and contextualized language learning experience that extends beyond the boundaries of the traditional teacher-centered classroom. Selected social media technologies, when properly used and integrated, have the potential to involve learners in the overall learning process that goes beyond the classroom. As a result, it may be beneficial for language educators to create appropriate class policies, procedures, and guidelines. These policies should acknowledge both risks and benefits of social media integration. Best practices and use guidelines should be disseminated through training and professional development opportunities to provide concrete solutions for privacy concerns and provide educators with guidelines for integrating social media applications into their classrooms.

Finally, as web-based applications infiltrate every aspect of everyday life, it is recommended that language educators be kept up-to-date to take advantage of the most effective ways to enhance their instruction and their students’ learning. I hope that in the future professional development programs offered to language educators will be able to provide the kind of ongoing support needed to make proper use of Web-based educational technology, and as a result, more educators will be in a position to integrate new technologies into their classroom practices.
In particular, more training is needed on how to (a) develop a sound strategy for social media implementation into the language classroom; (b) determine how these platforms support course goals; (c) establish specific use guidelines; (d) articulate clear expectations; (e) review and monitor student contributions; (f) evaluate social media implementation.

Language educators should pay special attention to a series of preliminary questions. Following Joosten (2012) implementation guidelines, they should ask themselves: “(a) What could be the specific students’ pedagogical need? (b) How could selected social media applications help to meet that need? (c) What aspects of the learning process could be improved? (d) What learning outcomes could educators achieve through the use of the selected social media applications over other technologies? (e) What could the expected behavior of students be within the selected social media applications?” (p. 30).

In other words, when selecting an appropriate social media technology, language educators should ask themselves the question of whether the technology integration helps students achieve the course objectives, whether it enhances their language learning experience, whether it allows learner-learner interaction, and, finally, whether it requires training. In sum, as long as language educators consider the aforementioned factors, social media technologies may be a useful addition to language education course design and delivery.

Limitations

In this section I identify, acknowledge, and discuss the limitations of this study. Every study has limitations, and there are some limitations to the present study I need to discuss. Acknowledgment of a study’s limitations is also an opportunity to make suggestions for further research.
One limitation is the self-selection bias as participants volunteered for the study. The language educators, who volunteered to participate in the study survey questionnaire, may have been more inclined toward the adoption of social media technologies. Likewise, the participant who volunteered and who was purposefully selected to participate in the follow-up interviews, may have been more inclined toward the adoption of social media technologies.

Another limitation was the time frame in which I conducted the study and related social and institutional constraints. Moreover, all the participants were from the same university, from the same college, and from the same doctoral program. Given the exploratory nature of this case study, I limited the number of participants.

One final limitation that merits discussion is related to the instruments I used in the study: the survey questionnaire, the interviews, and the researcher self-reflective journal. For instance, I could have also included additional data collection instruments such as observations, field notes, participant research journals, and documents analysis to provide a more accurate triangulation of the findings.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

In this section, I describe topics that may generate new research questions for further studies. The following recommendations support the belief that scholarly work initiates as many questions as it answers, thus opening the way for further practice and research. Although limited in scope, I could draw some recommendations from this study.

Further research with a larger group of differing levels, ages, and backgrounds might yield more comprehensive conclusions about the benefits of social media integration for language education. Research on the integration of social media applications for pedagogical
purposes is still in its infancy and, therefore, language educators will have to make their own
decisions to adopt a particular tool, based on their own specific learners’ needs. The positive
response to this study would encourage the integration of other social media tools in the
language education curriculum at the higher education level.

Future research is still necessary, to identify the most effective best practices of utilizing
social media technologies to improve language teaching and learning productivity, and to better
support active, social, and engaging learning environments. We need more qualitative research
studies to analyze students’ perceptions of learning using social media for an educational
purpose, as well as a comparison of how educators perceive different social media tools.

The study could be extended over to the other universities, colleges, and institutions to
see the impact of social media technologies in language education. Further studies could identify
which challenges occur at which stages in the social media applications integration process and
how can these obstacles be overcome. A possible extension to this study could be to compare the
use of social media in large research-oriented universities and small teaching-oriented colleges,
to examine whether differences in educators’ perceptions, beliefs and best practices on social
media integration into the language classroom exist.

Future research could also explore students’ perceptions and beliefs about social media
technologies integration in language education for pedagogical purposes. There is a vast scope
for further research to study different types of educators’ beliefs and comparison of educators’
beliefs and attitudes towards social media technologies. Finally, future studies could also include
other social media applications not included in this study (Instagram, Snapchat, WeChat) and
could explore the educators perceptions of the use of social media technologies for pedagogical
purposes in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL).
Recommendations for Practice

In this section I describe recommendations for practice. It is worth noticing that the following recommendations for practice are actionable. In other words, by providing specific action planning and concrete next steps, they suggest implications for policy and practice based on the findings. Based on the results of this study, I propose four recommendations to support the use of social media technologies in language education at the higher education level.

1. Higher education institutions could promote the critical and informed use of social media technologies in language education, by increasing a constructive dialogue among all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and administration.

2. Higher education institutions could provide ongoing training for language students and instructors, focusing on the possibilities and benefits of social media technologies.

3. Higher education institutions could offer support to assist language educators in implementing, maintaining, and evaluating social media technologies.

4. Higher education institutions could develop and maintain a resource web page with demonstrated best practices and recommendations regarding the appropriate use of social media in language education.

Given the rapid changes and continuous new developments in social media, this study will outdate quickly. However, the suggestions and best practices I outlined in this study may help language educators integrate social media tools effectively, protect both personal information and professional reputation, and follow institutional policies.

Autobiographical Reflection

This final section offers me an opportunity to reflect on the overall dissertation process,
to rethink the challenges, and share any new insights developed over the course of the research and writing process. In other words, in this autobiographical reflection, I have an opportunity to reconsider how I value the overall dissertation experience and what lessons, knowledge, and inspiration I have learned from conducting the study.

Undertaking this dissertation has been not only an invaluable learning experience. It has been an opportunity to reflect on what I have learned, to recall my achievements, and to recognize the challenges I have faced. First of all, it has been an opportunity for me to reflect on my own dissertation journey. I have now gained a better understanding of the fascinating yet complex nature of qualitative research and the cyclical nature of the research process. I have learned, for instance, that sometimes things do not easily fit into categories and that research is time-consuming, frustrating and even tedious at times, yet rewarding at other times.

I had some intermediate research skills before engaging in this research. I found particularly challenging the data collection and data analysis section since analyzing qualitative data requires time, energy, creativity, and motivation. Moreover, there is no single way or best way to analyze the data.

I have to admit I have limited experience in interviewing participants to conduct a qualitative research study for academic purposes. Without a doubt, the pilot studies I have conducted the previous semesters helped me in many different ways. Reading and studying essential texts on the subject, such as Patton (2015), Silverman (2013), Saldaña (2015), and Wolcott (2009) also helped in designing and conducting my study. In particular, reading the works of Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) and Rubin and Rubin, (2012) has helped me in planning and conducting the interviews.

This dissertation study has also helped me to reflect on how my understanding of
qualitative research has changed and how I have grown as a researcher. It also gave me an opportunity to examine my professional values and offered me an opportunity to improve my future practice. I intend to explore further the impact of other technologies on language education since I now have a growing awareness of the complexity of the issue. In sum, the dissertation process has encouraged me to reevaluate my own approach to technology integration to improve the quality of language education.

**Final Remarks**

In this chapter, I presented a set of concluding statements and recommendations based on an integration of the study findings, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. Integrating technology to improve teaching and learning is increasingly important in second and foreign language education. One of the most significant trends in the past ten years has been the challenges language educators are faced with adapting their teaching styles to accommodate a new generation of language learners and with finding new ways to engage them. As shown in the literature review chapter, research suggests that the use of social media in language education has several advantages: it may promote collaboration, facilitate communication, and engage students outside of class. However, while many instructors are familiar with and use social media, they are not familiar with its pedagogical potential.

This inquiry shed light on the study participants’ integration of social media technologies, and explored examples on how to best integrate social media to enhance the language learning experience. In this dissertation, I explored participants’ perceptions about social media as pedagogical tools, and I reinforced findings from previous studies that proper social media integration may be beneficial to the language education field. Furthermore, the study findings
also suggested that social media might have the potential to provide great benefits as a supplement to the traditional face-to-face class in language education.

By facilitating a learning environment that may involve learners beyond the boundaries and limitations of the traditional classroom, social media may offer alternative solutions that may complement the use of traditional course management systems as a tool for sharing course information. Furthermore, social media may also help educators meet the 21st Century students’ needs (Richardson, 2010), by creating a community outside the traditional classroom, for example, creating a class Facebook group, facilitating a Twitter-based discussion, maintaining a class blog, showcasing students’ work and presentations on SlideShare, creating digital portfolios, and sharing resources on Pinterest.

Little is known about the challenges that may influence a social media integration initiative. The literature on social media and language education is expanding. However, investigation of the ways social media may facilitate language learning is still emerging, and is often more speculative than empirically based. The extent to which these technologies may facilitate both informal and formal learning is still indeterminate. Without question, there is much to learn about methods, specific uses and the effectiveness of implementing social media in language education at the higher education level.

The study offered recommendations for instructors, instructional designers, and policy developers. Finally, the study addressed possible future research directions based on the findings. I hope the discoveries made in this dissertation will provide some help to other educators interested in the future use of social media technologies and their role in language education.
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*Language Teaching, 31*, 57-71.


APPENDICES
August 3, 2017

Alessandro Cesaranò
Teaching and Learning
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review
IRB#: Pro00031356
Title: Language Educators’ Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media For Pedagogical Purposes

Study Approval Period: 8/2/2017 to 8/2/2018

Dear Mr. Cesaranò:

On 8/2/2017, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
cesarano study protocol version 1.pdf

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
consent form edited.pdf.pdf
online consent form.docx

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent documents are valid until the consent document is amended and approved. The Online consent form is not a stamped form.

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:
(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.117(c) which states that an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either: (1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or (2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. (Online consent).

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk

Pro # 00031356

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him/her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called: Language Educators’ Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes
The person who is in charge of this research study is Alessandro Cesarano. This person is called the Principal Investigator. He is being guided in this research by Dr. John Liontas.

The research will be conducted online and at the College of Education of the University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this exploratory study is to describe and discuss language educators’ perspectives on their use of Social Media for pedagogical purposes.

Why are you being asked to take part?

We are asking you to take part in this research study because of your experience as language educator and graduate student enrolled in the TESLA (Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition) doctoral program at University of South Florida.

Study Procedures:

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to:
1) Complete an electronic survey which will take approximately 15 minutes; The following is the link to the online survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SFD97LL
Your answers will be kept confidential. The survey questions are arranged into 3 sections as listed below.

Section 1 - Demographic Information. Includes some general close-ended questions such as: age, teaching experience, technology experience.
Section 2 - Social Media Evaluation. Includes open questions regarding their personal opinions, experiences and views about social media use in the language classroom.
Section 3 - Post-Survey Interviews. Includes a question about the willingness to be interviewed at the participant convenience.

2) Participate in an interview. This interview will conducted face-to-face or via Skype. The interview process will take approximately 30 minutes and will be digitally recorded. I will then conduct brief follow-up interviews to discuss and to ask the participants to elaborate on what they have stated in the first interview. Follow-up interviews will serve two purposes: (1) to give the participant with an opportunity to provide feedback about the first interview; and (2) to allow me to expand and verify descriptions, ensuring a proper reflection of the descriptions. The interviews will take place on USF Tampa campus, in my office, in EDU 265.

Total Number of Participants

Up to 20 individuals will take part in this study at USF.

Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal

You do not have to participate in this research study. You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study.

Benefits

The potential benefits of participating in this research study include: a better understanding of how Social Media integration may help language educators.

Risks or Discomfort

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Costs
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. Anyone who looks at your records must keep them confidential. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, study coordinator.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study, and individuals who provide oversight to ensure that we are doing the study in the right way.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, including staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

**You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an unanticipated problem, call Alessandro Cesarano at 813 765 5070.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at R SCH-IRB@usf.edu.

**Consent to Take Part in this Research Study**

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study

Date

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

**Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent**

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This
research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
Appendix C: Audit Trail

June-August 2016

Selected general idea
Identified potential topics
Narrowed down topic
Defined research problem
Decided on qualitative research approach

September 2016

Chose major professor
Chose dissertation committee members
Began preparation of the dissertation proposal

October 2016

Completed Chapter 1 Introduction

November 2016

Completed Chapter 2 Literature review

December 2016

Completed Chapter 3 Methodology

February 2017

Presented proposal for review to major professor and the members of the dissertation committee

March 2017

Received dissertation proposal approval

April 2017

Made necessary modifications, revisions, and adjustments after the defense

May 2017

Research Instrument Preparations

June 2017
Application to the IRB
July 2017
Obtained IRB approval to conduct research.

July 2017
Prepared a realistic timeline
Reviewed critical dates with major professor
Pilot tested instruments
Revised instruments as needed

August 2017
Participants’ recruitment

August 2017
Started data collection

April 2018
Explained the informed consent form and process to participant; conducted face-to-face interview.

April 2018
Performed transcription and analysis process of all interviews.

April 2018
Conducted follow-up communications with participant providing her the opportunity to review transcripts. (member check)

April 2018
Data collection
Data organization
Coding
Categories/Patterns Creation
Description of the Themes

Prepared data for data analysis

April 2018
Requested peer review as findings and themes emerged.
Wrote findings chapter 4

April 2018
Wrote Chapter 5 conclusion and recommendations
Reviewed entire manuscript for alignment
May 2018
Completed proofreading and editing
Appendix D: Recruitment Email

Dear all,

My name is Alessandro Cesarano and I am a doctoral candidate in the Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology program at the University of South Florida. I am conducting a dissertation study (eIRB# 00031356) on languages educators’ experiences in the use of Social Media. I am being guided in this research by Dr. John I. Liontas. The purpose of this exploratory study is to explore language educators’ perspectives on their use of Social Media for pedagogical purposes.

Your participation in this study is requested because of your experience as language educator and graduate student enrolled in the TESLA (Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition) doctoral program at the University of South Florida. Participants will be asked to take an electronic survey and then to be interviewed individually. The survey should take only 15 minutes to complete and the interview should take no more than 30 minutes. Short follow-up interviews will be requested to confirm and/or clarify data and interpretations. If you are interested, please click on the following link to complete the online survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SFD97LL

Your participation is voluntary and your answers will be confidential. There is no compensation. However, your participation will be a valuable addition to my research and findings could lead to greater understanding of Social Media use for pedagogical purposes.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at: alessandro@mail.usf.edu

Thank you very much for your time.

Best,

Alessandro Cesarano

Alessandro Cesarano
Doctoral Candidate in SLA/IT
ESOL Instructor
Teaching and Learning Department,
University of South Florida
4202 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, Florida 33620-5650
### Appendix E: Survey Questionnaire

**Language Educators’ Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes.**

**Informed Consent To Participate in Research**

Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

Pro # 00031356
Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. This form tells you about this research study. We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called: Language Educators' Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes. The person who is in charge of this research study is Alessandro Cesarano. This person is called the Principal Investigator.

**Purpose of the Study**
The purpose of this exploratory study is to describe and discuss language educators' perspectives on their use of Social Media for pedagogical purposes.

**Why are you being asked to take part?**
We are asking you to take part in this research study because of your experience as language educator and graduate student enrolled in the TESLA (Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition) doctoral program at University of South Florida.

**Study Procedures**
If you take part in this study, you will be asked to:
1) Complete an electronic survey which will take approximately 15 minutes;
2) If you agree to participate in a follow-up interview, some participants will be selected for this interview. This interview will conducted face-to-face or via Skype. The interview process will take approximately 30 minutes and will be digitally recorded. I will then conduct brief follow-up interviews to discuss and to ask the participants to elaborate on what they have stated in the first interview. The interviews will take place on USF Tampa campus, in my office, in EDU 265.

**Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**
You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study. You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer; you are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your job status, employment record, employee evaluations, or advancement opportunities. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status, course grade, recommendations, or access to future courses or training opportunities.

**Benefits and Risks**
The potential benefits of participating in this research study include: a better understanding of how Social Media integration may help language educators. This research is considered to be minimal risk.

**Compensation**
We will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**
We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. It is possible, although unlikely, that unauthorized individuals could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. Certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are: the Principal Investigator and the advising professor, The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is possible, although unlikely, that unauthorized individuals could gain access to your responses. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet. However, your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the Internet. If you complete and submit an anonymous survey and later request your data be withdrawn, this may or may not be possible as th

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu. If you have questions regarding the research, please contact the Principal Investigator at (813) 765-5070 or contact by email at alessandro@mail.usf.edu.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are. You can print a copy of this consent form for your records.
Consent
I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by proceeding with this survey I am agreeing to take part in research and I am 18 years of age or older.
Language Educators' Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes.

Section I. Demographic Information

* 1. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male

* 2. What is your age?
   - 17 or younger
   - 18-20
   - 21-29
   - 30-39
   - 40-49
   - 50-59
   - 60 or older

* 3. What language(s) are you currently teaching?
   - German
   - Spanish
   - French
   - Italian
   - English/ESL
   - Other (please specify)

[Box to specify other language(s) if any]
* 4. How many years have you been teaching in higher education?
   - Under 1 year
   - 1 – 5 years
   - 6 – 10 years
   - 11 – 15 years
   - 16 – 20 years
   - Over 20 years

5. Which Social Media applications have you used in your personal life? Please check all that you have used.
   - Facebook
   - Pinterest
   - Blogs
   - Twitter
   - Youtube
   - Linkedin
   - Slideshare
   - Google+
   - None

6. Which Social Media applications have you used in your professional life? Please check all that you have used.
   - Facebook
   - Pinterest
   - Blogs
   - Twitter
   - Youtube
   - Linkedin
   - Slideshare
   - Google +
   - None
**Language Educators' Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes.**

**Section II. Social Media Evaluation**

* 7. Social Media have been defined by researchers as “A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). How would you define Social Media and why?  

* 8. Do you think it is important to integrate Social Media in the language classroom? Why or why not?  

* 9. Based on your pedagogical orientation and teaching experience, what kind of Social Media would you say should be integrated in the classroom and why?  

* 10. What do you think the role of the language educator should be with regard to Social Media integration in the classroom and why?
Section III. Post-Survey Interviews

* 11. Would you be willing to be interviewed at your convenience?
   - Yes
   - No
Language Educators’ Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes.

12. Address

Name

Email Address
Thank you!

Thank you for your time and your input!
Appendix F: Interview Protocol

Initial information for the participants:

My name is Alessandro Cesarano and I am conducting this research to earn my doctorate in education. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts on with me. Your input will provide insights into language educators’ perceptions of their use of social media for pedagogical purposes experiences.

With your permission I would like to make an audio recording of this interview to capture your responses. I would like to ask you questions regarding your experiences as a language educator who adopts social media for pedagogical purposes. Remember that you may stop the interview at any time.
1. Can you tell me about your vision of technology in language education?

2. What Social Media technologies have you adopted into your teaching?

3. How Social Media has affected the way you teach your courses?

4. What is your philosophical orientation (belief system) on the integration of Social Media in the language classroom?

5. How do you integrate Social Media into the language curriculum?

6. What is the impact of Social Media on your teaching style?

7. Can you describe an experience that would highlight the benefits of Social Media integration for language teaching?

8. What has been your greatest success with Social Media integration in the classroom?

9. What has been your greatest disappointment with Social Media integration in the classroom?

10. Is there anything else you want to tell me at this time?

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts on with me!
Appendix G: Survey Result Data

Q1 What is your gender?

Answered: 18  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>72.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2 What is your age?

Answered: 18  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 or younger</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or older</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Q3 What language(s) are you currently teaching?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English/ESL</td>
<td>61.11%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANSWER CHOICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Other (Please Specify)</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>none at this time, however, Spanish if I were</td>
<td>8/31/2017 11:54 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Indonesian, English, Tagalog</td>
<td>8/28/2017 10:09 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>English and Arabic</td>
<td>8/25/2017 2:20 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>8/24/2017 7:34 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:40 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 How many years have you been teaching in higher education?

Answered: 18  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 years</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 years</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15 years</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20 years</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 years</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5 Which Social Media applications have you used in your personal life? Please check all that you have used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>88.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkedin</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slideshare</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 18
Q6 Which Social Media applications have you used in your professional life? Please check all that you have used.

Answered: 17  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>82.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>52.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkedin</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>35.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google +</td>
<td>35.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slideshare</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 17
Q7 Social Media have been defined by researchers as “A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). How would you define Social Media and why?

Answered: 16  Skipped: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kaplan and Haenlein definition sounds acceptable.</td>
<td>8/31/2017 12:08 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In my point of view, Social Media could be defined as a network to connect people together. In other words, people from different countries can communicate with one another via social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. It’s also a way for us to get updated about latest news in the world and to share ideas/perspectives/information with just a click.</td>
<td>8/28/2017 4:24 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social media is a group of internet-based apps that I utilize to either reach out to my family, friends, and coworkers or to recruit and educate students.</td>
<td>8/28/2017 10:17 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I think that it is hard to place one single definition on Social Media. However, I would define Social Media as web-based tools and applications that allow users to interact, create, and share content and ideas.</td>
<td>8/26/2017 7:54 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Its type of technology that allow people to communicate with each other online from different locations around the world.</td>
<td>8/25/2017 2:26 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social media is an internet based application that allows people to communicate. I feel this way because social media is diverse in needs and application.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 7:41 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>It’s a mean for communication and interaction on a virtual world mediated by online apps on the internet.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:50 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Social media consists of tools that provide spaces for interaction among people and agencies, and they provide a reflection of society away from official influences.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:47 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social media is an ongoing and dynamic platform, supported by Web 2.0, allowing people to exchange ideas and information via multimedia features embedded on it.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 12:28 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Technology that facilitates the sharing and exchange of information. This explanation is very simple, but holds what technology means to me as an educator.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 9:16 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My definition is simpler although I mostly agree with Kaplan and Haenlein. It is an internet based means of sharing ideas and collaboration. This may include user-generated content, but also responses to blogs.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:49 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Social Media is a tool to use to find and show information on related topics, ideas, and users. These persons can be your friends, family, colleagues, and other industry personnel.</td>
<td>8/23/2017 1:56 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>tools that connect multiple people and have the potential to form social groups (friends; networks; etc.)</td>
<td>8/22/2017 9:33 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>media to connect with others; tools to generate content that is shared with others</td>
<td>8/22/2017 7:42 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Social Media are websites or apps are platforms that enable us to easily interact with other people.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 7:05 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>social media to me is a collection of computer-mediated tool to facilitate communication from distance. In this sense, the drawbacks of lack of face-to-face communication is compensated and other modes of communication are superimposed to a simple communication.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 3:54 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q8 Do you think it is important to integrate Social Media in the language classroom? Why or why not?

Answered: 16  Skipped: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes, due to the definition of the &quot;creation and exchange of user generated content,&quot; it would be acceptable. However, with safe and appropriate limits.</td>
<td>8/31/2017 12:08 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I believe Social Media use in language classroom could bring numerous benefits to ESL/EFL learners; however, it should be used within limit and under the teacher's supervision. In terms of potential advantages of Social Media, it can help boost learners' motivation to learn the language as a majority of young learners are familiar with and use social media a great deal on a daily basis. Further, it's convenient to embed or attach multimedia learning materials or resources in the social media for the learners to get access to outside of the classroom. Nevertheless, there are also concerns pertaining to privacy, digital identity, and social media as a distraction that teachers should take into careful consideration when incorporating social media in language classroom.</td>
<td>8/28/2017 4:24 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes. Nowadays, almost everyone uses Social Media to interact with each other. I can use it to connect to my students, find resources for them, they can use Social Media to express their thoughts, etc.</td>
<td>8/28/2017 10:17 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I think it is important to integrate Social Media in the language classroom because it has become such a popular tool and can also easily connect students to other language learners around the globe as well as in their own communities. Social Media is also a great way for language learners to practice their language in a less threatening environment than face-to-face environments, especially for beginner learners. However, there are also risks of using Social Media, like encountering trolls that might hinder language learners if not used properly.</td>
<td>8/26/2017 7:54 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes but as intervention I like the traditional methods ... human being life interaction and face to face specially in my field as ESL educator. Social media is type of tool that i can use it to enhance students content learning, extra practices, knowledge, different learning style, fun atmosphere as a extra curricula.</td>
<td>8/25/2017 2:26 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes, I feel that social media can help promote genuine language exchange.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 7:41 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yes, because social media is no longer a virtual world, but people started communicating their feelings, thoughts, ideas, events, lifestyles, business, personal life, etc. It's directly tied to our daily activities and lives.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:50 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Social media could provide a platform for authentic interaction. So, I think it could be useful to integrate since one problem of language education is the limited opportunities of interaction in the L2.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:47 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes! That's the current trend of education grappling with students' interest and self-intuition.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 12:28 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I would say it depends on the type of students you have. If I can explain what I need without the use of technology, then why use it? However, sometimes, particularly with certain age groups or with some students, it is important that we do to maintain their interest. It also depends on the tasks we assign them.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 8:16 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>It is not necessary but it depends on the goals and design of the course. The benefit that I see from this is engagement. Social media is so much a part of the lives of college students that the course work may seem more relevant and appealing if its delivery includes social media.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:49 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>In Deaf culture, utilization of Social Media is how word gets around for events in the community and gives users and learners of ASL an opportunity to communicate that might otherwise not be there.</td>
<td>8/23/2017 1:56 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I do not think it is necessary, but if done correctly, it may be useful. Students are already familiar with many social media tools and they are usually easy to use.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 9:33 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>yes because it is close to many students' lives and may be beneficial for learning</td>
<td>8/22/2017 7:42 PM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Yes, I think it's important. Social Media are a part of students' lives these days and they are a potentially effective way to learn.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 7:05 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Absolutely. When it comes to online and hybrid courses it seems to be a sine qua non. Social media is a sample of implementing synchronous and asynchronous boards where students have the opportunity to communicate with each other through removing borders. In my experience, students learn from older posts in asynchronous discussion boards and other forms of social media. Accordingly, social media can and/or should harness the potential of the student and the tool to be successful.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 3:54 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q9 Based on your pedagogical orientation and teaching experience, what kind of Social Media would you say should be integrated in the classroom and why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Any social media should be integrated that is appropriate and safe, and also useful.</td>
<td>8/31/2017 12:08 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Because I have used Facebook for a long time, I would support the adoption of the application in language classroom. Most of the articles I have read mentioned various ways to incorporate Facebook-based activities with blended language approach in order to motivate students and maximize learner achievement. Highly recommended activities would be integrating learning activities on Facebook to traditional class such as posting reading articles or video clips on a Facebook group and having students do some multiple choice questions to check their understanding. Students can also write and post learning journals about certain topics by using Facebook notes. Then, peer assessment is employed to foster cooperative learning and enhance students’ writing skills. Last but not least, it is helpful when students join actively in discussion groups in which they read articles, write summary reports as well as post meaningful comments on Facebook group’s page.</td>
<td>8/28/2017 4:24 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I have used YouTube to conduct Flipped Classroom, Google Drive to collaborate with my students, Blogs to share our thoughts and writing in a fun and engaging way, Twitter to read various post when discussing current events, etc.</td>
<td>8/28/2017 10:17 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I think the best kinds of Social Media to integrate into the classroom include blogs, wikis, and things like Facebook and Skype as long as the parameters are set on each tool depending on the levels of students. Blogs and wikis can provide an innovative platform for students to share their ideas with others and collaborate on projects. They can also feel a greater sense of accomplishment in their work if they can create something that can be shared with others online. Facebook, I think, can be a good tool for learners to meet other language speakers and learners and share/post new ideas. Skype is also a great tool to connect learners across countries and build connections. I think Skype is a great way for language learners to practice their speaking skills as well as learn about others cultures and build friendships across the globe.</td>
<td>8/26/2017 7:54 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Probably Edmodo.. i can create a full educational classroom .. activities, videos</td>
<td>8/25/2017 2:26 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I think that any social media that can foster language growth is useful. Group wikis, Facebook, and Instagram for lower levels are all great.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 7:41 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I use YouTube tutorials, educational clips, short videos with morals, etc.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:50 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Youtube: opportunities for conferencing, speaking, explaining and learning. Pinterest: Provide spaces to share materials related to the content of teaching.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:47 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Youtube and Facebook. Widely embraced by the public with various features such as videos, images, polls, and animations.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 12:28 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I am a fan of integrating videos in my classrooms so I would say YouTube.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 8:16 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>There are mostly two ways that I’ve used it. First, students can more easily share self-made audio-visual projects on U-tube than by trying to create a link via the college or university LMS. My students have worked in small groups and created presentations on an assigned topic and then shared them with the class via a URL, which they received by posting on U-tube. Another application is collaborative writing. Google docs can be very useful for students who are writing something together. This enables them to meet electronically when it would be inconvenient (too time consuming) to meet face-to-face.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:49 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>It depends on the needs of the instructor and the course.</td>
<td>8/23/2017 1:56 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Facebook can serve as a hub of information and exchange of comments (long or short). FB is very versatile in the ways it can be used as well as the reach (closed or public, etc.)</td>
<td>8/22/2017 9:33 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timestamp</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>youtube because it allows students to peak into another culture facebook/whatsapp/skype because it allows students to connect with peers in different countries</td>
<td>8/22/2017 7:42 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I think it depends on the situation, but Social Media that make it easy for the participants to communicate would be good. I also think that using Social Media that can protect the students’ privacy would be important. For example, Social Media that offer the ability to limit who has access to the accounts and their posts.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 7:05 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>It heavily relies on the type of activity, the skill being taught, and the level of the students. Similarly, digital literacy plays a pivotal role here. To me, Facebook, pinterest, telegram, tweeter, penzu, viber, whatsapp can be beneficial.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 3:54 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10 What do you think the role of the language educator should be with regard to Social Media integration in the classroom and why?

Answered: 16  Skipped: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The role of the language educator should be facilitator of language learning in the classroom.</td>
<td>8/31/2017 12:08 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social media with its interactive and collaborative features can be modified to facilitate language teaching and learning. However, it is important that teachers take into considerations the differences in cultural and social contexts to make use of social media appropriately. It is also advisable that teachers and language educators have clear learning objectives and outcomes in order to design suitable and meaningful activities for certain group of learners with different proficiency levels, learning styles and learning strategies.</td>
<td>8/28/2017 4:24 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social Media should be used as a tool to engage and educate students.</td>
<td>8/28/2017 10:17 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I think the language educator has a very important role with regard to Social Media as the facilitator and sort of protector of their students. Unfortunately, Social Media has become so popular that it is being used in harmful and negative ways amongst its many beneficial tools. It is important for language educators to make sure they are researching the Social Media application that they are using thoroughly before using it with their students and also taking the proper precautions while students are using different applications. For example, this might mean creating closed groups that are not open to the public when there is a fear of their students encountering a high volume of trolls that might hinder their learning experience.</td>
<td>8/26/2017 7:54 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Observer, supportive, and enhance students difficulties with the social media</td>
<td>8/25/2017 2:26 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>As a moderator and to define it's use</td>
<td>8/24/2017 7:41 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Like any other teacher, language educators should be able to use the social media wisely and select appropriate materials for their students.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:50 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The language educator equipped with the knowledge of the latest trends in technology could be a facilitator that helps in creating an atmosphere for safe and useful interaction.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:47 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Facilitator with appropriate modeling. Class will be more efficient and effective with teachers’ guidance, control, and demonstration.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 12:28 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The language educator has to control Social Media and not let it control him/her. As a teacher, you should be in charge of what goes on in the classroom and not let Social Media take control and get carried away with it.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 9:16 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>It should be used when it supports the goals and objectives of the course.</td>
<td>8/24/2017 6:49 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>It has been my goal, in the past, to inform students where to find specific related sights.</td>
<td>8/23/2017 1:56 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>the instructor who uses it should be very familiar with the tool, especially in terms of its privacy/reach. The instructor should monitor the posts and the site in general in order not lose control of the class, especially for large groups or immature users, which could create a problem if used incorrectly (harassment, etc.).</td>
<td>8/22/2017 9:33 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>teach how to use monitor mediate and facilitate</td>
<td>8/22/2017 7:42 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>First and foremost, I think the students’ safety and privacy are the most important. I think teachers also have to help the students how to interact effectively and politely with their peers. Also, technology is not a panacea for learning, so the instructor will need to give a lot of thought as to how the Social Media can promote learning.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 7:05 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>According to my study, the best a teacher can take on is guiding the discussion at the beginning and let the students take the lead. Whenever the students are out of the track, it is always a good idea to interfere in the process. According to the community of inquiry theory: three aspects of teaching presence, cognitive presence, and material presence should be emphasized depending on the educational goals.</td>
<td>8/22/2017 3:54 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11 Would you be willing to be interviewed at your convenience?

Answered: 16  Skipped: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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</table>
Appendix H: Member Check Form

Dear ________________________,

Thank you for an enjoyable and insightful interview. Attached please find a draft copy of the verbatim transcripts of the interview. Please review the transcription for accuracy and completeness of responses. Please feel free to contact me at (813-765-5070) or via email at (alessandro@usf.edu) should you have any questions.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Alessandro Cesarano

From: Janesick, 2016
Appendix I: Peer Reviewer Form

I, __________________________, have served as a peer reviewer for language educators’ experiences in the use of Social Media by Alessandro Cesarano. In this role, I have worked with the researcher throughout the study in capacities such as reviewing transcripts and assisting in identifying emerging issues.

Signature: ________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________

From: Janesick, 2016
Appendix J: Sample Researcher Reflective Journal Entry

Date: 04/24/2018  
Time: 12:00 pm

Today I interviewed the participant and immediately after I prepared a summary of my interview. I began by offering the participant the opportunity to go over the consent form with me. I explained who I am, what I am doing, and why I am conducting this research to earn my doctorate in education. I also reminded the participant that her input would provide insights into language educators’ perceptions of their use of social media for pedagogical purposes.

With her permission, I made an audio recording of this interview to capture her responses. To keep it simple, I used the app on my iPhone. The Voice Memos app is underrated and often overlooked, even if it is one of the most convenient ways to digital audio record an interview. I wanted to ask her questions regarding her perceptions as a language educator who adopts Social Media for pedagogical purposes.

Overall the interview went well. I am satisfied with the quality of the input she provided me. I am also feeling more confident as I am getting better as interviewer. She seemed to me genuinely interested in the topic. When asking the questions, I attempted to remain as neutral as possible. I also avoided interrupting or completing my participant’s sentences. I ended the interview with a smile, a firm handshake, and a sincere thank you.
Appendix K: Current IRB Certificates

Certificate of Completion

Alessandro Cesarano

Has Successfully Completed the Course in

Restricted Enrollment: Dr. Zhu's Class - IRB Process & Informed Consent

On

Friday, October 23, 2009
Certificate of Completion

Alessandro Cesarano

Has Successfully Completed the Course in

Foundations in Human Research Protections at USF

On

Wednesday, July 06, 2011

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**

**COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Alessandro Cesarano (ID: 4975339)
- **Email:** alessandro@usf.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** University of South Florida (ID: 425)
- **Phone:** 8137655070

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Social / Behavioral Investigators and Key Personnel
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 16918195
- **Completion Date:** 08/15/2015
- **Expiration Date:** 08/14/2018
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score**: 86

**REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Description</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Research - SBE (ID: 509)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)</td>
<td>08/15/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

**CITI Program**

Email: cmisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org
Appendix L: Voice Memos App for iPhone
Appendix M: External Auditor Form

I, Dr. Youness Mountaki, have served as auditor and critical friend for the study “Language Educators’ Perceptions of Their Use of Social Media for Pedagogical Purposes” by Alessandro Cesarano. In these roles, I have worked with the researcher through the study in capacities such as auditing his reflective journal, reviewing transcript, coding and data analysis, and assisting in emerging issues.

From: Janesick, 2016
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alessandro Cesarano was born and raised in Milan, Italy. He received his Master in Italian Studies from the University of Virginia, his Master in Foreign Language Education from the University of Rome and his Bachelor in Philosophy and Languages from the University of Milan. He taught Italian for several years in Milano, Italy, before moving to the United States to pursue his graduate studies. He taught Italian and Spanish language and culture at various institutions.

While studying for his doctoral degree in the Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology (SLA/IT) program at USF, he also taught ESOL courses to pre and in-service teachers, and Italian language at the University of Tampa. During his doctoral studies, Alessandro has presented at various local, state, regional, national, and international conferences. His academic interests intersect on the broader fields of teacher education, instructional technology, and qualitative research.