Language play in a second language: Social media as contexts for emerging Sociopragmatic competence

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## Sample

Two private Facebook group groups set up for English L2 learners in Colombia, Finland, Sweden and Taiwan for the purpose of the project.

## Implications For Educators About

# Abstract

The aim of this study is to gain insights into students’ language use on social media as part of the specific linguistic activities of second language (L2) learning, including development of sociopragmatic competence. Two Facebook groups were introduced in different English-as-L2 classes that were part of an international collaborative project comprising secondary schools in Colombia, Finland, Sweden and Taiwan. The study is theoretically grounded in sociocultural perspectives on learning, and the methods involve logging the students’ linguistic interactions in the social media groups. The analysis of the empirical material explored how the students framed the activities by different types of keying in their choice of linguistic repertoires. The findings show that the social media context offered a casual space for communication in which the students, by attentively attuning to the local coordinated framing, used diverse linguistic repertoires to play with the language. In instances of upkeyed framings, the language play was not only used with pragmatic intentions, but also as a means for various socializing purposes. In conclusion, it is suggested that language play on social media can be seen as a valuable activity in developing sociopragmatic competence to prepare students for L2 use outside of school.

# Outcome

"The overall findings show that when the students frame the communication by including features of the linguistic repertoires of their out-of-school social media use, language play with both content and form is performed. The analysis of the interactions revealed both playing with form, for example, shown by the choice of linguistic repertoires, including rhyming, punning and repetition and playing with content, related to meaning and often involving some kind of irony or ridicule in the message (cf. Cook 2000; Danet 2001).... In instances of upkeyed framings performed by language play, the students display sociopragmatic competence in how they use their linguistic repertoire not only with pragmatic intentions but also as a means for various kinds of socializing purposes. social media spaces imply linguistic practice in the targeted language that enable students to learn to adapt to the needs of the differently framed communications, which in turn means that they are presented with opportunities to develop sociopragmatic competence." (Authors, 720-722)