RESEARCH PAPER

L2 Engagements on Facebook: A Survey on the Network's Usefulness for Voluntary German and Japanese Learning

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Abstract

In this paper the results of an online survey (n=210) regarding the usefulness of Facebook for informal L2 learning will be presented. Participants were individual Facebook users who study either German (n=118) or Japanese (n=92). By using a combination of open and closed questions, the mostly quantitative findings of the survey indicate that for most participants Facebook is a suitable tool for improving their L2 skills, because the network enables them to establish or to maintain social contacts with native speakers and to have authentic opportunities to express themselves in the L2. As particularly effective activities, participants mentioned reading and writing L2 posts on the networks' timeline, exchanging private messages, and commenting on friends' posts. As far as effects on L2 learning are concerned, most participants noted an improvement in their reading and writing skills, as well as an expansion of their vocabulary and cultural understanding. Some respondents, however, raised concerns about the formal correctness of the language they encounter on the network as well as insecurity regarding communication with strangers. The information participants provided on their informal use of Facebook led to the conclusion, that learners of L2 German and learners of L2 Japanese show similar tendencies in using the network for their L2 learning. In contrast to using social networks in educational settings, their informal use allows learners much more freedom to decide

when, how often, with whom, on which topic, and in which way they wish to interact in their target language on the network.

Keywords: Facebook, autonomous learning, computer-mediated communication.

1. Introduction

Social networking sites (SNS) can be a valuable tool for learners to engage in authentic L2 communication. Most of the research in this field focuses on the use of social media as part of formal or institutional L2 instruction. However, using such networks as a **compulsory element of the L2 classroom might harm students' as well as teachers' privacy** and cause disadvantages to learners who are less inclined to use such tools for their L2 learning. Apart from that, within informal or voluntary L2 engagements on social media, it can be expected that learners express themselves more authentically and are more willing to experiment with their L2 knowledge, because they are not being evaluated for their output.

Such qualities inherent in private SNS use are rather difficult to accomplish within "teacher-**controlled**" educational settings, but it can be anticipated that they benefit L2 **learning. Therefore, it is important to gain more insights into learners' voluntary or** informal SNS use regarding L2 learning.

In order to investigate the potential as well as the difficulties of using Facebook as a tool for German as a foreign language (GFL) in Japan to improve their L2 skills informally, an online survey was carried out. Participants were 118 Facebook users in Japan who study German, as well as 92 learners of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) in Germany. These two languages were chosen, because the researcher teaches German at a Japanese university and intends to create a network for German-Japanese Facebook language exchanges as part of a future research project. The survey, which was conducted in May 2018 with the online application *LimeSurvey*, put particular emphasis on such informal L2 engagements on Facebook and pursued answers to the following questions:

1) What **are learners' incentives** to use Facebook for learning L2 German/Japanese?
2) What kind of activities or functions of the network do they use for L2 learning?
3) How do they rate the effectiveness of the network for learning their target language?
4) What difficulties or limitations do they encounter?
5) Do L2 Japanese and L2 German learners use the network differently?

2. Theoretical background

The benefits of utilizing SNS for L2 learning have been pointed out in numerous studies covering a variety of target languages of L2 learners from many different backgrounds; for an overview see Stevenson & Lui (2010) and Wang & Vasquèz (2012). Among the predominantly descriptive and exploratory studies on using Facebook in L2 teaching, the **networks'** ease of use and convenience (Dizon, 2015), its potential to promote learner autonomy (Araya Ríos & Campos, 2015) and to enhance digital literacy and L2 learning (Prichard, 2013) are often highlighted. As far as individual language skills are concerned, the use of Facebook may **improve students' vocabulary and expression (Sim & Pop, 2014)** as well as their L2 writing (Dizon, 2016) and L2 pragmatic skills (Harting, 2017). White (2009) even noted positive effects for acquiring L2 grammar.

Even though most studies on the use of Facebook highlight positive effects on L2 teaching and learning, the use of social networks within pedagogical contexts is not unproblematic as Manca & Ranieri (2016) attested in a survey among university teachers in Italy. In a blended-learning project carried out with GFL learners in Japan, Harting (2018) observed **that learners' willingness to engage with each other in assigned Facebook tasks varied**

greatly among individual learners and that teacher-controlled communication within the project adversely affected the appeal of the network. To allow for more learner autonomy, Promnitz-Hayashi (2013) let her students design their own tasks, which significantly increased the number of prompted comments as compared to teacher-assigned tasks.

To date, only few studies have attempted to investigate learners' informal use of SNS for L2 learning. Notable exceptions are two studies conducted with learners of different target languages at universities in New Zealand (Leier & Cunningham, 2016 and Alm, 2015), which indicate a huge potential of informal SNS use for L2 learning. In a comparative study of private vs. class-related SNS activities, Waragai et.al (2014) found that L2 German learners in Japan make even more use of the L2 within private messaging than they do within teacher-assigned tasks. It can be inferred that in their voluntary L2 **interactions, the scope and contents of learners' contributions are not** limited by any task **design or assumed teachers' expectations or evaluations. Consequently, learners tend to** be more uninhibited and motivated to use the L2 in private or informal settings.

In order to make maximum use of the potential SNS have to offer for L2 learning, it should be further investigated how learners can be assisted in improving their L2 skills by using them privately. Therefore, it first has to be established what the incentives and difficulties regarding the use of SNS for L2 learning are. The survey described below **pursues this aim by taking a closer look at German and Japanese learners' private L2 use** on the network Facebook.

3. Participants and procedures

In order to find out how language learners use their L2 knowledge on Facebook voluntarily, the author deliberately devised an anonymous online survey addressing learners who are not necessarily members of a defined learner group engaged in a particular SNS activity. The survey was carried out in May 2018 by means of the online application *LimeSurvey.* In order to recruit participants, the survey was advertised in open and private Facebook groups used by learners of German and/or Japanese who participate in cultural and language exchanges. Apart from that, L2 teachers at universities in Japan and Germany were also asked to make their students aware of the survey. For one month, **the questionnaire which was made available in participants' L1 (German and Jap**anese) could be accessed through a link, which guided the respondents through 4 sections **containing a total of 17 questions regarding participants' biographical data (section 1),** their general use of Facebook (section 2), their use of the L2 on Facebook (section 3), and the effect of Facebook on their L2 learning (section 4). Most questions either contained a set of answers to choose from or had to be answered by Likert scales, for example questions regarding **biographical information and participants' L2 sk**ills, their use of certain Facebook functions, as well as the use of the L2 on the network. The survey also contained some open questions in which participants were asked to write comments on their L2 activities on Facebook, as well as to reflect on positive and negative aspects of using Facebook for L2 learning.

Within a one-month period, 210 fully completed questionnaires were collected; 118 from GFL and 92 from JFL learners respectively. All of them were subjected to a quantitative and qualitative analysis. For questions that had to be answered by figures, scales, or **answer choices, percentages of respondents' answers were calculated (see Tables 1 to 5** in the results section). Questions that required written comments were analysed by a content analysis, in which comments reflecting similar ideas were grouped together and counted. The originally German or Japanese quotes used in this paper were translated **into English; the letters "J" and "G" in brackets following the quotes stand for Japanese** and German le**arners respectively. The qualitative analysis of participants' comments** aimed at determining the merits and drawbacks learners perceive regarding the use of **Facebook for L2 learning. Points which were brought up repeatedly in respondents'** comments were counted and listed according to the frequency by which they occurred

(see Tables 6 to 8).

4. Results

4.1. Biographical data of participants

Since the survey's participants were not members of an interconnected group, but individuals who study either German or Japanese, Tables 1 to 3 will provide some biographical information on those who participated in the survey regarding their L2 learning and knowledge. To begin with, Table 1 shows participants' gender and age distribution. The majority of both German and Japanese participants is female, in the case of GFL learners even around two-thirds. As far as the age distribution is concerned, the German learners are overall a bit younger: almost one-third are even under 20, whereas among Japanese learners there is hardly anyone in that age group. Almost half of the Japanese learners are in their twenties, and almost a third are in their thirties. Among the German learners, another third is in their twenties, and less than 20 percent are in their thirties.

Table 1. Gender and Age of Participants (in percentages)

	L2 German				L2 Japanese			
Gender	Male	33.1	Female	65.3	Male	40.2	Female	58.7
Age	under 20	32.2	20-29	33.1	under 20	1.1	20-29	48.9
	30-39	17.8	40-49	12.7	30-39	30.4	40-49	12.0
	50-59	0.8	over 60	2.5	50-59	5.4	over 60	2.2

Table 2 shows participants' length of L2 study as well as the time they stayed in a country where the target language is spoken. Regarding the time spent on L2 study, 42.4 percent of GFL learners studied German between one and three years, the percentage of those who studied already three to five years, five to ten years, or even more than ten years are around 15 percent each. As for JFL learners, around a quarter studied either one to three years or even more than ten years, while the share of those who studied less than one year, three to five years, or five to ten years is only between 10 and 20 percent.

Table 2. Length of L2 Study and Stay in Country where the L2 is spoken (in percentages)

	L2 German		L2 Japanese	
	L2 study	Stay abroad	L2 study	Stay abroad
No stay	–	33.1	–	30.4
Less than a year	6.8	33.1	14.1	27.1
1 to 3 years	42.4	15.3	28.3	21.7
3 to 5 years	15.3	7.6	10.9	2.2
5 to 10 years	13.6	8.5	18.5	6.5
More than 10 years	16.1	1.7	25.0	10.9

Almost a third of both German and Japanese learners had never been to a country where the target language is spoken. Almost another third of GFL learners had stayed in a German-speaking country less than a year and just over 15 percent one to three years. Among JFL learners, just over a quarter had spent less than a year in Japan, around 20 percent one to three years, and almost eleven percent more than ten years. Less than ten percent of both German and Japanese learners had spent either three to five or five to ten years in countries where their target language is spoken.

As far as participants' L2 skills are concerned, they were asked to make a self-evaluation of their speaking, writing, listening, and reading abilities according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. Table 3 shows the calculated figures for the three levels of beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners.

Table 3. Perceived Level of L2 Knowledge (in percentages)

	L2 German			L2 Japanese		
	A1/A2	B1/B2	C1/C2	A1/A2	B1/B2	C1/C2
Speaking	54.2	33.1	8.5	44.6	32.6	17.3
Writing	56.8	29.7	9.3	57.6	33.7	3.3
Listening	55.9	30.6	10.2	41.3	32.6	20.6
Reading	51.7	32.2	11.0	44.5	40.3	8.6
Average	*54.7*	*31.4*	*9.8*	*47.0*	*34.8*	*12.5*

As the average figures indicate, more than half of GFL learners perceive themselves as beginners, just under a third as intermediate, and around ten percent as advanced learners. If one takes a closer look at the figures of the individual four language skills, only minor deviations from the calculated averages can be observed. This suggests that the German learners who participated in this study rate their competence in each of the four skills more or less evenly. Among JFL learners, on the other hand, there are some variances concerning the percentages of the individual skills, which overall indicate a lower assessment of their reading and writing skills. Apart from that, almost half of JFL learners consider themselves as beginners, around a third as intermediate and just over ten percent as advanced learners.

4.2. Use of the L2 on Facebook

As far as the use of the L2 on Facebook is concerned, respondents were asked how often they perform certain activities involving the L2. Table 4 lists the activities mentioned in the survey according to how often participants claimed to perform them. To determine the frequency, answer categories such as **"never", "occasionally", and "often" were used,** which are rather subjective in themselves and cannot claim to yield precise results.

Table 4. Frequency of L2 Use on Facebook (in percentages)

	L2 German			L2 Japanese		
	never	occ.	often	never	occ.	often
Reading L2 posts	31.4	50.0	14.4	14.1	59.8	20.7
Writing messages in the L2	33.9	39.0	19.5	25.0	48.9	22.8
Commenting on L2 posts	43.2	45.8	1.6	26.1	62.0	4.4
Writing one's own L2 posts	44.9	42.4	7.6	33.7	53.3	9.8

For learners of Japanese, Table 4 shows overall higher figures in the categories of **"occasionally" and "often", which suggests that these learners tend to use the L2 more** often on Facebook than the GFL learners who took part in the survey. Regarding the individual activities mentioned in the survey, similar preferences were revealed for both German and Japanese learners. The most popular one is reading L2 posts, occasionally performed by half of GFL students and almost 60 percent of JFL students; plus another almost 15 percent of German and more than 20 percent of Japanese learners who read L2 posts often. Writing L2 messages is almost just as popular: Almost 40 percent of GFL

and 50 percent of JFL learners occasionally write messages in their target language and around a fifth each write them often. Commenting on L2 posts seems to be an activity which is performed "occasionally" rather than "often", with figures well over 40 percent for GFL and more than 60 percent of JFL learners. The same accounts for writing one's Facebook posts in the L2, although the portion of learners who do this often is here a bit higher, while the portion for "occasionally" is a bit lower.

4.3. Effects on L2 learning

As far as the improvement of individual L2 skills is concerned, participants were asked, whether or not they perceive any effect on a number of different language-related skills, which were given as answer options in the survey. Table 5 lists the individual skills specified in the survey according to the frequency by which participants answered affirmatively.

Table 5. Effect of Facebook Use on Individual L2 Skills (in percentages)

L2 German		L2 Japanese	
Reading comprehension	69.5	Reading comprehension	54.3
Cultural understanding	63.6	Understanding colloquial language	50.0
Command of vocabulary	62.7	Writing	47.8
Writing	57.6	Cultural understanding	47.8
Understanding colloquial language	54.2	Command of vocabulary	45.7
Understanding written language	53.4	Understanding written language	32.6
Understanding L2 pragmatics	53.4	Use of idiomatic expressions	19.6
Use of idiomatic expressions	51.7	Mastering L2 grammar	19.6
Mastering L2 grammar	24.6	Understanding L2 pragmatics	16.3
Listening comprehension	12.7	Listening comprehension	4.3
Speaking	11.0	Speaking	4.3

The figures in Table 5 show overall higher percentages for GFL learners, suggesting that the L2 German learners who participated in the survey seem to perceive a stronger impact on their L2 skills by using the L2 on Facebook.

Respondents were also asked to write comments on which particular Facebook activities they consider effective for L2 learning. Table 6 lists individual activities that were mentioned in participants' comments by the frequency of their occurrence (Σ = total number of items).

Table 6. Effective Facebook Activities (total number of items)

L2 German	Σ	L2 Japanese	Σ
Reading L2 messages	10	Reading friends' L2 posts	6
Exchanging L2 messages	6	Video-chatting	5
Writing one's own posts in the L2	3	Commenting on friends' posts	5
Reading friends' L2 posts	3	Following/writing status updates	4
Taking part in events	1	Watching videos	2
Watching live broadcastings	1	Writing one's own posts in the L2	1
Following group interactions	1	Translating posts	1
Reading comments on news	1	Planning events	1

As can be seen in Table 6, the individual activities mentioned by participants do not only address receptive skills (reading, following, watching), but also productive (commenting, writing, translating) and interactive faculties (exchanging, chatting, taking part in), which

are all quite essential for L2 learning. While most of the activities mentioned refer to an engagement with written language, some do also address oral and auditive skills (video-chatting and watching videos).

In their comments, GFL learners mostly refer to a rather passive engagement with SNS, as in "I follow Facebook updates of German news broadcasters and those of my favourite ice-hockey team" (G), while only some seem to use the network more actively to produce L2 contents as in: "I write my own posts in both languages, Japanese and German. In doing so, I can also receive comments from my German Facebook friends, and so I have additional opportunities to use the language" (G). In JFL learners' comments, on the other hand, a more proactive approach to using Facebook for L2 learning was revealed: "I take part in Facebook group discussions geared at learning Japanese, and I create my own threads within these groups" (J) and "I write my own posts and comments in Japanese and give preference to Japanese posts and comments in my newsfeed" (J).

Apart from the effect of using Facebook on individual language skills listed in the survey (Table 5), participants were also asked to write more detailed comments on positive and negative aspects of using the network for L2 learning. As far as merits are concerned, Table 7 lists key points mentioned in participants' comments according to the frequency by which they occurred.

Table 7. Merits of Using Facebook for L2 Learning (total number of items)

L2 German	Σ	L2 Japanese	Σ
Learning colloquial German	8	Maintaining contact with NS friends	10
Finding out about friends' lives	7	Accessing L2 language and culture	4
Maintaining contacts with NS friends	6	Making new friends	4
Communicating across distances	5	Communicating across distances	3
Communicating with NS	4	Learning is a welcomed side-effect	3
Accessing L2 language and culture	4	Expressing myself in the L2	5
Learning with visual support	3	Finding out about friends' lives	3
Reading German news in real time	3	Improving my L2 knowledge	3
Exchanging information with NS	3	Finding interesting L2 articles	3
Expressing myself in the L2	3	Communicating with NS	2
Getting to know other L2 learners	2	Communicating on shared interests	2
Having records of L2 learning process	2	Obtaining feedback on L2 output	1
Learning through interaction	1	Learning colloquial Japanese	1

As the individual points listed in Table 7 illustrate, a major attraction of using Facebook for L2 learning seems to be to create and to maintain friendships with native speakers across the globe, to get in touch with the target language (in particular colloquial language) and culture, and to have opportunities to express oneself in the L2. In their comments, some GFL learners also praise the authenticity of the language they encounter on the network: "We can get familiar with colloquial German, which we normally don't find in textbooks or newspapers" (G). Learners of Japanese also appreciate the opportunity of being able "to decode the meaning of comparatively short texts by means of visual and contextual clues (J)".

As far as the effect on L2 learning is concerned, one JFL learner notes: "Learning happens in a casual way. There is no pressure, because the primary goal is not to learn, but to communicate. (J)" In this regard, one GFL learner claims that by using her German on Facebook, she had become more aware of her own L2 acquisition process: "Thanks to the timeline, I have records of my own German learning history" (G).

Although many participants praised the usefulness of certain Facebook features for L2 learning, some critical remarks also emerged. Table 8 lists the negative aspects **mentioned in participants' comments according to the frequency by which they occurred.**

Table 8. Negative Aspects of Using Facebook for L2 Learning (total number of items)

L2 German	Σ	L2 Japanese	Σ
Incorrect grammar and spelling	8	Concerns regarding data protection	4
Understanding long and difficult posts	3	Understanding dialect/colloquialisms	4
Understanding dialect/colloquialisms	2	Risk of cultural misunderstandings	3
Inadequateness of FB's translation tool	2	Lack of L2 character knowledge	3
Risk of misunderstanding friends' posts	2	Understanding difficult posts	2
Lack of feedback on mistakes	2	Changing input mode of keyboard	2
Input of German alphabet	2	Inadequate translation tool	2
Communicating with strangers	1	Lack of L2 knowledge	2
Sharing personal opinions publicly	1	Irregularity of contact	1
Assessing the level of L2 (in)formality	1	Correct grammar and spelling	1
Insecurity of being understood correctly	1	Lack of privacy	1

As the comments listed in Table 8 illustrate, participants' main concern regarding language learning through Facebook seems to be (a lack of) language correctness or appropriateness. This refers not only to their own contributions, but also to the language they encounter on the network. There is a potential danger of misunderstandings, which **is expressed in the following comment: "In some posts sentences are too long and complicated, in others they are not explicit enough" (G). In this regard, some partici**pants also voice uncertainty of being able to understand dialect and vernacular, and to assess **the level of formality of Facebook posts: "Some native speakers write in a quite colloquial style and use a lot of characters that I don't understand" (J). Some** participants even wonder if the language they read on Facebook is actually appropriate or formally correct. **Others also miss opportunities to receive feedback on their language use: "There is no feedback on mistakes as long as the meaning is transported" (G). and "Due to the lack of** feedback on posts and comments there is a potential for misunderstandings which might **have a negative effect on friendships" (J).**

Apart from that, technical difficulties, such as typing the unique characters of the German alphabet and switching the input mode of the keyboard from alphabet to Japanese characters were also mentioned. Some participants also expressed insecurity regarding the communication with strangers and to voice their own opinion on such a public platform. For others, on the other hand, this seems to be a particular incentive for using such networks. This point illustrates that whether something is perceived as a merit or a difficulty of using Facebook for L2 learning might depend on individual preferences and expectations regarding L2 study.

5. Summary and discussion

In view of the five research questions stated in the introduction, the following results were obtained. As far as incentives of using Facebook for L2 learning are concerned, establishing and maintaining contacts with native speakers or other learners of the target language, accessing L2 contents, as well as achieving a deeper understanding of the target language and culture were mentioned by German and Japanese learners alike. This confirms th**e findings of Alm's (2015) survey regarding the informal use of SNS for L2** learning conducted with foreign language students in New Zealand.

Regarding the use of certain Facebook functions for L2 learning, reading and commenting **on friends' posts, writing one's own, as well as writing private messages** by using the **Messenger app were German and Japanese learners' favoured Facebook activities.** Judging from the average frequencies by which learners use the network to perform certain Facebook functions in the L2, the Japanese learners who participated in the survey generally seem to be more active on Facebook than the learners of German.

As far as learners' rating of the effectiveness of the network for L2 learning is concerned, it turned out that although the German learners who participated in the survey are generally less active on Facebook than the Japanese learners, they perceive a stronger effect on their L2 competence by using the L2 on the network. While the share of learners who perceived benefits on their L2 skills was generally higher among GFL learners, the rank order of individual skills did not differ much from that of JFL learners. Most learners sensed an impact on rather passive or receptive skills, such as reading comprehension, knowledge of L2 vocabulary, understanding L2 culture as well as written and colloquial language. A better understanding of L2 vocabulary and colloquial language by using Facebook was also observed in the studies conducted by Sim & Pop (2014). Other learners also noted positive effects on more productive skills, such as L2 writing and the use of idiomatic expressions. Such improvements were also observed in **Dizon's (2016) studies.** The GFL learners who participated in the survey also noted an increased awareness of L2 pragmatics, that was also documented in the studies carried out by Harting (2018). Regarding the fact that the participants of this study observed improvements in their receptive L2 skills by using Facebook, should be an incentive for teachers to design Facebook tasks geared at eliciting such faculties.

As far as difficulties of using Facebook for L2 learning are concerned, learners raised concerns about the formal correctness of the language they encounter on the network and the likelihood of misunderstandings. Not only did they complain that some posts and comments they want to read are either too long, too difficult, or too colloquial to understand, but they were also concerned about the correctness and appropriateness of their own contributions. Therefore, teachers should advise their students to only read or write what is within the scope of their L2 level. Also, teachers should make students aware of the different quality of authentic L2 material they discover on social networks as compared to what they find in their textbooks. Some participants were also hesitant to share their personal opinions on public platforms and voiced concerns regarding privacy and data protection. Such concerns have to be addressed, particularly when it comes to using social media as part of institutionalised L2 tuition, be it in the classroom or extramurally. Under no circumstances should students feel obliged to cast their privacy or security concerns aside for the sake of L2 learning. In the survey, some respondents also criticised the lack of feedback within informal Facebook interactions. This is indeed a disadvantage of private L2 engagements as opposed to tutored activities carried out in class. Therefore, teachers should encourage their students to share their informal SNS experiences in class, in particular those which resulted in communication difficulties and/or cultural misunderstandings. Finally, both Japanese as well as German learners also mentioned technical difficulties, in particular, to adequately type unique characters of the target language and to switch the input mode of the keyboard from L1 to L2 and vice versa.

As far as differences between Japanese learners of German and German learners of Japanese are concerned, the quantitative results of the survey seem to suggest that JFL learners use the network more actively and that GFL learners perceive a stronger impact on their L2 skills as a result of their Facebook use. It has to be taken into account, however, that the answer categories used in the survey **such as "often", "occasionally"** etc. are in themselves rather subjective and cannot claim to yield precise results. Regarding the incentives for using Facebook for L2 learning and which particular activities on the network are considered as beneficial for that purpose, the data gathered did not reveal major differences between L2 German and L2 Japanese learners. Due to the fact

that both German as well as Japanese learners seem to have similar ambitions to improve their L2 knowledge by using social media, leaners should be encouraged to interact with native speakers of their target language on Facebook.

By providing insights into learners' private L2 engagements on Facebook, the findings of this study may contribute to uncovering more of the potential that social media have to offer for L2 learning. Numerous studies have been carried out regarding the application of such networks in the L2 classroom. However, while it is important to investigate didactic aspects of SNS use for L2 learning, one must equally pay attention to learners' personal motivations and ways of engaging with the L2 on social media. For that purpose, more research is needed that looks into how language learners apply their L2 knowledge voluntarily when using social media and in which way this enhances their acquisition of the L2. Due to the fact that SNS might lose their motivational qualities when used in a performance- and outcome-oriented educational setting, it also has to be further investigated how **differences between students' private and teacher**-assigned SNS interactions affect L2 learning. Such information is vital for language teachers who are interested in using Facebook as part of their L2 instruction or who intend to encourage their students to use Facebook extramurally, whether in the form of teacher-controlled language exchanges with native speakers or autonomously.

Ethical statement

The study is based on a survey conducted online with Facebook users who are learners of L2 German or L2 Japanese. Participation in this anonymous survey was voluntary, and participants agreed that the information they provided on their L2 study and their Facebook activities would be used for research purposes.

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