Title: Internet-based Social Networking Activities in a Russian Class: The Case of Status Updates

Author: Liudmila Klimanova, University of Iowa; Svetlana Dembovskaya, Loyola University-Chicago

Social networking is an increasingly popular form of social interaction in virtual environments which allows participants to express themselves, build profiles, form online communities of common interests, and interact socially with others (Godwin-Jones, 2008; McBride, 2009). By integrating social networking activities into the language classroom teachers capitalize on today's college students' investment in social networking, bridging the gap between common and classroom practice (Thorn & Reinhardt, 2008). This paper will analyze status updates as one of the functions of social networking sites. Status updates are a unique and evolving form of online discourse that carries a number of social functions and exhibits typical syntactic patterns. We apply the discourse analysis framework, as proposed by Herring (2004), to the investigation of language elements of the status updates posted by second and fourth semester college learners of Russian during a six-week online social networking project. The analysis will focus on the use of cases, prepositional constructions, verbal forms, and sentence constructions in the learners' status updates. The results suggests that status updates provide an opportunity for learners of Russian to use the grammatical categories acquired in class within meaningful and authentic contexts such as social networking web sites.

Godwin-Jones, R. (2008). Emerging technologies: Web-writing 2.0: Enabling, documenting, and assessing writing online. *Language Learning & Technology, 12*(2), 7–13.

Herring, S.C. (2004). Computer-mediated discourse analysis: An approach to researching online behavior. In S.A. Barab, R. Kling, & J.H. Gray (Eds.), *Designing for Virtual Communities in the Service of Learning* (pp. 338–376). New York: Cambridge University Press.

McBride, K. (2009). Social-networking sites in foreign language classes: Opportunities for re-creation. In L. Lomicka & G. Lord (Eds.), *The Next Generation: Social Networking and Online Collaboration in Foreign Language Learning* (pp. 35–58). CALICO Monograph Series.

Thorne, S. & Reinhardt, J. (2008). "Bridging activities", new media literacies, and advanced foreign language proficiency. *CALICO Journal, 25*(3), 558–572.

sdembov@luc.edu