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Crossing boundaries in Facebook: Students' framing of language learning activities as extended spaces

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Abstract Young people's interaction online is rapidly increasing, which enables new spaces for communication; the impact on learning, however, is not yet acknowledged in education. The aim of this exploratory case study is to scrutinize how students frame their interaction in social networking sites (SNS) in school practices and what that implies for educational language teaching and learning practices. Analytically, the study departs from a sociocultural perspective on learning, and adopts conceptual distinctions of frame analysis. The results based on ethnographic data from a Facebook group in English-learning classes, with 60 students aged between 13 and 16 from Colombia, Finland, Sweden and Taiwan indicate that there is a possibility for boundary crossing, which could generate extended spaces for collaborative language-learning activities in educational contexts where students combine their school subject of learning language and their communicative use of language in their everyday life. Such extended spaces are, however, difficult to maintain and have to be recurrently negotiated. To take advantage of young people's various dynamic communicative uses of language in their everyday life in social media, the implementation of such media for educational purposes has to be deliberately, collaboratively and dynamically negotiated by educators and students to form a new language-learning space with its own potentials and constraints.

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Introduction

The amount of time that especially young people spend on communicative activities in social media is rapidly increasing. Globalization through the use of digital media has contributed to changing conditions regarding the use of English for communication, as many users of English today are non-natives interacting with other non-natives (Crystal 2011; Schneider 2011; Seedhouse 2004; Seidlhofer 2011). Young people's everyday practice is consequently interconnected with their language-learning activities, even if they do not regularly use social-media contexts explicitly for language learning as such. At the same time, relatively little is known about the pedagogical implications of integrating social media in the context of language classes; the impacts on learning that these new media ecologies entail are not yet acknowledged as such in educational practice (e.g., Bonderup Dohn 2009; Lampe et al. 2011; Lewis et al. 2010; Thorne 2009). Consequently, on the one hand, we have societal knowledge of young people's considerable interaction and communication in social media using English and on the other hand, we have language education that still has to increase the understanding of changing conditions for languages to make more informed use of the language-learning potentials in this new arena. However, an important basis for this study is that combining these contexts, i.e., young people's spare time communication practices with educational practices, is by no means seen as uncomplicated. This issue will be further elaborated below.

When incorporating social networking sites (SNSs) in educational contexts, we have to recognize that young people's engagement in social media practices in their everyday life belongs to their 'self-directed practices' (Drotner 2008), which are different from school practices in many respects. This implies that students have different ways of representing and expressing themselves in the naturally occurring linguistic activities in their everyday life in social networking contexts compared to the more instructionally designed language teaching and learning practices in schools. These more traditional practices have emerged over time, comprising certain discursive procedures with many, both explicit and implicit rules, along with teaching practices (Edwards and Mercer 1987). Therefore, when social media are implemented for educational purposes, the discrepancies in the views of learning, i.e., what counts as knowledge, and the goals of the different practices implicitly lead to tensions and practical challenges. Furthermore, there is not always an awareness of the divergence (Bonderup Dohn 2009). A simplistic picture of contemporary schooling could be viewed as caught between the acquisition metaphor and the participation metaphor. The acquisition metaphor implies that the acquisition of something is transferred to the students who are viewed as recipients. The participation metaphor illustrates that learning is recognized as a process of participation in practices with shared activities (Sfard 1998). Bonderup Dohn (2009) argues that there is always some sort of acquisition assumption connected to education but when SNSs are deployed in schooling this means that "collaboration and interaction no longer are goals in themselves, but instead are a means for realizing the goals of the educational practices" (p. 356). What is at stake here is not a question of divergent or conflicting perspectives on learning activities as such. Rather we see social media as representing new pedagogical dilemmas but at the same time with a potential for learning.

Social media contexts are also characterized by unexpected and therefore unplanned encounters, which means that the way in which schooling is designed to control and structure loses much of its meaning (Conole and Alevizou 2010). Wenger argues that shared practices by their very nature generate boundaries that emerge when different practices meet, arising from "different ways of engaging with one another; different histories, repertoires, ways of communicating and capabilities" (Wenger 2000, p. 232). This indicates that introducing and implementing learning activities in SNSs in an educational context imply *boundary crossing* (Akkerman and Bakker 2011) that could open up extended learning spaces, connecting

students' use of school-subject-language with their everyday use of language and other modes   78
of communication in their out-of-school-practices. One of the challenges for education will   79
therefore be to make more informed use of the possibilities for participation and collaboration   80
provided across a diversity of these new and emergent practices (Ludvigsen et al. 2010).   81

Point of departure and aim of the study   82

In line with the view of students' learning as a collaborative activity mediated by the use of   83
computers (CSCL), this study departs from the view that learning is seen as an interactive   84
process of participating in various cultural and social practices and that collaboration can lead to   85
other insights than learning on one's own (Vygotsky 1939/1978). Learning is hence seen as   86
interplay between people and situated in their practice (Wenger 2000). In accordance with the   87
assumptions of the CSCL field of research, collaboration is defined as something one achieves   88
through a joint and mutual negotiation in interaction with others where sharing of group   89
meanings is central (Stahl et al. 2006). The web and various SNSs represent vast spaces and   90
resources for such encounters involving social activities such as participation, interaction and   91
collaboration. These new interactive contexts could also be seen as part of a historical event that   92
is embedded in a specific practice with its inherent possibilities and constraints (Bonderup Dohn   93
2009). The collaborative and communicative practices within SNSs are therefore tightly   94
connected with the medium and the context, but they are not seen as *determined* by the medium   95
itself (Thorne 2003). Rather, they are seen as practices that are negotiated dynamically through   96
the norms developed out of the everyday use of the medium and may differ across e.g.,   97
generations, social groups, national groups and institutional groups.   98

Based on the above arguments about the possibilities but also potential constraints of using   99
social media as a part of schooling, the aim of this exploratory case study is to scrutinize if and,   100
in what case, how SNSs could serve as extended spaces for language learning activities in   101
school practices.   102

Analytically, this is done within a sociocultural perspective and, in addition, by adopting the   103
conceptual distinctions of frame analysis (Goffman 1974/1986). The framing of activities   104
relates to how we define activities, adjust to their invisible situational norms and to the people   105
we share the activities with; this is something that is often done quite unintentionally. In order to   106
explore what, if any, potential social media has for learning and the use of English as a world   107
language, we have studied how students frame their interaction and accomplish their impression   108
management in SNSs when implemented in school contexts. The study was designed by setting   109
up a Facebook group in educational English learning contexts with the intention to examine the   110
nature of the interactions and to investigate how the students accomplished the communication,   111
i.e., to scrutinize what the everyday use of language implies when implemented in an educa-   112
tional context. The use of English for communication in a SNS is here explored as a common   113
language in the students' everyday online interactions, together with an open question of what   114
this can imply if SNSs are introduced as arenas for language learning activities in an educational   115
context. The study involved 60 students aged between 13 and 16 in one school class in each of   116
the following countries respectively: Colombia, Finland, Sweden and Taiwan. The following   117
research questions have guided our research: 118

1. How do the students frame educational English learning activities in Facebook by   119
   impression management and by orienting and adjusting to the situated and local   120
   context? And what does this imply for their communication and language use?   121
2. What implications for language learning activities and language education could be found?   122

The next section introduces research in language as contextual, in English as part of many students' communicative practices online, and as a language encountered and used in increasingly complex settings such as SNSs. This is followed by a section with a particular focus on empirical research studies on SNS, Facebook more specifically. The review section concludes with a section on empirical research on language learning activities and SNS.

Changing conditions for the use of English

Even though today's society is increasingly characterized by multiculturality and multilingualism and also, what is argued to be a consequence—multicompetent language users (Hall et al. 2006), English is a common mediating language among many students, especially for online communication. One critical aspect though when perceiving English as a lingua franca is that this idea is generally grounded in a western way of framing conditions for language use (Norton and Toohey 2011). A biased perspective of English used for language learning activities can restrict our approaches to exploring changing conditions for communicating in SNSs. The English that is used internationally represents diversity and variation (Jenkins 2006). Language learners today should, thus, be prepared to develop an awareness of other approaches to learning, which are based on viewing *language as hybrid, as context-transforming, as representational* (Canagarajah 2006). Seen from an historical perspective, languages have always developed over time. Language is always contextual, and interaction is developed in negotiation and collaboration. Departing from a more traditional view of language, written language can be discussed in terms of a product and more linguistically complicated, while spoken language has more often been regarded as a mediating process. Halliday (1994/2004) though, regards this comparison as less meaningful, and adopts the metaphor *dance* to the complexity inherent in spoken language. Spoken language is bound in a context, and is in "a constant state of flux, and the language has to be equally mobile an alert" (Halliday 1994/2004, p. xxiii). In other words, both written and spoken language have rich qualities, and dimensions of language use, whether spoken or written will unfold depending on the interaction in a given situation.

What is evident today, however, is how the increased volume in digital arenas in itself demonstrates changes in the use of English. This illustrates the already existing variation in text- and speech genres, i.e., extended text arenas, but also what counts as 'correct' language is being challenged (Warschauer et al. 2010).

What characterizes these new digital arenas is their basis in social activities, which can be seen as a kind of language socialization in an out-of-school context similar to everyday interaction and as part of several communicative practices in a dynamic interplay. By adopting the notion of bridging activities in language courses in higher education, Thorne argues that this approach has the potential of opening up for the students' *digital vernacular* use of language (2009). Other linguistic characteristic in SNS genres, such as emoticons, economy words (White 2013) like plz for please can serve to exemplify changes in language in use, which are seldom acknowledged in education. Furthermore, it is argued here that learning English is no longer easily framed in traditional terms and discrete competences; using English in SNS contexts is characterized by more complex encounters and settings (Leppänen et al. 2009). Thorne (2009) uses the idea of *participation* to address the concept in relation to linguistic genres, which as a participant you shape and transform. The uses of English in SNSs are seldom recognized, however, in a more traditional sense, and language education has been criticized for excluding students' competences and linguistic activities in an everyday context (Thorne 2009). To conclude, research on online contexts for language

use in general as well as for English in particular as a lingua franca, suggests there is a gap in our understanding of language use in SNSs and potential interrelations with designing for language use in education. Thus, research focusing on students' use of English in SNSs and possible implications for language learning activities in school, can be argued to merit our research interest.

Social networking sites as spaces for learning activities

Facebook is a relatively closed networking site, described as a "walled garden" by Rogers (2009), where users need to have an account to gain access and must add people (with their consent) as "friends" to view their profiles. Users themselves have to change privacy default settings to let friends of friends view their profile and users can join a group, as in our study, without being "friends" with the other participants. Since 2009, Facebook has changed its settings to make it possible for users to differentiate between Facebook friends and to make their profile open to all other users with accounts. Facebook is thus a networking site, which can be conceived as both private and public (West et al. 2009).

Although there is potential for an unlimited audience in Facebook, research has shown that people often socialize with other people that they already know. This means that the friends online are largely the same as the friends they already have (e.g. Alhabash et al. 2012; Boyd 2008; Ellison et al. 2007). In other words, the potential audience that young people have online is to a significant extent connected to their social lives off-line, which has implications when implementing a collaborative and communicative space with students from different countries that neither know each other nor meet online because of a specific interest. At the same time the communicative activities in Facebook open an inclusion of social and personal aspects of young people's lives into the prevailing notions of knowledge content in schooling (Blattner and Lomicka 2012). This points to potentials of creating spaces where what counts as knowledge can be redefined, entailing a *third space* that could become a meaningful context for learning where students and teachers can bridge the various social spaces within a classroom (Gutiérrez, et al. 1995, 1999). Thus, the inherent participatory view of learning in SNSs has potentials not only to enable collaborative learning spaces but may also serve as a way of transforming education from within (Bonderup Dohn 2009).

Social networking sites as spaces for language learning activities

Though there is an increasing number of empirical research studies in higher education, connections between language learning activities and communication in SNSs are however still relatively unexplored even if many scholars increasingly suggest potentials that these new arenas may offer. Frequent among these studies, is the interest in quantifying and assessing postings. University students taking French and German participated during 2 years in a blog project based on action research (Ducate and Lomicka 2008). Besides the role a SNS could play for language education, student activities were structured to explore what aspects could be brought into the learning activities in relation to grammar, reading and vocabulary. It was assumed that blogging could open a kind of window to cultural issues. The results however, showed that students were more interested in getting to know each other. In this study, as in others, there were elements of grading the students' linguistic interactions and production, which may have an impact on the interaction.

In a multilateral collaboration between Japanese and Taiwanese students studying English, Yang (2011) investigated their interpretation of a shared space, as a metaphorical place, and how the students considered that blogging could be used to learn a language. Individual blogs were connected to a class blog, and all activities mainly took place outside regular class. The methodological approach encompassed surveys, ethnography and a quantitative analysis of postings and comments. The conclusions drawn demonstrate that sharing personal experiences is of importance for communication and interaction on a blog.

In their survey study, Blattner and Lomicka (2012) explored 24 American and French university students' reactions to using Facebook in a language course (French and English). Facebook was used approximately twice a month, both for their own language as well as the new. The activities in Facebook reflected the themes in the course book (communication as a skill, cultural aspects) but also aimed at creating a community beyond the classroom context. Students were required to write postings with a minimum of 50 words and to achieve extra credits students were asked to respond to others' postings. Differences were found regarding activities based on education compared to personal interests. Even though students had access to each other's profiles, few visits were made when communication was related to education. On the other hand, when students took a personal interest, updates were made regarding other students' postings, and students shared links and chatted. In other words, taking a personal interest led to an increase in the use of more mediating features than when Facebook was used for studies (Blattner and Lomicka 2012). Again, it is interesting to note that in the pedagogical design of language learning activities, participation is quantified as for example in the required length of a posting, but also that credits were used to increase interaction among the students.

SNSs can be seen as meaningful for language learning activities, especially since they significantly differ from communication in written and printed form (McBride 2009). Given these central and distinctly different features and given that students today are expected to work in existing and not yet known web environments, it is argued that taking a more pragmatic perspective to what constitutes languages and communication online could be more productive.

The connections between language learning activities and communication in SNSs are relatively unexplored even if many scholars increasingly suggest potentials that these new arenas may offer. Recent studies point, though in guarded terms, for example, to the benefits concerning the fact that the implementation of Facebook increases learners' self-efficacy and motivation (Lewis, et al. 2010) and improves second language learning skills in reading and writing (Drouin 2011). While there is need for more extensive research on the affordances of using Facebook as an educational environment some of the potential impact on young people's English language learning has been presented in a recent research review. Aydin (2012) argues some potential benefits of implementing Facebook regarding language learning. Facebook is referred to as an ideal environment, which offers diverse ways to address e.g., cultural issues and improvement of linguistic skills. Though research on Facebook use within education is relatively new, there is, however, not yet solid research evidence about either the potentials or the challenges in these new arenas.

To summarize, the examples given above demonstrate research grounded in specific subject domain traditions rather than exploring new conditions and re-thinking. Assessing, grading, quantifying participation and investigating the use of language regarding vocabulary or grammar indicate that research questions have departed more from an interest in linguistics instead of from more open explorative approaches. However, it was also suggested that taking a personal interest had an impact on communication leading to an increase in students' interactions illustrated by postings and sharing links. In line with arguments

concerning the fact that the interplay with new technologies such as social media entail that 261
we can expect changes both regarding ways of working in education as well as what counts 262
as knowledge (e.g., Ludvigsen et al. 2010), our research intends to explore new spaces that 263
might occur when SNSs are implemented as part of schooling when students use English for 264
communication and consequently grading and assessment have been omitted. 265

Analytical framework—Framing in social networking sites 266

The study presented here is part of a research project called Linguascapes, which aims to 267
investigate if and how the gap between young people's language learning activities in social 268
media contexts and language teaching and learning practices in school can be bridged. By 269
applying a socio-cultural theoretical view of communication for the design of the study, we 270
have followed and logged the students' interactions in a Facebook-group and analyzed their 271
activities as social practices (Vygotsky 1939/1978; Wertsch 1998). Theoretical insights from 272
the scholarly contributions by Goffman (1974/1986), and the concept of *framing* have 273
guided our research. An important link between these traditions is that they share basic 274
assumptions about how knowledge is developed in communication, in practices and in 275
interaction. Given the basis for considering the importance of studying the situated, local 276
practices to understand activities, the sociocultural perspective and concepts derived from 277
Goffman's theory are, thus, seen as complementary. 278

The framing of an activity implies a *definition of a situation,* which the participants in that 279
particular situation more or less share. According to Goffman (1974/1986), this can be 280
understood as part of a larger process by which one defines a situation and one's own actions 281
become part of this definition. There are certain overall aspects that are part of every framing 282
process and that have a bearing on the possible ways of framing activities. In many cases, 283
individuals do things "in relationship to cultural standards established for the doing and for 284
the social role that is built up out of such doings" (Goffman 1974/1986, p. 662). Goffman's 285
(1959/1990) sociological perspective, or dramaturgical perspective (Lemert and Branaman 286
2005), also implies that we play different roles and display different ways of *presenting* 287
ourselves and compose *impression management* according to how we define the situation 288
and according to the way we want to be seen. In our impression management, we try to 289
maintain the role in which we want to present ourselves; we perform and the performance 290
comprises both social rituals and strategic plays for us to deliver a desirable picture of 291
ourselves, implying that we selectively give off details. The social self is thus seen as a 292
dramaturgical product of social interaction. The framing of the situation is closely connected 293
with the concept of situated identity, while as in our study, the participants "take on the role" 294
as students. In SNSs we do not have our bodies as tools for managing impression or 295
interpreting others' presentations of self, therefore other textual and multimodal resources 296
become important tools. As argued by Sundén (in Boyd 2008, p. 129) "people must learn to 297
write themselves into being" (see also Canagarajah 2006), which is consistent with Turkle's 298
(1995) notion that participation online involves impression management and self- 299
presentation through text. 300

Although this approach has mainly been considered in face-to-face contexts it is also 301
currently being used by quite a few scholars in analyzing online interaction (e.g., Boyd 302
2008; Lam 2000; Rosenberg and Egbert 2011). Research on new roles for participation 303
through SNSs will most probably be central to contemporary scholars in relation to literacy 304
and learning issues, and could entail new spaces or boundaries for language use within 305
institutional education. Akkerman and Bakker (2011) define a boundary "as a sociocultural 306

difference leading to discontinuity in action or interaction" (p. 133). They argue that even if such discontinuities are challenging they do carry learning potentials but what these learning potentials could be, needs to be further studied (for an extended review of the literature on boundary crossing see Akkerman and Bakker 2011). A starting point in our study is thus to regard the interaction in the Facebook group as spaces that combine different sociocultural practices. Such spaces could analytically be viewed as extended spaces or *third spaces* (Gutiérrez et al. 1995, 1999) i.e., encounters where the values and cultures of traditional schooling are challenged and new spaces for participation and involvement are made possible. Even though the discussion of third spaces refers to spaces in the classroom, we argue that it parallels such practices online, where learning can be shaped by movements across spaces or boundaries and meaningful interaction may occur.

With the new online arenas for language learning activities that have now been available for some time, research is shifting from primarily quantitative research methods to principally qualitative methods, to "qualitatively analyzing how and in what ways students actually negotiated meaning with each other" (Kern et al. 2004, p. 244). In line with such arguments, we have adopted qualitative research methods to account for and address how students frame their interaction and accomplish their impression management in SNSs when implemented in school contexts and what this could imply for language learning activities.

Method

To address the aim of this exploratory study, we as researchers established contacts with teachers in Colombia, Finland and Taiwan, which was made possible through our international research contacts. The reason for choosing these countries was primarily that English should not be the native language and that the Facebook group could be implemented as part of the students' learning of English as a language taught at school. The Facebook group was then created specifically for the purpose of this study in collaboration with two Swedish teachers. We discussed the aim of the research with the teachers via email and the teachers in each country introduced the Facebook activity to their students, with the exception of the Swedish group where we as researchers had the opportunity to meet the students to inform them about the study. The Facebook group was established in October 2011 and lasted until June 2012. The study is thus based on ethnographic data from collaborating students aged between 13 and16 from Colombia, Finland, Sweden and Taiwan, as mentioned previously. Due to the voluntary nature of the interaction in the group the students joined gradually and some students chose not to join at all. In total 60 students from the different countries joined the group, as is displayed in Table 1 below.

The dataset in total consists of 106 postings; 43 of these postings had no comments but almost all of the postings had some "likes", 20 postings received one or two comments and 43 postings received three or more comments. Out of the 43 postings with multiple comments, 39 include students from more than one country (see Fig. 1 below).

Table 1 The number of participants

Students from Colombia	Students from Finland	Students from Sweden	Students from Taiwan	Teachers	Researchers	Total
14	21	17	8	6	4	70

Fig. 1 Overview of the data corpus

Methodologically, the study takes as its starting point empirical research in the context of   345
CSCL applying Interaction Analysis (Jordan and Henderson 1995) for the in-depth analysis of   346
the data. With its roots in ethnography (especially participant observation), sociolinguistics,   347
ethnomethodology, conversation analysis (e.g. Crook 1994; Goodwin and Heritage 1990;   348
Sacks et al. 1974; Stahl et al. 2006) and other traditions that also include nonverbal resources   349
in interaction, the aim of Interaction Analysis is to identify how the participants made use of   350
various resources in the complex social context in which they act. Interaction Analysis is also   351
consistent with Goffman's (1974/1986) micro sociological theory regarding interaction as a job,   352
as an activity, that participants perform in order to accomplish something, and with the   353
assumption that research should focus on how participants create meaning in this activity.   354

The students' interactions were logged and the screen was captured using Jing (a free   355
Tech Smith software) enabling analyses of the multimodal elements, i.e., the photos and   356
videos they used for representing and expressing themselves. This enabled the study of   357
communicative flow as opposed to e.g., screenshots capturing moments of interaction.   358

When analyzing students' postings and interactions in the Facebook group, Goffman's   359
(1974/1986) theoretical concepts offer analytical tools for dealing with activities from the   360
participant's point of view. The first step in our analysis was to scrutinize what the students   361
wrote and how they interacted linguistically, in accordance with their temporary definition of   362
the situation. The analysis focuses on what kind of information the students shared, the   363
content of the messages posted, how the other students responded and what kinds of situated   364
local practices these entailed (Dirksen et al. 2010; Lockyer and Patterson 2008). This   365 **Q2**
enabled us to account for our first research question about the kind of framework that has   366
temporarily been established and how the students accomplished their impression manage-   367
ment. This first analytical step provided an overview of the postings and comments in the   368
Facebook group (Derry et al. 2010). Our next step was to study how the interaction was   369
managed collaboratively and how English was used as a lingua franca during the continuous   370
Facebook group activity, to be able to discuss what this implies for the students' commu-   371
nication and language use as well as for language learning in general.   372

The research adheres to the ethical code of the Swedish Research Council.   373

The students and their parents were informed about the research, and it was emphasized   374
that all participation was voluntary. Pseudonyms were used for all the participants.   375

Results   376

The overarching goal for the participating students was to learn English and communicate   377
with other learners of English. They were initially given specific discussion topics, but they   378
were also recurrently encouraged to introduce issues of their own. In an attempt to avoid the   379
communication in this Facebook group as only providing an added space to the already   380
existing approaches to language learning and to encourage the students to contribute with   381
whatever they found worthwhile to discuss, it was emphasized that participating and   382

communicating in this group was voluntary. Therefore, the guidelines from us as researchers were kept to a minimum meant as triggers and the students' postings were neither mandatory nor quantified or assessed by the teachers (cf. Farmer et al. 2008). The teachers in each country introduced the Facebook activity and offered occasional opportunities to interact during English learning classes, but interaction also took place after the school day. The Facebook group could be seen as private where only participants of the study could gain access by accepting the invitation from the administrators.

The case study reported here presents findings from the initial phase of the study when the students introduced themselves. The excerpts were chosen chronologically, to illustrate joint interactions and how these evolved during the study. The first excerpt exemplifies how the students introduced themselves with very few or no comments from the other students. The second excerpt illustrates a playful interaction and even if the comments pertaining to this specific posting were only from students in the same class it marked a shift in the interaction pattern of this Facebook group, where the students more frequently commented on each other's postings. The third excerpt is an example of the interaction in the continuing postings. After this initial phase, the continuing interaction consisted of discussion topics such as music, sports etc. where almost all postings were given comments.

To start the exploratory case study, aimed at discerning what the everyday language use implied and in addition trying to avoid a traditional school activity, it was suggested that the students could upload a photo that meant something special to them, and write a short description of why this picture was important to them. We also explicitly encouraged commenting on each other's postings. By starting with the students' own interests, it was assumed that this could lead to a more student driven communication. During the collaboration with the teachers regarding the framing of the first activity, it became clear that designing for interaction and communication in a SNS but departing from an educational context was not trivial, which is shown in the students' first postings. This is illustrated in the excerpt below as an example of the students' initial postings including a short description of themselves and a photo of a place where they, for example, had been on holiday.

Excerpt 1—Presentation of self in the first posting
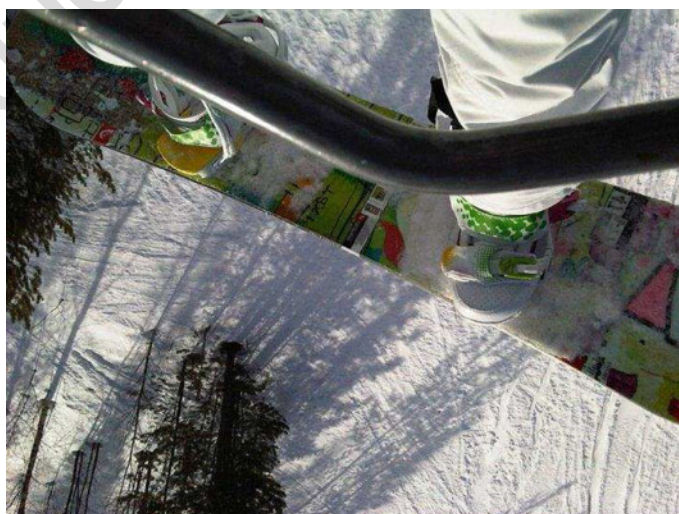
Hi, my name is Anna Svensson and i'm 14 years old.

I'm from Sweden and both my parents are also Swedish.

Something that makes me happy is going skiing.

Every year me, my parents, my aunt and her family and often one of my friends go skiing in the Swedish mountains.

Have you ever tried it?

For go skiing you need: snow, a pair of skis, a pair of sticks and warm clothes because if there's snow it have to be cold.

If you don't like skiing you can also go by snowboard which I do (the picture)

I've been in the mountains for skiing every year since I was two month.

It makes me feel good because I think it's really fun and very cosy.

Every year I really look forward to this trip. We usually go sometime in the end of mars.

Look forward to hear from you!

In this first individual posting, not open to negotiation, Anna starts by presenting herself by name and age, which is typical of the students' first introductions in this Facebook group. Anna frames her presentation in line with a culturally conventional practice of introducing oneself, which is also a common exercise in language classes, even if this was not included in the starting-up guidelines. After Anna's two introductory lines about herself, she continues her introduction by describing her favorite vacation every year. The picture she posts displays a ski lift where she is wearing boots for snowboarding attached to a snowboard. She describes what you need to perform this sport, what kind of clothes you need, how often she snowboards and why she likes it. The narrating descriptive part; "For go skiing you need: snow, a pair of skis, a pair of sticks and warm clothes" resembles English learning descriptive and informative exercises in schools. Then she finishes quite politely writing that she is looking forward to hearing from the other group participants, inviting the others. However this invitation does not trigger the other students to comment on her posting and her question regarding if the other participants have tried skiing remains unanswered; she gets no comments on this post and only three *likes*.

The overall analysis of this particular posting is that it shows a resemblance to writing a letter to an unknown pen pal as a school task, a common way of practicing English in educational learning contexts. Anna's impression management is framed in line with the norms of schooling, even if the guidelines did not include assessment or mandatory aspects. The linguistic style is characterized by information and descriptions, and is written in the first person singular *I*, though she added one question of interest for her potential readers. The posting could be understood as a response to a traditional school task, and displays very little of the common language use and dynamics characteristically found in communication in social network sites. Since she gets no comments it is not possible to know how this presentation is received by the other students, but in relation to the continuing postings her introduction posting seemed to provide the other students with a model of how to frame their introductions. It is also possible to interpret her posting as an example of a shared student understanding of what presenting yourself commonly includes in a writing activity in English class. This kind of text is not open to negotiation, and does not develop into a joint activity, rather the opposite, this activity exemplifies how you as an individual present yourself to someone you do not know. The postings that followed were in line with her introduction and the suggested guideline of just uploading a picture with a description of what it means to them appeared to be of subordinate importance. Therefore, to start with, the framing of the interaction in the Facebook group as a context for language learning activities, does not seem to challenge the prevailing framing of

schooling. Even if this activity is presented as optional the educational framing of the activity is 473
thus shown to be superior in relation to a framing more oriented to common language use in SNSs. 474

Another indication of the students' initial framing in relation to the practice of schooling 475
is that instead of commenting the postings as a common linguistic activity in SNSs contexts, 476
the students in this group post their own presentations,[1] i.e. they are framing the activity as if 477
solving an individual school task. 478

Excerpt 2—Posting that marks a shift in framing 479

The presentations in the Facebook group continue and, as stated above, most students start by 480
introducing themselves quite formally with their name, age and an interest. One of the Finnish 481
student's postings, which marks a shift in the interaction i.e., a framing more oriented to young 482
people's common language use in social media, is shown in the example below. This posting 483
involves five students and their teacher and gets 15 *likes* and 46 comments. All the comments 484
are conducted the same afternoon by the student's classmates and teacher, indicating a fairly 485
synchronous interaction that is also drawing on the resource of knowing each other, albeit with 486
an explicit notion of the other students' presence. The excerpt has been divided into two 487
sections, turn numbers have been added for analytical purposes and translations to English 488
from Finnish and Swedish are found in double brackets. 489

1.	Risto	hello everybody, im 5 yrs old	490
2.	Vilma	Risto, we know that ;)	491
3.	Risto	i know that you know it :D	492
4.	Vilma	:P	493
5.	Teacher	Risto, you probably mean 15 years old? ;)	494
6.	Risto	no im not that either :D	495
7.	Risto	teacher please join the keskustelu *((conversation))*	496
8.	Matti	Risto är fyrtton år *((Risto is fourteen years old, written in Swedish))*	497
9.	Risto	kirjotetaan fjorton* :DD *((is spelled fourteen))*	498
10.	Matti	Risto is 14 yrs old…	499
11.	Risto	asennetta vaa hei matti : *((show some attitude hey matti))*	500
12.	Risto	and matti is 12	501
13.	Matti	we don't remember little mistakes	502
14.	Risto	but big yes	503
15.	Risto	MUSTAaHUUMORIa *((black humor))*	504
16.	Risto	fjorton *((forteen* translated from Swedish*))*	505
17.	Risto	opi jo :D *((hey learn already))*	506
18.	Matti	learn learn fyjorttonde *((fourteenth* translated from Swedish*))*	507
19.	Risto	no no no: fyrtjotontodne *((fourteenth* translated from Swedish,*))*	508

While the first postings in this Facebook group, exemplified here by Anna's posting, could 509
be seen as framed in a response to the educational requirements, by means of expository 510
writing, the posting and comments above differ quite radically and are more immediate and 511
informal, in line with young people's everyday interaction in SNSs (Conole and Alevizou 512
2010). Here Risto starts up ironically by joking about his age (using the short form "yrs" for 513
years). By this framing, Risto is distancing himself from the hitherto usual way of framing the 514
activity in this Facebook group. This posting marks a shift from the earlier formal interaction 515
and is an example of a boundary crossing that could be seen as initiating an interactional 516

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[1] The first 18 postings do not get any comments at all.

sequence that builds an extended space for the students' interaction (cf. Akkerman and Bakker 2011; Gutiérrez, et al. 1995, 1999). With Risto's posting the activity is reframed into playfulness or in Goffman's terms *make-believe*. Goffman argues that when a participant in an activity says or does something that should be understood as a joke, this definition takes precedence; "he may fail to induce the others to follow along in the fun, or even to believe that his motives are innocent, but he obliges them to accept his act as something not to be taken at face value" (Goffman 1974/1986, p. 48). Accordingly, the comments that follow are a response to Risto's ironical posting. Vilma's first comment "we know that;)" ending with an emoticon denoting a jocular tone, is an uptake of the joke in Risto's posting, recognizing him as childish. Later in the thread (turn 23) Helmi is also implying that boys are childish by posting "it's acceptable, because boys are, as we can see, 5 years old". Risto's response to Vilma is also given in a joking tone, expressing; "i know that you know it :D" in agreement since their history is situated, shared and therefore also known by everyone. Then their teacher joins the discussion suggesting that Risto perhaps meant that he is 15, also ending with a joking emoticon, possibly to open up for Risto to withdraw his statement and to adhere to the implicit expectations about presenting yourself to someone you do not know. But since Risto is 14 years old, which becomes evident later in the comment thread, his first posting is not a mistake but a way of presenting himself as a person who makes jokes and analytically speaking is also a way of reframing the interaction from a school-task and from the other students' formal responses to this into playfulness.

From turn 8 to turn 19 there is a sequence of turns between Risto and Matti where they alternate between Finnish, Swedish and English discussing how to write fourteen in Swedish and making jokes concerning their type of humor, claiming that Matti is only 12 etc. Analytically the juxtaposition of their mother language and Swedish could be seen as framing the activity in line with the use of language in their everyday life. This alternation indicates a linguistic hybridity of the activity (note that they come from a Swedish-speaking part of Finland, which is one reason why they also use Swedish). As the interaction continues in the excerpt below, the teacher joins the discussion again.

20.	Teacher	Boys remember things we talked about. Use english please.
21.	Risto	we actually used but you didn't noticed that cause matti has some talents
22.	Annie	guys, try to behave.
23.	Helmi	it's acceptable, because boys are, as we can see, 5 years old.
24.	Matti	Sorry… I was trying to speak English, but swedish is more easyer than english
25.	Risto	helmi huutelee.. ((helmi goes on ..))
26.	Risto	OHO, se oliki suomee ((oh, it was Finnish))
27.	Helmi	boys,boys....
28.	Risto	girls, girls, girls! do you now that song?
29.	Annie	O-O-O-OMG ,do you know that song ? please guys, BEHAVE!
30.	Risto	Annie pplease..
31.	Risto	we see who behaves n school :D
32.	Helmi	.......hey pllzz, try not to spam. this is not nice for anyone.
33.	Risto	are we spammiong? i dont see
34.	Annie	Risto; I do, you don't !
35.	Helmi	when did you lost your ability to see ?
36.	Annie	:D
37.	Risto	you clearly dont know what is spammin, u want to see?
38.	Annie	NO

39.	Annie	WE DON'T	565
40.	Risto	i knew u dont	566
41.	Teacher	Risto. Stop this nonsense.	567
42.	Risto	we were just having fun :'(	568
43.	Annie	have fun somewhere else !	569
44.	Risto	actuallky quite good advice	570
45.	Risto	sorry for that clerical error	571
46.	Teacher	The beginning of this discussion was a little bit (how would I say it nice…)	572
		SIMPLE and this comment of nonsense was more for that part. The end	573
		instead showed that you are quite good in wordacrobatics. I'm impressed. ;)	574
47.	Risto	Thanks DJ ;)	575

In turn 20, the teacher addresses both Risto and Matti to put them back on track again, i.e., to use English. Risto objects to this rebuke and points out that the teacher did not observe Matti's talents, an objection that does not lead to any response from the teacher. This is followed by Annie (turn 22), who reprimands them and asks them to behave. Then in turn 28, there is a mixture of style and language again. Here it is performed in relation to music, where Risto replies to Helmi's post "boys,boys...." by referring to a lyric; "girls, girls, girls! do you now that song?" Recurrent in young people's interaction in social media is the mixing of languages often by inclusion of certain terms in English. The frequent flow of English as a lingua franca in their everyday lives carries local meaning and becomes an integral communicative mode (cf. Leppänen et al. 2009 who discuss the sense of normalcy associated to English presence in media, particularly in relation to music). After some turns of associations about the song lyrics, Annie once more asks the boys to behave, this time stressed in capital letters, emphasising the teacher's rebuke (turn 29). This is supported by Helmi, who posts; "hey pllzz, try not to spam. this is not nice for anyone". Both Annie and Helmi align their impression management with the conventional practices of schooling and the teacher's arguments, while Risto continues throughout the interaction to frame his impression management in a playful way. Another example of this is when Risto responds to the reprimands both from the girls and the teacher in turn 42 by saying that they are only having fun which Annie responds to by posting; "have fun somewhere else!", signalling that this forum is not a place to have fun in, which could be understood as a response to the requirements of this interaction, framing it as a school task. The teacher has now sharpened the tone of his rebuke, even in writing to emphasize the seriousness; "Risto. Stop this nonsense.", by adding a full stop after his name, and by the short rebuke also completed with a full stop. This excerpt does not only illustrate a shift in framing between the Finnish students, but also concerning how the teacher in explicit wordings goes from interventions focusing on how to behave, to the use of the "right" language to actually acknowledging that one of the rebuked students, Risto, has shown that he is "quite good in wordacrobatics. I'm impressed. ;)". The teacher's recognition of his language use is stressed with an emoticon. The teacher has gone from rebuke to appraisal during this thread. Risto's reply "Thanks DJ ;)" could be seen as continuing the playful frame and teasingly giving the teacher a role as a DJ, suggesting that the teacher is in charge of the discussion. This indicates that the role of the teacher, as an authority did not appear to be particularly challenged by the communicative activity in this networking site (cf. Hemmi et al. 2009).

Whereas we argue that this posting marks a shift in the interaction in this Facebook group by crossing the boundaries from the communicative framing as a response to the locally established norms of schooling, an extended space for communication is negotiated (Akkerman and Bakker 2011; Gutiérrez, et al. 1995, 1999). As the students and the teacher collaboratively negotiate about what kind of participation, as well as language use, that could be viewed as legitimate in this space, it becomes obvious that it does not entirely become a space in line with the students' customary interaction in networking sites. The ways in which not only the teacher but also other

students respond to the ironic, playful way of interaction by rebukes indicate that the interaction 613
also is framed in relation to the practice of schooling as well as related to an awareness of the 614
audience, i.e., the other group members. Even if this posting only gained comments from students 615
in the same class, the collaborative framing here involves that there is a turn in the postings that 616
follow and the interaction evolves from the initially formally framed expository writing to a more 617
casual tone. Furthermore, most of the continuing postings received comments from students other 618
than their classmates. The continuing posts are thus, more frequently commented on and they also 619
tend to be shorter. In addition, even if they consist of the students' name, age and something they 620
like, the use of jokes and emoticons increases, which is exemplified below by one of the 621
presentations from one of the Columbian students, who gets eight *likes*. 622

Excerpt 3—Posting exemplifying the evolving interaction 623

Paola (Colombia) 624
 Hi! my name is Paola I'm 15 years old. I have a very happy life I love to smile bit I think 625
we need a pet in my family to be always happy!. I love the beagles…anyone has a dog or 626
know someone who can sell or give me one? 627

1.	Teacher(C)	Paola is the best skater I've met, sha has participated in differen races,	628
		you can ask her…	629
2.	Sini (F)	wow that's cool! can you tell more Paola? (:	630
3.	Paola	I'm among the top 6 of the League of Bogatá-Colombia, and i'm working	631
		to be the best!I've been skating 9 years, I really love what I do. The next	632
		Wednesday I will go to Cartagena to run and I hope I win because I've	633
		been training a lot. I practice all days after school. I love to skate<3!!:)…	634
4.	Ayla (S)	it sounds cool, wish you good luck :)	635
5.	Annie(F)	how cool :D!but isn't it so hard? i have try it once and it was so hard	636
		:D i couldn't almost stand on the skateboard! :DDD	637
6.	Paola:	jeje! no i dont practice in skateboard, i practice speed skating! i think	638
		is not so hard, but obviously the first time yo do is difficult!:D Where	639
		are you from?	640
7.	Annie (F)	oh:D i'm from Finland:)	641
8.	Paola	O! I'm from Colombia! Have you ever been to Colombia?	642
9.	Annie	no i haven't :s but it would be cool to visit there!	643
10.	Paola	It's Beautiful! The best of Colombia is the food and the people!! the next	644
		year in march i will go to europe! :D	645
11.	Annie	how cool! :D where in europe you're going? :D	646
12.	Paola	I will go to France like 2 weeks and then to Germany!	647
13.	Annie	so cool :Dd i've beebn to Germany and it was so beautiful place! But i	648
		want so much to go to France!	649
14.	Paola	:D me TOO! Also I want to go to Italy :D you have family in other	650
		countries?	651
15.	Annie	well my aunt and couple cousins live in Danmark and we're going there	652
		with my family this summer:) I would also go to America toNew York!	653
16.	Annie	have you any relatives in other countries ? :)	654
17.	Paola	:O ot sounds so good! i also wil go to new york in september to skate there :D	655
18.	Paola	mmm my uncle lives in Fort Lauderdale and some relatives of my father lives	656
		in Italy!	657
19.	Annie	oh well that's nice! :DD have you ever visit in Italy at your relatives?:)	658

| 20. | Paola | | No! But i want to! the problem is that I do not know us! Jeje | 659 |
| 21. | Annie | oh :) | | 660 |

Paola's introduction starts up like most postings by stating her name and age, framed in line with a conventional presentation. But after that she presents herself as happy and finishes the posting by asking the others in the group if they could sell or give her a dog, which could be understood as a playful way of framing the initiation of a conversation. Before any of the students comment on that specific question her teacher posts a comment on her skating talent, inviting the other participants to ask her about that. The above excerpt illustrates how the involvement of the teacher contributes in orchestrating the international communication and becomes a trigger for the subsequent interaction. Analytically the importance of all the teachers' involvements in the interaction implies that the framing of the activity to a significant degree relies on the established norms of schooling. This is shown in the succeeding comment from Sini, a girl in the Finnish class. Sini states that she thinks it's "cool" that Paola is a great skater and she also corresponds to the teacher's request and asks Paola to say more about her skating, which becomes superior in relation to Paola's request about dogs. The teachers' interplay with the students' framing of the activity is significant and this is also shown in other parts of our data where sometimes a comment from the teacher becomes the final comment of a thread. This elicits questions of both the subject matter and the timing of teacher interactions in relation to the students' interactions.

The next reply in the excerpt is from a Swedish girl repeating that she thinks it is "cool" that Paola is such a skilled skater, it is however, not until the Finnish girl Annie enters that a discontinuity of the framing in the thread emerges. It is when the girls leave the initial discussion of skating that the framing of the activity reveals proximity with a genuine dialogue, and analytically could be described as initiating an extended space. The hybridity in the interaction between the two students from Colombia and Finland is shown in the intertwinement between an apparent interest in each other, but it is still within a framing related to the overall goal of the Facebook activity i.e., to communicate in English with students from other cultures. The interaction reveals that the students have other languages and cultures in their contexts and that English serves as a lingua franca but also that the English used is not tightly connected to what could be called school-English, it is rather spiced with youth expressions and emoticons that resemble emergent communicative practices in SNSs. To summaries the overall result of the interaction in our Facebook group is that it was hard to maintain a dynamic space where students would be motivated to voluntarily engage in communicating with other students that they do not know. A clear indication of this was that there were only 106 postings in the 8 months' duration of the group. By chronologically choosing three excerpts that are typical for the interaction that evolved during the study, we presented examples where the students framed the communication with a combination of what can be argued to be their habitual emergent communicative styles in SNSs with a framing of the activity as a school task. Thus, our data indicate a possibility to cross the boundaries of schooling and initiate an extended space. In addition, when the students are in command, and take the space as theirs, and when English is used for more meaningful and engaging interactions beyond a regular school task, the students' use of language also changed. However, such extended spaces are by no means easy to establish and have to be recurrently collaboratively negotiated and maintained.

Discussion

In this exploratory study, we examined if, and in that case how, social networking sites could serve as extended spaces for language learning activities when implemented in school practices.

We have pointed out that the language learning potentials that this new arena could offer but also the constraints that combining young people's practices in their spare time with the educational practices could entail. Our study aimed at exploring if the dynamic flow of linguistic activities associated with SNSs practices could be generated and maintained by implementing a Facebook group as a voluntary part of the students' language learning activities. Our prerequisites then differed from several earlier studies where student interactions were quantified and assessed by the teachers, postings and comments were closely connected to a course content and in which the SNSs became an add-on to the existing language learning approaches (e.g. Blattner and Lomicka 2012; Ducate and Lomicka 2008; Yang 2011). A recurrent reason for implementing Facebook as part of students' English learning activities can be argued to be grounded in assumptions that Facebook can constitute an "ideal environment for communication and interaction among students" (Aydin 2012, p. 1103). Drawing on the result of our study we argue that this reasoning has to be viewed in relation to counterarguments invoking that this and similar claims, are not easily confirmed empirically and an important basis is that the perceived practices online are social rather than educational (Roblyer, et al. 2010).

In addition, our study demonstrated how students' initially frame the Facebook group activity in relation to what counts as conventional practices of individually solving a school task, in this case to upload a photo of something special to the students, and some additional contextual cues. What is evident here was that every setting has its own logic and in educational settings the framing is rather stable and not entirely negotiable. Goffman (1974/1986) assumes that "there is a main activity, a story line, and that an evidential boundary exists in regard to it" (p. 564). This means that the students had to negotiate how to frame the interaction, which was constrained by social structures and social organizations, i.e., the students are limited and were not able to frame activities entirely as they wished. In line with this reasoning, Goffman (1974/1986) maintains that framing is guided by the norms and goals of a specific activity and institutions often play important roles in the framing process. However, framing the activity as a well bounded practice of schooling of course implies that learning would occur, the point made here was merely to discuss how possible extended interactive spaces might be initiated to scrutinize how they interrelate with the language learning activities.

As the interaction continued and evolved in the Facebook group, the norms of schooling are collaboratively negotiated and challenged by the students' increased use of more digital vernacular language (Thorne 2009). In such instances, as exemplified by our second and third excerpt, the interaction was more vivid, exemplifying the possibility of developing into an extended space for communication. The students' use of English has more the traits of spoken language, more or less synchronous interaction, similar to a chat, to a vibrant dialogue, or to use Halliday's metaphor, similar to a dance (1994/2004). In other words, their initial framing departed from an individual perspective in a descriptive textual mode to evolve into a more vibrant and collaborative interaction with social cues spiced with emoticons. However, this assumes that the students are in command and take the space as theirs, and reframe the interaction in collaboration according to their interests. A strong prerequisite for this, however, seems to be that the students know each other quite well (cf. boyd 2008; Ellison et al. 2007), and even in such instances the practice of schooling becomes part of the students' authorial creativity when interacting (cf. Kramsch et al. 2000). The instances of extended spaces generated in our study (as illustrated in excerpt two and three) displayed discontinuity in the interaction where what counted as a legitimate framing of the activity and correct language use is negotiated and challenged (cf. Warschauer et al. 2010). Akkerman and Bakker (2011) argue that extended spaces or boundaries trigger dialogue and negotiation of meaning since they are not fully defined. Such negotiations are however challenging for both teacher and students. For teachers, the challenge is to orchestrate such media productions, which in part tend to be quite

primitive from an educational language learning perspective (c.f. Lewis, et al. 2010). Students, on the other hand, have to negotiate what it means to be a student in this boundary activity, finding new ways of framing, engaging in impression management and conforming their textual representations to the teachers' expectations (cf. Hemmi, et al. 2009). For students to become successful participants in these extended spaces, they need to adapt to new roles concerning diverse communicative genres and linguistic repertoires. The interaction in these extended spaces could be seen as the result of encounters between the practices of schooling and young people's social media practices. This implies that the language use does not only consist of communication but also the negotiation of new and changing roles. Important issues to discuss further would be to what extent the students can be made aware of the communicative shifts and in what ways these kinds of extended spaces become other kinds of institutionalized and ritualized activities for language learning.

Conclusions

To conclude, our results indicate that there are possibilities for boundary crossing that could initiate extended spaces when implementing social networking sites in schooling. Such extended spaces where students can engage in language activities could be triggered by the students' established communicative, collaborative practices that belong to their everyday use of language in social media. However, the impact of schooling is strong and the Facebook group in our study did not develop into a vigorous space for language activities in line with young people's everyday interaction in SNSs. But even if the interactions in this Facebook group only became partially dynamic, our results show possibilities for re-framing the activity and initiating extended spaces for language learning activities. We argue that instead of comparing the interaction in these boundary activities with the interaction in students' everyday use in SNSs, the interaction here needs to be regarded as communication and language learning activities with values of their own. The interactions in SNSs, when implemented in schooling thus have to be deliberately and dynamically negotiated by educators and students to form a new language-learning space with its own possibilities and constraints. However, how such extended spaces can be encouraged in order to go beyond school language use as we know it and the potential transformation of language learning and language teaching has to be further investigated. Questions regarding teacher and learner roles, what counts as knowing a language, and how students' digital vernacular language use can be acknowledged as other communicative styles than those commonly considered from an educational perspective, remain issues to be re-visited and re-thought.

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