5-2010

Learning to Speak Through Writing: The Case for Microblogging in the Language Classroom

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Learning to speak through writing

The case for microblogging in the language classroom

New Insights into the Study of Conversation
Applications to the Language Classroom

University of Granada, Spain
May 26 – 28, 2010

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What is microblogging?

A microblog entry could consist of nothing but a short sentence fragment, or an image or embedded video.

As with traditional blogging, microbloggers post about topics ranging from the simple, such as "what I'm doing right now," to the thematic, such as "sports cars."

Some microblogging services offer features such as privacy settings, which allow users to control who can read their microblogs, or alternative ways of publishing entries besides the web-based interface. These may include text messaging, instant messaging, E-mail, or digital audio.

From WIKIPEDIA
Microblogging platforms
Setting up Twitter in the classroom

People whose tweets YOU read, in this case, your students

People who read YOUR tweets.
How does it work?

1. Sí, un poco! Pero también estoy emocionada.
2. ¡Qué bien! Ya me voy la semana que viene. ¿Estás nerviosa?
3. Hola profesora! Como estas? Y si quiero seguir tuiteando!
4. ¡Hola! Muy bien. Me voy a España el lunes. Y en dos semanas vienen @amandaee10 y @phriennesp.
5. ¡Hola Profesora! mañana comenzaré a buscar un trabajo para el verano, cómo está tu verano?
6. Hola chicos. ¿van a querer seguir tuiteando en el verano? A veces se me olvida esta cuenta... Díganme para que no se me olvide.
What were students **required** to do with Twitter?

1. Write at least four tweets and one @reply per week trying to use some of the vocabulary words studied in class*.
2. Complete a weekly questionnaire about their weekly tweets

* Based on Antenos-Conforti, 2009
How was Twitter used in the end?

1. The normal Twitter use, to talk about what’s happening.

- Con este tiempo afuera me siento que estoy perezza
  2:58 PM Nov 19th, 2009 from web

- Necesito escribir un ensayo (7-9 páginas) y tengo un examen para la clase de biología el viernes!! :(
  10:57 PM Nov 18th, 2009 from web

- Tengo que estudiar mucho materia para la clase de historia.
  11:26 PM Nov 17th, 2009 from web

- SPCONV Bueno, ya estoy en casa. ¡Qué cansancio! Mi marido y un niño están viendo AFV en la tele y yo con la computadora leyendo un poco.
  7:49 PM Nov 17th, 2009 from Seesmic

- Estoy escribiendo un composicion para mi clases de religion
  4:04 PM Nov 17th, 2009 from web
2. To have “spontaneous” conversations outside of class
More examples of these conversations among students

Fui el doctor y averiguó que fracture el pie.
Apr 15, 2010 10:22:14 AM
@kayla1091: ¡Esto es muy malo! ¿Cómo lo fracturaste?
Apr 16, 2010 1:35:55 AM
@kayla1091: Yo me cai en ello el sabado.
Apr 16, 2010 9:02:29 AM
@kayla1091: ¿Te pusieron un emplasto o una bota?

¡Me gustaría no tener clase hoy y pasar todo el día trabajando en el jardín!
Mar 18, 2010 9:40:59 PM
@gaby: Cultiva legumbres o flores?
Mar 19, 2010 12:42:59 PM
@amy: Flores porque no tengo bastante luz para cultivar legumbres

Hoy yo estaba buscando mi camisa en el armario pero estaba debajo de mi cama.
@amanda10: un lugar muy extraño para una camisa.
@amanda10: jajaja yo se, pero yo creo que yo nunca puse la camisa en el armario porque lo dije en mi silla y creo que se cayo al piso
@amanda10: jaja, estoy seguro que mi suelo come mis ropa porque yo nunca puedo a encontrar nada
3. To practice vocabulary

In class

Outside of class
5. To talk about homework or tasks in class I wanted them to do.
What about corrections?

a) Through a Direct (private) Message (DM) on Twitter

b) When possible, repeating the corrected version in the following tweets
What kind of vocabulary was used in the students' tweets?

Student #1:

- Hoy
- Buenas
- Profesora
- Clase
- Ahora
- Mas
- Si
- Comida
- Semana
- Casa
- Encanta
- Comer

Student #2:

- Gusta
- Hacer
- Tarea
- Clase
- Magnifico
- Dias
- Hoy
- Rapido
- Tampoco
- También
- Claro
- Profesora
- Chocolate
- Trabajo
- Hoy
- Saudos
What about native speakers' tweets?
In what other ways can students learn from Twitter?
Students get real input

They can follow famous people who may be of interests to them

Buen domingo a todos!

http://twitvid.com/YTJKS - guitardiando... #fb
about 2 hours ago via Twitterific

Familia como están, Buen sábado a todos! #fb
about 15 hours ago via API

toda mi fuerza natural para Cerati! #fb
6:09 AM May 20th via Twitterific

toda la energía positiva para Cerati!! #fb
8:21 AM May 19th via Twitterific

aqui estan los 20 seg de #Yerbatero here's a 20 second preview of my new single #Yerbatero http://bit.ly/juanes1 #fb
10:56 AM May 18th via web

muchachos! hoy les pondre un link pa que escuchen 20 seg de "yerbatero" mi nuevo sencillo. esten pendientes . abrazoo #fb
8:45 AM May 18th via web

http://www.elnuevodia.com/wap/noticia/ultimahora/705916/ #fb
6:01 AM May 18th via Twitterific

pero nos une la musica muchachos, cada quien es libre de pensar como quiere. respetemonos como hermanos e hijos de la misma tierra. #fb
And also they can follow regular native users, with whom they can communicate.
And see how they communicate with other native speakers
How are twitter interactions similar to “real” conversations?

• Short
• Deal with everyday life topics
• Colloquial language used, including pragmatic markers (*hala, hale, qué va*)
• Similar words are repeated often (*pues, bueno*)
• Native speakers even “attempt” to add prosody (*guauuuu, uffff, sííí, bueeeeno*)

How is it useful for language students?

• Time management: mostly asynchronous but can also be synchronous
• Mobility: Students can use their cell phones to interact
• Stress reduction: The affective filter is lowered
Students’ opinions about Twitter

Because *just memorizing words isn’t enough*, applying them to real parts of your day helps the words to stick in your head forever, not just for a quiz.

Twitter is something that *relates to our life* since it is similar to other *social networking sites* and it was *easy* to use.

I was able to see the different ways vocabulary words were used and *seeing it from someone else’s perspective* and not just mine was very helpful.
Students’ opinions about Twitter

I liked twitter because it allows you to incorporate Spanish in your every day life. It is easy to manage and really does help with your Spanish and using the vocabulary from the class.

I like it because it was a way to continue thinking in Spanish outside of the classroom. Instead of only talking in Spanish for 2 1/2 hours a day, it was continued throughout the week.

I enjoyed Twitter because it was an easy way to contact my classmates and the professor. It also allowed me to practice my Spanish outside of the classroom and with my classmates. Twitter was also easy to use and I recommend it for other Spanish classes or just regular classes so that they can contact one another.
For more information:

• [Microblogging on Twitter. Social Networking in Intermediate Italian Classes](#) - Enza Antenos-Conforti

• “Tweaching” with Twitter - Jennifer Rafferty’s Digital Pedagog’s Blog

• [Twitter in Education: How & Why](#) - David Hopkins
Thanks to my friends:

• @AliyCia
• @Mcrueda

For questions, or comments, you can reach me at

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