



Università degli Studi di Udine
Prova di Ammissione alla Scuola Superiore a.a. 2013-14 – LINGUA INGLESE

Part 1: Reading comprehension

Why Youth Love Social Network Sites

If you're not on MySpace, you don't exist —Skyler, 18, to her mom

During 2005, online social network sites like MySpace and Facebook became common destinations for young people in the United States. Throughout the country, young people were logging in, creating elaborate profiles, publicly articulating their relationships with other participants, and writing extensive comments back and forth. By early 2006, many considered participation on the key social network site, MySpace, essential to being seen as cool at school. While not all teens are members of social network sites, these sites developed significant cultural resonance amongst American teens in a short period of time. Although the luster has since faded and teens are not nearly as infatuated with these sites as they once were, they continue to be an important part of teen social life. The rapid adoption of social network sites by teenagers in the United States and in many other countries around the world raises some important questions. Why do teenagers flock to these sites? What are they expressing on them? How do these sites fit into their lives? What are they learning from their participation? Are these online activities like face-to-face friendships or are they different, or complementary? The goal of this chapter is to address these questions and explore their implications for youth identities. While particular systems may come and go, how youth engage through social network sites today provides long-lasting insights into identity formation, status negotiation, and peer-to-peer sociality. (...)

When I ask teenagers why they joined MySpace, the answer is simple: "Cuz that's where my friends are." Their explanation of what they do on the site is much more vague: "I don't know . . . I just hang out." Beneath these vague explanations is a clear message: the popularity of MySpace is deeply rooted in how the site supports sociality amongst preexisting friend groups. Teens join MySpace to maintain connections with their friends. (...) Teens often turn to sites like MySpace for entertainment; social voyeurism passes time while providing insight into society at large. (...)

Identity Performance

In everyday interactions, the body serves as a critical site of identity performance. In conveying who we are to other people, we use our bodies to project information about ourselves. This is done through movement, clothes, speech, and facial expressions. What we put forward is our best effort at what we want to say about who we are. Yet while we intend to convey one impression, our performance is not always interpreted as we might expect. Through learning to make sense of others' responses to our behavior, we can assess how well we have conveyed what we intended. We can then alter our performance accordingly. (...)

In mediated environments, bodies are not immediately visible and the skills people need to interpret situations and manage impressions are different. As Jenny Sund'en argues, people must learn to write themselves into being. Doing so makes visible how much we take the body for granted. While text, images, audio, and video all provide valuable means for developing a virtual presence, the act of articulation differs from how we convey meaningful information through our bodies. (...) In some sense, people have more control online—they are able to carefully choose what information to put forward, thereby eliminating visceral reactions that might have seeped out in everyday communication. At the same time, these digital bodies are fundamentally coarser, making it far easier to misinterpret what someone is expressing.

Writing Identity and Community into Being

A MySpace profile can be seen as a form of digital body where individuals must write themselves into being. Through profiles, teens can express salient aspects of their identity for others to see and interpret. They construct these profiles for their friends and peers to view. While what they present may or may not resemble their offline identity, their primary audience consists of peers that they know primarily offline—people from

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school, church, work, sports teams, etc. Because of this direct link between offline and online identities, teens are inclined to present the side of themselves that they believe will be well received by these peers. The desire to be cool on MySpace is part of the more general desire to be validated by one's peers. Even though teens theoretically have the ability to behave differently online, the social hierarchies that regulate "coolness" offline are also present online. For example, it is cool to have Friends on MySpace but if you have too many Friends, you are seen as a MySpace whore. These markers of cool are rooted in the social culture of MySpace. One of the ways that coolness is articulated is through bulletin posts meant to attack those who have status online and offline. One such post is a satirical Top 10 list of "How To Be Cool On MySpace," which includes material like "Your MySpace name MUST contain symbols and incorrect spelling" and "All your blogs have to be about how bad your day was." While this post is meant to dismiss these common practices, when these posts are spread around, they simultaneously reinforce these norms in the process of mocking them.

(by Danah Boyd, in *Youth, Identity and Digital Media*, ed. David Buckingham, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008).

Exercise 1. General Comprehension. Circle the correct answer.

1. Why do social networks appeal to the young? Because social networks
 - a) turn them into voyeurs
 - b) make them popular at school
 - c) allow them to create imaginary identities
2. Why is MySpace so popular? Because it allows teens
 - a) to meet new friends
 - b) to communicate across the globe
 - c) to socialize with their friends
3. In the mediated world of social networks, identity is performed through one's
 - a) body
 - b) voice
 - c) words
4. The author implies that the lack of physical bodily responses when interacting online
 - a) requires the development of new skills for performativity
 - b) is unproblematic
 - c) grants greater control
5. Young people try to be cool on MySpace by
 - a) uploading satirical posts
 - b) making tons of friends
 - c) emphasizing certain aspects of their identities

Exercise 2. Say whether the following are True/False: if false, write the correct answer

1. US teens do not love social networks anymore.
2. Digital bodies are as effective as our physical bodies.
3. Teens who join social networks usually target their own peers.
4. The rules for being cool online differ from those of being cool in real life.
5. The Top 10 list of "How To Be Cool On MySpace" yields a solely ironic effect.

Exercise 3. Textual and Stylistic analysis:

1. Macro text type: is the text expository, argumentative or instructive?
2. Micro text type: is the text a story, newspaper article, essay, scientific review, interview, manual, biography, speech or editorial?
3. Is the overall register: formal /informal /neutral /colloquial?
.....

4. Are there instances in which the register changes? Provide some examples.....
.....
5. Does the text make use of figurative language? If so, give some examples of the figures of speech used.....
.....
6. Does the text use specific jargons? If so, say which jargon(s) are present and give some examples.....
.....

Exercise 4. Linguistic analysis: The following is a list of synonyms for words/expressions which appear in the text. Find the corresponding words/expressions and write them down:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. passionately attracted to (par. 1) | _____ |
| 2. to herd, swarm (par. 1) | _____ |
| 3. equal-to-equal (par.1) | _____ |
| 4. to evaluate, judge (par. 3) | _____ |
| 5. consistently (par.3) | _____ |
| 6. to leak out, to come out (par 4) | _____ |
| 7. to cancel, reject (par. 5) | _____ |
| 8. to ridicule (par.5) | _____ |

Part 2: Syntax and lexis

Exercise 5. Join the following sentences with an appropriate connective.

Example: John couldn't play the game. He had a pain in his shoulder.

John couldn't play the game because he had a pain in his shoulder. // Owing to a pain in his shoulder, John couldn't play the game.

1. First participants create a profile. Then they are asked to invite their friends to the site. To do this they have to supply their email addresses.
.....
2. Teens sometimes make their profiles private. That way their parents can't see them.
.....
3. Social networking favours socialization among teens who live in isolated, suburban communities. It also exposes them to dangerous encounters.
.....
4. Teens can be targeted by pedophiles. Some parents fear social networks.
.....

Exercise 6. Read the following extract and choose the most appropriate word to complete the text.

Sound Advice for Language Learners

A recent issue of a language learning magazine has consulted a number of experts in the (1) of second language acquisition. Their advice may prove invaluable for those (2) a language course. One

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suggestion is that you (3) whether you are likely to be successful at learning a language. Did you enjoy studying languages at school, for example? Do you have enough time to learn a language? The major (4) will be your own time and effort. If proof of your level of proficiency is important you must make sure that the course on offer leads to a (5) qualification. Also, be realistic in your (6) If you don't set achievable aims you are more likely to give up. Do not be deceived (7) thinking that the most expensive courses are the best. (8) around to get the best possible value for money. You should also bear in mind that the quicker you learn a language the more quickly you forget it. Sandra Miller, a French teacher, tried to teach herself German by enrolling on a (9) course. Already fluent in four languages and with a sound knowledge of teaching methodology her chances of (10) progress were high. Three years (11) she remembers very little. She feels her biggest mistake was not to follow (12) her first experience. "I should have consolidated what I'd learn by continuing to study, even if it were by myself."

- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1. a) domain | b) branch | c) field | d) area |
| 2. a) wondering | b) thinking | c) considering | d) looking |
| 3. a) assess | b) review | c) balance | d) survey |
| 4. a) change | b) evaluation | c) price | d) cost |
| 5. a) recognized | b) understood | c) valued | d) regarded |
| 6. a) sights | b) ends | c) objects | d) goals |
| 7. a) by | b) about | c) into | d) in |
| 8. a) look | b) push | c) run | d) shop |
| 9. a) rapid | b) crash | c) quick | d) fast |
| 10. a) achieving | b) doing | c) gaining | d) making |
| 11. a) on | b) forward | c) from | d) onward |
| 12. a) up | b) on | c) through | d) out |

Exercise 7: Find ONE word to complete all three sentences.

Example: Could you do me a and hold the door open while I bring in the shopping?
 All those in of the proposal please raise your hand.
 After being out of fashion for years the painter is now in with the critics.
Answer: FAVOUR

- The council have commissioned a local artist to create a statue in of the late Prime Minister.
 This computer is so much faster since we added extra
 I have difficulty remembering things from way back and have no whatsoever of much before the age of five.

Answer:.....

- The police have sealed off the crime whilst forensic tests are carried out.
 In the opening of the play we see the two lovers making plans for their wedding.
 Our reporter is at the now and we can speak to her live.

Answer:.....

- Tom has his own legal in the centre of town.
 I haven't ridden a bike for years so I'm probably a bit out of
 He was telling me how much he's looking forward to leaving college and putting the things he's learnt into

Answer:.....

4. Can you keep an on my bags while I pay for the tickets?
Her eyesight was failing and she was having real problems threading the cotton through the of the needle.
We are looking for someone who has an for design and who will be able to contribute creatively to the team.

Answer:.....

5. I am writing with to our recent meeting on 21st May.
I think students in other countries seem to have more for teachers than they do here.
The match has been cancelled out of for the death of our previous Manager.

Answer:.....

6. They are planning to postpone their house-warming till the spring when the weather is nicer.
There is little support within the for a change of leadership and most politicians seem happy to support the Prime Minister.
The restaurant got very busy when a coach arrived full of people travelling to the coast.

Answer:.....

7. Before we close the meeting I'd like to raise the of punctuality in the office.
The press are calling into Government claims that the crime rate has fallen and point to latest research figures as evidence that this isn't true.
The company claim there is absolutely no of making anybody redundant as business has never been better.

Answer:.....

8. I'm driving into town and can you off at the station if you need a lift.
Can we just the subject and talk about something else, please.
Gardeners be warned that temperatures are likely to to below freezing tonight.

Answer:.....

9. John has just taken up the of Marketing Manager at a local college.
He put me in a really difficult asking for money when he knows I'm not very well off.
The yoga teacher told everyone to remain in a standing for 30 seconds.

Answer:.....

10. Apparently, the police are going to the man with assault following that fight the other week.
I couldn't get the car to start this morning and finally had to the battery as it had gone flat.
The company have been asked to submit a proposal outlining how much they will for the consultancy work.

Answer:.....

Part 3. Writing

The rapid and ever-increasing spread of social networking among teens has attracted controversial opinions. Briefly discuss what you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of social networking in youth culture (max. 500 words).