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# Integrating Corporate Social Media Communication into the English Language Curricula

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**Abstract.** The rise of social media has affected how people do business and communicate. Companies interact with potential customers, share offers and promote sales, tracking instant responses on the Internet. Exploring how they do them with language can enable meaningful changes in the vocational English language curricula.

This study gives a descriptive analysis of 500 selected corporate Facebook (FB) threads collected from the 100 Best Global Brands in 2017. It delivers a sizeable collection of corporate FB posts categorized according to industry, business topics, and language functions. For contextual analysis, the three parameters 'Field', 'Tenor' and 'Mode' based on the Hallidayan framework (Halliday and Hasan, 1985) were used, while the Language Analysis Framework for Writing (California Department of Education, 2015) was adopted for the analysis of language characteristics.

The findings revealed that a range of communication strategies, remarkably different from those in traditional business communication, were employed by corporates to boost FB traffic, achieve succinctness and innovation, and build brand images. The study is significant for vocational and professional education and training as it facilitates close reference to exemplary authentic language materials of the best global brands. The unique characteristics of social media, such as spontaneity, interactivity and openness, will also shed light on a new variety of topics, content and styles for vocational English training. The versatile nature of the social media also makes the study a good stepping stone for any further joint research on content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

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**Keywords:** Content and language integrated learning, curriculum innovation, FB, social media communication, vocational English

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Literature Review**

Many scholars have covered how the rise of social media platforms have impacted corporate communications. Tao et al. (2015) quote extensively from sources like Nielsen (2011), Grunig (2009), Barnes et al. (2012), Wright and Hinson (2012) to illustrate how FB and Twitter had 'revolutionised public relations practice'. Kim et al. (2014) also cited numerous studies Wigley and Zhang (2011), Kelleher and Miller (2006), Yang and Lim (2009), Kelleher and Miller (2006), Sweetser (2010) to prove how the growth of social media has 'dramatically reshaped the entire landscape of public relations'.

Lo's research (2015) demonstrates positive effects of integrating topics in content subjects into the English language curricula through a small-scale classroom project. Lam (2004) studies how social networking contributed to language socialisation and development of young immigrants in the US. Thorne (2009) and Hui-Ju Wu and Pai-Lu Wu (2011) offer positive evaluation, specifically, to blogging. However, little qualitative research has been done on the linguistic aspects and integrating corporate social media communication into local vocational English language programmes. Thus, the present study aims to fill this gap.

## **1.2 Methodology**

This study adopts a broad qualitative approach and focuses on FB for its access to the densest mass of 'netizens'. Tao et al. (2015) and Kim et al. (2014) acknowledge its immense popularity and versatility. As of the fourth quarter of 2017, FB had 1.4 billion daily active users and has become the most popular social network worldwide (Statista, 2017). It allows longer posts with more occurrences of communicative functions, examples of language devices and varieties of text modes. Entries are more enrichable with audio and/or visual features to promote longer and linguistically richer responses and comments to them. Further, its demographically diversified audience also promise less biased data.

Accompanying the qualitative study is a statistical analysis of a collection of 500 selected corporate FB threads in terms of language characteristics. To ensure a variety of business content and contexts, five from each of Interbrand's 'The 100 Best Global Brands Facebook' websites from January to April 2017 are covered to attain a total of 500 threads. Each thread includes the initial post, taglines, captions and all the webmaster's responses to users' comments.

The research has potential in reinventing vocational English programmes. For this purpose, the quality of the data is of paramount importance. A non-probability, purposeful sampling is adopted. For easy deployment, the 17 categories of Interbrand brands are grouped into the 6 common vocational training disciplines shown below.

**Table 1:** Brands Surveyed against Interbrand Categories and Vocational Training Disciplines

<b>Interbrand Category</b> (no. of brands surveyed)	<b>Vocational Training Discipline</b> ( <i>abbr.</i> )
a. Diversified (5), Energy (1)	Applied Science ( <i>AS</i> )
b. Business Services (3), Fast Moving Consumer Goods (9), Financial Services (12), Retail (3), Logistics (3)	Business Administration ( <i>BA</i> )
c. Apparel (3), Luxury (8)	Design ( <i>DE</i> )
d. Automotive (15), Electronics (4)	Engineering ( <i>EG</i> )
e. Alcohol (7), Beverages (4), Restaurants (3), Sporting Goods (2)	Hotel, Services & Tourism Studies ( <i>HT</i> )
f. Media (4), Technology (13)	Information Technology ( <i>IT</i> )

### 1.3 Data Analysis

The study yields 2 types of data, quantitative and qualitative.


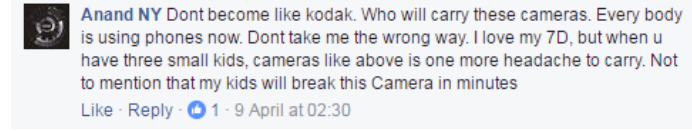
The purposes of corporates using social media communication have been covered in previous works such as Folger (2016) and Bruhn et al. (2012). Drawing on their findings and considering the organisation of common vocational English language modules in Hong Kong, the analysis of such data will be arranged under these four business topics:

- Building a reputation
- Marketing products and services
- Collecting market intelligence; and
- Managing crisis and problems

Each thread selected, including the initial post and the webmaster's responses to users' comments, is scanned for instances of major language characteristics in vocational English: a) language functions; b) grammar items, and c) style markers.

Qualitative data from a selection of posts or responses to comments are of significant value in materials development. A post or response to comment can be selected for a particular business topic of interest for a target learner population, for its innovative use of language that makes a familiar message look and sound unfamiliar and more worthy of reading, or for its rich collection of communicative functions and language features as an exemplar. A sample of the analysis is presented in **Table 2**.

**Table 2:** Sample Analysis of a FB Response

<p><b>Sample response to comment</b></p> <p>Business topic: handling crises</p> <p>Relevant discipline: ENG</p>	 
<p><b>Context analysis</b> (Hallidayan Framework)</p>	<p><b>Field:</b> responding to criticism about product  <b>Tenor:</b> webmaster ↔ customers/FB users  <b>Mode:</b> thanks, explanation, goodwill</p>
<p><b>Language analysis</b> (Framework for Writing – California Department of Education)</p>	<p><b>Content, knowledge and register:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• varied sentence length</li> <li>• friendly tone: greeting ‘Hi’ + first name greeting; use of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns</li> <li>• lots of goodwill, tact, subtlety and sensitivity             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expression of thanks and understanding to buffer explanation</li> <li>- very generalised statement with null subject ‘there’; a smiley for a friendly close</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Text Organisation and structure:</b> sandwich - from positive to negative to positive</p> <p><b>Grammatical structures:</b> complex sentence joined by interrogative conjunction ‘where’, antithetical conjunction ‘but’; relative pronoun ‘who’; null subject ‘there’</p> <p><b>Vocabulary:</b> pertaining to photography</p>

Qualitative data includes details of contexts and language characteristics. Threads are recorded in terms of three context parameters based on the Hallidayan framework (Halliday and Hasan, 1985), namely, field’ (what and where: the ongoing activity in the context); ‘tenor’ (who: the participants and their interrelations); and ‘mode’ (how: the channel). The framework facilitates the categorisation of social contextual variables of a huge body of texts without losing sight of characteristics like organisation and coherence.

For language characteristics, data collected will be broken down, according to the Language Analysis Framework for Writing (LAFW) (California Department of Education, 2015), into content, knowledge and register, text organisation and structure, grammatical structures, vocabulary and spelling and punctuation. Originally developed for curriculum and pedagogical uses, this framework well complements the Hallidayan framework for the present study.

## 2. Findings and Discussions

### 2.1 Content and Structure

#### 2.1.1 'Field'

The figures derived from Halliday analyses of the selected items reveal noticeable patterns of content across disciplines. Many companies in design, engineering and hospitality industries consider FB an effective marketing channel. A significant amount of the posts and responses collected (39.7%) are strictly relevant to a particular product (line) or service. Some are presented as third person descriptions without explicit persuasion for consumption, while others may include direct appeals which can be emotional or instrumental.

The 'subject matter' and 'ongoing activity' categories in the Halliday analysis generally yield similar results, although it provides more specific information. For example, items with the following 'subject matter' or 'ongoing activity' descriptions will be lumped together as 'building a reputation' in the quantitative analysis:

- Express goodwill and build up a reputation
- Build up a reputation of caring for the environment; persuade audience to take action
- Instruct audience ways to avoid online scams; build up a reputation of prudence

The time-bound nature and limited relevance of post content and lack of predictability of responses are salient characteristics of social media communication. 'Managing Crises and Problems' is an important business topic for many corporate users (34.7%), especially service-oriented companies. Customers want to take advantage of the open platform for enquiry, complaint redress, dispute resolution, or even provoke an argument. A combination of factual information and strong arguments conveyed in language that exhibits tact, subtlety and sensitivity is necessary. **Table 3** summarises their frequencies in the pool of data collected across different disciplines.

**Table 3:** Business Topics across Disciplines (Total no. of posts and responses to FB users' comments in italics)

Discipline	Building a Reputation	Marketing Products & Services	Collecting Market Intelligence	Managing Crises/Problems
<b>AS (84)</b>	53 (63.1%)	12 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	19 (22.6%)
<b>BA (451)</b>	139 (30.8%)	98 (21.7%)	2(0.4%)	212 (47.0%)
<b>DE (95)</b>	11 (11.6%)	61 (64.2%)	0 (0%)	23 (24.2%)
<b>ENG (297)</b>	38 (12.8%)	183 (61.6%)	1 (0.3%)	75 (25.3%)
<b>HST (218)</b>	66 (30.3%)	99 (45.4%)	4 (1.8%)	49 (22.5%)
<b>IT (214)</b>	34 (15.9%)	87 (40.7%)	0 (0%)	93 (43.5%)
<b>Total (1359)</b>	341 (25.1%)	540 (39.7%)	7 (0.5%)	471 (34.7%)

### 2.1.2 Structure

The LAFW consists of a separate element of 'text organisation and structure'. Given the uniqueness of the items selected for this analysis, it is not quite possible to generalise how they are organised. Listed below are some of the representative patterns:

- From personal interests to workplace
- From general topic to specific wh-details
- From near 'today' to far 'over the last two years' to future 'what's next'

The structure of the posts tends to vary a lot more than that of the responses to comments. This is quite logical given the fact that the content in a response message is bound by the incoming correspondence, i.e. the FB users' comment.

The sandwich structure popular in mainstream business writing is also found in some of the reply messages as revealed by the qualitative study:

- From personal to factual to personal
- From personal to discursive/argumentative to personal
- Goodwill – explanation – suggestion – goodwill

## 2.2 Language

Quantitative data regarding major language characteristics of corporate social media communication is tabulated in **Table 4**, with discussions in the sections that follow.

**Table 4:** Instances of Major Language Characteristics

	Common Vocational Training Disciplines						Total
	AS	BA	DE	EG	HT	IT	
<b>a) Language Function</b>							
Persuasion	88	340	68	266	219	190	1171
Instruction	34	296	55	94	65	106	650
Explanation	41	241	40	100	31	115	568
Description	31	148	43	108	44	150	524
Goodwill	14	157	8	85	75	54	393
Thanks	23	123	30	108	36	70	390
Request	16	122	17	62	66	50	333
Offer	12	126	7	59	24	41	269
Problem	12	91	4	43	39	37	226
Suggestion	24	51	11	61	29	10	186
Apology	8	79	4	22	12	29	154
Compliment	4	30	0	30	31	11	106
Evaluation	11	21	1	10	36	14	93
Emotion	4	34	1	27	16	3	85
Discussion	8	51	1	3	19	0	82
Narrative	5	14	11	12	3	9	54

	Common Vocational Training Disciplines						Total
	AS	BA	DE	EG	HT	IT	
Invitation	2	4	3	8	0	3	20
Preference	0	1	0	1	4	0	6
Direction	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>b) Grammar Item</b>							
Imperative	33	293	65	130	84	136	741
Connective	24	188	32	89	22	106	461
Conditional	11	97	9	30	24	48	219
Passive	9	67	17	32	13	21	159
Relative Clause	12	57	21	20	8	18	136
Participle Phrase	4	13	22	15	5	7	66
Sequence Marker	1	21	2	1	1	9	35
Reported Speech	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>c) Style Marker</b>							
Contraction	31	191	8	88	111	96	525
Hashtag/Emoticon/Visuals	28	80	14	94	62	42	320
Spoken Text	16	2	22	81	96	4	221
Incomplete Sentence	5	54	26	60	46	15	206
Tact, Subtlety & Sensitivity	8	96	6	25	26	16	177
Literary Device	4	9	7	11	76	5	112
Word Choice	0	4	6	0	13	1	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>3293</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>1884</b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>1567</b>	<b>9304</b>

### 2.2.1 Length of Posts and Comments

Internet users usually have divided attention. Writers have to cater for very short spans of concentration. Average length of selected posts varies from 27 words to 30 and from 25 to 45 in responses to FB users' comments across disciplines. Both posts and responses in HT are found to be slightly shorter than in other industries. Responses are found to be always longer than posts across disciplines, even more noticeably in the BA and DE industries.

### 2.2.2 Short Sentences

Succinctness in social media communication is achieved by composition of very short sentences that follow the simplest subject-verb (SV); subject-verb-object (SVO); or subject-verb-complement (SVC) patterns. For example:

'Leisure thrills.' (BMW)

'You can sing! You can dance! After all, this is the Beauty and the Beast' (Disney)

### 2.2.3 Incomplete Sentences

Succinctness can also be attained by omission of grammar words, leaving only important content/key words in the post, in incomplete sentences, like news headlines. Note that words that could be supplied to make these lines grammatically complete for comparison are italicised in the examples below.

'*(This is the)* Strongest-ever sales month!' (Mercedes Benz)

'*(I am / We are)* Glad *(that)* you like it, John!' (Ford)

As the examples illustrate, most of the omitted words fall on the close word classes, like pronouns, auxiliary, stative verbs, articles or prepositions. Meaning and sense are not weakened because the omissions can be inferred with intuition.

Some of the items, on the other hand, appear in catchy short phrases that are self-explanatory:

'Oversize silhouettes and asymmetric shapes.' (Burberry)



'[Anti-Resolution] No new friends. #MoetMoment #MoetImperial #MoetRose'  
(Moet & Chandon)

Bullet points and numbering are also common methods developers or webmasters employ to demonstrate good organisation and attain succinctness.

#### **2.2.4 Informal Language**

Many companies studied use direct and informal language when communicating with users in their FB. They address customers in causal ways in social media, often minimally with only the name of the user or even the generic 'there', like a phone call. Closing is almost optional, sometimes briefly with initials, occasionally just thank a user to signal finish.

#### **2.2.5 Personal Pronouns**

The use of first and second person pronouns suggests the presence of authorial voice and an identified audience, hence drawing a direct relation between the companies and the readers. Such a relation can be brought even closer with expressions of spontaneity and informality. Interjections and exclamations are direct and immediate expressions of feelings. Content developers may also use short forms in posts or responding to comments for economy or for an informal and immediacy effect.

#### **2.2.6 Pre/Postmodifiers**

As far as lexical and grammatical features go, a variety of sentence patterns are found with pre/postmodifications on simple SVO or SVC sentences, some straightforward and easy to identify (pre/postmodifiers italicised):

'*Regretfully*, these cards do have foreign transaction fees ...' (Citibank)  
'We look forward to seeing you *this May*.' (Jack Daniel)

#### **2.2.7 Imperatives**

The imperative is a popular language tool to urge action. With the hidden sentence subject 'you', closely relates the author to the reader and renders the persuasion more direct and immediate. To optimise impact, lines are usually very short, for instance, 'Sharing the things we love makes us happy. Love it. Show it. Let the world know it.' (Starbucks).

#### **2.2.8 Sequence Markers and the Passive**

The use of sequence markers in instructions and passive voice is not as regular and predictable. They are very often regarded as options rather than a rule. Writers tend to use the active voice to demonstrate intimacy when relating to (potential) customers. On the other hand, the passive can highlight the relative importance of the subject/agent of an action by postponing it to the end of the sentence to achieve end focus. It is also used to indicate third party opinion or convey objectivity. The passive verb phrase functions as a buffer and avoids upsetting the reader when pointing out problems or mistakes (passive verbs italicised):

'Updates *are* actually *pushed* out to customers by the various carriers, not the makers of the devices.' (Samsung)  
'We're sorry that you've *been misinformed* (by someone else), Ann Brant Cumbee. There is absolutely no truth to this circulating rumor, we do support our troops.' (Starbucks)

### 2.2.9 Visuals

The internet is highly visual. Making use of visuals is a very effective way to attract and retain attention. Many of the exemplary posts and responses present content in bullet points or individual sentences rather than paragraphs. Moreover, they make use of emoji's, symbols, pictures/albums and videos to express meaning, or they may include references/links to such external sources:

'Nice work Geoff 🐮 We'd love to share this with ...' (John Deere)  
'There's excitement in the air... 🎤🌟 Pixie Lott is backstage at ...' (Shell)  
'Shhhhh... just enjoy. 🌹❤️ Happy #Valentines Day!' (Coca cola)  
'A fairytale beginning! 🏰🌟' (Disney)

There are also cases of unconventional use of capitalisation, e.g. all caps or no caps, and creative use of space or punctuation (or a lack of), to arrest the attention of the users:

'This. Could. Be. The. Greatest. Holiday.' (Coca-Cola)  
'WE JUST LEAKED the future of business tech.' (Lenovo)

Deviant written forms, that is, sensational spellings, also give a different visual impression and attract attention. 'Am I right?' is spelt in a very informal way as 'amirite' in a post by CocaCola. Short forms such as ICYMI ('In case you miss it') and #TBT (Throwback Thursday), common abbreviations or short forms used in texting ('textspeak' or 'txtspeak') for economy, also find their way in:

'ICYMI #CrystalPepsi is back, but only for a limited time ...' (Pepsi)  
'ICYMI: Here's a quick look back at #LenovoCES ...' (Lenovo)  
'#TBT to the original Honda logo, when the dream began. #PowerOfDreams'  
(Honda)

### 2.2.10 Hashtags

Hashtags function as key words and enable easy online referencing. Content developers can relate their messages to the others with one or many related hashtags. To maximise traffic and exposure, they have to think of as many relevant hashtags as possible. For example:

'I spy with my GTI. #VWStreetStyle #VDubLove' (Volkswagen)  
'OK, 1st things first! #itallstarts #newyear #goodmorning2017#coffee' (Nescafé)

### 2.2.11 House Style

Some brands follow certain patterns or structures when composing materials and refer to glossaries of set phrases when responding to comments, after meticulous research into the preferences of customers. A distinctive house style can become an important part of the overall branding strategy of company. In the examples of ZARA below, the posts begin with a trademark noun phrase and are followed by a vertical bar "|" and further descriptions or reference source:

'**Real DENIM** | New woman editorial.'  
'**New this week** | frills, floral print, gingham, orange + pink.'  
'**Reworked white** | New TRF editorial now available <http://bit.ly/2o1AcFo>'

### 2.2.12 Innovative Use of Language

The unique constraints of social media give rise to some innovative and unconventional use of language, elevated by such literary devices as (sustained) metaphors or similes, rhyming, word play and so on.

- Alliteration: ‘Dashing through the snow while there’s still snow to dash through. #NewCountryman #AddStories’ (MINI)
- Rhyming: ‘Live wild, flower child: <http://hm.info/17sx3>’ (H&M)
- Idiomatic expression: ‘Keep calm, spring is on: <http://hm.info/17vjm>’ (H&M)
- Dramatisation: ‘Quick, someone call 911! Oh wait... Nevermind. #MyShot#NESCAFÉ#itallstarts.’ (Nescafé)
- Metaphoric expression: ‘We pour our hearts into crafting the finest for you.’ (Jack Daniel)
- Coining a new word: ‘Be YOU-tiful in floral!’ (H&M)

### 2.2.13 Tact, Subtlety and Sensitivity

Many writers manage to follow textbook approaches in writing, e.g. the sandwich approach of feedback, buffering of less preferable messages with goodwill, and concluding by an offer or more expressions of goodwill. The extensive use of tact, subtlety and sensitivity to avoid offending customers is commonplace in contemporary workplace communication. The LAFW provides details of exact strategies employed. The following is a list of some of them:

- sharing of stance for persuasion effect
- thanking and complimenting customer’s ‘passion’ and sharing of stance for persuasion effect
- thanking and showing understanding before apology
- emphasising understanding of customers’ feeling as a result of a difficult choice
- apology and clarifying chance to report incident without putting blame on customer
- distancing of error (contrast ‘you made a mistake / you got it wrong’)
- thanking loyalty, acknowledging idea, clarification – attributing rejection to policy constraints but not quality, encouraging close ‘all the best in your endeavors’

### 2.2.14 Other Language Characteristics

#### a. Complex Sentences

There is also an abundance of complex sentences formed with the complementiser ‘that’, as in ‘I understand *that* you’re having a problem with ...’ and ‘We are happy to hear *that* you’re interested in pursuing an opportunity ...’.

#### b. Questioning

Questioning is another common sentence pattern on company FB websites. Content developers may ask genuine questions to collect marketing intelligence, expecting responses to corresponding posts:

‘Do you know a woman who’s making the future a better place? Nominate her to be a 2017 Women of Worth for the chance to win ...’ (L’Oreal)

even though this happens much less often than rhetorical questions which are asked simply to stimulate readers’ interest to read:

‘Did you know? In the early 1980’s, all these brands were ...’ (Danone)  
‘Have you heard about microfiber pollution? It happens when ...’ (AXA)

These rhetorical questions can be incomplete sentences. In the examples below, the missing components are italicised for reference:

‘*(Do you)* Need a hand? Send us a private message and ...’ (Citibank)  
‘*(Is it//this)* A flying truck? (Or is it/this) A turbo-charged jet? With modular builds you can combine ...’ (LEGO)

Some rhetorical questions are in the form of suggestions or subtle persuasion taking the sentence structure of the interrogative.

‘Have you considered upgrading?’ (Ford)  
‘When are you going to stop by for a Big Mac?’ (McDonald)

### c. Value-laden Adjectives

A lot of persuasion in corporate social media takes the form of promoting product or service benefits, advantages or features. This is often achieved by the use of value-laden adjectives or descriptions.

‘*Compact. Sporty. Affordable.* Introducing the 2017 Nissan Rogue Sport, designed for ...’ (Nissan)  
‘This is the *thinnest, lightest*, and one of the *most powerful* PCs we’ve ever made.’ (Samsung)

### d. Numbers

Numbers also stand out in texts and make a post more attractive:

‘One master challenge, two expert caddies – UPS has Lee Westwood covered!’ (UPS)  
‘Do the math: take your average inner-city – let’s say Frankfurt. Subtract 2 delivery vans from the road, add 2 Cubicycles, and what do you get? 16 tons less CO2 each year – and better last-mile service, because ...’ (DHL)

### e. Virtual Events

Participation is key to success in social media. Traffic in social media websites is also a valuable marketing asset. Many of the 100 brands seek to boost their FB traffic by holding virtual events and making offers to invite participation:

‘Do you know what makes Green Label unlike any other Johnnie Walker blend? Message us and test your whisky knowledge.’ (Johnnie Walker)  
‘All hail the king! Do you have a Road King Special? Post it up below in the comments for the chance to be featured.’ (Harley-Davidson)

## 3. Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings discussed well characterise the interactional and conversational nature of this new type of online written discourse for business communication and its important implications and application for vocational English training. This paper aims to introduce an innovation in language pedagogy, making use of social media materials in developing vocational English learning materials. For

this purpose, the data selection is non-probability, purposeful sampling. In fact, it is biased towards quality.

A lot has been written to explain the benefits of social media in language learning. The strengths of immediacy and soaring popularity of the platforms, combined with relevance of material and variety of language styles render it one of the best contexts for computer-mediated language assessments (CMLA). The absence of discipline boundaries in social media also means an excellent backdrop for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

Not all companies are equally active in social media. Some may post more frequently, and respond in greater lengths. Some industries may not really need presence there, or can survive or even thrive without it. True. Of the 100 companies surveyed, one of them, indeed, has not made any footprint in any social media until quite recently. Apple Inc actually has joined the rest of the 99. They cannot ignore it. Who else could?

The vast majority of businesses in Hong Kong are small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Should they worry about communicating with customers (B2C) or other businesses (B2B) digitally? Given the prevalence of e-commerce and use of big data, there is more evidence to suggest they should. And in English? With the revival of the US and European economies, and the unprecedented business opportunities brought about by the Belt & Road initiatives, yes. Hongkong companies, large and small, may use digital social networks to promote their products or services to niche markets, or simply tell potential customers about their presence. Provided right training, content developers or marketing personnel can formulate communication strategies and express ideas more eloquently.

#### **4. Recommendations**

The research has revealed tremendous potentials social media have to offer to language pedagogy in terms of the innovations in topics and language use, market value in workplace communication and as an effective motivator in language learning. To tap these potentialities, a dossier has been drafted to illustrate how this idea could work out: a Curriculum Guide, a Handbook of Effective Corporate Social Media Communication, a Language Supplement for Corporate Social Media Communication, and planning materials for a try-out programme. Given the importance of the topic 'Managing Crises and Problems', it is recommended that corresponding skills be covered in social media communication training materials. A careful combination of 'traditional' text types and new media materials is indispensable so that learners will have enough exposure to the salient characteristics of these very different if not conflicting writing styles. A pilot study of the effectiveness of using closed social media groups to enhance English language learning is proposed. Some of the corporate social media strategies to promote participation identified can also be experimented.

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