Reflection:

Thinking back about the design process for the midterm and further modification of it into my final project, the biggest problem is actually my biggest “selling point” or, say, the most important and unique feature of my website: the concept of the combination of social media functions and language learning platform. When doing midterm project, I thought more about the design part: how to realize each function I want to incorporate into the website and how to present them in a beautiful way. From the surface, it looks good; however, I ignored the integration of two “platforms”: the social component and learning component. Fortunately, after discussion with the lecturer and teaching assistant, I got so many insightful suggestions. The most urgent point to focus on is to make tight connection between learning and social functions.

To solve this problem and further develop the website focusing on its core function, I re-designed the whole structure and created another set of wireframes. To directly present our users the unique social component, I replace the main homepage with the “showcase” of how the social networking components actually works in the website, mainly with videos and text/photo-based posts so that the functions of the website will be more direct and straightforward. To better link the learning component, I add more explicit “affordance” to guide the users to go from “blogging” to “learning”, such as the “plus icon” to add the new words into the personal dictionary; the pop-up windows to give users options to start to blog or learn first. Meanwhile, in each of the learning page, social media element is also being integrated, especially the pop-up windows when finishing one lesson. With this new structure, users always have the option to switch seamlessly between learning and blogging, and the two functions are not separate anymore as before.

Overall, the re-thinking, re-design and reflection are very worthy parts, helping me to think deep and further about the design, the goal and the structure of the website. There is always room to improve and modify. I do realize the importance of having and sticking to the clear goal and objective of the project. This experience really helps with my future project design, especially the final master project next year.