This article begins with the somewhat descriptive analysis of a Martian stumbling upon Earth and reporting their findings. After the science fiction beginning, the authors describe the meaning of language, and then describe the features and characteristics necessary for a creature to communicate through language. Overall, the article is about the evolution of language in humans with a point that more interdisciplinary work must be done this field.

One key point of the article was the distinction between the Faculty of language in the broad sense (FLB) and in the narrow sense (FLN). A significant part of the article was dedicated to the definition and explanation of these two terms. Furthermore, a substantial part of the article mentions past work in language and communication between animals.

An interesting point in the article is the evolution of language in animals and humans. The figure, the system of imitation in the animal kingdom, was interesting because it showed that dolphins and songbirds have evolved exceptional abilities to replicate the language used by their parents. However, our ancestral family apes and monkeys are comparatively very poor in the matter. It seems odd how humans were able to develop such complex language patterns and replication techniques, and apes are so far behind.
The overall theme of the article is repeated in the conclusion when Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch reiterate that more empirical and comparative studies are required in this field. I would be excited to read more interdisciplinary stuff on the evolution of language and communication in humans and other species.

**Social Catalysts: enhancing communication in mediated spaces by Karrie Karahalios**

This article describes methods to create audio-video connections between two geographically remote spaces so that people can socially and casually interact. The beginning of the article goes over the problems that currently exist audio-video links. Furthermore, the article proposes site-specific designs that would be able to complement these spaces both aesthetically and socially. The idea behind these designs is to develop a social catalyst – an intelligent social interface that will serve as a catalyst between people to create and foster new interactions. Strangers will spark up conversations because of this catalyst that has created a shared experience, interest or any conversation topic between the two.

Furthermore, the paper goes beyond designing a large interactive wall with audio and visual stimulus. An example of the forward thinking interactions is *Telemural.* People in the local space are displayed as orange silhouettes. Those in the remote space are displayed as red silhouettes. When both these people interact or overlap, the space is colored yellow. This method ensures privacy, but enables more interaction. It also mitigates the effects of slight audio and video technical faults and offset eye gaze – people need not know where a person is looking, just that someone is there.
The interactive technology developed by Telemurals is very interesting. It created a technology that not only created interested, but also maintained it by rewarding people for longer interactions with the remote space. I found it fascinating that as people stay in the space longer, and keep communicating, they are able to view more and more of their remote partner.

**Primates on Facebook**

*The Economist*

This article really sparked interest since I interact on Facebook almost everyday. I currently have slightly over 1000 friends on the social networking site. Throughout the article I kept applying the conclusions that were being made about people with certain amount of friends. I found them to be true on certain instances, but not all. For example, the article mentioned that Men with social networks of 500 leave comments for 17 friends, and communicate (two-way communication) for ten. I have many male friends with such large networks who communicate with so many people daily. However, I also have male friends with networks below 200 who communicate with over 15 people daily, by either leaving comments or wall posts. However, these people may be simply above or below the average.

Regarding my Facebook activity, I don’t really leave comments or wall posts too often. However, I do communicate with approximately ten people daily usually via instant messaging chat. Therefore, I think it really depends the way you like to use Facebook. I don’t think that comments or communication can be quantified and averaged
over all the Facebook users. Everyone uses the platform for a different means to achieve a different end.

Furthermore, I was surprised that Women are more active on Facebook than Men. Through my experience I have noticed in fact that Men are more active. However, after considering the behavior of my female friends online, I can see that they indeed are.

The last paragraph of the article was really thought-provoking. I have often had the same thoughts that Facebook was merely a place for people to “show-off”. A Facebook profile has become a platform of display, which allows one-way interaction, similar to an exhibit, between people whom they may never converse or interact with face-to-face. However, people will always have a smaller inner circle of friends, their core social group.

**Facebook Data Team’s Notes**

**Maintained Relationships on Facebook**

The article basically analyzes whether Facebook is increasing the size of people’s personal networks. The Facebook data team attempts to answer this question by presenting a series of graphs and written data. They discuss that people on Facebook usually only have a core group of friends that is relatively small. Then, the amount of people they interact with on a daily basis, in terms of postings and comments is about double that size. An interesting fact that the article mentions is that the average person on Facebook has about 120 friends. This makes sense because Facebook has only been around for 5 years and not everyone has used it, or has gotten used to it. Furthermore, the article mentioned that the number of people that an American can discuss important matters with is only three. This number, as low as it is, has actually dropped over the past 10 years. Throughout my friend group, I found this number to be quite low. I would say
that my number is probably a bit higher. However, it would make sense that the number has been decreasing over time, especially in metropolitan cities where people’s daily actions are increasingly relying on automated and computer actions.

Facebook allows people to maintain relationships through a much less taxing medium. It allows people to keep in contact and up-to-date with each other’s lives without ever meeting face-to-face. This is regarded as the Facebook Experience. As the Economist Article pointed out, it is interesting to note the effect this experience has on the breadth of people’s network. Obviously, it would make it easier and quicker to communicate with more people. However, it also allows you ‘keep an eye’ on many more people as well, increasing your knowledge of specific people – passively engaging. The article, supported by a graph, indicates that a Facebook user passively engages with 2 and 2.5 times more than the amount of people they actively engage with.