

WikiLingua.ie: Towards using Web 2.0 Technologies in Language Learning and Teaching

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Abstract

Recent years have seen a trend towards the increasing use of Web 2.0 elements in education. Unlike traditional Web 1.0 technologies, these so-called social web applications, e.g. social networks, podcasts, blogs and wikis offer more extensive, outcome-oriented possibilities for communicative language learning. Due to their participatory and interactive potential, they do not only foster the students' receptive language skills, but also their productive language skills as well as offering new opportunities for intercultural learning.

Based on these assumptions and our own teaching experiences, the WikiLingua project¹ sets out to build an international wiki platform for language teachers, to promote the use of Web 2.0 technologies in language teaching and learning and to provide a forum for collaboration and exchange. In the initial phase of the project, a survey was conducted among 254 language students and 34 third-level language teachers in Ireland. As its main result it shows that, though most teachers use ICT for teaching, they do so mainly for receptive learning aims, as opposed to enhancing the students' productive language skills. Correspondingly, while students use some Web 2.0 applications actively in their pastime, most of them do not relate them to effective language learning.

A first version of the platform is accessible at <http://www.wikilingua.ie>. While WikiLingua is currently still work in progress, it will eventually host material in five different sections: (i) Targeting teachers with little or no experience in Web 2.0, we introduce the basic terminology, essential elements and their potential for language teaching. (ii) We include step-by-step instructions on setting up blogs and wikis, obtaining accounts in social networks or finding and producing podcasts. (iii) Another section provides ideas for the application of Web 2.0 elements in the classroom, supported by real-life experiences gathered at NUIG. (iv) WikiLingua will further include a forum for the exchange of experiences and for establishing collaborative class projects. (v) Finally, there will be a section with annotated link lists for teaching projects and materials.

In our paper, we will present the results of our survey in more detail, and give an introduction to the WikiLingua platform and its collaborative potential.

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