

SpeakApps: Developing Oral Production and Interaction Online

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Abstract

In this paper we describe a platform designed to provide online tools for the development of foreign language oral skills online. This platform is funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, KA2 Languages. The three main tools developed are LANGblog, an audioblog that allows you to easily record your interventions online, a Videoconferencing tool with an integrated recorder and archiving system which facilitates easy access to recorded conversations by both teachers and students, and the Tandem tool which is a content manager for synchronous online tasks facilitating the administration of complementary materials to students as they interact in order to complete a task (from spot the difference tasks to more complex exchange of information tasks). The platform has two distinct areas: 1) a social network space for language teachers where they can exchange ideas, avail of training, guides and materials, and 2) Moodle classrooms where the tools above mentioned are available. Teachers who wish to try out the platform with their students can apply for a Moodle classroom where they can bring their student during a semester, sign up for training in the use of the tools and teaching of oral skills online and use the guides and materials available in the Speakapps library.

In this paper we describe the cycles of development of the different tools and the materials pedagogically appropriate for each of these tools. This development is based on a user requirements and learner needs survey administered in 5 different countries (Spain, Ireland, Finland, The Netherlands and Poland) and a series of pilot studies using the Common European Framework of Reference descriptors for oral interaction and production as their departure point. The results of the surveys will be discussed and preliminary results from pilot studies will be presented.