



On-line Collaborative Learning Communities for LEARNING foreign Languages and Cultures: A Case Study in Greeks Learning Italian as a Foreign Language in Academic Setting

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The aim of this article is the description of a pilot research study conducted in the faculty of the Italian Language and Literature at the University of Athens, in order to assess the impact of Web2.0 technologies, and in particular the wiki environments, in teaching a foreign language and its culture.

Internet offers technologies and means for creating an efficient and collaborative learning environment for on-line lessons. Second language acquisition research has shown that collaboration facilitates language acquisition [1] and related cognitive development [2]. In addition, it changes the structure of communication and social relationships developed in the classroom framework [3]. Moreover, it allows authentic experience in learning environments [4], and development of students' responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, we have noticed a positive effect in writing (advanced complexity in sentence structure) and an encouragement for enhanced production and effective linguistic feedback, via collaboration writing [5].

Web 2.0 applications have the dynamic to set up on-line collaborative learning communities. On the other hand, the wikis environments- the on-line cooperative implements of writing- can promise increased on-line learning, by involving the trainees in a co-creator role with the content and the structure of various lessons.

Our pilot research was conducted on first-year Greek students, via web chosen activities. These were based on the learning theories of constructivism, creative writing and multiple intelligence. Our preliminary results of the academic year 2011-2012 support fully the usefulness of the on-line collaborative environments in the courses of the foreign language and culture learning. Furthermore, these results will be evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively in regard to similar research, which was carried out in the academic year 2010-2011 at the same institution [6].