THE INTERNET AND AUTONOMOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING:
A TYPOLOGY OF SUGGESTED AIDS

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ABSTRACT
As leading languages spoken all over the world, a number of learning and teaching sites or pages on the Internet specifically concerning the teaching of English, French, German and Spanish are available. A review of these sites shows that they have low standards as opposed to language teaching CD-ROMs. Generally speaking, affected largely from the structural approach, these sites present structural exercises while employing very few possibilities expected from the vast possibilities of the Internet. In the absence of satisfactory explanations in relation to previously determined objectives and direction towards other sites, the students are not only misdirected but also exposed to trouble some self-measurement processes. Knowing that the Internet contributes to learning autonomy and remote learning, the present study examines the extent of suggested helps for autonomous consultation
Keywords: Learning and teaching sites, autonomous consultation and suggested helps

INTODUCTION
The Internet has a major potential in language teaching and learning. In today's world, there is a number of teaching sites or pages on the Internet which have been categorized according to the teaching of language domains (vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, etc.) or language skills (listening, reading and writing). Apart from this categorization, there are also sites related to the course books and methods. These sites or pages present, as opposed to language learning software found off-line such like CD-ROMs, a huge diversity from technical characteristics to rich content (e.g. number of subjects). Thus, it is hardly impossible to give a single typology of these learning sites, clearly categorizing the many aspects of these sites.

Moreover, as reported by Martel (1998:142), the idea to learn on the web has still largely been intuitive. It recommends, confirms and is deepened by the tendencies that foreign language learning area has been integrated during the last twenty years. On the other hand, a certain number of pedagogical benefits of the Internet in the context of foreign language learning are recognized by many authors. Cord-Mounoury (1999:49) offers the following typology which is based on the activities proposed on the Internet:

-*Communication*: project of correspondence, distant pedagogical framing, research of givens on the Internet community, virtual meeting, role-play…;
-*Documentation*: documentary research assisted or not, providing readers with resources in use…;
-*Publishing* (personal or collective) of documents found on the Internet or without preliminary existence on the Net…;
-*Collaborative study*: competition, play collective, writing interactive, simulation, tele-presence...;
-*Individual study*: on-line pedagogical products, virtual campus....

The same author, in one of his published articles on the electronic journal **ALSIC** (2000:239), makes a census of three big types of resources concerning language learning on the Net:
1. *Resources related to institutions* (organisms and formation centres, associations of teachers, editors, etc).
 2. *Documentary resources* (on-line dictionaries, the media, bibliographies, lists of hypertextual links, documents for teachers, etc).
3. *Resources conceived for learning* (interactive exercises, complement of course books, pedagogical activities for groups, sites dedicated to correspondence, etc).

Lancien (1998a) enumerates all proposals about language learning through the Internet in five significant domains:
1. *General sites for public use:* sites that aren't elaborated for an objective to learn, for example, the site of the British Library: http://portico.bl.uk ;
2. *Resources for the general public accompanied by an environment of learning*: the example of TV5, established for a goal of spreading the French language: http://www.tv5.org ;
3. *Linguistic and cultural issues*: http://iteslj.org/links

4. *Specific environments for teaching and learning*: sites which have been conceived only for learning and teaching, for instance, the site *My English*: http://myenglishdiary.com ;

5. *Language exchange between students with the online tandem*: This is a case of *Network Tandem International*, conceived in 1999 with the frame of the project called *Lingua of the European Community*. In fact, this project is the outcome of the collaboration of European universities so that the students can learn a foreign language by corresponding on the Net: http://tandem.uni-trier.de/Tandem/email/idxfra00.html.

As we have seen, all of the typologies above seem different in terms of both structures (form) and contents. Through this diversity of typologies, by especially taking into account the parts of "activities" and "courses" planned directly for language learning, we offer the following simple classification based on both the language skills and areas such as vocabulary, grammar and phonetics:

-The sites designed for the purpose of language skills: Reading, writing and listening, where as the Internet does not provide much for the development of speaking skill.

-As for other language components; the Internet presents a huge body of sites concerning learning of grammar, phonetics, vocabulary, culture and civilization.

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF LEARNING SITES

Concerning the structure of all these sites, it can be said that they are given more or less in the same structure similar to off-line language learning software, most of whose contain a basic document, generally a videogram, with which the activities are carried out. However, most of these learning sites, as opposed to such software, do not contain a basic document and, with the exception of certain simulations and the "open answer questions" these presented only with auto-corrective exercises, such as multiple choices questions, true or false items and fill in the blanks.

It must be stated that almost all of these learning sites lack the reflections of pedagogical scenarios and learning theories. Neither the objectives nor the levels and the target audience are not indicated.

Moreover, as stated by Lancien (1998), activities and courses available on the Internet are often presented in a very far-fetched way. That is to say, in a majority of these sites, a learning unit does not match with the objectives of the overall content. Thus, it can be said that, the logic that rules these sites views that it is sufficient for them to place such materials to teach a language via the official existence of the most modern educational tool; the Internet. In summary, these sites do not include all opportunities that the internet provides, and the pedagogical approach is reduced to answering structural exercises stemming from behaviorism which ends in affirmative or negative feed-back following the exercise (Kartal, 2004).

THE INTERNET AND LEARNER AUTONOMY[1]

One of the arguments, in addition to interactivity, frequently put forward by marketers of language learning/teaching software (CD-ROMs), is that these tools provide learning autonomy (Chevalier and Perrin, 1997). Moreover, Sanz and Villanueva (2002:66) report that during the last twenty years the autonomy of the learner has became a key-concept in the domain of education in general and in language learning in specific. Similarly, today the orientations of the European Council for teaching and learning foreign languages emphasize the importance of developing the capacity to guide learning autonomously. This necessitates a specific formation to emphasize that it is important to "learn how to learn" (Riley, Bailly and Gremmo, 1996, cited in Sanz and Villanueava).

In this study, we will not focus on the concept of autonomy which is located on the margins of pedagogy, psychology, and sociology. As Rogers (1973) points out the true learning is what a person discovers and appropriates all by himself. Hence, he invites audiences to criticize the traditional approach on the basis of its being transmissive. It is sure that learner autonomy isn't a contemporary subject. As Demaizière (2000) points out, this concept, developed as opposed to the classical education in all aspects, was recuperated, absorbed, and diluted especially by the technological currents of the last century. In fact, learner autonomous has been a matter of centuries whose roots can be found in the meiotic of Socrates. Furthermore, Montaigne and Rousseau emphasize the importance of an individual

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[1] We would like to indicate that along this study, by the term autonomy, we always intend a complete autonomy which is released outside of an institution otherwise there is also the concept of semi-autonomy released at an educational institution under the surveillance of tutor.

education and discovery of fundamental notions of the child by himself. On the other hand, as opposed to behaviorism of B.F. Skinner, Piaget opens the era of cognitivism with his theory of constructivism that can be formulated as "teaching how to learn".

From a perspective of language teaching, Mangenot (1994) distinguishes four kinds of autonomy:

1. *Physical autonomy:* possibility for the student to learn by following other models rather than the classical "teacher –learner" interactional pattern;

2. *Social autonomy**:* learning in interaction with in a group;

3. *Linguistic autonomy:* learning the language in order to make something else with it;

4. *Cognitive autonomy*: learning how to learn by-self.

It is sure that all of these forms of autonomy aren't naturally antagonistic. Moreover it could be seen that the same activity could sometimes imply some of these types together.

Among these four categories, the first item emphasizes the idea of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) or more specifically using the Internet for learning and teaching purposes. Thus, we have to indicate that what is concerned here is the minimal definition of autonomy. This is, student studies without the presence of a teacher, or at least, following a model of interaction that isn't a product of a "student-teacher" interaction.

Physical autonomy is the area to which computers contribute most as far as the learning process is concerned with the strong assumption that computers are beneficial for autonomous learning (Derville and Perrin, 1998; Mangenot, 1997:120). Mangenot (1994) further asserts that the following points show the importance of computers in autonomous learning:

-the time in the service of the language classroom is multiplied by the number of computers: instead of an interaction between the teacher and four or five active students of a classroom, it could be X interactions;

-computer permits students to study parallel to their rhythms, independent from the others, all being active by means of solicitations of the machine;

-without any doubt, because of re-dramatization of error (constructive feed-back) and modification of the relationship of teacher-student interaction, it is often observed a great motivation;

-different styles of learning are respected;

-in the case of free access without the presence of the teacher, the students do not feel the pressure of time, and may offer themselves supplementary hours.

After we have laid out the relation between autonomy and computing, we can now focus on the matter how the Internet can contribute to autonomous language learning and what the qualities of such contribution are.

From the moment when huge resources, especially, on the Web became more and more a part of the daily environment of a learner, just like as the other media in foreign language (exactly the radio and television), it seems probably that the learner, being a novice or proficient, could wish profit the offers of this virtual world. Thus, an autonomous consultation without pedagogical aids over the Internet should essentially be dictated according to the personal interests of the learners. For that reason, as Lancien (1998b:99) underlines also, we have to consider the aids which will be proposed for an autonomous consultation in the context of learning.

As reported above, we would like to present the typology of these aids and discuss if they can be used within the potentials of the Internet or not. Such a question is important because if they work well, along with necessary aids per se, they will clearly help the learners in their journey to individual learning. Generally, in the learning sites, two types of aids can be proposed to a learner in his autonomous learning (see ***Table 1***). These are:
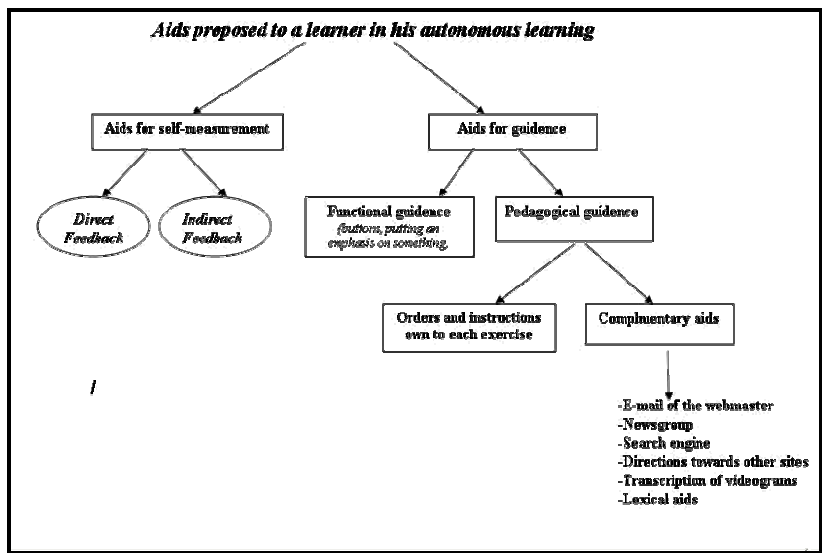
Table 1: A typology of suggested aids

-Aids for self-measurement (individual assessment or auto-evaluation): these are the direct or indirect feedbacks. Here we have to indicate that because of type of activities (as we have seen nearly all of them are "one answer question", that is the meaning that they authorize only one correct response or impose a choice between the responses given) these kind of sites generally propose a direct feedback;

-Aids for guidance: Bastien, Leulier and Scapin (1998:121) clarify that "guidance" means "the unity of means implemented in order to advise, orientate, inform and lead the learner at the time (instant) of his interactions with computer, included lexical aids". Cord-Maunoury (2000:249-250) categorizes this concept under two headings:

1. Functional guidance: this is the unity of components dependent on the functionality of the site such as buttons, putting an emphasis on something, colors, etc, which help to orientate the learner in his course and mark out himself in the site.

2. Pedagogical guidance: this is the unity of components provided by designers (learners and computer scientists), which guide the learner in his study and lead his reflections over the contents. This type of guidance is generally provided by:

-orders and instructions own to each exercise: these instructions are generally short and clear which points out what the learner have to do such as "choose the best answer(s), fill in the blanks, etc. Interactivity is executed by the navigation and the execution of the instruction and orders such as "notch, choose or find the best response".

- and **complementary aids**: these are the background components which are able to help the learner in his autonomous study. At this time, these components present themselves by outside of the context and conforming to particularities of the Internet under the forms of e-mail of the webmaster, newsgroup, search engine, direction towards other sites, etc. Additionally, it is possible to speak of transcription of vidiograms, and lexical aids. The latter item is generally seen as directing learners through related links to electronic dictionaries on such web sites.

As we notice, the suggested aids which are able to help learner in his autonomous study are limited to the general functions of the Internet and no other proposed supplementaries. There for, if we take the general structure of these learning sites into account, that is to say, the lack of structure (incoherent rubric) and clear indications over the pedagogical presuppositions such as objectives, level, target audience, and also direction towards other sites could disorient the learner in his auto-learning. Hence, a tutorial aid proves to be necessary.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
Formerly a tool in service of militaries and university researchers, the Internet today opens through different applications such as communication, information, commerce (marketing) and education. It can not be thought that the foreign language learning domain, which has been in a tendency since the last twenty years to be led deliberately toward an individual learning by encouragement of the economic environments concerned, isn't indifferent to such an innovation.

On the other hand, as we notified from the structures and contents of the sites presented on the web, the actual learning approaches are more or less intuitive and correspond to the classical structural approach of the behaviorism. However, such approaches do not go on with today's language learning strategies which intend to learn a foreign langue cognitively, pragmatically and through interaction.

The Internet makes part of the daily life only because it shows all the particularities of mass media and more. So, the profit of the learner from this tool himself is inevitable. However, as we mentioned above, the structure of the sites and the nature and the extent of the provided aids do not permit the learner for an autonomous study and consultation. In any case, he needs an aid tutorial.

Consequently, the speed of access to the Internet increases day by day and it reaches each office and house more and more. Today's world where the distance and autonomous learning gain importance, we, as institutions and language teachers, by using optimally the sources and functions of this "terra incognita", have to design neatly the learning sites with clear indications and objectives, and also insert much more supplementary aids which will help learners who aim to learn one or more foreign or second language in autonomy.

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