YOUTUBE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: WHAT GENERATION WEB 2.0 WANT

Denitza Charkova, Kirina Boykova, Vanya Ivanova

Abstract. This article examines the application of Cloud technologies in foreign language acquisition as an innovative and exciting Web 2.0 tool to boost class interactivity in higher education practices. We take a closer look at the availabilities of YouTube which allow students to delve into the digital world and become both active participants in their own education and vloggers dwelling in a world-famous video sharing platform. More specifically, we examine the incorporation of YouTube tutorials as a part of the curriculum of an intensive language course called *English for ICT: Lifelong Writing in the Cloud* [2].

Key words: Web 2.0, YouTube, Cloud-based learning, YouTube ShowRoom

1. Introduction

“If you are using a computer in 2010, chances are you’re in the Cloud” [6]. Gilmore is right, in the sense that most of the widely spread online applications such as Google’s Gmail, Yahoo, social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, the famous Wikipedia, as well as the multifaceted interactive video sharing website YouTube (property of Google since 2006) are only a minute part of the vast availabilities of Web 2.0 technologies today. Gilmore also defines the Cloud in more technical terms: “Cloud computing is a style of computing in which dynamically scalable and often virtualized resources are provided as a service over the Internet” [6]. It is exactly the easy access, interactivity and student engagement in Cloud services which make it so attractive, not only to businesses, but also for education. It becomes a powerful device for communicating and sharing information. The Cloud, in focus, is available anytime, anyplace and is free of charge. For the

sake of clarity, this paper will relate the term *Cloud* to a few of Google's Apps, utilized in this methodology and research of this paper. They include *Google Forms*, *Google Sites* and *YouTube*.

Figure 1. Web 2.0 availabilities used in the methodology of this study

The Cloud is a multilayer platform for performing personal and professional activities, while in the same time pushing online education towards developing its full potential. The opportunities which the Cloud offers are numerous, as it cultivates social, language, computer, web and soft skills simultaneously. "Although the term cloud computing is a metaphor for technologies that allow people to access computing services and to share data over the Internet, the growing impact of this technology on teaching and learning is anything but metaphorical" [3]. In this sense, Denton is right since the Cloud's potential provides much more for both students and teachers today. We have to adapt to the changing digital environment which is omnipresent in our realty. Following these new predispositions, we see that educational systems all over the globe should focus more on incorporating ICT, to make the learning process more interactive, engaging and useful for students [13].

Web 2.0 has provoked a lot of debate since its first grand appearance in the title of "Web 2.0 Conference", also known as "Web 2.0 Summit" in October 2004. Thus, the grand debate around the essence and evolution of the web phenomenon is born, bringing forward the rise of a new era of digitalization, which will forever change the role of the user. Even though the term was used for the first time in 1999 by Darcy DiNicci, it is Tim O'Reilly that is best known for fathering and popularizing the term [4, 8, 10].

A brief historical overview clearly defines three generations of Internet. Today in literature and practice they are commonly known as Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0. Each of them is marked by specificities of use and levels interactivity. Despite the fact that these generations develop and flourish at different time periods, every previous generation is not deleted by the new one. Each subsequent generation builds upon the previous. "Relating the generations of the Web with generations of e-Learning, if Web 1.0 is the read-only web and Web 2.0 is the read/write web, then Web 3.0 is the read/write/collaborate web. E-Learning 1.0 is about providing the learner information access, whereas e-Learning 2.0 in addition to all e-Learning 1.0 capabilities provides authoring and interacting capabilities to the learner.

Furthermore, e-Learning 3.0 enabled and enriched with Web 3.0 technologies will promote intelligently collaborative, rich 3D virtual learning environments" [8].

The first internet generation is known as Web 1.0 and allows users to simply view pages. It is usually referred to as the read-only Web [8]. During the reign of this generation web pages serve basic purposes. This experience resembles a visit to the library, since it is a passive form of knowledge accumulation mainly through reading. Information is restricted from the point of user interest, since the people who create content for the web, publish only what they want others to read. There is no contact between creators and users of online content [8]. One stark characteristic is the one-sidedness of communication in Web 1.0. There is no possibility to comment or contact the author unless contact information is provided. There is still a clear distinction between authors and readers of web content. This generation Internet is void of feedback and discourse, a trait which the future generations retain.

With the birth of Web 2.0 new perspectives for communication open to the generic user. Today he/she is not just a passive receiver of information, but it is the individual who models and transforms online content. "Web 2.0 is here. Internet users are not only finding information on the Internet; they are also creating and uploading content" [14]. Today we have unique digital instruments which help us become devoted users of social media. We author blogs, host websites, publish news, and even more fashionable – film vlogs, and even write our own Apps. Because of the links that Web 2.0 creates between users, a few authors characterize this generation of Internet with *openness*, *active participation* and *dynamic involvement*. It is based on exchange of knowledge, information and know how; cooperation and creation of personal content is central [14]. Today, digital natives, [11] the tech savvy generation, are not only in control of the influx of information content, but they themselves create and upload their own on the Internet. In this sense, Brown and Adler have a point when they defend the position that Web 2.0 technologies have washed away the clearly defined lines between the creators and the users of information on the Internet [1]. Users and content creators are closer than ever and thanks to the exchange of information and the omnipresence of social networks. Web 2.0 availabilities have become an integral part of our everyday habits, as they have already taken a central part in modern education. The biggest boom of this new generation of Internet came to be with the popularization of social networks. Examples of Web. 20 are: YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Wikis, Pinterest, Craigslist, Amazon, eBay, Flickr, Evernote and many more. Some of the general characteristics are: 1) *active participation and integration*, 2) *generic user creates online content*, 3) *social bookmarking and tagging, and* 4) *rich user experience.*

Still, technologies remain and instrument to serve contemporary education, not something that must trigger the change [8].

Even in their infancy, Web 3.0 technologies are developing at high speed. According to Hussain, "Web 2.0 has given rise to silos of data being generated by social networking and there will be a need to enable the utilization of this data" [8]. According to Miranda et al., Web 3.0 is the next generation which comes with new standards, in order to address the limitations and imperfections of Web 2.0. It appears exactly in a time when because of the data burst occurring everywhere on social media a need for a systematic and smart web had appeared. Web 2.0 allows everybody to become active, but that least to an information flow, thus creating the necessity for a semantic system to systematically archive all the data out there. The only way out is such a smart system, which is a practical solution in our dynamic digital environment. The new phenomenon is based on fundamental principles: *collaborative filtering*, *cloud computing*, *big data management* and *mobility*. The main idea is to have an intelligent Internet so that users will be able to faster and more effectively find the necessary information [9] Web 3.0 is not based on documents, as was the first generation web. To the contrary, it is based on data. Below (Table 1) is a systematic representation of the generations of web compared in view of technologies and e-Learning.

	Web		**e-Learning**	
Generation	**Concept**	**Technology**	**Concept**	**Technology**
Web 1.0	Read-only or write only, security, web of documents	HTML, HTTP, URL	Content management, Unidirectional activities	LMS, eBooks
Web 2.0	Read/Write Social web	Dynamic web technologies ASP, AJAX, SNS, podcasts	Blended learning, content authoring Multimedia content	LCMS, social networks, video conferences
Web 3.0	Read/Write/ Collaborate, big data, linked data	RDF, XML, OWL, 3D	Learner-centered, U-learning, knowledge representation	PLEs, Social semantic web second life, personal avatars

Table 1. Connections between generations and education, Hussain

In the words of Peter Duffy, "New Web 2.0 technologies and websites, such as a blog, wiki or YouTube, make new demands on learning and they provide new supports for learning, even as they also dismantle some of the learning supports upon which education has depended in the past" [5]. The possibility every person who holds a unique password and username to have the right to upload authored material and share it with the world renders a powerful technical tool and precious

methodological instrument. There are numerous educational videos and channels connected to learning program languages foreign languages and computer soft skills. All of them use YouTube's services to exchange information. „YouTube has over a billion users – almost one-third of all people on the Internet – and everyday people watch hundreds of millions of hours on YouTube and generate billions of views" [15]. Having so much daily traffic, YouTube has become a powerful source of information, incorporating all spheres of life.

Contemporary educators can create, animate and record class content (parts or specific tasks) and can share them with students as video material. The possibilities, given by YouTube allow for many alternatives for team, pair and individual work on projects, filming and editing video footage, as a way to upgrade computer, technical, Cloud and language skills. Despite that, Duffy believes that "the phenomena of Web 2.0 provide for students and unprecedented way to access, socialize and co-create" [5]. Thus, instructors have to be able to spot the potential in the software so that they could make the best of their experience and their students' experience in the Cloud. The author talks about three main strategies when applying Web 2.0 in class, as he emphasizes on the content clarity and precision of tasks. Learners need to be guided in the right direction , to be given the skills, and knowledge, which they will then use to build something of their own.

Since YouTube's potential has grown immensely and Web 2.0 availabilities allow a continuous overload with video content, an imminent need for a separate platform focusing only on YouTube learning content was needed. "YouTubeEDU is the result of a volunteer project sparked by a group of employees who wanted to find a better way to collect and highlight all the educational content already being uploaded on YouTube" [7]. This is how in 2009 YouTubeEDU was born. It is a branch platform which selects, filters and arranges videos, so that it holds only educational and lecture material. During its first year manages to integrate 300 colleges and universities, as well as including in its database over 65 000 videos, lectures and news. Many famous universities such as Harvard, Stanford and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), have already registered and enrich their YouTubeEDU content regularly. All that is needed is the university to register with the system. "True global enlightenment." He also adds that all people who are qualified instructors can always find a way to contribute to the platform.

2. Methodology

This article explores a specific part of a trimester long (10 weeks) intensive language course at the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics at Plovdiv University

"Paisii Hilendarski". It is titled *English for ICT: Lifelong Writing in the Cloud* [2]. The coursebook, which holds the same name, has been specially developed to suit the needs of a Cloud environment and follows the principles of quality Web 2.0 education. The classbook resides entirely in the Cloud Website, which is the binding component of all building blocks used to create this unique Web 2.0 educational atmosphere. All class material, presentations, examples, self and peer evaluations, tests, surveys and voting is done through the website platform. In order to complete the course successfully, students had to finish a number of assignments and as a final course project (due last class), they were required to create a video tutorial and upload it on their YouTube channel. This paper investigates an innovative way of combining language acquisition and vlogging, which uniquely brings learning English to a whole new level.

The video production was conducted during the fall trimester of academic year 2015/2016 and included 91 freshmen, level B2-C2 from two different majors (Business Information Technology and Software Technology and Design). The two groups were tested on their English abilities and divided in two subgroups. Subgroups were formed so that they would be of overall equal language abilities. The 4 newly created groups were as follows: *Software Technology and Design group A*, *Software Technology and Design group B*, *Business Information Technology group A* and *Business Information Technology group B*. Throughout the trimester, A groups worked in teams (of 3) and B groups work individually.

On the first day of class students were introduced to the course and informed about the final assignment related to YouTube. They were told that during week 5 they would be given the task and guidelines, and that they were expected to show their work during final class. For this purpose, on week 5, an interactive presentation was shown in class. The aim was to specify all details and procedures included in the process of creating a YouTube video. Students were assigned a broad topic worded "Creating quality web content". Students could choose from famous types of vlogs such as: *How to videos*, *Tips and hacks*, *Tutorials*, *Technology reviews*, *Software or hardware reviews*, so they did not feel limited in their creativity.

During the presentation, the teacher set the criteria for all tutorials which included:

- *length* (3-5 minutes);
- *format* (avi, mp4);
- *credits* (providing citations, copyright);
- *text* (script writing); *link* (channel upload).

Students were advised to follow shortcuts, provided by the instructor, in the form of easy *Steps to follow* and relevant due dates, outlined in Table 2.

Steps #	Activity	Due date
Step 1	Choosing topics	Week 6
Step 2	Script writing	Week 7
Step 3	Filming	Week 8
Step 4	Editing and rendering	Week 9
Step 5	Uploading on YouTube	Week 9
Step 6	Presenting to the class	Week 10

Table 2. Steps: YouTube video

Each step develops a specific part of the video and has a fixed order. Students had to begin with choosing a topic. After they received the assignment they had one week to formulate the title of the work. The next step was script writing. When students were ready with their text, the instructor edited it for mistakes and inconsistencies and when all issues were resolved, students could pass on to the third step- filming. Once they had all the raw video materials stored, the video editing step followed. Students chose a software and began work. After the video was ready and rendered, students uploaded their work on YouTube and sent the link to the instructor. The final step was presenting the tutorials at YouTube Showroom.

3. Web 2.0 Instruments

Together with the video production task and topic, students were provided with all the necessary information in the form of specific instruments (Table 3).

Web 2.0 Instruments	Purpose
Google account	Portal to all Apps
Cloud Website	Platform that combines all instruments
Presentation	Sets task and guidelines, initiates Q&A
Example tutorial- *YouTube know how*	Teaches students YouTube basics
Example tutorial- *Video editing*	Teaches students to edit video material
Forms evaluating	It encourages feedback
Forms voting	It stimulates “individual influence”

Table 3. YouTube tutorial instruments

All these instruments serve to guide students through the video creation and sharing task. The first and most important is the individual Google account which is created during first class. It allows users to access and utilize all of Google’s Apps, which of course includes YouTube. The second is the Cloud Website (Figure 2), which is the fundamental and most important part of the course. Students are also introduced to the site during Week 1 and use it for every action in the Cloud. It is the basic platform which holds all other elements together and in place.

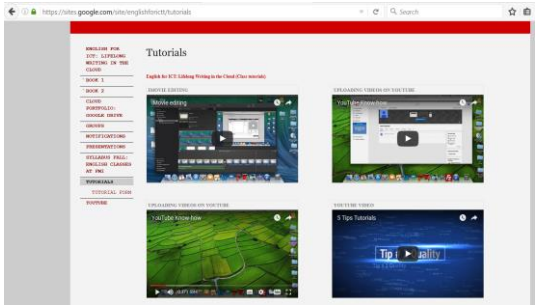

Figure 2. Cloud Website>Tutorials

The third instrument, an interactive presentation (Figure 3), is vital in this methodology, since it sets the task and guidelines for the entire project. It holds the criteria, examples and software hints that can be extremely useful to people with no prior know how on video production. In addition, the presentation discusses, lighting, filming, directing and post production. The presentation ends with a Q&A to address all questions.

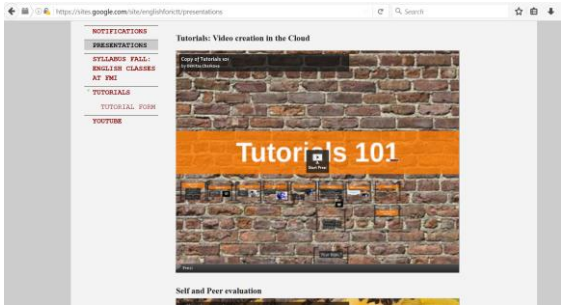

Figure 3. Interactive presentation of YouTube video production

The next instruments applied in this methodology are the example YouTube videos (Figure 4), created by the instructor. Each video is tailored so that it provides specific know-how for students. This information can be easily provided on paper, but recording it on video stimulates students to revisit it, if they have and doubts or questions. They can leave a comment below and thus directly get the information anytime and anyplace. There are two key videos which students are shown. The first is connected to video editing techniques and shows the basics of working with visual material. It introduces rendering and finalizing the project. The second video is named *YouTube Know-how* and it shows students how to create a unique channel and upload videos. It also discusses keywords and tagging. There are also many

other videos on the specialized learning English through ICT channel, which students use as examples.

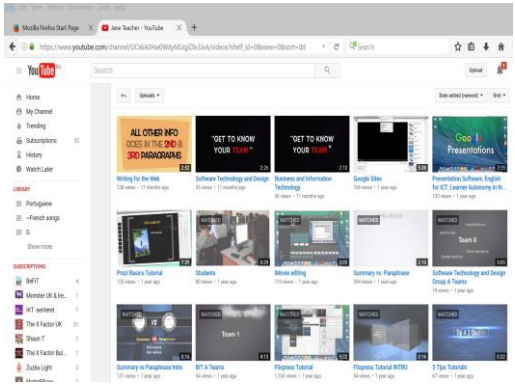

Figure 4. English for ICT, YouTube channel

Last class is devoted to presenting all the tutorials students have produced during the last 5 weeks. It is called YouTube Showroom and is divided into two parts. The first part includes the next instrument which is completing the Video Evaluation (Figure 5). It represents a Google Form which all students in the audience have to fill in after they have watched a peer/peers' video. This form gives a clearer idea of whether all the guidelines have been followed.

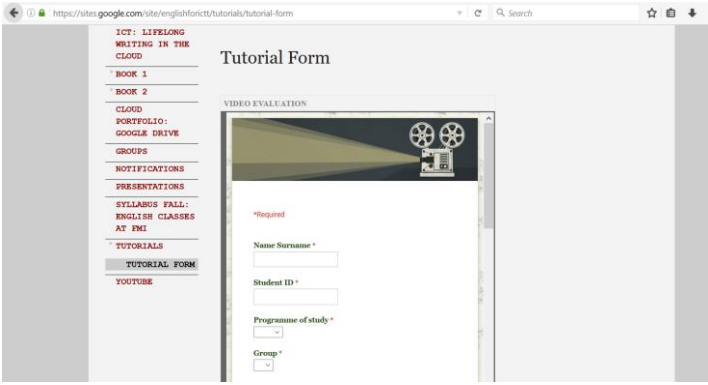

Figure 5. Video evaluation

The second part of YouTube Showroom is about students' individual influence on class events. They are encouraged to vote for the video they enjoyed watching the most (Figure 6). This is done once again through Google Forms and its option for

analyzing data on the spot. Figure 6 represents the form for the Software Technology and Design group, working on a team.

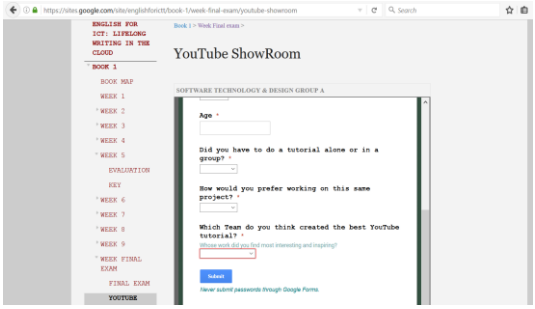

Figure 6. Voting, Software Technology and Design group A

After all students have placed their vote, the instructor announces the winner, who gets an excellent grade for the assignment. Below in Figure 7, we can see the results of Business Information Technology, group B. Since this group worked individually, we can see students' names on the right part and a pie chart on the left revealing the winner. In this case results were very close, but no tie was observed.

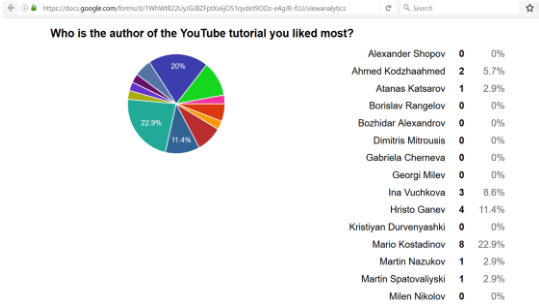

Figure 7. Form statistics, Business Information Technology, group B

4. Conclusion

This paper traces the application of YouTube and Google Forms as instruments to boost learner interactivity and accumulate an entirely new set of technical and language skills. The task develops multiple talents and allows students to be up to date with Cloud technologies. The methodology proves interesting and engaging for students as they are motivated to work and show their final video product. This paper suggests just one way of introducing Cloud technologies in class, but possibilities are

numerous. It is up to teachers to invent original ways of incorporating open source software and integrating it in contemporary instruction.

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МЯСТОТО НА YOUTUBE В ОБУЧЕНЕИЕТО ПО ЧУЖД ЕЗИК: КАКВО ИСКА ПОКОЛЕНИЕТО WEB 2.0

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Резюме. Тази статия изследва приложението на Облачни технологии в обучението по чужд език, като иновативен и вълнуващ Web 2.0 инструмент, който стимулира интерактивността в методическите практики на висшето образование. Разглеждаме възможностите, които YouTube дава на обучаеми, за да се потопят в дигиталния свят и да се превърнат едновременно в активни участници в собственото си обучение, както и влогъри, подвизаващи се в световно-известната платформа за споделяне на видео материал. По-конкретно, ние поглеждаме на интегрирането на YouTube обучителни видеа като част от програмата на интензивен чуждоезиков курс, „Английски за ИКТ: писане в Облака през целия живот“ [2].