Traditional vs. Virtual Learning: Does it Make a Difference? ADELEX – Assessing and Developing Lexical Competence

MARÍA MORENO JAÉN
University of Granada, Spain

ABSTRACT

This paper presents survey data from English Philology students (University of Granada) on a virtual course entitled ADELEX – Assessing and Developing Lexis – which was carried out in 2007-08 to enhance vocabulary acquisition. In the first part of this paper, we briefly offer a description of this second generation virtual course to enhance lexical competence. However, in the second part, we report on student perceptions about relevant aspects of web-based learning: 1) the role of the teacher; 2) the planning of the course and effectiveness of activities; 3) some differences between virtual learning and traditional learning; 4) motivation; 5) the use of communication tools: discussion forums. By and large, students showed great satisfaction at this virtual learning experience confirming the benefits of online learning versus traditional learning. Implications offered in this study may also be useful to academics interested in developing lexical competence.

Keywords: Lexical competence, virtual learning, instructional design, ILIAS, student's perceptions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Before delving into the evaluation of a web-based course for developing learners' vocabulary, we believe it might be useful to consider the importance of acquiring a good lexical competence. For many years the lexical component of the language has been a neglected aspect in the field of Applied Linguistics (cf. Zimmerman 1997; Pérez Basanta 1999). However, we have witnessed such an increase in the number of studies devoted to this issue in the last 20 years (see, for example, Carter 1987; McCarthy 1990; Lewis 1993; Nation 2001; Bogaards &