



Learning languages, cultures and cuisines in digital interactive environments: What's cooking in the Italian portable kitchen?

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LanCook is an EU-funded project which is developing language learning materials for six European languages and cuisines (<http://www.europeandigitalkitchen.com>). Drawing on the experience of the French Digital Kitchen (Seedhouse et al. 2013), the project involves partners throughout Europe to construct and trial digitally enhanced kitchens that communicate with learners in Catalan, English, Finnish, German, Italian, and Spanish, instructing them in how to cook a typical dish of that culture (Montanari 2004).

The University of Modena and Reggio Emilia is home to the Italian language-based materials, designed to be used with a 'portable kitchen' which uses tablet and sensor technology to lead language learners through the cooking of two Italian specialties: a first course inspired by Neapolitan cuisine, and a second course based upon one of Artusi's recipes (1891). Embedded digital sensors are attached to all the equipment and ingredients, allowing the kitchen to detect activity while learners progress through their cooking tasks, and to provide help along the way through a range of audio-visuals.

Against the background of the literature on task-based language learning and teaching (Nunan 1989; Ellis 2003), and of the ongoing trialing of the digital kitchens, this paper will present the Italian prototype.

After describing the different stages involved in the preparation of the Italian recipes and learning materials, thereby showing how the European project texts and tasks have been localized to fit country-specific conditions, it will outline the learning contexts in which the digital kitchen has been trialed, providing a first analysis of how users learn Italian whilst performing a meaningful real world task and experiencing cultural aspects of cooking a European dish. It will conclude by exploring how this interdisciplinary model of task-based situated learning could be applied to other cultural skill and knowledge sets as well as language learning, such as dialogue interpreting and translation.

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