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Petall project - paneuropean exchange of tblt and ict good practices¹

Today's language education policies' planners on global and European levels concentrate on encouraging and supporting new forms of language teaching. There are also efforts to incorporate these new forms with concrete communicative needs on one hand, and proclaimed stances of multilingualism and multiculturalism on the other hand, both recognized as key values and crucial elements of intangible cultural heritage viewed as the cornerstone of European unity. Politics of equality of all speakers and all speech communities, and with that all languages and cultures in multinational European states, has been meticulously cultivated and supported for over a quarter century. This support also extends to areas of language equality and functionality in all domains: social, educational, professional and private (Vučo, 2018). Clearly formulated definitions include support of plurilingualism understood as an individual's and a community's ability to communicate in a number of languages at various levels of competence. A creation of systemic opportunities both inside and outside of formal educational systems is identified as a prerequisite for a lifelong learning of all citizens and for learning of different languages recognized as necessary for different communicative actions (Tosi, 2007, Baeco et al., 2009). This view is supported by the right of all citizens to speak their own language on all occasions, to be educated in it, but to also have the opportunity, within formal educational systems, to learn other languages of their choice², aiming at exercising their right to work and move (physically or virtually) within the framework of the European Union³. Linguistic diversity in educational systems should be recognized by merit of a planned linguistic education policy based on the needs of citizens on an individual and collective local level. In this respect, the solution lies in a conciliatory global attitude that connects an openness to global flows and local and regional affiliation through planning and investment based on the needs of the local environment, within the framework of a bottom-up language education policy (see Filipović 2018, Vučo 2018), through "adequate models of teaching minority languages, changes in traditional (unplanned) ways of selecting foreign languages in schools, differentiated learning objectives in teaching foreign languages (first and second foreign languages), with adequate substantive changes in understanding the role and connection of the mother tongue to other languages in teaching, highlighting the mother tongue (including minority languages spoken as first languages) and foreign languages as vehicular languages of schooling, as instruments in which attributes of non-linguistic objects are performed, etc." (Vučo 2018). Multilingual education is an obligation that should be delegated to schools as basic institutions of modern societies in which languages are understood holistically (Baeco et al. 2009, Vučo 2018, Filipović 2018), including the mother tongue and other languages covered by school systems⁴.

By setting lifelong learning as an imperative for the prosperity of modern society, key competences⁵ that need to be developed primarily within European educational systems⁶ - primarily communication in their mother tongue and in foreign languages - are recognized. The responsibility for the development and support of these

¹ This is a companion paper to Filipović, Vučo, Marković (**MULTIMODAL LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED TASK BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING**, this conference)

² The views on European language education policy, with plurilingualism as the core value, are clearly confirmed by the document of a number of European intellectuals (Baroso et al., 2008), which emphasizes the need for knowledge construction which would lead to a space for acquisition/learning of three languages that must be recognized by national formal educational systems. Three languages represent the three levels of functioning of European citizens in the modern world using a first language for identification (most often their mother tongue), a second language of international / continental / global communication (most commonly recognized as English as a lingua franca, but which may also be Spanish, French, Chinese, Portuguese, or another language of global or regional extension), along with a third language, identified as a personally adopted language that should also develop within a given educational system to various levels of competence which depend on local and professional needs of citizens and their local, regional or national community.

³ More on this subject in: Vučo, 2009, Filipović 2009, Filipović, Vučo, Đurić 2010, Filipovic, Vučo, 2012, Filipović, 2012, 2015, 2016, Filipović 2018, Vučo 2018)

⁴ Languages in the school system can be: 1. subject languages - native, foreign, classical, non-maternal, minority or regional language, as a subject, 2. languages used as a means, language mediator - vehicular language for teaching and learning other subjects - native, foreign, classical, minority or regional, intangible (Baeco et al. 2009, Vučo 2018) and the language of the environment.

⁵ The key competences to be developed in European educational systems are: 1. communication in the mother tongue, 2. communication in foreign languages, 3. mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, 4. digital competence, 5. learning how to learn, 6. social and civic competences, 7. sense for initiative and entrepreneurship, and 8. cultural awareness and expression. *Lifelong learning — key competences*, Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, pp. 10-18) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/AUTO/?uri=celex:32006H0962>,

⁶ *Lifelong learning — key competences*, Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, pp. 10-18) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/AUTO/?uri=celex:32006H0962>, accessed April 7th 2018 at 17:43.

competences lies with the school, and this comprehensive and complex holistic approach to the understanding of language education corresponds to the advantages that derive from the "use of common language characteristics and the mutual application of multiple language experiences to all languages involved in teaching" (Vučo, 2018).

With the intention of supporting this kind of language education policy, the European Commission has been funding a number of projects aimed at supporting plurilingual education and lifelong learning in Europe and beyond, through a number of programs, such as Socrates, Tempus, Erasmus, etc. for years.

Lifelong Learning Programs (LLP)⁷ are organized to enable citizens, at any time of their lives, to participate in incentive activities that will provide them with opportunities for learning, personal improvement, as well as for the overall development of educational system and the improvement of teaching practices across Europe⁸.

Within the LLP project KA2 action, from 2013 to 2016 the *Pan European Task-based Activities for Language Learning (PETALL)* project has been developed.⁹

The objectives of this project are to promote mutual understanding and focus on language and cultural differences through project tasks (TBLT-Task Based Language Teaching) realized with the help of Information Technologies (ICT), encouraging the use of classroom tasks supported contemporary information technology. One of the objectives of the project has been to improve teachers' methodological and ICT competences. In learning and teaching of a language, the power of Information Computer Technologies (ICT) is reflected in numerous advantages. It provides a high degree of differentiation, and it makes it easier for a teacher to meet the students' individual needs, by recognizing them and satisfying them faster. Working with ICT is highly productive in enhancing students' motivation and their active participation in the school work, as rich content and more intensive learning process relying on all senses are available. Schrooten also believes that learning is more effective because a teacher can focus on supporting the student instead of being dedicated and functioning solely as a source of content (Schrooten, 2006).

Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a teaching method based on project tasks which are integral parts of the communicative approach in the teaching of language. Students acquire languages more effectively when they are not constantly reminded of language structures and when their attention is focused on meaning rather than on the form while performing tasks in real life conditions (Ellis, 2003, Thomas, M. & Reinders, H. 2010, Van den Branden, K. 2006, Willis 1996, Willis, D., & Willis, J. 2007). The greatest attention is paid to the meaning and the use of student language resources. The task is set so that its goal is in language usage, which is similar to the way that language is used in real life. In the pedagogical sense, a project task refers to a part of time and work in the classroom during which the students are involved in the activities of understanding, manipulation and processing data into information through interaction in the target language, while their attention is simultaneously focused on the application of their grammatical knowledge in order to express socially and semantically adequate meanings. In these activities, priority is given to transferring knowledge rather than manipulating the form (Nunan, 2004).

The objectives of the PETALL project correspond to the needs of modern schools in line with the aforementioned key competences¹⁰, raise the quality of teaching and teacher education by developing their digital competences, encourage positive collaboration among teachers and stakeholders in the process of teacher education in different countries, with the aim of establishing regional task development networks based on information technologies. The project aims to facilitate access to empirically tested, technologically-supported tasks, ensuring the quality of communicative exchange through cultural and geographical differences and exchange. Such wide-ranging requirements of the project related to intercultural differences are feasible given the number and diversity of participants and the way of achieving results. The participants in the project were Portugal, Spain Italy, The Netherlands, Germany, Serbia, Scotland, Greece, Turkey and Hungary. Portuguese tandem: University of Algarve and Agrupamento de Escolas Alberto Iria elementary and high school; Spanish tandem: University of Granada and IES Luis Bueno Crespo high school; Italian tandem: University of Torino and Istituto Comprensivo III Chieri high school; Dutch tandem: University of Amsterdam and Regionale Opleidingsschool WF high school; German tandem: Landesinstitut für Schule Bremen and Kippenberg Gymnasium; Serbian tandem: University of Belgrade and Aviation Academy, Belgrade; Scottish tandem: University of West Scotland and Trinity High School; Greek tandem: University of Patras and 13th Junior Secondary School; Turkish tandem Gazi University and Gazi University Foundation Private Secondary School elementary and high school.; Hungarian tandem: Eötvös Loránd University and Madách Imre névét gimnázium.

The project aims to promote mutual understanding and care for linguistic and cultural diversity in the use of information technologies in the design of modern languages. The results of the PETALL project offer examples of good practice in ICT supported TLBT for easy application in learning and teaching of different languages and across educational contexts. Conscious of plurilingual and pluricultural foundations of the European Union as a factor of European unity that are recognized and confirmed in a number of European educational system, the

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme_en, accessed April 7th 2018 at 20:38.

⁸ This program supports EACEA (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency), http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/llp_en.htm, accessed April 7th 2018 at 20:44.

⁹ No. 530863-LLP-1-2012-1-NL-KA2-KA2MP with the support of the European Commission. Details about and results of the project can be found on: <http://petallproject.wixsite.com/petall>.

¹⁰ Link 2 *Lifelong learning — key competences*, Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, pp. 10-18) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/AUTO/?uri=celex:32006H0962>, accessed April 21st .2018.

PETALL project's tasks also focus on the allocation of intercultural features understood as an advantage and topics for discussions within project tasks. Furthermore, the focus extends on overcoming language barriers on the one hand, working together in English as the global language of today; and on the other, highlighting the value of all the languages of Europe, especially the languages of the project's participants.

The authors of the project address various target groups that cover a wide range of people in educational and scientific fields - primarily language teachers, participants in the process of teacher education and researchers in the field of applied linguistics and related linguistic and pedagogical-psychological sciences, believing that the results of the project accomplished through project tasks of a universal character and applicable to all living languages, can serve on the one hand as validated teaching material in the classroom or preparatory classes in initial education or during master and specialist studies of future teachers, and on the other hand as a template and reference material for numerous research comparable in teaching contexts in various languages. This has been reaffirmed with the creation of project tasks in all ten languages of the institutions participating in the project (Dutch, English, Gaelic, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish and Turkish).

The consortium encompassed ten national tandems of ten participating countries, each comprising one faculty engaged in language teacher education and one primary or secondary school. The task of each tandem was to work together to produce and select examples of good practice of project tasks for learning languages based on information technologies in line with the requirements of the Common European Framework of Reference Languages. The principal objective of their collaborative activities has been to evaluate selected classroom tasks and align, correct, and match with perceived needs of students in specific classrooms during a three year process of task creation, evaluation and improvement. The tandems produced 40 complex tasks which cover a wide range of languages, of topics as well as levels of communicative competence (in accordance with CEFR), and which are available for application in a number of educational contexts in Europe and worldwide. Alpha versions of the tasks had been tested *in situ* within educational institutions engaged in the projects, prior to a very rigorous evaluation process upon which the beta versions were approved. Tandem members (university professors and school teachers) exchanged visits and worked together in task implementation and evaluation. Tasks beta versions were created in accordance with the feedback from all participants (teachers and students alike) and after positive evaluations by external experts had been received. It was only then the the final versions of all tasks were prepared.

The final product of the PETALL project consists in forty technology-mediated language learning tasks, which are currently being transformed into national and international seminars designed to provide in-service teacher training in the area of TBLT and the application of ICT in foreign language teaching.

Conclusion

The Pan European Task-based Activities for Language Learning project- PETALL truly harmonizes new forms of language teaching with the needs of contemporary Europe. The positive experience of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism through different authors' perspectives and origins of the project assignments, the application of modern trends in teaching in general as well as foreign language teaching through affirmation of task assignments, application of new computer technologies, lifelong learning as the principle of continuous teacher training, creation of a network of collaborative partners across the European educational landscape, and an inter-European exchange of knowledge and good practices are just some of the worthwhile goals and contents achieved over three years through efforts of twenty educational institutions participating in the project¹¹.

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¹¹ In 2016, the Portuguese EASMUS + Agency awarded the PETALL project as the most successful international award by the European Languages Label (ELL). This award is given as an incentive to new initiatives in the field of language learning and teaching, the application of new techniques in language teaching and the spread of language skills and good practices.

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