EDUGATE – Multilingual teaching in early childhood education and care

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O5

Guidelines for the New ECEC Professional Curricula

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Content

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1. Introduction – Broad objectives

In the current document we present a series of guidelines with the aim of modifying and integrating the actual professional curricula addressed to teachers' training. The guidelines we proposed were inspired by the knowledge in the scientific literature about children's language development in multilingual context and implemented by the ECEC teachers and educators that took part in the EDUGATE Project.

This document aimed to offer a theoretical background regarding which linguistic competence a child should develop in his/her pre-school years (1 to 6 years) and some practical examples of broad activities that would help the development of these specific language capacities in second language acquisition. As multilingual children use a language at home different to the language of school teaching, the aim of these guidelines is to allow the children to maintain and develop their multilingual skills (both in L1 and L2), considering multilingualism as a resource not only for individual purposes but also in a group context as the class.

Three are the objectives of the present document: (1) give a basic knowledge of the linguistic steps a child should attain in preschool years, (2) propose some activities with the purpose of enhancing these steps, (3) give some indication regarding the teacher's role in a multilingual class.

The main steps of a child language development in his/her first years of life are essentially the same both in first and second language acquisition. Focusing our attention on the current knowledge in first language acquisition, we will report on the literature describing the main stages of linguistic development and we will propose some examples of activities that teachers may integrate in their curricula in the perspective of adapting them to second language acquisition.

The broad activities we will present were designed to give teachers and educators some practical indications for improving and integrating their curricula in a multilingual

perspective. Children in transition from kindergarten to school develop fundamental skills important for the acquisition of reading and writing abilities. It is a well-known fact that some of these abilities emerge in the first years of life of an individual while other abilities emerge later on. The linguistic competence of a child evolves consistently in the pre-school years and essentially develops from a comprehension / speech emergence level (1 to 3 years old) to a spontaneous fluent production level (3 to 6 years old). In this vein, the broad activities were specifically adapted to the children linguistic level depending on their chronological age. Therefore the guidelines were divided into a first group designed for the curricula of children aged 1 to 3 years old and a second group designed for the curricula of children aged 3 to 6 years old.

Teachers play a crucial role in the development of children's language capacities. The primary role of a teacher in a multilingual class is to establish conditions and develop activities so that children are able to practise the languages in a meaningful context. A section of this document will be dedicated to set a list of practical skills that teachers should develop in order to create the best possible conditions for language acquisition.

In the current project the ECEC teachers and educators had the chance to test all the activities proposed in the guidelines, adapting them to their needs. Therefore, for each domain we present one or more examples of practical activities that were adapted by the ECEC teachers and educators and tested in their classrooms. It is important to recall that all the didactic methodologies we are proposing, might be further developed and modified by the teachers/educators according to their working context.

The document is organized as follows: we will first present the guidelines for children aged 1 to 3 years old. After having introduced the main findings in the literature on first language acquisition, we will propose some broad activities that would help developing the linguistic competence of bilingual children and that were inspired by this scientific literature. These activities were adapted to consolidate language acquisition in a multilingual environment (both L1 and L2).

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Regarding children aged 3 to 6 years old the present document will focus on further implementation of the activities we proposed in the O4 document of the current project. In the O4 document the ECEC teachers and educators successfully identified and tested some didactic activities, which proved to be particularly adapted for the language development of children who already attained a spontaneous productive phase (3 to 6 years old). The ECEC teachers and educators in the local context implemented each of these broad activities. For each activity, we included the main linguistic domain that should be trained, the age group for which the activity is suitable for as well as the description of the procedure. Furthermore, the activities were created to offer practical didactic methodologies for teachers and educators working in monolingual, bilingual schools as well as in multilingual classrooms.

Both the activities included in the guidelines for children aged 1 to 3 years old and 3 to 6 years old can be easily integrated into the educational daily routine of the kindergarten and classes in schools. Each teacher might consider modifying and adapting the activities not only with respect to the language s/he is using, but also regarding the age, the type of class, the number of children s/he is working with.

A final section of this document will be devoted to teacher's role and it will describe the essential set of skills a teacher should have/develop for guaranteeing constructive involvement into the multilingual development of pre-school children.

2. Suggested activities for children aged 1 to 3 years
2.1.   Language development in children aged 1 to 3 years

The preschool years are critical to the development of emergent literacy skills that will ensure a fluid transition into formal reading and writing. Crucially, the linguistic competence of children aged 1 to 3 years old is not the same as that of children aged 4 to 6 years old.
In their first three years of life toddlers develop many of the foundations that underpin their subsequent linguistic abilities. Observations of children acquiring different languages reveal that the stages are similar, possibly universal (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2011). While at

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age 4-6 years, children already entered a stage of active linguistic production (which corresponds to what we called *speech emergence* and *fluency* phases), children aged 1 to 3 years, normally move form a *comprehension* phase, in which they develop their perception of sounds, their acquisition of words meaning and their first knowledge of syntactic parameters of a language, to a phase of "first spontaneous oral production", in which they start producing meaningful speech strings.

Regarding the *comprehension* phase, already at birth children start processing the speech stimuli of their linguistic environment. Infants display a surprising sensitivity to the acoustic cues that express constructs of natural language (syllables, phonemes, words). This sensitivity includes, as we described in the previous document (O4), attention to speech stimuli to perceive speech in certain ways and then to map the acoustic stimuli onto the phonological system of their native language (Guasti, 2002).This process is usually called "phonological awareness" and it has been shown to be a robust predictor of early reading achievement (Blachman, 2000; Lonigan et al., 2000; a.o.). Therefore children use acoustic cues also for extracting other prosodic features such as pitch, tempo, rhythm, amplitude and other auditory aspects of the speech signal. These features are normally used as a cue to identify other properties of grammar, such as the ordering of syntactic elements in the sentences, indicating the location of phrase boundaries and word boundaries. This process is usually called "Phonological bootstrapping" and it constitutes another fundamental stage during the preschool years, as it sets the basis for eventual reading achievement.

In addition to the sensitivity to acoustic cues, it has been demonstrated that very young children develop their linguistic competence from the direct interaction with context-related activities, like for example, "Role-play" games, activities of "Categorization and "Story-telling". This kind of activities normally help children into the transition from a purely *comprehension* phase into the *first spontaneous oral production* phase. Role-play is an important part of child development, as it builds confidence, it encourages creativity and imagination, it enriches language and enhances communication skills, it builds physical development and problem solving. Along with being a fun activity, it also allows children to get into character and act out real life roles or fictional performances. It can be purely child-

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led, and encourages children to take risks and be creative with the role they are playing, or be guided by an adult, developing a finer interaction with the goal linguistic competence.

Another crucial aspect of linguistic development in toddlers is the ability to categorize words into conceptual classes. Generally speaking, in fact, categorisation mediates our interactions with the world as it allows us to generalize across experiences, objects, mental states, etc. (Bornstein & Arteberry, 2010). Categories are especially valuable in infancy and early childhood when many new objects, events, and people are encountered. Without the ability to categorize, children would have to learn to respond anew to each novel entity they experience (Rakison & Oakes, 2003). In this vein, insights into how categorization initially develops are fundamental to understanding children's cognitions as well as other emerging related mental functions, such as memory and language (e.g., Mareschal, Powell, & Volein, 2003). Crucially this type of linguistic/cognitive domain has beneficial effects in the acquisition of lexicon, semantics, reading and writing abilities.

Finally, it has been demonstrated that knowledge of the forms and functions of written language influences the later reading attainment of children (Badian, 2001; Stuart, 1995; a.o). This knowledge is acquired by most children during the preschool years and sets the stage for eventual reading achievement. Print awareness is the umbrella term that is usually used to encompass children's concepts of print and their alphabet knowledge (Justice, Bowles, & Skibbe, 2006). Thus, this term typically refers to one's understanding of the forms and functions of written language and of letters and their corresponding sounds. Print awareness can be elicited at several level: it can focus on alphabet knowledge, on environmental print recognition and on print concepts, which involve the typical use of the printed object to produce an activity of storytelling.

To sum up, the literature has demonstrated that some linguistic domains play a crucial role in the acquisition of reading and writing abilities in children both in first and second language acquisition. Notably phonological bootstrapping (rhythmic abilities and pitch cues), the ability to put linguistic stimuli in a context (role-play), categorization of lexical concepts and print awareness (storytelling) are some of the areas associated with emergent literacy (Pullen & Justice, 2003).

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In order to create the basis for an adult-like language competence, pre-school curricula need to be integrated with some activities that enhance and reinforce these fundamental capacities which are supposed to appear and grow in very young children aged 1 to 3 years. In this vein, in the next section, we will propose a series of broad activities that could be introduced in the curricula of teachers and educators working with pre-school children. These activities will cover, in different ways, the four linguistic abilties we listed before: (1) rhythmic abilities and capacities to discriminate pitch cues; (2) the ability to role-play; (3) the ability to categorize lexical concepts; (4) print awareness. Note that each activity can (and should when necessary) be adapted to the specific need of a classroom by the teacher/educator.

2.2. Broad activities – The transition from comprehension to first spontaneous oral production

2.2.1. Phonological bootstrapping – the rhythm of language

The relatively early sensitivity to syntactic and grammatical structure of toddlers raised the question of what cues enable young children to acquire grammar. According to the phonological bootstrapping account, prosodic and rhythmic information, and phonological cues more broadly, immediately perceivable from the speech signal from birth, may be the main components providing infants' initial bootstrap into the language. The central assumption of this hypothesis is that children can learn certain aspects of the structure of their language through an analysis of the speech they are exposed to. Notably prosodic and rhythmic information can both help in discriminating words and in acquiring the syntactic properties of a language. Several studies have examined potential relationships between music and language skills and have shown that there are important parallels between theories of the development of language and music (Kraus and Slater, 2015) for various competencies, such as pitch and phonemic discrimination (Anvari et al., 2002), rhythm and prosody (Patel et al., 2006), rhythmic abilities and reading (Butzlaff, 2000) and the recall of melodies and sentences (Harms et al., 2014). In particular, in both domains a hierarchical model of step by step skill acquisition during childhood has been suggested (Christophe et al., 1997; Christophe & Dupoux, 1996). Syllables and words in a sentence do not occur with a

metronomically regularity, but they are grouped into prosodic units. Listeners perceive these groupings, and it has been shown that they do so on the basis of an analysis of the incoming acoustic signal, rather than through a reconstruction process that involves lexical and syntactic processes. As suggested by Pullen et al. (2003) « promoting the development of these foundational aspects of phonological awareness in young children may help avoid a causal chain of negative effects initiated by the absence of phonological sensitivity ».

Acquiring lexicon

Studies show that infants are remarkably good at extracting information from continuous speech. They seem to know what kind of cues to look for in the input that will help them to isolate words. One of the cues that English-speaking children attend to that helps them figure out word boundaries is stress. The prosodic structure is computed from the speech signal and used for lexical access. Infants may be able to discover function words quite early in their acquisition of language because they are extremely frequent syllables that typically occur at prosodic edges (beginning or end depending on the language). Because prosodic boundaries will never occur inside of a word, thus infants will not be constrained in how they identify words in the speech signal. For example, children can differentiate between words such as "***dice***" and "***red ice***", even though both are phonologically similar. This is because a prosodic boundary will not appear in the middle of the word *(d][ice) but around the word instead ([dice]). Children use phonological phrase boundaries to constrain lexical access. They infer the existence of a word boundary given a prosodic boundary. If two sequences differ in prosody while being made up of identical segments (*pay per* vs. *paper*), children treat them as different sequences. Studies that measured cues from prosody to phonological phrases have been done in a variety of languages that differ from each other, providing support that phonological phrases could possibly aid in acquiring lexicon universally.

Acquiring syntax

Phonological phrase boundaries always coincide with the boundaries of syntactic constituents. As a result, it has been supposed that both infants and adults would exploit phonological phrase boundaries to constrain their on-line syntactic analysis (Christophe, Millotte, Bernal, & Lidz, 2008). It has been demonstrated that 18- and 24-month-old infants were already able to

identify the syntactic categories of words (nouns and verbs) from speech segmentation (Thorpe et al., 2006). To derive this information, syntactic indices such as function words need to be incorporated. The joint integration of prosodic information and frequently occurring, and acoustically distinct, function words (articles, morphemes, prepositions) may build a partial syntactic representation of sentences: a syntactic skeleton (Christophe et al., 2008). In a study by de Carvalho, Dautriche, & Christophe (2016), experimenters tested preschool children, where they showed that before age 4 prosody is used in real time to determine the syntactic structure of a sentences and to discriminate between syntactic structures. Children were able to correctly assign the grammatical category to an ambiguous word (noun vs. verb) when this ambiguous word was embedded in sentences that began in a phonemically and morphologically identical fashion, but that were syntactically and prosodically distinct. In this vein, stress is very salient to infants, and they are quick to acquire the rhythmic structure of their language.

Therefore, several studies have nowadays proved the positive impact of musical training on language skills. For example, Strait et al. (2013) showed that musical aptitude was a significant predictor and accounted for over 40% of the variance in reading performances in children from 8 to 13 years with little to no music training in pre-school years. Other studies showed that the ability to synchronize to a given beat predicted performance in pre-literacy skills such as phonological bootstrapping and verbal memory in preschool children (Carr et al., 2014). In particular, young children in preschool seem to benefit from training musical skills which show positive transfer effects on pre-literacy skills and literacy acquisition in school. In general, musical training has been shown to improve many aspects of auditory processing and to improve cognitive language and literacy skills in children (Jancke 2012 ; Jentschke & Koelsch, 2009 ; Lorenzo et al., 2014; a.o.).

2.2.1.1. Suggested activities (Mis-pronunciation, Ryhthm of language and Songs)

Methodological note: the activities are in steps of increasing complexity, starting with the comprehension of single words, continuing with verbal production of these words and ending with the formulation of short sentences.

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Acquiring lexicon:

Mis-pronunciation

The teacher shows the puppet the flashcards of words the children already know and asks the puppet what the word is. The puppet mispronounces the word and the children have a chance to correct it.

This activity can only be carried out by a mother tongue speaker because the mispronunciations are very slight and a non-native speaker might not be able to reproduce them.

Acquiring syntax:

Rhythm of language

Step 1: The puppet greets the children by saying the wrong name. The children react usually by laughing, the puppet then asks, "What's your name?": the questions is asked by counting the words, not the syllables, present in the question according to English phonology (1. What's, 2 your, 3 name).

The child answers by saying his name.

Step 2: The teacher invites the child to formulate a short sentence, "I'm + name" by using another hand gesture (hand on the chest).

Step 3: The puppet greets the child saying the right name.

Step 4: After greeting all the children, the teacher invites the children to ask the puppet its name, by counting the words, not the syllables, present in the question according to English phonology (1. What's, 2 your, 3 name).

In exchanging views with the mother tongue teacher, the importance of teaching the children the rhythm of the sentence was deemed more crucial than sounding out the syllables of single words.

Songs

Step 1: The teacher shows the children the flashcards of the parts of the face and body using "repetition of three" (the repetition of each word three times counting with your fingers).

Step 2: The teacher puts the flashcards on the floor and calls on each child to recognize and touch the part of the face or body the teacher has said.

The first two steps prepare the children for the use of songs that aid in the acquisition of new vocabulary.

Step 3: The teacher sings "One little finger" (lyrics below) and asks each child in turn to choose a part of the face and touch it.

One little finger, one little finger, one little finger, tap tap tap
Point to the ceiling, point to the floor
put it on your ….(nose, eyes …).

Another song that can be used to consolidate vocabulary of parts of the body is "Head shoulders knees and toes", in which the children sing and touch the parts of the face and body that are in the song.

2.2.2. Role-play, vocabulary and categorization

Historical research has shown how role-play has emerged in children's lives as a consequence of their changed position in society, following increased division of labor (Elkonin, 2005). Traditionally, all members of a group (society) live and work together. Children are socialized through participating in their caregiving group's everyday work. With the invention of new tools – such as the plow – there is an increased division of labor. The new tool requires physical strength and children can no longer participate in the work of cultivating the earth with this tool. Children start to spend more time with other children apart from adults' work. It is at this point that not only real toys – mimicking real tools but which cannot be used as such – but also role-play emerge. When children are no longer part of their caregivers' everyday work, they start to role-play what the adults do. As a consequence of this societal development, new arrangements for caring for the reproduction of important forms of knowledge emerge. Rather than being socialized in these through their everyday work with adults, children are now introduced to such tools and practices through institutional arrangements such as preschool and school. In the nature of these institutions, children are also introduced to a wider repertoire of forms of knowledge and societal work. Hence,

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children are introduced to a richer set of roles to play. Being introduced to forms of knowledge and cultural practices is therefore critical to facilitating children's role-play and through role-play their development more generally. Learning about different roles that are possible to play is intrinsically related to learning new vocabulary. For example, learning to play librarian means that words such as books, reading, writing, borrowing, library card, categorization system, searching and many others become recourses necessary for the development of role-play and thus also for children's language development (Magnusson & Pramling Samuelsson, 2019; Pramling et al., in press; cf. Vygotsky, 1978).

Today we know that, for children, play and learning are close related. The richer experience children get in early years, the more are they able to role-play. For example, if a child has never been at an airport, or heard about one through books or storytelling, she cannot play airport. There are also studies showing how role-play collapses when one child does not know the role that she is meant to play in a role-play (Mauritzsen & Säljö, 2003). Other research shows how children are excluded in role-play, when other children experience that they cannot act in the play they are acting (Lunde Vestad, 2010).

Role-play is one of the most important aspects of young children's everyday life, where they communicate with other children. And when they play with friends that have other experience than they have themselves, role-play can introduce children to new knowledge and experience contributing to development of language. Many teachers think of role-play as the child's own world, but both parents (see Fleer, 2014) and preschool teachers have an important role to play, for providing opportunities for play, for stimulating and expanding children's play and for taking part in children's play (Pramling et al., 2019).

In a fundamental sense, language is categorical. A word such as 'car', for example, does not refer to a particular car but to a category encompassing every instance. We develop our descriptions, that is become more specific through adding more categories: color (red), size (big), model (convertible), time (old/new) etc. Learning language thus in a fundamental sense means to learn to categorize the world; perceive it in categorical terms. However, children are also introduces to categorization as a more specific kind of activity, already in preschool. This

is evident, for example, in playing common games such as animal game where the child is challenged to find every member of a family: cow, bull and calf. Learning to categorize in early childhood could also be facilitated through grouping familiar objects, such as wooden blocks: according to size, material (wooden, metal), color, function, geometrical shape etc.

Children spontaneously also in early years begin to collect specific object, which could be seen as an interest in categorization. Categorization is also closely related to discovering patterns, which is a fundamental aspect of developing cognitive skills, something that can be worked with in preschool (Gärdefors, 2010). Humans are meaning-making creatures who makes the world and its phenomena understandable and possible to remember by creating and distinguishing patterns (Björklund, 2014; Björklund & Pramling, 2014).

2.2.2.1. Suggested activities (Role-Play and Vocabulary/Categorization)

Role-play:

Step 1: Children listen to the story in mother language and foreign language. We use the story with a lot repetitive sentences (for example in Gingerbread man: Run, run!). The story is told several times in different ways with the use of different things - puppets, realia, toys etc.

Step 2: Children are offered different materials, which was already used by the teachers (puppets, realia, toys etc.). They play with this material while teacher retells parts of the story and invites them to join in. Teacher also encourages children to repeat certain simple phrases and words from the story with him. After several repetitions teacher offers children only material and allows them to play with it.

Step 3: In the end, when children are ready (they understand the story, can tell certain words in foreign language), each child gets a certain role. Teacher tells the story again and children act out the given role (using a puppet, some words/phrases, realia).

Vocabulary/categorization:

Step 1: Teacher sings a short song or tells a short chant in mother language and later on also in foreign language. Meanwhile he shows them pictures or things or body parts, depending on

the vocabulary used in the song/chant. Teacher focuses on the vocabulary which is appropriate for this age.

Step 2: This song/chant is repeated several times in different situations (for example a song about food can be sung before lunchtime, about body before washing their hands and face etc.). Teacher encourages children to sing a song or tell the chant with him until they have learned it.

Step 3: Teacher uses realia for words from the song/chant and encourages them to put them in different boxes or places in the room. Later on teacher can also ask them to bring the realia out of the boxes (for example: Please bring me the red ball).

Step 4: Children play a game: they all make a train which moves around the room. Then train stops and teacher asks certain children to step out of the train (for example: Children with red slippers step out in the red town). Teacher uses simple words and phrases which are well known to the children.

2.2.3. Print awareness

According to numerous research studies, assessments measuring a child's understanding of print concepts have successfully predicted future reading outcomes (Adams, 1990; Badian, 2001). Children begin building concepts about print through literacy-based interactions with the adults in their lives at a very young age. Infants at 8 months of age begin handling books, turning pages, and actually babbling in a "reading-like" manner (Snow et al., 1998). This foundation, however, is not built automatically. It requires active participation with adults in print-focused interactions that are age appropriate in a cognitive, emotional, social, and physical sense (Pullen et al., 2003). It is during the preschool years that children acquire an increasingly sophisticated understanding of print forms (Justice & Ezell, 2001). Through experiences in being read to by adults (teachers and educators / parents and family), children develop their language acquisition.

There are several levels of analysis of a child's knowledge in the domain of print awareness. As described by Justice & Ezell, (2001) child with well-developed print concepts knows several essential points that are necessary to reading acquisition. For example, a child may know that : the print tells the story; the text on a page is read from left to right ; progression

through text moves from the top of the page to the bottom of the page ; when one page of text is read, the story continues on the following page ; the white spaces between groups of letters represent a break between spoken words or word boundaries. One of the most effective measures of print awareness focuses on the child's knowledge of the alphabet (Pullen et al., 2003). This can be encouraged simply naming the letters that supports reading acquisition since an overall familiarity with the letters and their sounds is necessary in the attainment of early reading skills.

Finally, storybooks can improve a child's print awareness when the teacher (or other adult such as the parents) uses different techniques for improving the literacy knowledge of a child. For example adults can use verbal or non-verbal cues to encourage a child's attention or interaction with print. An example of this is a teacher asking the child to point to the first word on a page or to ask "Where are the words on this page?". A more classical technique is reading aloud the books' stories or telling the story from a book which can be used only for visual support. Listening to stories and telling them provides a bridge between the oral language skills of early childhood and the more formal language of print (Speaker et al., 2004). However, although storytelling and story reading are similar in content, they diverge in crucial ways in their process. One difference is in audience participation. In storytelling, children are encouraged to join in repetitive phrases or refrains, and given the opportunity to suggest variations in certain free story elements. Isbell and colleagues (2004) have described these aspects of storytelling as co-creative and a form of two-way communication. The language patters learned in these social contexts while children are interacting with adults and other children are the basis for the construction and reinforcement of language abilities that are essential for developing literacy skills.

2.2.3.1. Suggested activities (Storytelling)

Storytelling

The teacher reads "Do you want to be my friend?" by Eric Carle and at every page asks the children why the animal on that page doesn't want to be friends with the little mouse.

Depending on the level of each child, the child could comprehend the teacher's request and answer in Italian or answer in English.

Another storytelling activity is singing "The wheels on the bus", by asking each child what is on the bus and then inserting their answer in the song.

We would advise this activity only for children that know a good amount of words (nouns, adjectives) so the children will be able to interact better. The goal of this activity is that the children would be able to experiment with the language and use the words that they know.

3. Suggested activities for children aged 3 to 6 years

3.1. Further implementation of the activities proposed in the O4

Multilingual children aged 3 to 6 years old undergo the transition from a first spontaneous productive phase to a fluency phase both in first and second language acquisition. During this stage, the child's analytical skills enhance and their ability to form complete sentences emerges. The child's comprehension by this stage has considerably improved and production is advanced, as well. In a language class, the teacher could begin to ask hypothetical questions and assign analytical topics because the student would be capable of producing the appropriate responses during this stage of language acquisition. The final stages of first and second language acquisition have the same result: fluency. The child can verbally produce completely sentences, thoughts, and ideas. Throughout the process of language acquisition, culture and norms are also adapted.

For this phase of language acquisition the current project has already delineated some practical guidelines (O4) that can be adopted by teachers in order to enhance and develop the linguistic abilities of children aged 3 to 6 years old in multilingual settings (e.g. the class).

The previous guidelines were created on the basis of seven linguistic activities that are known to be well-suited for enhancing the linguistic domains necessary for multilingual acquisition. These seven activities are: phoneme awareness, narratives, colouring task, sentence repetitions, perspective shift, enhancing vocabulary, and translanguaging. All these activities

can be used for training both receptive and productive skills. We present here a series of further implementation of these seven activities both for receptive and productive skills specifically created by the ECEC teachers of the current project to be integrated to the curricula for children aged 3 to 6 years old.

3.2. Implemented activities for enhancing "Receptive skills" *(listening)*

In the first stage of learning a foreign language, teachers should develop the ability of listening, because it has a huge impact on the further development of speaking and writing. Listening should be adapted to the child's age. The material presented during the classes must be attractive, because pre-schoolers have a short time of concentration. The best solution are: songs, short stories, rhymes, poems, videos, simple phrases and verbal commands, games, e.g. Bingo, Talking Pen - touching the words with a pen to hear the correct pronunciation. Classes should be based on active play. Listening to short dialogues, fairy tales, rhymes and nursery rhymes, children learn and imitate English intonation, rhythm and sounds. Listening can be developed by combining with the physical movement, which is why The Total Physical Response (TPR) method can be used. The teacher gives simple instructions, children listen and perform tasks, while the teacher sees whether they understand commands. The teacher's task is to provide children with many language materials through which they learn the vocabulary and learn to listen. It is important to constantly draw attention and avoid boredom.

3.2.1. Phoneme awareness

Rhyming words

The teacher uses a set of words that children have learnt earlier. Children sit on a carpet in a circle and the teacher says two words aloud. Children listen very carefully, if the word rhymes they show thumbs up, if not - thumbs down.

Examples: play – stay

               cat – hat

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red – fish

fish – dish

mouse – blue

two – blue

mouse – house

Blending activity

The teacher says: blend together speech sounds to create a word

Examples: /c/ /a/ /t/ - cat

/m/ /e/ - me

/p/ /o/ /t/ - pot

/b/ /e/ - be

Beginning sounds

The teacher says: listen very carefully to the initial sounds, what do you hear?

Examples: top - /t/

pot - /p/

me - /m/

snake -/s/

bee - /b/

3.2.2. Narratives

Reading a fairy tale

Step 1: Reading a fairy tale by the teacher "Pete the Cat, My white shoes"

Step 2: The fairy tale contains repetitive phrases: I love my white shoes! I love my red shoes!
I love my blue shoes! This gives children a sense of predictability and security. The teacher
uses a fairy tale and shows colorful pictures.

Oral narrative

Step 1: The teacher is a narrator and uses colorful illustrations on which he shows the relevant scenes.

Step 2: The teacher tells the fairy tale in simple language and combines it with the appropriate facial expression and gestures.

Drama

The teacher uses puppets and plays a short scene about the situation in the shop. In addition to the obvious phrases used when selecting and paying for products, you can practice with kids the numbers and names of different types of products: vegetables and fruits, sweets, toys and clothes.

Use of audiovisual media

Step 1: Children watch the video: "Five little monkeys".

Step 2: When re-watching the children imitates jumping monkeys, the doctor and his voice: No more monkeys jumping on the bed!

Watching a movie provokes children to imitate actions and speeds up the learning process.

3.2.3. Coloring tasks

Drawings are the first artistic creativity of children. It is worth using this feature in learning a foreign language also in learning to listen.

Face coloring

The teacher gives simply instruction: Listen and color, and then checks if children understand and remember the vocabulary (picture of face).

Examples: Ears are green.

Eyes are blue.

A nose is orange.

A mouth is pink.

Hair is red.

Balloon game

Step 1: The teacher says: Color balloons according to my instructions - a small balloon is yellow, a big balloon is blue, and a star balloon is red.

Step 2: Children color the picture of 3 balloons.

T: We have two new colors. What are the colors?

It was something new for children, the teachers insisted on covering a color by another one, because only after mixing them a new color came out. Children were surprised noticing that orange and purple appeared when they overlap. The task turned out to be not only interesting but surprising as well.

Toys

Listen and color (picture of 2 teddy bears)

- A brown teddy bear is sitting.

- A red teddy bear is dancing.

The teacher checks the correctness of understanding and also the knowledge of children's vocabulary.

3.2.4. Sentence repetition

It is widely used in children's literature that words or phrases are often repeated in order to assimilate a second language. It should be used intentionally.

Repetition

The teacher speaks a short poem that often contains repetitive words or phrases e.g.:

„I can see a monkey. The monkey is brown. The brown monkey is jumping. The monkey is jumping all the time" (poem).

The word repetition – monkey

The word MONKEY is used in various sentences (functioning).

Some words repetition are often used and practiced in songs or rhymes. e.g.

„...let it snow, let it snow, let it snow...” (song)

„Five little monkeys jumping on the bed... Four little monkeys jumping on the bed...” (rhyme)

„This little Piggy went to market, this little Piggy stayed at home, this little Piggy had roast beef, this little Piggy had none...” (poem)

Children repeat the poems several times. They can imitate and improvise while speaking. Pupils are taught new vocabulary using songs and rhymes that contain repetitive sentences and expressions.

www.kapitannauka.pl/jezyki-obce/1903
www.little-sponges.com/index.php/2018

3.2.5. Perspective Shift

Pre-listening phase

Step 1: The teacher shows the cover of the book, the children try to guess what the story will be about.

Step 2: The teacher prepares cards or props to present the story np. Goldilocks, 3 bears, 3 bowls, 3 chairs and 3 beds.

Step 3: Children listen the vocabulary associated with the story. They can try how porridge tastes.

Step 4: The teacher asks: Do you like it? Children answer: Yes, I do/No, I don't. They show thumbs up or down.

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Listening:

The teacher presents the main characters: Papa Bear, Mama Bear, Baby Bear and Goldilocks and briefly presents the place of the action and the problem: Goldilocks ate porridge, destroyed chairs, and fell asleep in bed. Finally, the bears came back home, and Goldilocks escaped.

Activities:

- „Guess the object" (pre-listening phase) - children guess the names of items that appear in the story;
- Children arrange cut figures and objects during the teacher's story (while-listening phase);
- When storytelling, children lift up or touch the appropriate picture cards;
- Pantomime - children present scenes with gestures - they listen to stories several times (while-listening phase);
- Children show appropriate smileys about characters during the story. They indicate whether the hero of the story is happy, sad, scared etc. (while-listening phase);
- Arranging the pictures in the right order according to the story (post-listening phase);
- „Guess who I am?" - the teacher plays the role of a story (post-listening phase).

3.2.6. Enhancing vocabulary

Activities using toys

Step 1: Children sit in a circle. The teacher puts several toys on the floor: a ball, a bear, a doll, a car, an airplane.

Step 2: She/he slowly pronounces the names of toys and asks the child to provide a specific toy. If the child makes the right choice, he/she hears the praise.

Activities using flashcards

Step 1: Giving commands in English and responding to them on the example of a fairy tale: "The very hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle

Step 2: Children learn the content of a fairy tale when playing a hungry caterpillar. The teacher says: I'm very hungry! I'd like a pear. Can I have a pear? The child chooses the appropriate box from the ones lying on the floor and gives it to the teacher.

This way we check to what extent children learned vocabulary.

Activities using puppet

Step 1: The teacher prepares 5 pieces of paper to be applied: mum, dad, brother, sister, child.

Step 2: The teacher sings a song:

> Daddy finger, daddy finger, where are you?
>
> Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Step 3: The teacher shows all the characters in turn, sings the song, and the children watch movements, listen and try to repeat.

3.2.7. Translanguaging

The basic idea of translanguaging is for children to be allowed and encouraged to use all their linguistic and communicative resources to make sense of the world and communicate with others. Such a stance to language learning and sense making facilitates children's learning of and with different languages and sends an important meta-message to children that their language experiences count, are valued and important. This stance therefore also has the advantage of strengthening the child's identity as someone knowledgeable and as a participant in cultural practices.

Name of the objects

Step 1: The teacher can label some of the things in the classroom e.g. tables, chairs, desk, shelves, pictures etc. and the children can respond in any of their languages.

Step 2: When they have lunch, they label food etc and talk about what it is called in different languages that children in the group have experience of.

Reading books or singing song - multiple languages

Step 1: The teacher utilizes bilingual books or talks about a book in one language, which is written in another (L1 and L2).

Step 2: Pupils can name the words they hear in two languages and respond in any of their languages. It helps them to develop their knowledge about both the first and the second language.

3.3. Implemented activities for enhancing "expressive skills" *(speaking)*

3.3.1. Narratives

There are a lot of important things that can be taught through narratives, as narratives are children`s natural way of learning. The wisely chosen stories with a lot of repetition and a simple language can be a wonderful help for any teacher. It is wonderful if the books are big and beautiful, sometimes it is good if the books deal with children`s favorite characters, for example, Peppa pig for smaller ones, then they perceive the story as a game. Books can become lifelong learning!

Aim- that children through narratives learn grammar, vocabulary, intonation, everyday phrases and improve their communication skills.

Pictured story

Make a story according to pictures (you can start this activity with less (for example 4) pictures and then enlarge the amount of pictures). It develops creativity of a child, as well as talking and listening skills. This activity is possible also in small groups or pairs, or even you can let children choose whether to work individually or with somebody.

Draw a story

Reading/listening a story and create your own pictures. (This task involves careful listening and comprehension, that is why it can become a great motivation to listen/read carefully and later draw)

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Create a story from pictures

Make up your own story using different pictures and setting them in your own order. This activity involves some pictures that should be organized in your own order and then a story becomes alive through pictures. It should be very interesting to compare how a lot of different stories can be created from the same pictures but in different order.

Story cubes

Throw cubes (you can start with 3 and then enlarge the number of cubes till 9 (it means 54 images as each cube has 4 pictures) for older children) and create a story by joining the pictures thrown on cubes.) It sparks the imagination of all ages.

Stories from mother tongue into English

Sometimes it is a good idea to tell the well-known story in English, it helps learn in more relaxed way

Stories with omitted words

The teacher reads a story and children are welcome to join with their own ideas to finish the story.

Stories without ending

You read the story till the particulate place and then ask children to figure out their own endings (can be done individually, in pairs or in groups) or for smaller children you can offer 3 different endings and then they can vote for the best ending.

Drama

Play theatre according to the story.

Question session

After reading a story you ask control questions to check if the children have understood the story.

Verbs into activities

Show all the verbs in action, or you can play miming game with words from the story.

3.3.2. Sentence repetition

It enhances vocabulary, intonation and pronunciation.

Low voice and high voice

Repeat new sentences in different voices.

Different intonation

Add emotions when learning sentence repetition, for example, say something in angry/happy/friendly/sad manner.

Using a puppet

Puppet repeats new sentences and children repeat after it, or puppet repeats, making some mistakes and children have to find mistakes and correct them.

Describing a picture

Picture can serve as visual aid.

Action songs

Children show every action they sing about.

Children love movements and they learn through them.

3.3.3. Sound detection and phoneme awareness

Discrimination and production of sounds which differ from a child's mother tongue, recognition of rhyming words and words of various length.

Th – z or s

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W – v

Wide e – narrow e

R

H

Various pronunciation games and exercises

1st activity: Take a lollypop and put it into your mouth. Make round lips and then pronounce w – white.

2nd activity: Take your chin in your hand and pull your mouth open, say (wide) e – bag.

3rd activity: Warm your cold hands, open your mouth and exhale hot air with your mouth open, then say a sound h – house (mouth open, exhaling air).

4th activity: Your tongue is frozen, it does not vibrate, say r – red.

Different length of words

1st activity: Take ropes of various length or a train with several carriages and produce words – big, dangerous.

2dn activity: Clap hands for syllables – big, yellow, orange.

Rhyming words

- o Number of children: 10
- o Place: classroom
- o Material: worksheets
- o Description of the activity:

Listen and color rhyming words (pictures) – bed-red-bag.

3.3.4. Coloring tasks

It includes comprehension check, speaking practice, perspective shift and vocabulary.

Children work in pairs

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Step 1: Each of them draws a monster and then tells his/her partner what the monster looks like.

Step 2: The partner draws a monster in accordance with the description. Later both monsters are compared.

Drawing a picture

Children draw a picture about a particular theme and later describe it to the teacher or group mates.

Questions

Following a new theme, a teacher asks questions and children answer them, as the result the teacher (or another child) draws a picture. 'The Weather' – What season is it? Is it a day or a night? Is it sunny? Is it rainy? Can we see the sun/moon/stars? Is it windy? Are there any clouds? Can we see any people there? What is she/he wearing? What hair has she/he got. How is she/he (happy, sad, angry, surprised)?

Story telling

Children take turns to tell a story and simultaneously draw a picture.

Communication through pictures

Children try to ask simple questions to find out what the other child has drawn. (Has your monster got one head? Has your monster got long/short hair? Has your monster got green/blue hair? Has your monster got five arms? Etc.)

Great assistance in teaching prepositions.

Step 1: Teacher draws a (big) table, a cupboard (with open door), a box, a chair.

Step 2: Teacher asks children to draw something (an apple, an ice cream, a cup cake etc.) on, in, under, next to or between the furniture. (Draw an apple in the cupboard. Draw an ice cream on the table.)

Step 3: Teacher asks what children want to draw and draws it on one side of the board (or small cards with pictures may be used). Then children are invited and match the picture with a

particular place (Put the cupcake on the table). They draw a line from the cupcake to the top of the table. Following this activity, children are asked questions – Where is the cupcake?

3.3.5. Perspective shift

It develops emotional intelligence.

Story telling from different perspective
After reading story from the main character point of view, children try to tell the story from the point of view of different character.

Creating story by looking at drawing of story (well know story for children)
Children create story by choosing one of the different characters from the drawing

Perception pictures
By looking at picture tell the first thing a child sees in the picture by pointing out to other children

3.3.6. Enhancing vocabulary skills

It creates interest in learning foreign language.

Emotions
Teacher shows emotions by using puppets and naming them, repeating emotion which were named by teacher.

Visual aid
Every word you teach you should show with a picture

Different voices

Repeat the same word by using different voice tone and intonation, which will help children to memories words.

Magic box

Teacher names and shows objects which are hidden in the magic box, teacher asks children to name objects which she/he is taking out.

Riddles

Teacher describes objects by using simple words, children need to guess.

3.3.7. Translanguaging

It makes children aware of various nationalities and languages and create respect towards them.

Song in 2 languages

Children listen song in their 1L and then in FL, translate the word which are important for learning language.

Short story in 2 languages (well know story in 1L)

Teacher reads story in FL (story in FL languages should be simplified).

Films in more than 2 languages

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4. Teacher's Roles

4.1. Teacher's role when teaching foreign language

The main role of all teachers as well as the specific language teacher of very young learners is to create conditions for language acquisition by communicating and interacting all the time whatever children are doing. There are, however, several aspects which will enable the teacher to support children's language development in an efficient way. Institutions should consider these areas when choosing and/or training the teachers.

Firstly, the teacher with a proficient level of competence in the target language will provide young learners with an optimal model of the suprasegmental features of the language such as stress and intonation. These are features to which young learners pay particular attention. Some researchers are committed to the view that this is the best way to learn the target language, because the teacher's mistakes could have a long-term negative effect on children. However, we have to be aware that this is not the only situation found across Europe. In many educational situations, teachers who are engaged in conveying a foreign language, may not have a high level of proficiency. This is especially true since English is becoming a lingua franca, spoken with different accent and in some cases with slightly different grammars. American English and British English are mutually intelligible, but present many differences at different levels (phonology, lexicon, grammatical options). In such circumstances, according to some authors, the fact that children hear a variety of different speakers with different levels of proficiency is not necessarily hurting, because children are not merely imitating one speakers.

Another area we should pay attention to are the teacher's **didactic and planning skills**. Working with very young learners includes implementing methods and strategies relevant for this particular target group. The language development activities focus on the "here and now" principle when children learn through their current multisensory experience. The ability to perceive things with all four senses enables them to remember the moment and the language

utterances they came across. Ideally, these moments are connected with positive experiences such as songs, chants, games and stories. The child's positive feeling can be enhanced by routine activities, where the child has an opportunity to practice the language in a safe environment. Such activities can include an opening song, everyday morning circle where the same questions such as weather, day of the week, etc. are discussed on a daily basis.

Implementing a **rich variety of resources** is going to support the multisensory learning. Teachers need to have a collection of resources available for everyday use. A suitable library or shared folders amongst colleagues will help new teachers in particular. Such a resource library could include toys, songs, chants, real objects, craft and art activities, pictures, story books, videos and DVD.

The teacher's **social skills** are another key element that we should consider. Caregivers/parents are the most essential people for the majority of children. Children naturally adopt their caregivers' views and priorities. If the teacher succeeds in establishing a positive relationship with the caregiver/s, it is likely to enhance the language development process as well. Ideally, caregivers can support the process by implementing some enjoyable activities such as stories, songs, books and/or cartoons. But even if the teacher cooperates and communicates with a family that does not get involved in the language development process, the child can still sense the mutual trust and respect which will benefit the language acquisition process. This means that **cooperating with the children's caregivers is important to teachers in supporting children's language development and identity development** as knowledgeable and participants in languages and cultural practices (Kultti & Pramling, 2017).

Teachers should have a chance to gain sufficient amount of **teaching practice** with this particular age group. During the initial teacher training at university students can observe other teachers teaching and look at their lessons from different perspectives. Another possibility is co-teaching with another teacher and thus learning to organize activities in a safe environment. Such partial steps can lead to teaching under an experienced colleague's supervision and finally teaching alone. In conclusion, very young learners are a specific target

group and working with them requires special knowledge and skills that not every language teacher has. Schools should be aware of the teacher's role by hiring and supporting suitable candidates. It is also important both for teacher student as well as for teachers to keep up with the research field, and build their work on up-to-date knowledge.

Last be not the least, research has shown that even though the teacher does not know that child's native language, it is important that there is an allowing attitude and interest by the teacher to support each child to use his or her languages, since this will give children a signal that all languages are important and it contributes to developing a multicultural society where all languages – and thus, speakers – are recognised as valuable.

4.2. Teacher's role when teaching first and second language

The teacher should be **responsive to children's attempts to communicate their experience** and, secondly, being able to **make children engaged in communicative activities** is an important skill to have as an early childhood education teacher with the task of providing developmental support to young language learners.

Furthermore, **engaging children in language developing activities should be an integrated part of everyday activities**, rather than a stand-alone one. The reason for this is that learning one (or several) language(s) at the same time always means to learn about something (else), since language is used to communicate about and make sense of something. This means that children's language skills are facilitated at the same time as their knowledge about different phenomena. **Shifting between speaking about something (a phenomenon) and speaking about how we speak about it (i.e., meta-communicating)** is therefore important.

Important aspect in teaching young children's first and second language
To summarise, the important work of teachers to support first, second and additional language learning includes:
1.   Being responsive to children's attempts to communicate

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2. Being able to engage children in communicative activities (of many kinds: storytelling, rhyming, language play…)

3. Building upon and relating different semiotic means (pictures, music, speech, gestures) in mutual sense-making activities

4. Making evident that all the languages of the children in the group are valued

5. Making also language a content – shifting between speaking about something (a phenomenon) and how we speak about it (meta-communicating)

6. Building developing relationships with the children's caregivers – collaborators in developing all children's language(s)

7. Seeing all languages as resources to acknowledge and develop

The multitude of skills required of teachers implies the importance of

8. Competence development for teachers – supporting teachers in being updated on research

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