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iLike "Byod" in Language Learning

Tord Talmo, Trond Morten Thorseth, Robin Støckert
Sør-Trøndelag University College (HiST)
Tord.Talmo@hist.no, Trond.M.Thorseth@hist.no, robin.stockert@hist.no

Abstract
This article will present the background for iLike. iLike is a Comenius multilateral pilot project, targeting students in the age 13-18 learning English as a Foreign Language. The article will explain why it is benefical to utilize handheld devices like Smartphones and tablets in a language learning situation and introduce a new software to enable students and teachers to learn and teach in a more efficient and inspiring way then the current situation.
Keywords: languages, logic, peer learning outcome

1. Background
When it comes to foreign language teaching (FLT), innovations in technology have not yet been properly researched and taken into account, although the use of multimedia computing, the Internet, language laboratories and other technology has become common in classrooms all over the world. This is mainly due to the assumption that new possibilities of language learning by Internet and other computer interfaces are just a new form for already established approaches and methods. It was widely accepted that traditional exercises and activities (albeit communicative, grammar-based, etc.) have just been copy/pasted to the digital form, with the advantage of distance learning, faster distributing of materials to the students and much lesser time for students to finish them. But could it be possible to help students understand the logic of how language works by utilizing modern technology and a new approach towards language training? This is what the LLP Comenius project named **Identifying the Logical structure of languages by use of new Interactive mobile services, new diagnostic training methods for development of Key competences, and new Evaluation methods introducing assessment for learning practices (iLike)** [1] aims at investigating.
iLike will be an avenue for developing analytical, structural and creative diagnostic language thinking among secondary school children and high school students, through blended learning activities which can be integrated into existing school curricula as complementary educational tools. Activities will encourage children and students to analyze texts in order to break down selected language items. The activities will demonstrate solutions which aim at being the result of collective, creative peer learning problem- solving processes. iLike targets English as a foreign language (EFL), and specifically look at English verbs. This article presents the background and reasons for the project, and points at the needs for a strategy towards utilizing mobile technology in language training.

2. Methodology
The consortium in iLike consists of five partners; Sør-Trøndelag University College (Norway), HiST Contract Research (Norway), Centre for Flexible Learning (Sweden), University of Thessaly (Greece) and OS Drinka Pavlovic (Serbia). Together the consortium have both methodological expertize, programming skills and experienced teachers at both secondary and high school levels. iLike aims at introducing an alternative in how grammar is thought in secondary and high schools in the partnering countries today. This means that they are not supposed to just digitalize the task and cases being given to students today, but also create new ways of allowing students themselves acquire the logic behind conjugation, variables in syntax and differences in meaning when changing vocabulary. This requires a new methodology, drawing more on student involvement and peer instruction. In order to achieve this, the consortium will focus mainly on three things.
First they will produce user requirements, where the current state of grammar teaching is identified. This will be achieved through looking at national plans and guidelines for teaching EFL, curriculum at schools within the target group, teaching books and best practices through interviews with teachers in the four partnering countries. With this as a background, the consortium will produce several cases to be used in class and by individual students, which allow the students to actually manipulate, look into and create new meanings according to context, intention and text internal elements before they submit their answers for the peers and teacher to examine. A vital part in the learning process will be a form of self-assessment before the students submit, in the form of a check list, built with the grammatical

rules of the task in the background. The list will not provide the students with the actual rules of grammar, just give a hint to lead the students thoughts in the right direction. Through these hints, students should be given a chance to understand the rule behind, and hence get a better understanding of why it should be like that.
The student's handheld devices, allows a seamless and cost effective way of bringing technology of interaction into the class. To make this possible the consortium wishes to utilize students' own handheld devices, like SmartPhones, computers, iPods and similar. The second aim in the project will be to build a Logic Language Service (LLS), an online service built on flex/Air, Java and Python. Since the consortium focus on EFL, we use an open source library, Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK), that contain all the grammatical elements needed for the project. But the main component in LLS on the interface side will be written as a standard web interface (html5). With the LLS the students will be able to do three things; 1) move around words on their own screen in order to create new meanings and more correct sentence build up, 2) look into different possibilities according to choice of verb used in the sentence (i.e. synonyms, negations and compound verbs) and 3) choose the correct conjugation, both according to tense and numbers. It might also be an opportunity to build the check list into the LLS, as a "hint generator" that the students can push in order to get a hint instantly.
The big advantage with utilizing handheld devices in the classroom is the opportunity to get more voices heard on the same question. This leads us to the third big task in iLike; finding and developing good ways to involve all the students, and the teacher in the same process. There are several analogue and digital ways to do this. Peer instruction, peer learning, word clouds and class discussion are all methods that the consortium will research, but we will also look into the opportunity of utilizing a student response system (SRS) developed at HiST [2]. This means that when the students have submitted their preferred answer, the LLS reduces the amount of possible solutions to 3-5, which the teacher sends back for a second voting. After the second round, the teacher will comment on the results, explaining both the correct alternative(s), and why the others are less correct or incorrect. Using this method, the students will get a sense of being important, involved and heard in the learning process/environment.
iLike will focus on letting the students themselves be involved in the learning process, and reverse the way students learn rules in grammar. Instead of providing students with a rule, providing them tasks to drill that rule and correcting them afterwards, the consortium will present a case in which the students work, manipulate, discuss and self-assess their solutions before the teacher corrects and/or provide the correct answer. This will, as well as teaching the rules, provide the students with a cognitive awareness about the way we create language, and make sure that the students are more capable of producing and reproducing meaningful, fluent and correct sentences/texts in the future.
The consortium will have to take into account both the digital competence, the level of grammar understanding and differences between schools and countries in the target group (13-18 years), and also the digital divide between teachers and students in order to reach their targets.

3. Possible outcomes

The main aim for iLike is to develop innovative teaching and learning-to-learn basic skills, and new online LLS that address vocabulary, syntax and conjugation of verbs in EFL. iLike should enable teachers and students to both investigate, manipulate and produce interactive language content by use of the latest mobile technology. By introducing mobile devices into the language classroom, students will be starting to use a new engaging channel for distribution and interactive restructuring of language content.
The consortium will also look into the possibility of designing new methods for turning language testing into an area for actual learning, utilizing a new language diagnostics method that involves peer learning assessment through the use of handheld devices. A possibility could be to let the students work through cases in the LLS regularly throughout the year, and letting the results count as a percentage of the final grade.
The iLike project addresses all stakeholders in secondary- and high school education. Specifically the consortium wants to reach learners who will benefit from enhanced learning activities on building fundamental learning to learn skills. But iLike also wants to improve the teacher's didactical skills and their opportunities in class, both through providing them with ICT skills and improving their ability to integrate them into blended learning activities.
There are also additional stakeholders who are expected to benefit from the outcomes of iLike. Policy makers will be presented evaluation results showing relevance, applicability, acceptance and effectiveness of the proposed language methodologies and applied technology, and will be urged to

implement these kinds of thoughts into the national curriculum. Parents are an implicit part of the students' education, and they will gain insight and knowledge concerning their children's education and progress, and can also be more involved through the online services provided via LLS. iLike also aims to enlighten the general public and provide society with more skilled language students.
The consortium wants to achieve these goals through intensive dissemination and exploitation strategies. Each of the partnering institutions will arrange at least one seminar, inviting schools in the target group from the whole regional area. In total, the consortium wants to reach several hundred tutors and even more students through these seminars. They will also produce at least ten articles published in peer review papers, as well as present the project at conferences related to language and ICT.
All the results, outcomes and articles can be found at the iLike project page [1].

4. Conclusion and future perspectives

iLike is considered as a beginning in the field of language education. More and more students own some handheld smartphone, ipod, iPad or similar. Teachers and the educational system should be ahead of the development and utilize this technology. Digital literacy includes creativity and innovation not only towards new technology and systems, but also towards new methodology that actually take into account the possibilities the new technology brings with it. It is easy to see ways to use technology in order to learn languages, but for now this technology is mainly created with the idea that the individual can use it on their own, not in a creative process with others. The available systems for language learning are so far mainly produced in order to digitalize task and cases the students just as easily could have done with pen and paper. iLike focuses on creating variations to this way of thinking about language training, and aims to overcome the barrier that many students sense when it comes to understanding the logic behind languages. iLike is also an innovation when it comes to student response systems, opening for text response questions and answers that are easy to utilize in a training session.
iLike starts with EFL, drawing on already existing open source data bases, but the LLS will be created as a language neutral service, meaning that it should be possible both looking into different languages as well as different word groups like nouns and adjectives in the future.

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