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MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES AS A BRIDGE TO PROFICIENCY IN LANGUAGE OF ORIGIN

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Migrants and refugees come from very different geographical areas and have left their home countries for very different reasons. They may have come to the host countries to join a spouse, to seek better job opportunities or to flee violence and persecution. Such people usually have very different experiences of education: some acquired no formal schooling and others obtained a high level of education and held relevant academic and professional qualifications. Some join settled communities, while others live in isolation.

In 2016 588,900 first residence permits were issued to Ukrainians in the countries of the European Union. This is about 17.3% of the whole amount of residence permits given to non-EU citizens [3]. Employment, family reunification and education are accounted among the main reasons to ask for the residence permit.

The results of the research conducted in Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal among children and adults with Ukrainian migrant background [1] show that children are usually well-informed about Ukrainian political historical issues; easily name their favourite Ukrainian fairy-tales and dishes and other etc. This is because their parents even living abroad try to be involved in the Ukrainian environment either in everyday communication at home, at the church or during their self-studies. Native language is considered by such category of citizens as a means for both to preserve their identity and to get access to the original information.

Besides, the European Union recognizes the proficiency in language of origin to be of great importance for immigrant pupils. Proficiency can make it easier for these pupils to learn the language of instruction and thus stimulate their development in all areas. In most European countries, educational support measures exist to enable

immigrant pupils to learn their mother tongue. Such EU countries as Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden have already issued regulations or recommendations on the school-based provision of mother tongue tuition for immigrant pupils, others (Estonia, France, Slovenia) have recently taken steps to enable the range of foreign languages taught to correspond more closely to the mother tongues of immigrant pupils [2: 19-20]. However, in most countries studying the language of origin is realized in the framework of informal or non-formal education.

The researches point that in the time of technologies' rapid development, non-formal means of education become more and more popular. Formal environment or lessons are not necessary now to learn the peculiarities of the Ukrainian syntax, vocabulary and phraseology. Mobile devices can open an access to the information and facilitate learning in a number of ways as:

- a 'communication bridge' allowing easy interaction between people from a wide range of backgrounds when information can easily be passed across the language and ethnicity divisions of a classroom;
- a 'community bridge' helping migrants to build links with different communities including their children's school, their workplace and within their learning community etc.;
- an 'independence bridge' offering a highly-valued level of independence to the user and helping to provide a bridge with society at large, much of this is related to the user being able to search the internet for information or the use of mobile applications or apps [4: 133-136].

Besides, mobile devices are having an impact on the way in which literacy skills in the language of origin are acquired or developed. Speaking about studying the Ukrainian language migrants can have profit from:

- *online courses* (e.g. «Лайфхаки з української мови» (Life hacks of the Ukrainian language) consists of pieces of advice to get knowledge about the peculiarities of the Ukrainian language by means of mnemonic techniques. The course consists of 16 lectures (5 weeks, 4 hours per week), tests, open tasks and

interactive workbook [https://courses.edera.com/courses/Osvitoria_and_EdEra/lifehacks101/lifehacks101/about/];

- *sites* (e.g. in linguistic portal «Мова. info» («Language.info»)) spelling rules, a collection of dictionaries and textbooks, a help desk with answers to the most common questions can be found. An opportunity for interactive testing is also available [<http://studway.com.ua/vivchai-ukrainsku/>];

- *communities in social media* (e.g. Facebook community «Слова, що нас збагачують» («Words that can improve our language»)) proposes pictures with rare and very beautiful Ukrainian words that are easy to remember thanks to illustrations [<https://www.facebook.com/Pravdyvo/?fref=ts>];

- *YouTube channels* (e.g. «СловОпис» («SlovOpys»)) presents interactive dictionary of rarely used and some modern Ukrainian words in short video format [<https://www.youtube.com/user/Slovopys/featured/>];

- *mobile applications* (e.g. «Український правопис» («Ukrainian spelling»)) offers spelling rules in tables, exceptions, examples and comments).

Web-based information is usually designed for large number of users having different levels of language proficiency. Thus, such non-formal means can be useful for both children so as to start learning native language or to develop own literacy and language skills (for example, to prepare individually to pass independent testing in Ukraine to be enrolled to the Ukrainian universities) and adults so as to remember, develop or renew the previously acquired knowledge. Anyway, this gives learners the opportunity to become responsible for creating their own learning resources as well as determining the shape and form of their learning. Students can be encouraged to work independently as well as in collaboration with each other and begin to view learning as something that can be fun and engaging while realizing the value of mobile devices as learning tools.

So, to preserve their identity and language the Ukrainian migrants and their children have several options to be involved in, mostly on informal or non-formal levels. Together with family, church and migrant associations they can have profit from self-study using different mobile devices. For such people with migrant

background they can act as a bridge offering the opportunity to make links between the education that takes place inside the classroom and the outside world, between learning with peers at the same time, i.e. synchronous learning and studying at other times and places convenient to them, i.e. asynchronous learning. Proficiency development in language of origin contributes to maintaining Ukrainian cultural identity in the host countries and passing it on to the future generations.

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