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TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION: KNOWLEDGE, PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT: Even though approaches to foreign language learning and teaching have represented one of the most innovative and developed fields of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary academic activity in applied linguistics in recent decades (Council of Europe 2001, 2018, 2020; Filipović 2015b, 2019), foreign language teacher education, as its integral part, has not been given sufficient attention. Within the transdisciplinary paradigm, foreign language teacher education is based on constructivism and connectivism in the classrooms and on communication with all interested parties. Such an endeavor necessarily implies a shift from traditional top-down language education policy based on language management (Spolsky 2009) towards bottom-up language leadership (Filipović 2015a, 2015b; Filipović & Đurić 2021, etc.). The transdisciplinary approach to foreign language education can significantly improve the schooling of young learners as it creates possibilities for community engagement and situated and distributed learning and teaching at the age when students are still “untouched” by traditional educational ideologies.

Key words: transdisciplinarity, language education policy, teacher education, learning community of practice, language management, language leadership, knowledge construction, critical open pedagogy, situated and distributed learning and teaching.

TRANSDISCIPLINARNI PRISTUP OBRAZOVANJU NASTAVNIKA STRANIH JEZIKA: ZNANJE, UČEŠĆE I OSNAŽIVANJE U FORMIRANJU ZAJEDNICA ZNANJA

APSTRAKT: Iako pristupi učenju i nastavi stranih jezika poslednjih decenija predstavljaju jedno od najinovativnijih i najrazvijenijih oblasti interdisciplinarnih i transdisciplinarnih akademskih aktivnosti u primenjenoj lingvistici (Savet Evrope 2001, 2018, 2020; Filipović 2015b, 2019), obrazovanju nastavnika stranih jezika se još uvek ne posvećuje dovoljna pažnja. U okviru transdisciplinarnog paradigme, obrazovanje nastavnika stranih jezika zasniva se na konstruktivizmu i konektivizmu u učionici kao i na interakciji sa svim zainteresovanim stranama. Takva promena pristupa nužno podrazumeva prelaz sa tradicionalne jezičke politike odozgo-nadole, zasnovane na jezičkom menadžmentu (Spolski 2009) u smeru jezičkog liderstva, odnosno jezičke politike odozdo-nagore (Filipović 2015a, 2015b; Filipović & Đurić 2021, itd.). Transdisciplinarni pristup

obrazovanju nastavnika stranih jezika može značajno poboljšati ishode učenika na mlađem uzrastu jer otvara prostor za angažovanje čitave zajednice i situirano i distribuirano učenje i nastavu u procesu sazrevanja, kada deca još uvek nisu „izložena” tradicionalnim obrazovnim ideologijama.

Ključne reči: transdisciplinarnost, jezička obrazovna politika, obrazovanje nastavnika, obrazovne delatne zajednice, jezički menadžment, jezičko liderstvo, konstrukcija znanja, kritička otvorena pedagogija, situirano i distribuirano učenje i podučavanje.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on a new approach to foreign language teachers' education and training (pre-service and in-service), with an emphasis on their empowerment and agency, which should be underlined and purposefully developed through a transdisciplinary agenda in language education policy and planning. This type of foreign language teacher training must pay special attention to language leadership, connectivity, networking and *bona fide* interaction among all the parties engaged in the teaching and learning process (students, teachers, parents, school administration, local and regional communities, language planners, etc.).

A transdisciplinary, socially engaged approach to language education policy and planning has been gaining ground in recent years. Transdisciplinarity requires activation of heterogeneous competences and expertise (not only those traditionally found within the academia) in the problem-solving process (Thompson Klein 2001: 43–57). Consequently, it is directly related to knowledge construction based on collaboration, dialogue, (auto)reflection and multiple points of view, as well as on social action, heterarchy, leadership, empowerment and emancipation (Filipović 2015a, 2015b, 2019; Filipović et al. 2022). Even though approaches to foreign language learning and teaching have been one of the most innovative fields of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary academic activity in applied linguistics in recent decades (Council of Europe 2001, 2018, 2020; Filipović 2015b, 2019), teacher education, as its integral part, has not been given sufficient attention.

Higher education, as the pivotal point of foreign language teacher education for all students' ages and schooling levels, is herein outlined as an innovative space in which learning communities of practice of future language teachers are created, in which leaders emerge empowered to become agents of critical open pedagogy, ready to adapt general educational guidelines and official requirements to actual learning and teaching contexts they live and work in. Critical pedagogy was developed in the second half of the 20th century in response to educational models which have traditionally fostered social inequalities and marginalization of specific ethnic, racial and social groups. In the 21st century critical pedagogy has become “open” as it calls attention to

the need for an equal access to quality education for students of all ages and all social, racial, ethnic and other groups in the virtual domain (for a more detailed account, see, e.g., Cangialiosi & Bledsoe 2021). It is noteworthy that in spite their proclaimed social and ethical relevance, critical and critical open pedagogy still remain a distant objective in many formal educational contexts.

The above outlined shift in foreign language teacher education calls for an overall change in approaches to language education policy design and development based on top-down language management (Spolsky 2009), requiring a step away from the generally imposed “national curriculum”, towards bottom-up language leadership (Filipović 2015a). In general terms, in education based on language leadership, teachers and their students of all ages are encouraged to connect, learn together and create knowledge relevant to each individual, family, local, regional, national and international community. The rationale behind such a position is that only through a continuous and open dialogue among all interested parties can students (and their teachers) develop not only traditionally acknowledged “encyclopedic knowledge”, but also find an educational space for their personal and collective experiences relevant inside and outside of their classrooms.

2. A BRIEF CONTEXTUALIZATION: MULTIDISCIPLINARITY, INTERDISCIPLINARITY, TRANSDISCIPLINARITY IN ACADEMIA AND IN EDUCATION

In terms of the development of approaches to scientific research and research method design, joining competences from different academic disciplines is not a new phenomenon. However, the nature and the outcomes of such attempts have varied across time in accordance with our understanding of the objectives of academic endeavor. Multidisciplinarity, as chronologically the oldest among the three approaches, presents a simple summing up of knowledge from different disciplines without any cross-sectional interchanges among researchers, all of who remain within their own monodisciplinary frameworks (Tella 2005; Alvargonzález 2011). Interdisciplinarity, which emerged from the need to understand researched phenomena in their integrity, in contextualized and complex ways which allow for a holistic account of their nature, gained ground in the second half of the 20th century, calling for an “integrative objective (formation) and integration among disciplines” (Daneshpour & Kwegyir-Afful 2022: 1051). The idea of synthesizing and connecting disciplines through interactions of theoretical postulates (theories, models, hypotheses, terms and definitions) and research procedures (e.g., combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies) not only supports a search for more coherent and

comprehensive solutions, clearer understanding and more credible (trustworthy) explanations of researched phenomena, but has also led to the development of new academic disciplines whose names serve as markers of their interdisciplinary nature (e.g., sociolinguistics, quantum physics, biochemistry, astrophysics, cognitive anthropology, etc.) (Filipović 2015a). Finally, transdisciplinarity can be understood as socially engaged interdisciplinarity which extends beyond the academic realm into the real world. It is “a complex process which does not respect boundaries of scientific disciplines: ‘[...] transdisciplinarity compels a sort of border-crossing – a need to step outside the limiting frames and methods of phenomenon specific disciplines’ (Davis & Phelps 2005: 2)” (Filipović 2015a: 60). It is a holistic, systemic approach which seeks to understand research phenomena as complex, open systems whose parts stand in continuous and multiple interactions that cannot be accounted for without a thorough and in-depth insight into “... the relation of its parts to one another; the relation of it to others culturally or historically associated with it; the relation of it to those who in some sense construct it; and the relation of it to realities conceived as lying outside of it” (Geertz 1980: 177, cit. in Filipović 2015a: 38). Moreover, transdisciplinary paradigm defines knowledge as a *common social good*, contextualized and created through constructive dialogue among scientific disciplines and the real world.

By its nature, transdisciplinarity is “collaborative, dialogical, reflective and generative” (Filipović 2015a: 60), which implies that if understood as an approach to education, it requires a paradigm shift from traditional knowledge transfer (“siloe educational system” (Daneshpour & Kwegyir-Afful 2022: 1047)) to constructivist and connectivist (i.e., digital constructivist (Siemens 2005)) knowledge creation in purposeful learning communities. In other words, the transdisciplinary educational paradigm suggests that all knowledge is socially constructed and context dependent, as “(e)ven ‘pure’ scientific facts are often socially constructed from assumptions, expectations, and conventions rather than directly verified” (Phelan 2001: 128). Consequently, we have to be aware not only of the fact that “the social organization of the scientific community has a bearing on the knowledge produced by that community” (Longino 2019), but also that educational models based on different types of knowledge created within given scientific and social communities are underlined by scientific ideologies, privileged positions and hegemonies, which give students only partial and often skewed interpretation of the world surrounding them:

(The) vital measures in experimental transdisciplinary teachings are the improvement of the student awareness of various disciplinary terminologies and expressions to ease communications and the development of critical thinking in students to grow their capabilities to view the world from different angles. (Daneshpour & Kwegyir-Afful 2022: 1048)

What implications do the above statements carry for foreign language teacher education, especially in early childhood language learning? Experts in foreign language teaching methodologies have long ago recognized the need to develop students' communicative and intercultural competences. And even though they have recognized the relevance of students' agency in the classrooms, the connections with the real world and real-world situations outside of the classroom still remain a great challenge for many foreign language teachers. This is especially the case in early childhood education in which foreign languages are often understood as optative subjects within formal curricula, still burdened by stereotypes regarding the poor success of early foreign language learning and erroneous correlation between the overall cognitive and L1 development and introduction of foreign languages at an early age (see Filipović and Đurić 2021 for a detailed discussion). A transdisciplinary approach to foreign language education for students of all ages promises a creation of new, innovative teaching spaces which would "make the traditional triangle of passive education (content, teacher, and student) invalid" (Daneshpour & Kwegyir-Afful 2022: 1048). Transdisciplinary foreign language education, as will be shown in the next section, allows for distributed and situated learning and teaching in which educational contexts are expended beyond traditional classrooms, and in which education becomes an integral aspect of every experience in every person's life. Young learners of foreign languages are expected to be particularly prone to accept, support and find joy and motivation in transdisciplinary endeavors which make direct correlations with their own life experiences and enrich them in continuous interaction with their families and members of local, regional and larger communities.

3. FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION – THE EXISTING PARADIGM AND POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE TOWARD TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

"Foreign language education, in line with current innovation trends all over Europe, may be viewed within the framework of an interparadigmatic change which is characterized by the generally accepted feeling that language is the most significant social activity human beings are able to perform" (Vez 2008: 1). However, even though foreign language teaching methods and corresponding classroom activities have been in the focus of different scientific disciplines since the early 20th century, until recently not much attention has been paid to the construction of future teachers' cognitive cultural models regarding their agentic role in the classroom, in the community and in the institutions dedicated to language education policy and planning (Filipović 2015a, 2015b). Consequently, to

my knowledge, no systematic introduction of transdisciplinarity in foreign language teacher education has been noted in language education policy design, development and implementation in Serbia or elsewhere.

I am fully aware of the relevance and importance of documents aimed at supporting national and international language education policies in defining curriculum frameworks and providing institutional support for foreign language teaching and learning based on ideas of plurilingualism, pluriculturalism and intercultural competence as gateways to European mobility and enhanced international communication designed and promoted by the Council of Europe and the European Union (CEFR; ELP; European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, etc.). These documents indeed provide a necessary space for a critical overview of the existing language education policies and are a possible excellent starting point for opening a new critical dialogue among all stakeholders in educational systems. However, it still remains to be seen if and when transdisciplinary approaches including socio-cultural, political, historical, epistemological and strategic factors that come into play when foreign language teaching is planned and carried out will become an integral part of pre-service (university) and in-service (life-long learning) education.

The overall success of foreign language teacher education has for a very long time been a truly interdisciplinary endeavor in international contexts and in Serbia as well. It has included and engaged a number of academic disciplines, such as: applied linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics (communicative competence), psychology (cognitive and social), pedagogy, didactics, cognitive science, cultural studies, information technology and information literacy, etc.

However, challenges have also always been present and have become more accentuated in this historical moment of the ever-expanding globalization and transnational movement, which place additional requirements on foreign language teaching:

Foreign language teachers presently face a great challenge not only to teach a language in the most appropriate way that would satisfy the personal needs and interests of their students (as well as help their students develop the most efficient learning strategies and prepare them for autonomous life-long learning), but also to fight and eliminate negative stereotypes, cultural, ethnic, racial and other types of intolerance and ignorance among the students, their peers, their parents and the overall community. (...) They need to be aware of their own crucial agentive role in impacting individuals (of all ages) and inviting them to respond positively to a great variation in historical, cultural, and other features of speech communities and

polities whose languages they learn, on one hand, and to the cultures and traditions of the polities they live in, on the other hand. (Filipović 2015b: 47)

That is why I believe transdisciplinary education might provide us with an adequate response to the challenges that most foreign language teachers face. Transdisciplinary education equals contextualized education (psychological, cognitive, social, physical, affective) (Kansanen 2003, cit. in Harjanne & Tella 2007) as it provides conditions for individual and collective empowerment and agency at all educational levels that extends beyond classroom walls. The concept of empowerment (or, maybe better to say the creation of conditions for personal and collective empowerment) has proven to be extremely important in pre-service and in-service foreign language teacher education, as it helps all the future and current teachers to better understand their position in the school system and in the community, and to develop auto-reflection and a critical stand toward their personal and collective assumptions about knowledge creation in varied socio-cultural, economic, political, religious, etc. contexts.

The teacher's pedagogical purposiveness is usually guided by her conceptions of human beings, knowledge and learning, as well as her world of values (her axiological worldview), though she might not be explicitly aware of that. (Uljens 1997: 40, 60.)

The student's purposiveness, too, is related to his relatively unclearly-recognised conceptions. In addition, the student's and the teacher's purposiveness in a teaching context are directed by their personality factors and the conceptions of the foreign language and the foreign language teaching–studying–learning process based on prior knowledge and prior experiences, as well as their pre-understanding rooted in their life histories. (Hajanne & Tella 2007: 212)

3.1. Transdisciplinarity and open critical pedagogy

Transdisciplinary education can be defined as a constructivist education in which attention is paid to affective, psychological, educational, cultural, social, religious, ethnic, racial and other aspects of teacher and student populations. It is very easy to make connections between the above listed factors and the concept of open critical pedagogy. Open critical pedagogy favors and puts forward dialogue, agency and empowerment in collaborative knowledge construction, along with the notion of the need to continuously work on critical self-awareness (of students, teachers, local and larger communities). Transdisciplinary education through open critical pedagogy steps outside of the classroom and:

- challenges dominant academic discourses and seeks to introduce and argue for social justice inside and outside of our classrooms (e.g., Wildman &

Davis 2000; Goodman 2011; Riolfi & Barzotto 2012; Watts & Hodgson 2019, etc.);

- takes into account the difference between “dominant knowledge and difficult knowledge” (Norton & Toohey 2004; Freire 2000). The concept of “difficult knowledge” defines emotions and actions in the educational process which contrast canonical knowledge and questions the ideology of scientific truth and value (Pitt & Britzman 2003, cit. in Filipović 2015a: 79). Dominant knowledge refers to teaching and learning which insists on “the *politics of science*, defined as institutionalized, epistemological orientations and methodological procedures used to identify and analyze phenomena in a wide range of scientific disciplines” (Filipović 2015a: 11), i.e., it refers to the interpretation of selected educational materials as uncontested truths within formal educational systems. Transdisciplinary education seeks to find ways and means to account for and validate different types of knowledge and competences found in deprived economic and educational contexts. It fosters a continuous and open dialogue among all interested parties which allows students (and their teachers) to develop not only traditionally acknowledged “encyclopedic knowledge”, but also find educational space for their personal and collective experiences relevant inside and outside of their classrooms;
- requires open and free access to quality education that emphasizes the role of IT tools and open science which assure continuous access to academic and other resources in both traditional and online environments which are within reach to all students regardless of their economic or social status. This, of course, needs to include critical digital literacy as an integral aspect of the educational process¹;
- is based on a “culturally sensitive” (Lincoln & Denzin 2005) approach to education (which is concerned with a wide range of ideologies, cultural models and needs of all stakeholders related to “(among other things) economical, political and other orientations of local communities and individual students and their parents (affective and other attitudes toward foreign languages, their speakers and cultures as well as the perception of

¹ For further information on open science and open critical pedagogy, see: *Open Science and Education Practice ontology*, <https://qubeshub.org/publications/2224/1>; for information on critical digital competences, see: *DigComp The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens*, https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp_en.

languages as economic and other resources)” (Filipović 2015a: 100), in order to eradicate social, racial, ethnic, cultural inequalities and hierarchies, marginalization, stigmatization and other types of intolerance and ignorance;

- relies on the readiness for social action, which stems from an overarching academic paradigm calling for a “a new ethic – communitarian, egalitarian, democratic, critical, caring, engaged, performative social justice oriented [education], characterized by a sense of ‘interpersonal responsibility’” (Lincoln & Denzin 2005: 1118, cit. in Filipović 2015a: 120).

Figure 1 below provides a graphic overview of a possible approach to transdisciplinary, socially engaged critical education of future foreign language teachers.

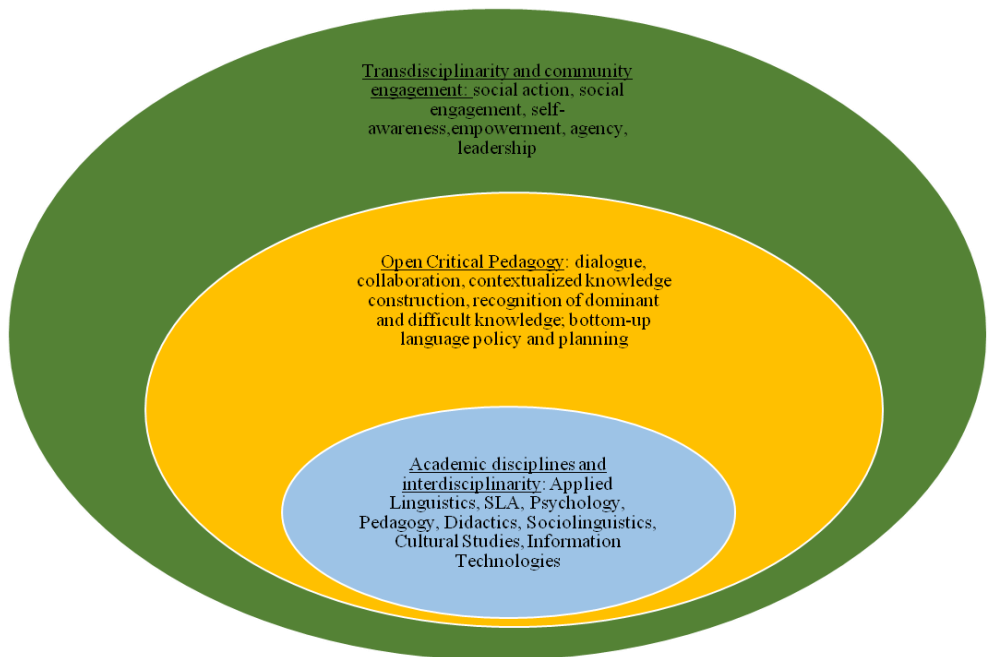


Figure 1. Example of a possible paradigm shift toward transdisciplinary foreign language teacher education

4. TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND SITUATED AND DISTRIBUTED LEARNING AND TEACHING

It may have been the COVID 19 pandemic that drew closer attention to the problems of formal education across the world (e.g., the United Nations organized an outdoor installation “Pandemic classroom” in New York on March 4, 2021, as a “solemn reminder of the classrooms in every corner of the world that remain empty”²). However, the ideas behind constructivism, connectivism, cross-curricular, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to knowledge creation have been among us much longer. A comprehensive literature review of challenges and needs for transdisciplinary education written by Daneshpour & Kwegyir-Afful (2022) concludes with the following remarks:

Real-life problems contain abundant ambiguities and uncertainties, necessitating a learning and education process that connects different disciplines such as art, science, technology, and engineering to yield problem-based and creative learning approaches. However, the lack of solid guidance in the extant academic literature for implementing pilot transdisciplinary experimenting is notable. Nonetheless, teachers can play an essential role in this process, and the unique opportunity of transdisciplinary education can be initially enhanced by reshaping teachers’ interpretations of pedagogy, or “how teachers learn to teach”, considering the incorporation of science and society, explicitly (Johnson 2019, p. 172). In a transdisciplinary team, members are not considered as “jack(s) of all trades”, but rather should be able to “draw on the expertise of others” (Cumming & Wong, 2012, p. 133). (Daneshpour & Kwegyir-Afful 2022: 1066)

Milan Petrović, an educational leader, provides an effective description of the concept by applying a nautical metaphor: “We should give up the safety of the port, from which sooner or later we would all have to set sail, to develop courage and responsibility with the confidence that each and every one among us will find the knowledge compass within oneself” (Petrović 2022: 77, in Filipović et al, 2022).

One of the key concepts of the transdisciplinary approach to foreign language education is herein understood as an expanded educational space which

² *Empty Desks At U.N. Represent Millions Of Children Who Have Missed School In Pandemic* <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/03/04/973660093/empty-desks-at-u-n-represent-millions-of-children-who-have-missed-school-in-pand>

involves not only schools, but also public and private spaces in which education should be continuously taking place and in which everybody “draws on the expertise of others”. In other words, transdisciplinary foreign language education should occur all around us within situated, distributed learning and teaching communities, i.e., not only in schools but also all over our villages, towns and cities, metaphorically redesigned into teaching and learning spaces and places which recognize, support and enhance “different learning and teaching styles, accommodate different learning opportunities, and face challenges of access to quality education for all” (Petrović 2022: 78). This is of particular importance to young learners who most often than not learn freely³ and without inhibitions (Jovanović et al. 2022: 16) and are ready to apply their communicative and intercultural competences in a variety of social situations and communicative actions. By extending the learning and teaching opportunities beyond the classroom in a transdisciplinary manner in which young learners, teachers, parents, care-givers, local community experts and leaders (e.g., museum curators, library workers, members of theater communities, medical doctors and nurses, biologists and botanists, engineers, physicists, to name only a few examples of activists who might be interested in working with small children in design and development of transdisciplinary projects in different languages) come together to organize projects and events for different audiences in which foreign (as well as minority or regional) languages are presented, their cultures and tangible and intangible heritage introduced and intercultural communicative competence affirmed and promoted. Not only learning and academic competences are employed in such projects, as they necessarily serve as a basis for short-term and long-term development of general social, citizenship and democratic competences (Jovanović et al. 2022: 23). It goes without saying that such transdisciplinary activities are supported by the already highly developed methods and techniques in communicative foreign language learning and teaching, such as task-based language teaching (TBLT) and content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

An inspiring example of the transdisciplinary approach to foreign language education and the development of pluricultural competences of young learners can be found among the activities of the *Zentrum für Sprache, Plurilingualismus und*

³ By „freely“ I mean still not affected by educational ideologies which support the “siloed” educational model based on teachers’ authority and skewed educational narratives of the formal and/or hidden curriculum (the latter one understood as the “socialization process of schooling” (Kentli 2009: 83).

Fachdidaktik of the University of Graz, which has been working on an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary project titled multilingual *GRAZ / STYRIA: Documentation of the linguistic diversity of Styria*⁴ for a number of years. The project is multilayered and multifaceted and almost all the activities carry some transdisciplinary perspective. One, however, stands out as an extraordinary example of possibilities in education of young learners. *ZUSAMMENreden. Creating language-friendly spaces*⁵ is a project dedicated to the promotion of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in Styrian elementary schools in which over 60 languages other than German are used. Here is a short overview from the project's website:

ZUSAMMENreden offered a language action day to participating schools on which different stations presented opportunities for exploring and playing. Moreover, the schools' teachers were provided with in-depth information about dealing with multilingualism. A travelling exhibition called *Sprachenlandschaft Deluxe (Linguistic landscape Deluxe)* was made available to help schools to continue their work on the subject. At each school, a distinct art project was carried out: Together with all participants, we explored what language-friendly spaces in schools may look like.

At the language action day, one of the workshops was dedicated to these art projects as well. In cooperation with each of the schools, the artist duo RESANITA developed the concept for this particular project. The goal was to involve all children into the creation process at all times and to render their linguistic expertise visible. Additionally, parents got involved in the multilingual investigations through their children. On the language action day, as well as through the art projects and the continuing education workshops, we could experience the linguistic diversity at Styrian schools firsthand; we had the chance to gather experience and share ideas on how linguistic diversity could be incorporated into school lessons in a positive way and how appreciation for all of the children's native languages could be expressed. We compiled the results of this cooperation into a short book (a "Reader"). This way, interested schools can make use of the existing materials to find personalized solutions for their own situations.

One of the objectives of the project was to "act as a catalyst for a societal change of values in which multilingualism is considered an asset – a resource for the individual as well as for society as a whole" (from the project's webpage). It was an opportunity for foreign language teachers, primary school students, members of local ethnic communities, city governance, university professors and future foreign language teachers (university students) to come together and to establish multitiered collaboration and communication, in order to achieve better

⁴ <https://multilingual.uni-graz.at>

⁵ <https://multilingual.uni-graz.at/?ca=projects&ch=ZUSAMMENreden>

understanding of ethnic, racial, cultural and other differences, and open pathways for a better social integration of all members of a number of communities. The situated and distributed approach to understanding the role and relevance of plurilingualism in Graz extended beyond the school walls and classrooms and engaged different stakeholders of the city's educational system in a meaningful, multimodal and constructive dialogue.

This particular project addresses not only foreign language learning and teaching but emphasizes the development of intercultural communicative competence within and beyond schools. As our cities become spaces of increasingly complex ethnolinguistic diversity (due to intensified mobility and globalization), it is necessary that all educational and public spaces mirror the ethnolinguistic diversity. Schools need to become pivotal points in which discourses on diversity, pluralism and linguistic diversity are confirmed and from where they spread in concentric circles across larger local and regional communities. In that way, educational policies are created which emphasize cultural, ethnic, racial and socio-economic aspects of formal education assuring that real-life experiences and aspects of personal and collective maturation are taken into account within the educational system.

The Graz project provides an excellent example of the *city-as-school* concept, which in Serbia has been developed and applied by the educational NGO "Teach me"⁶, dedicated to alternative, innovative and holistic approaches to education. As stated by the leader of the NGO, Milan Petrović (personal correspondence), *city-as-school* implies that every person is involved in the educational process: educational experts and policy makers, practitioners, parents and care-takers, as well as the young people who benefit most directly from the whole process. The name of the concept is inspired by the internationally recognized proverb "it takes a village (to raise a child)".⁷

⁶ Nauči me: <https://www.nauci.me/organizacija/>

⁷ Over the last five or six years I have engaged in transdisciplinary learning and teaching exchange with the NGO *Teach me* (which coined and uses in their activities the term *city-as-school*). I personally have learned so much by cooperating with young people who founded and who work in this NGO. Some of them have already been recognized as excellent leaders and innovators within the Serbian community of language teachers, while others are exceptional practitioners who guide us by example and provide us with valuable inputs regarding their own learning and teaching experiences (both as students and teachers).

5. TRANSDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS – A CALL FOR CHANGE

Higher education, as the pivotal point of language teacher education, should be an innovative space in which learning communities of practice of future language teachers are created, in which leaders emerge empowered to become agents of critical open pedagogy, ready to adapt general educational guidelines and official requirements to actual learning and teaching contexts in which they live and work. Such an understanding of the role of our universities calls for an overall shift in the approach to foreign language teacher education and language education policy based on *the top-down language management* (Spolsky 2009), stemming from institutions such as ministries of education, academic institutions and pedagogical institutes. It requires a change in educational ideologies which should allow for critical reviews of the generally imposed “national curriculum”. Concepts applied in foreign language learning and teaching (*city-as-school*, recognition of complex social networks and situated and distributed learning) should become a first step towards a new approach to language education policy design and development based on *bottom-up language leadership* (Filipović 2015a), in which teachers and their students are encouraged to connect, learn together and create knowledge relevant to a number of individual, family, local, regional, national and international communities. Consequently, in order to provide them with opportunities for continuous personal and academic growth, (auto)reflection and critical social action, the education of future foreign language teachers needs to be situated and distributed as well – it needs to expand beyond traditional interdisciplinary perspectives engaged in university accounts of foreign language teaching, and expand toward open critical pedagogy and community engagement. In other words, along the invitation to the future foreign language teachers (our students) to step outside of their traditionally acquired roles which involve “a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient listening Objects (the students)” (Freire 1999), we, as university teachers engaged in future language teachers education, also need to create and maintain critical connections in contextualized knowledge construction, which would help our future colleagues to recognize different types of knowledge, and understand the need to take part in social action, learn to empower themselves and others involved in the educational process.

Consequently, university education of all foreign language teachers would significantly profit from a holistic, socially engaged and contextualized, transdisciplinary approach which would assure the affirmation of situated and distributed learning including a wide range of interested parties within the

educational system: students (and their teachers) at all levels of education (future and current language teachers, their students and university professors). Moreover, such a paradigm must be accompanied by an open, constructive and continuous dialogue within and across larger learning communities (along the lines of the *city-as-school* concept). It is only through complex personal and collective interactions in meaningful social networks which function inside and outside of foreign language classrooms that we can expand our understanding of the role of education beyond the traditionally acknowledged “encyclopedic knowledge”.

The transdisciplinary approach to education, entwined with critical and open pedagogy has a clear socially engaged dimension and it extends beyond the school walls or online spaces designed for data searches and knowledge storage. As already pointed out, its essential, emancipatory goal is to motivate and actively include all interested actors in the learning and teaching process. In that sense, transdisciplinary education stands in an inseparable, intrinsic connection with the local environment (urban or rural, regional, national and international). When forming educational policies in varied social, economic, political and other contexts, issues of access and equality in education must be considered (e.g., they go hand in hand with social action that reduces or removes barriers to equal access to education dependent not only on economic and technological, but also social, cultural, racial, political and other possible factors that lead to marginalization and segregation of certain social groups). At the same time, each student’s “copyright” to knowledge, their choices of learning and expression styles, and the degree of engagement in the educational process need to be valued and recognized. Finally, education must also have an impact on the social community, not only in terms of employability, but also in terms of forming responsible persons who are able to think critically about the world around them, who are aware of their rights and responsibilities and who are capable of making decisions about their lives and the lives of their communities relying on self-reflection, critical thinking and social awareness and citizenship competences. Therefore, on one hand, transdisciplinary education must serve the development of autonomy in thinking and learning, contextualization of knowledge, relativization of viewpoints and recognition of different students’ needs and challenges. On the other hand, it serves as a stronghold of social responsibility, empathy and awareness of needs of others, recognition of differences and establishment and perpetuation of a set of cultural, ethical and study and work-related values which assure the wellbeing and social cohesion of entire communities, not only individuals.

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TRANSDISCIPLINARNI PRISTUP OBRAZOVANJU NASTAVNIKA STRANIH
JEZIKA: ZNANJE, UČEŠĆE I OSNAŽIVANJE U FORMIRANJU ZAJEDNICA
ZNANJA

Sažetak

Transdisciplinarnost zahteva aktiviranje heterogenih kompetencija i stručnosti u procesu rešavanja problema (Thompson Klein 2001: 43–57). Shodno tome, direktno je vezana za konstrukciju znanja zasnovanu na saradnji, dijalogu, (auto)refleksiji i višestrukim stanovištima, kao i društvenom delovanju, heterarhiji, liderstvu, osnaživanju i emancipaciji

(Filipović, 2015a, 2015b, 2019; Filipović i dr. 2022). Iako pristupi učenju i nastavi stranih jezika poslednjih decenija predstavljaju jedno od najinovativnijih i najrazvijenijih oblasti interdisciplinarnih i transdisciplinarnih akademskih aktivnosti u primenjenoj lingvistici (Savet Evrope 2001, 2018, 2020; Filipović 2015b, 2019), obrazovanju nastavnika stranih jezika još uvek se ne posvećuje dovoljna pažnja. Ovde je fokus stavljen na novi pristup obrazovanju i obuci nastavnika stranih jezika, sa naglaskom na njihovo osnaživanje i delovanje. Ako se odvija u okviru transdisciplinarne obrazovne paradigme, obrazovanje nastavnika stranih jezika postaje inovativan prostor u kojem se stvaraju zajednice prakse budućih nastavnika jezika u kojima se pojavljuju lideri osnaženi da postanu agenti kritičke otvorene pedagogije, spremni da prilagode opšte obrazovne smernice i zvanične zahteve stvarnim kontekstima učenja i podučavanja u kojima deluju. Ovo zahteva promenu pristupa i podrazumeva prelaz sa tradicionalne jezičke politike odozgo-nadole, zasnovane na jezičkom menadžmentu (Spolsky 2009) u smeru jezičkog liderstva, odnosno jezičke politike odozdo-nagore (Filipović 2015a), u kojem se nastavnici i njihovi učenici podstiču da se povezuju, uče zajedno i stvaraju znanja. Samo kroz kontinuiran i otvoren dijalog među svim zainteresovanim stranama učenici (i njihovi nastavnici) mogu razviti ne samo tradicionalno priznata „enciklopedijska znanja”, već i pronaći obrazovni prostor za svoja lična i kolektivna iskustva relevantna unutar svojih učionica i van njih. Transdisciplinarni pristup obrazovanju nastavnika stranih jezika može značajno poboljšati ishode učenika na mlađem uzrastu jer otvara prostor za angažovanje čitave zajednice i situirano i distribuirano učenje i nastavu u procesu sazrevanja kada deca još uvek nisu „izložena” tradicionalnim obrazovnim ideologijama.

Ključne reči: transdisciplinarnost, jezička obrazovna politika, obrazovanje nastavnika, obrazovne delatne zajednice, jezički menadžment, jezičko liderstvo, konstrukcija znanja, kritička otvorena pedagogija, situirano i distribuirano učenje i podučavanje.

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