



# An Effective Didactic Tool for Multilingual Teaching



Edenia Reyes Herrera\*, Yaquelin Cruz Palacios and Geisy Labrada Hernández

*Department of linguistics, University of Holguin, Cuba*

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**\*Corresponding author:** Edenia Reyes Herrera, Department of linguistics, University of Holguin, Cuba

## Mini Review

The teaching of foreign languages is essential today in the Cuban Higher Education and constantly needs new technologies. However, the teaching tools that make it viable are based on the teaching - learning of isolated languages, but not oriented towards a multilingual competence, according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference). Considering the current percentage of the implementation of Android devices, it was considered necessary to design an application or Software, as a didactic tool to favor multilingual teaching-learning and to respond in a timely manner to calls from the UN and UNESCO [1-3]. The didactic tool expressed in the interactive Android mobile application, was designed from the plurilingual approach and the linguistic mediation. For its design from the Computer Sciences, the native programming language, the platform and the XP software engineering development methodology were used. The application is a great help for both: the foreign language teacher and the student or user of these integrated languages, since you can find more variety of devices in the market, using this platform as Tablets and Smartphones, which favors more options when it comes to investing in technology. The tool is materialized from the Institutional Project: Theoretical and Practical Study of the Languages and Communications of the UHO and favors the thematic line: Didactics of Spanish and English as a Foreign Language. It has an exercise system, based on a functional communicative typology, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) [4].

The teaching of foreign languages is one of the knowledges of the field of education that constantly needs new technologies; However, the teaching tools to date are based on the teaching - learning of isolated languages, but not oriented towards a multilingual competence. According to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), it is possible to resort to a whole linguistic baggage to give meaning to communicative events in several foreign languages, through the appropriate use of new technologies [5-7]. When taking into account the current percentage of the implementation of Android devices, it has been considered feasible to design a didactic tool that consists of an application for these devices, which favors multilingual teaching

and learning in order to respond promptly to calls from UN and UNESCO to break down language barriers. This article presents the interactive mobile application for Android devices, developed at the University of Holguin from the XP software engineering development methodology, in order to favor this new teaching-learning typology of integrated foreign languages, protected under the umbrella of the multilingual approach and linguistic mediation. The application is the result of the research project: Multilingual teaching from the University of Holguin [8,9].

The CEFR, for the teaching of foreign languages, no longer considers as an achievement, the mastery of several languages, each considered in isolation, but the development of a multiple linguistic repertoire, in which all the capacities take place at the same time linguistic. The way of teaching foreign languages in multilingual classrooms can vary from one country to another or even in the same country that covers a very large region [10]. This depends on the prevailing concept of language and on the paradigms of the teaching of foreign languages, as well as on the role of each one of them in society worldwide.

The term plurilingüismo refers to the simultaneous presence of two or more languages, in the communicative competence of the multilingual speaker, and to the interrelation established between them. This approach is based on the recognition that the communicative competence of an individual is nourished by all the experiences and linguistic knowledge of their first language and other second languages. In this competence, these languages are related and interact with each other. In this way, a person can use all their linguistic baggage to make sense of a communicative event in a second language. This helps to address the classes by skills to achieve effective communication and develop an intercultural communicative competence, with the purpose of establishing a fruitful relationship where speakers from diverse backgrounds interact in the same environment. In this way, the linguistic experience is extended, by putting the speaker in contact with new registers of the mother tongue and other languages.

On the other hand, linguistic mediation is an activity of the language (included in communicative linguistic competence),

through which the user of that language makes linguistic communication (oral or written) possible between people who are incapable, for any reason, to communicate with each other directly. When we change from one language to another, or from one dialect to another, we exploit a special ability that allows us to express ourselves using a code and understand using another: "Those with some knowledge, however rare, can use this competence to help, serving as mediators between individuals who do not have a common language and, therefore, lack the ability to communicate" (Council of Europe, 2001: 16). According to Kramsch, the capacities of relationship between speakers of different languages and dialects are developed from the communicative competence and linguistic interaction. Those who have some knowledge, however scarce, can use this competence to help, serving as mediators between individuals who do not have a common language and therefore lack the ability to communicate.

Linguistic mediation is, therefore, one of the basic pillars of communicative activities linked to reception, production and interaction. Beyond translation and interpretation, the MRE also includes other activities suitable to train competent speakers. For example: in a plurilingual social context, oral mediation between speakers of different languages may consist of summarizing or paraphrasing a discourse. In social or learning situations, speakers can interact as a second or third foreign language in multilingual contexts, in which Spanish speakers, for various reasons, keep in contact with numerous codes, or with speakers of other languages. Knowing how to use these codes and mediation strategies as a communicative skill is, today, an indispensable priority. Although the concept has been addressed, it has not been perfected, hence the need to propose a focus on teaching foreign languages that allows, at the same time, intercultural competence.

In our society, it is difficult to understand the teaching and learning of languages without the assistance of the computer, either fully in virtual or partial teaching as support for teaching, both face-to-face and blended learning. Nowadays, thanks to the great interaction of applications and mobile devices, the use of ICT as tools for education has been strengthened and the flags of educational software have been raised, computer programs used to educate the user, help with the acquisition of knowledge and skills development. From this perspective, there are educational software's designed to support the teacher, which serves the teacher as a didactic tool to provide his students with lessons or reinforce a class. There is also educational software aimed directly at the student, offering an environment in which the student can be self-taught.

An area in full development, although still with a very limited use, is the Intelligent Computer Aided Language Learning Systems (ICALL), which plays a role closer to that of the teacher: it identifies errors of the student, offers feedback, determines their

level, provides appropriate materials and tasks for their progress and interacts with them through the conversation. Another of the open source operating systems is Linux, which was used as a basis to create the Android operating system.

In order to better understand the didactic tool that is designed, it is important to define which programming language to use, in which development environment that software is going to work and the tools that must be considered for its design and implementation. It should also be noted that for the development of the tool proposed for Android devices, the programming languages to be used were carefully selected. Native mobile applications are those that are developed specifically for each operating system. Among the advantages of this type of applications are that they take advantage of the functionalities of the device and that they can work without an Internet connection. From the aforementioned, the proposal to develop a native mobile application for Android operating system devices was considered, for which a development environment was also considered: Android Studio.

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