DigiLitEY Cost Action IS1410

Country Reports

Impact on Research in Europe in the area of the digital literacy and multimodal practices of young children

Introduction

Below is a summary from the countries who have participated in the DigiLitEY Cost Action IS1410 on the impact engaging DigiLitEY has had on research in their country.

Austria

Austria has been a rather small research partner in this project because only one researcher and one university were involved in this Cost Action. Despite of that DigiLitEY has had an important impact on our research. We had important synergy effects because during the period of DigiLitEY the Austrian Ministry of Education launched a new policy strategy that was focussed on the implementation of problem solving and computational thinking in primary schools by introducing programmable toys in the classroom. In this context a pilot project with 200 primary schools that were using programmable toys was launched. Knowledge that was produced in the DigiLitEY project informed this pilot project and vice versa (e.g. the classification of smart toys that was done in WG 4). In WG 4 also a research project on the media coverage of smart toys during the Christmas season 2016/17 was conducted. Austria was part of this survey and together with colleagues from Germany a follow up survey was conducted in the Christmas season 2017/18. Both surveys delivered interesting findings for Austria.

Austria had the following scientific output that was connected with DigiLitEY:

- 1 Bachelor thesis (as part of the analysis of the media coverage of smart toys in 2016/17)

- 1 article in a peer reviewed journal (will be published in spring)

- 2 chapters in edited volumes (one published, one forthcoming)

- 5 conference contributions

- 1 panel discussion with national stakeholders on digital literacy and smart toys

- Contribution to two research reports

Belgium

In Belgium the DigiLitEY Cost Action has especially had an impact on research at the university of Louvain (KU Leuven), resulting in several master thesis projects, articles in journals and handbooks and conference papers. At the department of Applied Linguistics of the Faculty of Arts the research has been coordinated by prof. Dr. Jan Van Coillie. Since 2014 the main research topics have been:

- The availability, quality and accessibility of digital books for young children (0-8) in Dutch (Belgium and the Netherlands): inventory and classification;

- Young children's media usage in Flanders, parents response and relation with reading aloud in the family (2015 survey study in which 696 Flemish parents of children aged 3 to 5 participated);

- The impact of digital books on second language acquisition of children with language deficits (due to migration background) (project developed in coordination with Adriana Bus, started in 2018).

At the Institute for Media Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences the research has been coordinated by dr. Bieke Zaman. The main research topics have been:

- Parental mediation practices of young children's media usage at home (Mixed-method study. Participants: 24 parents, 36 children aged 3 to 9;

- Children's roles in Participatory Design;

- Educational games and the internet of toys. (11 December 2017 – 10 January 2018

- Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) COST ACTION IS1410 (DigiLitEY), call number 5. Central aim was to gain a multi-faceted understanding of the emerging phenomenon of connected toys, focussing on Australia and Belgium) This research offered support to knowledge and information centres: Mediawijs (https://mediawijs.be/) (knowledge centre for media wisdom)

- Supporting the creation of the online platform medianest.be, a website for parents about media (https://www.medianest.be/), offering online tests, tips and tricks, a media growth line, adapted to the child's environment and development …

- LINC (https://www.linc-vzw.be/) (socio-cultural organisation, giving support and advice to anyone who wants to participate actively in the field of digital literacy)

- Supporting 'Diggie Dik, Voorlezen met een klik' (Diggi Dik, Reading aloud with a click), a training course about digital reading (aloud);

- Supporting the training course 'Digital Storytelling', offering a list of quality digital books.

Publications

Van Coillie, J., Raedts, M. (2016). Digikleuter ook boekenwurm? Onderzoek naar digitaal mediagebruik van Vlaamse kleuters en de relatie met voorlezen in het gezin, Mediawijs, KULeuven en Iedereen Leest. Available at: https://mediawijs.be/dossiers/dossier-mediawijze-

bibliotheken/digikleuter-ook-boekenwurm.

Bus, A. G., Hoel, T., Marin, C.A., Jernes, M., Korat, O., Mifsud, C.L., Van Coillie, J. (2019). Availability and Quality of Storybook Apps Across Five Less Widely Used Languages", in The Routledge Handbook of dig-

ital literacies in Early Childhood edited by Ola Erstad, Rosie Flewitt, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, and Íris Susana Pires Pereia. Routledge, 2019 (upcoming).

Nouwen M., Zaman B. (2018). Redefining the role of parents in young children's online interactions. A value-sensitive design case study. International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction, 18, 22-26. doi: 10.1016/j.ijcci.2018.06.001.

Schepers S., Dreessen K., Zaman B. (2018). Rethinking children's roles in Participatory Design: The child as a process designer. International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction, 16, 47-54. doi: 10.1016/j.ijcci.2017.12.001.

Zaman B., Mifsud CL., (2017). Editorial: Young children's use of digital media and parental mediation. Cyberpsychology-Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 11 (3), Art.No. CP2017-3-xx, doi: 10.5817/CP2017-3-xx.

Zaman B., Nouwen M., Vanattenhoven J., De Ferrerre E., Van Looy J. (2016). A Qualitative Inquiry into the Contextualized Parental Mediation Practices of Young Children's Digital Media Use at Home. JOURNAL OF BROADCASTING ELECTRONIC MEDIA, 60 (1), 1-22. doi: 10.1080/08838151.2015.1127240.

Bulgaria

There're some projects undertaken in Bulgaria relating to the digital literacy and multimodal practices of young children that started after 2015. The project "Digital Competencies and Media Education at Preschool and Primary School Age" began in 2016 (National Science Fund; 05/8 14.12.2016) and will end in 2019. The coordinator of the research team is Prof. Dr Rumyana Papancheva from University "Prof. Dr Asen Zlatarov", Bourgas. Assoc. Prof. Dr Lubomira Parijkova (MCM - DigiLitEY) is a leader of the Working Group "Research of the connection between Reading and Digital literacy".

Applied Research and Communications Fund did three successful projects "Young Children (0-8) and Digital Technology: A qualitative exploratory study across seven countries" (Luiza Shahbazyan and Marko Hajdiniak – coordinators, 2015-2016); "From digital competence to digital citizenship:

encouraging civil participation through building capacity of future teachers to teach digital and media literacy" (Luiza Shahbazyan – coordinator, 2015-2016); "From Digital Childhood to Digital Citizenship" (Georgi Apostolov – coordinator, 2015-2018).

DigitalKidZ: An open source school is the largest project of the Digital Children Foundation. Based on the learning by doing; and "The European Digital Single Market strategy, the project is a strategy for transforming education in Bulgarian schools, in line with the competences of the 21st Century.

The project NAVIGATE intends to apply an innovative approach based on digital gaming to increase competences on information literacy (IL), starting from higher education students in Humanities (https://www.navigateproject.eu).

It was also established Coalition for Development of Media Literacy of Bulgarian children that has been working to develop digital literacy in Bulgarian schools even for children in 1st do 4th grade (http://gramoten.li).

Digital National Alliance is part of the initiative of the European Commission Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition (www.digitalteachers.eu).

A conference „How to Teach Digital-Media Literacy in Schools: Practices and Methods" was held in 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria, under the aegis of Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Ms. Maria Gabriel. On the conference, teachers, school's directors and other pedagogical specialists discussed good practices and tested methodologies for developing digital literacy among students from 1 to 12 grade.

Croatia

Engagement of researchers from Croatia in the DigiLitEY Cost Action had a profound impact on research on young children's engagement with digital technology in home environment in this country. Through communication and collaboration with DigiLitEY colleagues we were able to jointly work on longitudinal research on this topic that for the first time allowed Croatia to be mapped in the European context regarding children's use of digital media. This was also a starting point for further research on the same topic in Croatia and the impact of such research studies is beginning to be more and more recognized in the scientific community as well as in general public and media. The results of these research projects were presented to fellow researchers through conference presentation and research articles, and to the public in form of various scientific events. In the same regard, the topic of this year's Annual Croatian Psychology Association is also related to children's use of digital technology. Some of the research project that started in collaboration with DigiLitEY colleagues are to be continued even after the action's official end.

Cyprus

Engagement with the DigiLitEY Cost Action was linked to different research and other activities in the Republic of Cyprus:

1. As part of the 3rd DigiLitEY meeting, which took place in Larnaca, Cyprus in March 2016, and in collaboration with the University of Cyprus, the following took place:

a. A day-long conference that attracted local academics, graduate students, ministry officials, and representatives of non-for-profit organizations.

b. A meeting with local policymakers, including representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, and non-governmental organizations to discuss the implications of attending to young children's digital literacy and multimodal practices for research, policy, and educa-

tional practice. Themes of literacy in the early years and of multiliteracies, multimodality and new technologies were addressed in the second International Conference on Literacy and Contemporary Society organized by the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus and the University of Cyprus in November 2017.

2. Research relating to early years' and primary teachers' digital biographies and in-school practices was initiated and conducted by researchers and students at the University of Cyprus, resulting in a number of senior and masters' level theses, research reports, conference presentations, and manuscripts to be submitted for publication.

3. Issues relating to digital literacies of young children and teachers' digital biographies and practices were incorporated in undergraduate and graduate level courses, and in seminar series organized (Spring-Fall Semesters 2018) by the Department of Education, University of Cyprus to promote knowledge on in-school digital practices of children and teachers.

4. The pedagogical potentials of digital literacy in early years' and primary classrooms were considered in (a) professional development sessions for early childhood teachers offered by faculty members and associates of the University of Cyprus, and (b) action research that facilitated the collaboration between teachers and researchers. Findings are scheduled to be presented at local PD programs (February and March 2019) and at an international conference (July 2019).

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the participants of the DigiLitEY are the members of the Interdisciplinary Research Team on Internet and Society (IRTIS - irtis.muni.cz), which is a leading Czech research team in the area of the digital technologies usage among children and adolescents. Within the COST action, the team organized the ECREA preconference "Research of Children, Youth and Media around the World "and the workshop of the WG5 at the Cyberspace conference. Several Czech researchers and Ph.D. students attended both events and gain knowledge about the digital literacy among young children. Since in the previous research, the research group IRTIS centred more on older children and youth, before the participation in DigiLitEY, their experiences and knowledge about age youngest group were rather limited. The engagement with the DigiLitEY Cost Action provided great chance to enhance and enrich their knowledge related to the digital literacy and experiences with technologies among children aged 0 to 8 years old. Moreover, it provided opportunity to get more insight into specific topics, such as the role of "internet of things" in children's lives.

Denmark

Danish research in the area of digital literacy and multimodal practices of young children has benefitted greatly from being part of DigiLitEY. As part of the COST action Danish researchers have enlarged and strengthened their international contacts and network, resulting in research collaborations and grant bits with colleagues in other countries across Europe. Particularly early career researchers and junior researchers have benefitted from the opportunities for networking, peer-feedback and discussions made possible by the many activities coordinated and organized by the COST network. Much inspiration has been drawn from the exposure to new methodologies and approaches brought forth by the other network members and in events organized by the five working groups. Several attempts to make closer ties to industry partners has been encouraged by DigiLitEY and even though these were not always successful the experience has been invaluable and let to new connections and ideas. Unfortunately the last two years of Denmark's engagement in the network and derived research projects/activities has to some extend been marked by a lower level of engagement than the first two year's intense interaction and commitment. This had nothing at all to do with the COST network. It was caused by completely unrelated events leading to the termination of engagement in the network amongst members who had previously been key to the Danish participation in DigiLitEY and associated research projects.

Finland

The DigiLitEY Cost Action has impacted research in the area of digital literacy and multimodal practices of young children in several respects in Finland. DigiLitEY has contributed to national research endeavours, including the national research and development programme The Joy of Learning Multiliteracies (www.monilukutaito.com/en) funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (years 2016-2020) and Tampere Centre for Childhood, Youth and Family Research (https://research.uta.fi/perla-en/) as well as Multiliteracies Through Life Cycles Research Group (http://www.uta.fi/edu/en/research/groups/multi.html). It has also strengthened Nordic, European-level and international research collaboration among senior and junior scholars, research groups and institutions. For instance, several actors involved in DigiLitEY are now collaborating in a new Nordic Research Network on Digitalising Childhoods (www.digichild.net) funded by a NOS HS program, Academy of Finland (2019-2020). The DigiLitEY Cost Action has also strengthened research capacity in the area including the education of doctoral students and early career researchers. The research knowledge base generated by the DigiLitEY Cost Action has been actively harnessed in Finnish educational policy and practice by various agencies and organisations, such as teacher education programs in Finnish universities, National Audiovisual Institute, and The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare.

Greece

The benefits of the Cost Action IS1410 in Greece are outlined below:

1. Strengthened the discussion about digital literacies of young children between the graduated and post-graduate students at the Department of Preschool Education of the University of Crete and the Department of Library Science and Information Systems at the ATEI of Thessaloniki, Greece and triggered research collaboration between COST action members, academics and students from these Departments.

2. Digital literacies of young children in informal learning spaces, especially in libraries, was raised as a subject to some sectors of the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs.

3. Research is in progress on how digital technology can foster phonological awareness in kindergarten children and how young children can create stories by using various applications are in progress in the Department of Preschool Education of the University of Crete.

4. Various research reports and articles summoned and presented evidence of examples and practices employed and formed a very good base for a researcher who wants to elaborate and further the research base

5. Libraries as well as museums and community centers placed the discussions of digital literacies of young children as key players and partners.

6. Literature readings and participation in digital literacies discussions, and meetings placed the foreground for schools and libraries to become more sensitive on the sensitive user groups of young children and students. An example is the American Farm School library (Dimitris and Aliki Perrotis Library) which collaborates intensively with teachers, staff and parents to create a Digital Literacy unified curriculum.

Hungary

A new network was established to connect experts on many different fields related to digital childhood, and to share information and improve professional communication.

The Hungarian Media Authority conducted a survey in 2018 on the media consumption of children under three years. According to the survey the most important media of children under three years is television, as the majority of parents consider the use of internet to be too early for their child.

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More than 170 classical and modern storybooks in just one mobile and tablet application. For helping the learning process of reading, there is also a highlighting feature added followed automatically by the narrated text. In BOOKR Kids Library, there are also syllable and dyslexia-friendly stories that allow everyone to enjoy reading.

Israel

Two STSM projects of two Israeli young researchers with COAST members have started: (1) Dr. Anat Ben-Shabat Segre from Bar Ilan University with Prof. Adriana Bus, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands. They work on the effect of music and sounds background in ebook on young children's language land story comprehension. (2) Dr. Tamar Shoham from Bar Ilan University with Dr. Trude Hoel from Stavanger University, Norway, who work on preschool educational attitudes towards the use of electronic books in kindergartens for the promotion of language and literacy: A comparison between Norway and Israel.

In November 2017, I organized international workshop on: Multimedia as Bridges for Language and Literacy for Young Children. Twenty researchers from five countries (Belgium, Canada, Israel, the Netherlands, and US) presented and discussed their most recent research. A summary paper is written currently on this workshop. Some of the studies which were presented by the Israeli group at this workshop:

- Pre-school TV programs: Between educational goals and stereotypical images Galit Rovner-Lev, Ben-Gurion University, Israel Ten years after: Revisiting the question of e-book quality as early language and literacy support Ofra Korat and Yael Falk, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

- The influence of animation and musical elements in electronic books on the language and listening comprehension of kindergarteners from LSES backgrounds Dorit Aram, Margalit Ziv, Carmit Zar, Chen Leon, and Adriana Bus, Tel-Aviv University, Israel and Leiden University, Holland

- The influence of interactive animations in commercial e-books on story comprehension of pre-k children Gal Ben-Yehudah, The Open University, Israel

- Background music and content expansion support story comprehension in e-book reading of pre-schoolers Anat Ben-Shabat and Ofra Korat, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

- Multimedia features in e-book for promoting literacy among students with and without attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) Ravit Grumberg-Vardi and Adina Shamir, Bar-Ilan University,

Latvia

DigiLitEY Cost Action contribution for Latvia is quite significant for several reasons. First of all, the result of action is focus of the studies on small children and digital technologies, as so far research in Latvia has been devoted to the study of media literacy of school-age children - it has become one of the priority research areas of the Scientific Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Latvia. Several projects have been implemented, for example, from 2015 to 2018, Latvia as one of 21 countries participated in the European Commission Joint Research Centre study "Young Children (0-8) and Digital Technology - A qualitative study across

Europe". Children's behaviour on the Internet, as well as the involvement of parents in the development of children's digital habits in family were comparatively analysed in this research.

2017 - 2018 the Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Latvia commissioned a study "Data compilation and analysis of foreign and Latvian experience on the availability and use of digital teaching aids general education curriculum content", in which the situation in Latvia regarding the availability of digital teaching aids and teaching aids in pre-school was analysed.

2017- 2019 the project "Printed audio-learning materials for early childhood education – How the Shammies learned? "Is being implemented at the University of Latvia within the framework of the INTERREG Europe transnational cooperation program 2014-2020. The project's leading partner is the Estonian company Digital Learning Systems, the project is being implemented in cooperation with the publishing house "Liels un mazs" (Latvia) and Tartu College (Estonia). The project develops audiobooks for Latvian, Estonian and English for 3-year-olds using images created in Latvia. Researchers of the University of Latvia together with colleagues from Tartu College developed pedagogical guidelines and methodological recommendations in this study, as well as are involved in testing the developed materials.

Secondly, the problematic of the action is embedded in the study programs – in study courses such Media Pedagogy and Pedagogical Anthropology, etc. students have the opportunity to study the pedagogical conditions for the formation of media literacy of young children, as well as to analyse the pedagogical strategies of parents and teachers.

And thirdly, as a result of DigiLitEY Cost Action, knowledge transfer in society is being implemented in Latvia - public lectures are held for parents and teachers, researchers address the public through the media.

Italy

The main national policy relating to digital literacy and multimodal practices of young children is the Italian National Plan for Digital Education (Piano Nazionale Scuola Digitale — PNSD), launched by the Ministry of Education, University and Research as one of the pillars of "La Buona Scuola" school reform (Law 107/2015). Action 16 of the National Plan for Digital Education (PNSD) aims to extend coding and computational thinking to primary school students, and even to the pre-school context. The implementation strategy includes the Code the Future (Programma il Futuro) initiative, which engages Italian students of all levels in the Hour of Code since 2014. Overall, 4,743,434 students have participated in Italy. Various initiatives of coding and "unplugged coding" are autonomously run in pre-school contexts (4-5-year-olds), often in cooperation with coding associations and clubs, such as CoderDojo and CoderKids. CoderDojo Italia (http://www.coderdojoitalia.org/) boast over 40 dojo across the country, and runs coding labs also in schools and libraries. These are usually open to children from 5 years old of age. CoderKids organizes summer camps for children (4-7-years-old) aimed at developing coding logics offline (programming play) and applying them to an interactive toy.

A research on coding projects is carried out by INDIRE (National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Research in Education) in collaboration with Università Cattolica and is based on a survey on teachers. The aim is to monitor the teaching outputs of coding and in particular the diffusion (or not) of a think-make-improve model. Since 2014 INDIRE has also proposed Maker@scuola. The project involves eight FabLabs in pre-schools. FabLabs area laboratories where children design and print digital products or toys with a 3D printer. The aim of the project is to diffuse the think-make-improve logic needed to give the correct instructions to the printer.

Lithuania

In collaboration with European academic partners, as part of the activities of Working Group 4 of the COST Action DigiLitEY, the researchers from Kaunas University of Technology have been involved in the research of The Internet of Toys (IoToys), as well as the research of young children and digital technologies. As internet-connected toys are an emerging market, the empirical research on their appropriation and use in the everyday lives of children and their families is a relevant, up-to-date and insufficiently researched topic in Lithuania. In order to understand whether and how IoToys has entered play discourses, the discursive environment of smart toys, that is, its representations in media commentaries and commercial advertisements have been explored. The results are going to be published in the book "The Internet of Toys Practices, Affordances and the Political Econo-

my of Children's Smart Play" (Palgrave, 2019).

Participation in COST Action DigiLitEY has also provided a possibility to join another research project, supported by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre "Young Children (0-8) Digital Technology". Kaunas University of Technology's research team co-authored with JCR researchers all outputs on this project related to international comparative study. The research aimed at providing insights how children and parents perceive smart technologies, the pedagogical conditions under which these technologies are used, and the factors influencing children's digital experiences.

The contemporary context of smart pedagogy in Lithuania seems to be insufficient to assure integration and access to smart educational environments to all children. Thus, the research completed within the COST Action DigiLitEY and other projects has contributed to the effective knowledge gain, providing recommendations for the improvement and development of the national education programs. The impact of the DigiLitEY Cost Action is the publication of the joint research studies, research articles, book chapters, presentation of research papers at the international conferences, dissemination of the research findings on local radio, press releases, etc. Participation in the COST Action DigiLitEY has integrated Lithuanian researchers into the international academic community.

Luxembourg

As a researcher, the participation in the DigiLitEY project has broaden my horizons regarding digital literacy. For the last 10 years, I have been investigating multilingualism and multiliteracies of language minority preschool children in Luxembourg, a multilingual country. My focus has been on home literacies and family language policies. Throughout the research years, I have been observing how the digital tools have permeated lives of young children and how parents started using the apps and e-books to pass the knowledge of their home languages and cultures to their children. During my participation in DigiLitEY, I specifically learned about the new projects in different countries and the methodology that was used. In particular, during the project, I consulted a colleague who have been extensively involved in home literacies of language minority children in the Netherlands to share with me the questionnaire he used in his project. I adapted some of the questions regarding digital literacy and integrated them in my questionnaire aimed for parents of language minority preschool children in Luxembourg. This was one of the studies I conducted in the framework of my project HOMELY: 'Home Literacy Environment and Family Language Policy of Language Minority Children in Luxembourg' that have been financed by the University of Luxembourg. There was one section that contained the questions about the frequency of use of language learning applications, the use of Skype for communicating with the extensive family in the home country, watching cartoons in different languages etc. I have received over 600 parent questionnaires

through preschool teachers and I am now analysing the data. Although a small part has been dedicated to digital literacy, it is however important and it will be implemented in the analysis. This analysis will helps us understand the links between the development of multilingualism, their home literacies and the use of digital tools of language minority preschool children in Luxembourg. This has not been extensively studied. The results will be submitted in a peer-reviewed journal (e.g., Journal of Educational Psychology) and will find its place on Conferences in Education (e.g., AERA).

Malta

The Malta DigiLitEY team has participated mainly in the work of WG3 regarding story apps in different languages and the work of WG4 on the Internet of Toys.

Collaboration with other Action partners, namely Professor Natalia Kucirkova of the University of Stavanger, Norway has led to a research project which seeks to explore the home book-reading routines of Maltese families with young children (5-7 years old) and to provide an understanding of how the parent and the child read digital books together. Currently the research team is working on coding and analysing the collected data.

Another project is the Digital Reading Project which seeks to understand how children develop knowledge when reading digital texts. This issue is critical for informing instructional interventions in the emergent stage of literacy development given the increasing prominence of digital texts and the need to develop digital literacy.

Four Maltese schools took part in the project with children aged 6 years and with different linguistic backgrounds. The project lasted 23 consecutive school weeks during which each child was given opportunities to learn to engage with digital texts. The researchers provided weekly interactive read-aloud sessions using digital books projected on a screen, including modelling and guided practice for understanding how digital texts work, as well as using digital features to construct meaning effectively.

During each week, children were video-recorded reading the same text in pairs, a total of 32 sessions per child over 16 weeks. The results of this study will contribute to finding new ways to describe and understand the transactional process between emergent readers, and digital text, in an independent school reading context. The researchers will try to identify concepts about digital text that reflect important understandings about how it works, as well as, the developmental process for learning how to more effectively construct meaning from digital text. By investing in how emergent readers engage with multimodal text, the study will seek to advance the learning and development of young children and provide guidelines to teachers about how to use digital text in classrooms.

Netherlands

A main outcome of the DigiLitEY action is the New Books project, aiming at the development of high-quality digital books for young children. Research has shown that well-designed digital books can provide intensive, closely monitored and individualized scaffolding which can turn putative risk groups into successful groups. Despite this, the marketability of digital books has been unsuccessful so far; the number of digital books and their quality is low across European countries. Many enhanced digital narratives found on the commercial market are targeted more towards amusement, and emphasize multimedia, colours, sounds, and graphics. See for a scientific underpinning of this conclusion The Routledge Handbook of Digital Literacies in Early Childhood (Editors: Ola Erstad, Rosie Flewitt, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, and Íris Susana Pires Pereia) written by members of DigiLitEY Working Group 3 and describing the supply of digital books across five less widely used languages (Dutch, Norwegian, Maltese, Hebrew, and Catalan). The New Books project in The Netherlands, initiated by an app designer (Het Woeste Woud) in collaboration with Dutch school television and researchers, aims at giving a boost to the development of high-quality digital books. In addition to affordances to scaffold children's engagement and story comprehension, the books will include hints for adults sharing the books with their young children. A main aim is to create prototypes that take appropriate advantage of the digital world, beyond what is possible in paper, thus demonstrating the unique affordances of digital books. It is for instance explored whether an optimal digital format makes demands of the story content. Prototypes of New Books may make the product more transparent and therefore more attractive to (educational) publishers and content creators, leading to New Books becoming more widely available for educators and researchers. Development and assessment of New Books will take the form of a cyclic process that continues for five years. Each year, five new books are created and evaluated in small-scale experiments. The initiators of the project are looking for collaboration with other European countries - and maybe other continents – to test digital books as a tool for learning a second language. Expectation is that books available in the mother tongue and a second language, mostly the language of schooling, can be helpful in acquiring a second language.

Norway

The impact of DigiLitEY in Norway is mostly expressed on an indirect level. In general, there is a growing interest among policy makers, researchers and the public of the possibilities and challenges of digital media in early childhood. One example is how 'the digital practice of kindergartens' (Barnehagens digitale praksis) became a key point in the new framework curriculum for kindergartens in Norway in 2017. And many municipalities are investing in digital tools and software for kindergartens and the first years of schooling. This has also generated more re-search proposals targeting these developments, for example at the Reading Center in Stavanger there are a couple of ongoing research projects about children and new media (VEBB, DigiHand) where participants in DigiLitEY also work. At the University of Oslo a new inter-faculty network of researchers have been established called 'Raising the Nordic 'Model Citizen'' studying different aspects of childhood in the Nordic countries with links to DigiLitEY. Also, a new Nordic network of researchers have been established with funding from the Nordic Council called 'Digitalising Childhoods' with several members of DigiLitEY participating. More robust research communities are being developed with international contacts and where members of DigiLitEY from different European countries are now being hired as researchers in Norway. Several initiatives for research proposals are being developed with reference to the DigiLitEY website and publications. Members of DigiLitEY from Norway are also participating in national and international publications, for example the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook of Digital Literacies in Early Childhood*.

Poland

Due to the engagement of Polish participants with the DigiLitEY Cost Action, priority has been given to the research areas relating to the impact of digital environment on not only young children but also very young ones in particular. Raising awareness of the necessity to deliver more scientific evidence, concerning the influence of modern technology onto children's development, has become one of crucial issues, discussed during scientific conferences and analysed while carrying out research projects, e.g. Communication, Digital Competences and Multimedia Practices of Children or Education towards Digital Reality.

The inspiration to write monographs on technology-related issues in children's lives came from the authors' participation in the DigiLitEY Cost Action. The book Child in the Empire of (Mobile) Screen can serve as a good example. The very young have become a subject of research interests in the context of growing up in the digital environment, ways of acquiring literacy skills and various competences, performing practices and types of preferences of using modern devices and multimedia applications as well as the potential threats related to the use of new media.

An important aspect of undertaken research is the primary teacher's role in the area of implementation of educational technologies into the teaching processes. The specific requirements for teachers in this field are determined in the core curriculum. The research results collated from the pre-primary and early primary teachers signal the urgent need to enhance both pre-service and in-service teacher's preparation

to use technology in the educational process. Changes in technology use at pre-primary and lower-primary level also imply the need to modify the educational process of student teachers at university. To meet the policy-related requirements, new courses have been added recently to the study program entitled Pre-school and early primary pedagogy, which is offered by the Jan Kochanowski University. Among mandatory courses, the following ones were added: Media Pedagogy, Media in Early School Education and Prophylaxis against Dangers in Virtual World. While New Information Technologies and Dimensions of Information Technologies were included on the list of elective courses.

Nowadays, there are more speculations and questions than answers concerning both the potential risks as well as the benefits of the digitisation of young children's lives. However, this issue is of interest to various parties – parents, early year's teachers, teacher trainers, policymakers, the children's media industry and needs to be widely discussed and extensively researched. The activities carried out within the DigiLitEY Cost Action contributed significantly to spreading and sharing knowledge in this area not only in participating countries but in the entire world. Thank you for dealing with this crucial issue of contemporary times!

Portugal

Some testimonies

It is our conviction that DigiLitEY has meant a lot for the Portuguese research community interested in the multimodal and digital practices in the early years, performing an important role in the consolidation of this field of studies. Its impact has been particularly clear among early career researchers (ECR), as evidenced in the testimonies below, which we cannot avoid relating to the fact that Portugal welcomed one of the project's Training Schools. Some senior researchers (SR), among whom we stand, share a very positive view about the possibilities that have been offered by DigiLitEY in the development of their research interests, networks, paths and achievements.

Íris Susana Pires PEREIRA Altina RAMOS

I am profoundly grateful to COST Action IS1410 for the opportunity to collaborate closely in the European research space and with other researchers. It was very grateful to be a part, to read, to collaborate and to share publications, projects and ideas. Being a young researcher, it was excellent to meet some people that I only knew from reading their publications. They showed a high sense of professionalism, patience and sympathy by when answering the questions that I have asked them, besides sharing knowledge and wisdom about the new innovative pedagogies supported by technologies, teacher training, research methodologies, reading pedagogies. On the whole, this had a profound impact on my research, which focuses on teachers' professional development on the use mobile devices in order to improve the reading- comprehension skills of primary-school students. Yet I should emphasise the particular importance of Short-Term Scientific Mission that I was granted with Professor Diana Bannister. I believe that DigiLitEY was a turning point, which brought much more consistency to my research.

Marco BENTO, ECR

DigiLitEY COST Action allowed me to meet colleagues from other countries and to know their experiences and research on this COST Action subject. Through this communication I enriched my knowledge, as well as it was possible to deepen my research. In addition, I met colleagues with whom I now conduct research.

Rita BRITO, ECR

For the last three years I was able to participate in DigiLitEY working groups, meetings, STSM's (2017 in Belgium with Bieke Zaman and in 2019 in Italy with Giovanna Mascheroni) and training schools. This has been without a question of a doubt an enriching opportunity and unforgettable experience for the learning opportunities and fruitful knowledge exchange it granted me as an Early Career Investigator. Being able to access such a vivid research community stimulated me to pursue and ameliorate my researching skills and embrace enriching professional challenges and opportunities. Thank you!

Teresa CASTRO, ECR

I am very grateful to this Action. The rationale for DigiLitEY Working Group 2 was determinant in the definition of the theme of my doctoral research, which aims at contrasting Portuguese and Brazilian initial teacher education regarding digital literacies in early childhood. Besides, this Cost Action has allowed me to attend to the meeting held in Riga, to meet researchers from other countries and to know recent relevant research. This has helped me to better acknowledge the importance of initial teacher training as well as ways in which it should be developed.

Lilian MOREIRA, ECR

The support provided by the COST Action IS1410 DigiLitEY has had a huge impact in my research. As a result, from a STSM funded by the action, I had the opportunity to work with Prof. Eva Brooks from Aalborg University in Denmark. This cooperation resulted in two publications, one of which received the Best Paper Award at the EAI International Conference on Design, Learning Innovation DLI 2017. Besides, I received an invitation from Prof. Brooks to chair the ArtsIT 2018, which were very successful. Furthermore, I received funding to attend IDC 2018, ACM Interaction Design and Children (IDC) Conference, where I have hold – together with Alejandro Catala, Mariët Theune and Eva Brooks, a workshop on "Rethinking Children's Co-creation Processes beyond the Design of TUIs". I also had the opportunity to present two contributions to the Work in Progress Track. Therefore, I acknowledge the huge impact that the DigiLitEY has had on my research and am deeply grateful for the

many opportunities it has provided.

Cristina SYLLA, ECR

As a computer scientist, participating in this project was a very enriching experience because it was possible to interact with researchers from different backgrounds and cultural realities and to realise what was the baseline in terms of early years' digital literacy. The possibility to join different perspectives and backgrounds led to very interesting findings and results.

Isabel ALEXANDRE, SR

This COST action gave me the opportunity to be part of a large international network that otherwise would not be possible and to have access and help to build knowledge in a particularly interesting domain.

Cristina VIEIRA, SR

Romania

The impact of the DigiLitEY COST Action in Romania was at three levels:

1. development of human resources and support for young researchers;

2. international collaboration in European research projects;

3. the initiation of some exploratory (local) studies and the raising of the topic on the scientific national agenda.

1. Two early-career researchers had the opportunity to take part in the STSMs organised by DigiLitEY: Alina Ticu, doctoral student and Monica Mitarc, researcher. Other researchers participated in the conferences and meetings organised during the project, occasions in which they have networked with other international colleagues (e.g. Dr. Monica Barbovschi, dr. Bianca Balea, Nicoleta Fotiade) and with their current research. Worth mentioning that Nicoleta Fotiade represented the Mediawise Society, an NGO that bases its intervention in schools, libraries, and disseminates, through meetings with parents, the results of researches. This way, the DigiLitEY project facilitated the dialogue among stakeholders in Romania.

2. Based on its participating in DigiLitEY, a team of Romanian researchers (from the Institute of Sociology) together with a team representing people from industry (Hatch Atelier) participated in MakEY project funding by EC H2020 (Grant No. 734720). Members of the COST action also participated in research projects of working groups (e.g. WG2 and WG4), participation that has led to publication and in conference presentations.

3. Prior to the DigiLitEY project, the digital life and the digital literacy of children under 8 years old was not on the research agenda in Romania. With the project, the situation has changed, reports of some exploratory studies in Romania being already published while other studies are still in progress. These researches also promote the topic in the media and opens it to public debates.

Serbia

WG2: Young children's digital literacy and multimodal practices in early years settings and schools and in informal learning spaces – the case of Serbia Although the COST team from Serbia joined the DigiLitEY Cost Action rather late, several steps have been taken towards drawing a picture of young children's digital literacy and multimodal practices in early years settings and schools and in informal learning spaces. The current state of knowledge and educational polices in this area in Serbia have partly been identified through published statistical data, UNICEF publications for parents and teachers, and the national educational policy documents. The documents indicate that Serbia lags behind most European countries in the percentages of homes with digital technology devices and internet access (a quarter of the population in Serbia has never used a computer or the internet; in 2018 only 72.9 per cent of the population had internet access). In 2017 the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia (MoES) recognised the need for developing digital literacy of young learners and introduced a compulsory school subject from Grade 5 (age 11), but at younger ages (ages 3 to 8) no programmes involving digital literacy have been developed or implemented. In 2017 MoES provided ICT professional development programmes for primary and secondary teachers, but kindergarten and preschool teachers were not included in the programme. The use of computers in teaching primary subjects is not mandatory in Serbian primary schools, and course material is not provided in electronic form, apart from the case of several pilot projects. A recent study of Serbian primary teachers' intention to use computers in teaching showed that the strongest predictors of computer use were teachers' attitudes to computers and to the school subject, and their experience in using computers. All these point to a number of obstacles to achieving success in developing digital literacy at a young age.

Slovakia

DigiLitEY member Zuzana Petrová participated in an interview study that collected data about early years and primary teachers' digital literacies, biographies and professional practice for a cross-country inquiry that included, except Slovakia, also involvement of colleagues from Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Romania and United Kingdom. This study enabled to examine the connection of early years and primary teachers´digital literacies and biographies to their professional practice, in national and

cross-country perspective. Especially, insights into how teachers perceive digital literacy, role of digital tools and media in the classroom, how their use of digital technologies in personal and professional contexts are interconnected brought valuable data brought an appropriate lens to reflect the effects of national education policy. Results of this examination served as a background for a research project funded by Ministry of Education in Slovakia for period of 2018 – 2020 (VEGA 2/0134/2018) studying the impact of new national preschool curriculum on literacy development of children.

The COST action has had a direct impact on research in Slovakia in the way that the international network of researchers and shared knowhow was an important aspect in successful application for research grant of DigiLitEY member Pavel Izrael. As a result, state funded research focused on multimodal media practices of children under 8 is being carried out with a special focus on parental mediation of media use in this age group. This type of research is scarce in Slovakia thus the current research will contribute to academic and professional discourse on children's media use. What's more, this research will complement the research of older children carried out within the EU kids online project in Slovakia. The fact that Slovak EU kids online team is led by DigiLitEY member Pavel Izrael certainly contributed to gaining support by supported by Ministry of Social Affairs of Slovak Republic for this project.

Slovenia

DigiLitEY enabled us to be a part of an interdisciplinary research network within which we already conducted collaborative research (Internet of Toys, Small children and digital technologies) and which will foster further collaborative research on an international level. On the national level, the action helped us to identify trending digital technologies, applications, uses by children. The action further helped identify emerging digital technologies 's strength and weakness when used in families and schools. This base of knowledge will drive future national-scale research project on Children's and Youth use of digital technologies and national policy recommendations. Within the network, we exchanged knowledge on appropriate methodologies and ethical issues when researching young children's digital literacy and multimodal practices. Based on the knowledge acquired during the action and the knowledge obtained by conducting a new research, we will be able to identify best practice in digital and multimodal literacy learning and teaching in kindergartens and primary schools in Slovenia and in cross-national perspective.

Spain

Research on digital literacy in Spain is nowadays a major area of academic research, mainly driven by studies in the fields of Education and Psychology.

Although It has mainly focused on youth (13-18) – in response to the fears and needs of families and schools assuming that they are the population "at risk"- it has recently expanded to include children as well. Emergent research on children under 8 has developed tied to the digital challenge in education and the concerns of the families. Emerging empirical research has started by looking at particular spaces/practices such as the ordinary classroom (Kucirkova, Messer, Sheehy Fernández-Panadero, 2014, Ramada Reyes 2015), the school library (Colomer Fernández 2014), the family-school intersection (Correro; Real, 2017; González-Patiño, Poveda, Morgade, 2012) or urban space and home (Morgade, Poveda, González-Patiño, 2014; Poveda, Morgade González-Patiño, 2012). This emerging literature has focused on particular technologies, mainly computers (Aliagas, 2011), iPads (Kurcirkova et al., 2014; Ramada; Reyes 2015; Real Correro, 2017) and videogames (Martínez-Borda; Lacasa, 2014). Research on the digital competence in Initial Teacher Education is also becoming a core interest in Educational Policy as a transformative global strategy. Moreover, research has recently shifted from a focus on the classroom to other settings beyond the classroom, usually using more qualitative or ethnographic-driven studies, such as the home, under the assumption that home is the main space where children have access to technology and thus come to master it (Aliagas Margallo, 2017; González-Patiño, 2011; González-Patiño; Esteban- Guitart, 2015; Morgade et al., 2014). Since Spain has a long tradition studying literature for children, research on digital books for 0-8 is also a growing field of study (Aliagas Margallo, 2017; Correro Real, 2017; Turrión 2012). Spain has also participated in EU projects on the topic: "Children 0-8 and digital practices", led by S. Chaudron at the Joint Research Centre, with the publication of two National Reports, and "A day in the life", led by J. Gillen. The Spanish Ministry has funded some I+D+i research projects on this areas: i.e. "Teaching to read digital literature" (coord. T. Colomer and A. M. Margallo, UAB), "Digital Identities and Cultures in Language Education" (coord. D. Cassany, UPF), the research group, Words, Ideas (coor. P. Lacasa, UAH) or the work on Digital Funds of Identity led by M. Esteban-Guitart (UdG). Other groups such as Infancia Contemporánea (www.infanciacontemporanea.com) have been very active promoting events to think about ethical issues and participatory methods in research with children. It is noteworthy to mention that some newspapers have included specific sections on children and technology (i.e. Vanguardia, Ara), educational innovation and technology (i.e. El País) and there are an increasing number of activities organized by schools, parental organizations, municipalities and professional consultants focused on promoting a developmentally adequate engagement with digital technologies in young children. In short,

although literature regarding technology in the life of children 0-8 is emerging in the Spanish context as a key focus as such, it is still very scarce. We hope, therefore, that the presented results from the study will serve as a basis for larger EU studies on related topics and for policy recommendations in Spain and beyond.

Sweden

Swedish media and communication research is now turning its gaze towards younger children. The Swedish Research Council funds the four year project 'A Day in the Digital Lives of 0-3 year olds', ref no 2018-01261 (2019-2022), which is based on work conducted within working group 1 (Digital literacy in homes and communities). The aim of the project is to gain new insights into the ways in which digital technology informs and permeates the everyday lives of children, 0-3 yrs. old. The project will investigate their digital media appropriation, practices and agency as well as parental mediation strategies, to advance our understanding of their implications on childhood and family life. Furthermore, the project highlights the status of children's early digital literacy skills, thereby also identifying implications for policy in relation to education, parenting, and the media industry. The project will make empirical and analytical contributions to two strands of research: the domestication of technology research, and theories on parental mediation. The project proposes a qualitative in-depth, and contextualized approach, focusing on 20 children and their families in a time-condensed ethnography, inspired by the well-researched 'A Day in the life' methodology, involving three visits in each family, and the construction of a thick set of data through interviews, survey, observations and video-recording the children in the domestic sphere.

Switzerland

- In 2017, the «MIKE study» was performed for the second time in Switzerland. Based on a representative sample, it examines the media use behaviour of more than 1,000 primary school pupils and their parents. Results are expected starting early 2018.

- Switzerland also participates in the study, «Young Children (0-8) and Digital Technologies which is performed throughout Europe. A national report for 2017 has been drawn up. Moreover, a Master's thesis has been performed asking asylum-seeking families the same set of questions. A national report for the 2018 phase will also be published.

- The Swiss Federal Commission for Child and Youth Affairs has commissioned a report on "Digitale Transformation: Auswirkungen auf Kinder und Jugendliche in der Schweiz" (Digital Transformation: Impacts on Children and Adolescents in Switzerland). The report is focused on education, training, work and leisure and was published at the end of 2017.

- In addition, the «ADELE study» was launched in 2018. ADELE stands for Activités - Digitales - Education - Loisirs - Enfants (Activities - Digital - Education - Leisure - Children) and is a bilingual study on the media behaviour of children between the ages of four and six in Switzerland. For the qualitative survey, 16 families in German-speaking Switzerland and 8 families in French- speaking Switzerland were interviewed.

- In 2018, the Swiss Health Observatory (OBSAN), together with the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, launched a quantitative study on the use of digital media by pre-school children (4 to 6 years old). By January 2019, 900 parents had been surveyed on digital media use and the health behaviour of their children. Results are expected by the end of 2019.

- A research group at the Linguistic Department of ZHAW aims at establishing a linguistic research project concerning digital literacy and writing competence, a first version has been written and submitted.

- Several courses at Bachelor and Master level were offered at the University of Zurich on the topic & language acquisition and digital literacy; 2016/2017.

Turkey

Dr. Tolga Kargın and his research team at Usak University, Turkey have conducted two studies about using digital and multimodal literacy in K-4 settings. The first study Dr. Kargın and his research team conducted was about teachers' use of technology in their classrooms and knowledge about digital literacy. The researchers conducted interviews with 18 K-4 teachers from different regions of Turkey and asked questions about their use of technology in and out of school, how they use technology and digital media as a teaching material, what kind of instruction they received about using technology in class, what they think about young children's technology engagements, etc. (Interview questions were prepared by DigiLitEY Working Group 2). Findings of this study have been presented in International Educational Research and Teacher Education Congress, held in Antalya, Turkey in September 2018. The second research Dr. Kargın and his research team conducted was about young children's (7 – 8 year-old) digital and critical literacy engagements in four elementary schools in Usak province of Turkey. In this study, the children used the Puppet Pals iPad application to recreate the well-known fairy tales (e.g., Cinderella, etc.) they recently read and found problematic. In this process, however, it was expected from the children to read and examine the tales based on the critical literacy guidelines the research team offered, and as a product of critical writing, it was expected from them to create new tales by using Puppet Pals iPad application as an answer to "How would this story be a better story?" question. This study was carried out in each classroom separately, and the researchers studied

with the children two hours a day for two weeks. The collected data have been analysed by using Mediated Discourse Theory procedures in Dedoose qualitative data analysis software.

UK

There have been a number of outcomes of the project in the UK. The Action has stimulated and brought together vibrant academic debate around digital literacies in early childhood. It has led to numerous shared conference papers and symposia at national and international conferences, beyond the COST Action.

In terms of research projects, the Action has informed the Day in The Life research project led by Julia Gillen, Lancaster University, with multiple UK-based and across Europe COST Action members. Jackie Marsh also drew together a group from the Action to collaborate on an EU Commission-funded project on makerspaces in the early years, MakEY (http://makey-project.eu).

The Action has led to methodological debate about established and innovative approaches to studying young children's digital lives, and to the creation of Open Access online Research Methods resources (e.g. methods database and podcasts),

The Action has provided a very rich network of international contacts, exchanges and visits. These have underpinned joint research activity (e.g. the WG1 DITL study and WG5 multiple stakeholder workshops) and have created rich opportunities for Early Career researchers and doctoral students training opportunities e.g. through STMS to visit overseas centres in their area of specialism, to make presentations of their developing work, receive critical and constructive feedback and report on the outcomes of these visits. This has led to the formation of new clusters of interest e.g. the international REDD Network (Researching Early Childhood Digital Documentation) involving Flewitt, Cowan, Kumpulainen et al.

There have been numerous knowledge exchange activities undertaken during the action, including Kucirkova and Flewitt's work with app designers on personalised learning through story (at UCL IOE), and Yamada-Rice and Marsh's collaboration on a Think Tank about the use of VR with young children.

Finally, Marsh and Flewitt have been appointed to a Department for Education Expert Panel on early years language, literacy and communication apps.

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