

SWIM: See What I Mean – a Visual Dictionary Project
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General Report

Developed by EKOS

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Introduction

The aim of this report is to analyze the current state of art considering usage of visual aids in foreign language classes in all partner countries. Its intent is to point out all similarities and opposites considering creation and usage of visual aids in teaching. This report will show what are teachers' favourite teaching methods in general, their favourite tools to create their own aids and resources of getting the available ones via the Internet. The report will also show teachers' attitudes considering creating their own teaching aids or just using the already existing ones.

Further, the report collects examples of best practises from all partner countries - three per country, with an exception of Spain; as two of the project partners are Spanish organisations, there are six best practice examples from Spain included in the report.

After national reports analysis, this report focuses on teachers questionnaire analysis (original teacher questionnaire is included as Appendix 1 and was disseminated in each partner country via Google Forms).

National reports analysis

1. Teachers favourite tools and techniques

Regarding the first question: **What tools or techniques do teachers/tutors use to help their learners with learning foreign languages in your country?** the partners in their national reports replied as follows:

Jaitek

In Spain, the techniques and tools used by teachers depend basically on the target group and the age of the students.

According to British Council, “young children learn language naturally and unconsciously”. Therefore, it is important for teachers to use “interesting everyday activities” to make them feel secure. One of the main resources used by preschool teachers are engaging and amusing songs that students happily learn without any effort.

Another important element is the creation of routines, in which these young students are asked about the weather, about their feelings. They will also use basic structures to ask for specific things, such as writing material, going to the toilet or the meaning of a word.

Books and stories also play an important role within these students. Children’s stories will keep them engaged. Normally, these books contain lots of pictures that will help them learn by analogy and repetition. While telling the story, preschool teachers, normally very motivated, will incorporate different gestures that will reinforce the meaning of words, helping the students’ understanding. “The very hungry caterpillar” is an example of a highly used book. Its multiple images will help students learn different words and answer very basic questions.

As the level and the age of students increases, it can be claimed that methodologies used change drastically. Especially in higher Primary Education lessons, teachers tend to focus more on grammatical exercises and vocabulary. However, some teachers let their students be more active and engage them in more dynamic activities, such as games or group projects. In order to learn a language, it is important to create an immersive environment, in which students are in contact with the language most of the time. Therefore, English should be the only language used in these lessons. However, that is not always the case, and some teachers use Spanish most of the time, leaving the second language for very specific cases and not letting students develop their communicative skills. According to Rubén Chacón (2019), dean of the Faculty of Philology, a language should be learnt by use and exposition. However, he claims that Second Language Teachers in Spain tend to use written activities because it is easier for them to control a class of 25 or 30 students.

During High School, the level of interaction seems to be highly reduced. Teachers normally focus only on grammar exercises and pay very little attention to communicative skills. On the contrary, other teachers promote different communicative activities among students, such as debates about topics that interest those teenagers. It could be said that the situation gets worse when those students finish the four courses of Secondary Education and access the Baccaureate. Teachers’ rush and willingness to cover all the contents of the curriculum and the pressure of the upcoming exam for accessing University makes it impossible to incorporate different activities than the old-fashioned grammar exercises.

Other educational institutions such as Language Academies offer different approaches. Some of them offer an immersive environment where students can learn a language naturally. These academies also try to develop the grammar knowledge among students, but they usually try to focus on the communicative approach instead, by making use of different resources and activities.

Innoventum

Finland has a long history of both teaching foreign languages, and using innovative and creative ways to do so. To begin with, it is worth mentioning that Finland has two official languages: Finnish and Swedish. Even if Finnish is the language of the majority, and about 90% of the population speak Finnish as their mother tongue, and Swedish is the native language for about 5% of the population, all pupils in Finland study at school both of the official languages.

As Finnish language is quite hard to learn and is not spoken widely outside Finland, most Finns, wanting to stay in touch with the rest of the world, learn to speak more than their two official national languages. Thanks to that, Finland places among the top countries in the world when it comes to the fluency of English.

Educational institutions that are trying to ensure access to education for all young people, regardless of their place of residence, language or financial situation. Since the 1980s, ICTs, open and distance learning (DL) and similar trends have started to play a major role in Finnish foreign language teaching. The emergence of the Internet, together with mobile telephony, have set a steadily growing number of foreign language teachers wanting to fully use the potential of these technological developments. Therefore, the most commonly used tools which help students learn foreign languages are technological devices and different kinds of software.

Finnish language teachers bear in mind that nowadays a growing amount of studying takes place outside of school and conventional classrooms and the use of modern information and communication technologies, e-learning and distance learning has become a necessity, especially after the COVID-19 virus outbreak in 2020. Finland has been better prepared for those changes than many other countries, as distance learning has been provided in Finland, on the basis of Act No.629/1998 on Secondary Education and Regulations No.810/1998 and 955/2002 on the objectives of upper secondary education and the distribution of hours, for quite a long time. Traditional distance learning is currently changing into open and distance learning (ODL) and e-learning. Instead of only delivering teaching to remote places through telecommunications, ODL and e-learning emphasize the importance of the learner's own responsibility for their learning process, which method with no doubt helps to learn foreign languages more effectively.

Finnish language educators focus on their students' language awareness/language immersion, and introduction of different languages from the earliest school grades. Multilingualism is highly encouraged and various languages are present constantly and everywhere in class and in school. Finnish teachers support language development in kindergarten, as they highly believe in the positive effects it has on the child's balanced growth. As in many other countries worldwide, also in Finland, pictorial material is widely used in early childhood education in supporting communication (both in mother tongue and second language) in early childhood education.

Furthermore, a significant number of Finnish educators of all types (including language teachers) are realizing that including play-like features makes classes more appealing, and that learn-through-play methods can be actually used in educational settings. Learning the language by singing, playing, through rhymes and games is, of course, a popular method in other countries as well. What is

different in Finnish educational mindset is that here, this method doesn't include any kind of tests or exams during the first years.

In addition it is worth mentioning that in Finland learning foreign languages - especially English - doesn't happen only in classes, language immersion happens naturally thanks to watching movies and TV shows. It is hard to find another country where movies with subtitles are that popular. What differs Finland from most European countries is the fact that not many TV shows or movies here are dubbed. The lack of choice makes people immerse in other language (usually English) as they watch the movies, even with subtitles in their native language, they still hear words in foreign language and are learning them, even subconsciously, connecting those sounds with picture (their visualization nonetheless) while chilling in front of the TV. The same effect can be achieved by playing console/computer games. Hearing English on a daily basis plays a significant role in both conscious and unconscious learning.

EKOS

It seems important to show the historical outline of the visualization in Poland and the countries of the Eastern Block in general. In Poland, in the late 80's there were systemic changes, which had a significant impact on the access to various types of goods and technological solutions. Teachers who currently practice their profession were mostly educated in the 1980s and 1990s. They had no access to computers and the Internet appeared in Poland only in the late 90. Back then, the visual materials used in teaching foreign languages were most often found in books, possibly on posters and boards, and in magazines. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the communicative approach was still the most common approach when it comes to teaching foreign languages.

Nowadays, in Poland, like in most European countries, the teachers' interest in the use of information and communication technologies in learning foreign languages is growing. As digitization of schools expanded, teachers began to include in their teaching methods the usage of such devices as mobile phones or interactive boards, learn how to use webquests etc. The dual method is used more and more in Poland, classes are conducted alternately by a Polish teacher who teaches grammar, spelling, text translation and a native speaker (consolidates this material during a conversation). The method of combining e-learning with face-to-face meetings with the teacher during classroom classes is used more and more in Poland. Tandem courses are becoming more and more popular. They consist of exchanging "language for language", learning each other. If such a course is organized in the form of a trip or a summer camp lasting, for example, 2 weeks, it can be combined with the total immersion method. The total immersion method assumes the possibility of conversation in a foreign language throughout the day, also during meals. The tandem course naturally forces such conversations through everyday contact with language users. In Poland, the audiovisual method is also very popular, in which to learn the language, videos, songs or pictures are used. This method allows for motivating the participants to speak through discussions on a given topic, it may be, for example, a discussion about a film watched during the class. This method also allows you to conduct topics related to the culture of a given country.

The grammatical - translation method is also often used, focusing on grammar and text comprehension, but nowadays it is rather combined with other methods.

Typical teaching techniques based on the grammar-translation method are:

- translation of a literature fragment (translation from the target language into the mother tongue) - text comprehension questions (finding information in a passage and relating to your own experience)

- finding synonyms and antonyms for words and whole sets of words - comparing the spelling and pronunciation of a foreign language and the target language
- filling gaps in sentences with new words or individual grammatical phrases
- memorizing word lists, grammar rules and grammatical peculiarities of the language
- the student inventing a sentence with a new word in such a way as to show that he understands its meaning - writing essays on a specific topic in the target language.
- Many language schools in Poland use the Callan Method and the Helen Doron method.

Storytelleme

Starting by explaining the organisation of the education system in Portugal:

There is a system of public education and also many private schools at all levels of education.

The school system in Portugal is organised in three sequential levels: pre-primary education (ages 3 to 5), basic education (typical ages 6 to 14) and secondary education (typical ages 15 to 17). Basic education is organised according to three cycles (Grades 1-4; Grades 5-6 and Grades 7-9)

Formal compulsory education comprises three sequential cycles of basic education – 1st cycle (grades 1 to 4, ages 6 to 9), 2nd cycle (grades 5 to 6, ages 10 to 11), and 3rd cycle (grades 7 to 9, ages 12 to 14) – and secondary education (grades 10 to 12, ages 15 to 17).

Foreign language education has had a long life in Portuguese schools. Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century, Latin, French, English, German and Greek were already part of the curriculum. More recently, the range of foreign languages was broadened to include Spanish, and since 2015 Mandarin has become an option in selected secondary schools.

In pre-primary (not compulsory) and primary education (years 1 to 4) there is no compulsory foreign language learning in the public sector. Schools may offer one FL course in this cycle as an extracurricular activity.

In the first cycle of post-primary education (years 5 and 6), with a 4 x 50m per week time allocation, pupils in the public sector now have one foreign language as a mandatory subject, the options being, in theory, English, French and German. It should also be possible (as in primary education) to follow an extra-curricular beginners course in a second FL, but this possibility is limited to a small number of schools. In the second cycle of post-primary education (years 7, 8 and 9) the compulsory foreign language has a 3 x 50m per week load and there is the option of a second FL, in theory again, English, French, German, Spanish or Italian (the option of a second FL is set against musical education and technological education, all on a 3 x 50m per week basis).

Currently, English is the main language choice in the 2nd and 3rd cycles with a provision time ranging between 90 minutes and 2 hours per week. At secondary school level a foreign language is mandatory for grades 10 and 11, irrespective of the chosen subject area. Students may take a third new foreign language (Latin, German and, when available, Greek or Mandarin), or continue studying one of the languages they took before. In higher education, following the Bologna process, language provision was substantially reduced in undergraduate degrees. However, the internationalisation agenda brought English-medium instruction to the table as a way to attract international students. English taught programmes at Master's and PhD level are therefore becoming more common, despite controversy generated by the (surprising) lack of English proficiency of both Portuguese students and academics.

English teacher education:

Until the recent changes in the English curriculum, there were two routes to becoming an English teacher: to obtain a degree in English for education at a university and teach English in 3rd cycle or secondary education, or to obtain a degree in basic education at a polytechnic institute with a specialisation in English for 2nd cycle.

With the inclusion of English as a curricular subject in the 1st cycle, a three-semester Master's degree, which includes a teaching practicum, can be taken by graduates with CEFR C1 English (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

Decroly

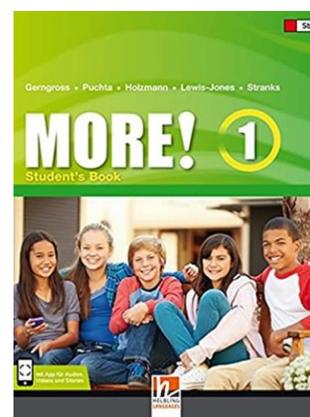
In Spain, great importance is given to collaborative tasks and work. The great majority of teachers try to instil the benefits of working together, learning from each other's strong as well as weak points.

Also, most teachers follow a communicative approach. For years, the Spanish have not been very successful as teaching languages but that is something that is considerably changing these days. Today, language is seen as a tool to open doors in this globalised world, so language is taught in context, in a way that the learner can see the actual use of it and how he or she can apply it in real life.

However, we can find differences depending on the type of course or institution where the language is taught. This is, English is not taught the same way in every school. This is worth mentioning because many students go to private language schools apart from learning English at school because they feel that is not sufficient. In these schools, the language can be more centered to a specific purpose, as it can be work in a certain field or passing an exam. This way, many aspects of the language can be left behind.

Auxilium

Foreign language teachers in Austria use a variety of tools and techniques to help their learners with language learning. Almost every Austrian language teacher, as well as teachers of other subjects, uses a course book in the language classroom. This is due to the political schoolbook campaign that provides every Austrian student with course books for every subject free of charge. This measure should ensure equality of opportunities and access to learning materials for every student, regardless of the family's financial situation. Although there is a great variety of course books that are available and officially approved, most schools use the same books. For example, in EFL (English as Foreign Language) classes in lower secondary school, the course book "More!" is most popular. Additional material of this course book includes audio and video material, amongst other things.



Although the use of an orientation towards the course book is highly popular, most teachers use, at least complementary, their own tools and techniques too. Many create their own worksheets for practice and especially for complex grammar issues, clearly structured information provided on the black board is common. In terms of vocabulary teaching, picture cards and word cards, mind maps and brainstorming are commonly used techniques. The teacher would, for example, let the students match the corresponding picture cards and word cards in an introductory activity in order to activate

the students' pre-knowledge of vocabulary that is important for the covered topic. Another pre-knowledge activating teaching method would be to let students create a mind map either in groups or individually, including all words the students associate with the given topic.

Games such as "Activity", which is a very popular board game in Austria, are played in the foreign language classroom on a regular basis too. In this game, the class is divided into two groups and every group gets a set of vocabulary items. One student then reads one of the words and explains it to his/her teammates. This is either done by drawing the word, by orally explaining the word or by miming it. The aim of the game is that the group guesses as many words as possible in a given time, e.g. 1 minute. Tabu, another game with similar rules, is often played too. When playing "Tabu", a student must explain a word to his/her group without using certain forbidden words. Many teachers play such games with their students in cover lessons or as a little break in-between exhausting study periods, but also as a reward for good class work.

Other tools used in Austrian language classrooms are pictures or graphs that should serve as food for thought and give students a starting point for discussing a certain topic. This is also what happens at the oral "Matura" in languages, the final exams at the end of the students' school career in Austria (equivalent to the A-Levels in the UK, for example). The students get two pictures which they need to compare and contrast before discussing the given topic in more detail. Pictures do therefore not only play a major role in oral language exams, but also in language classes because teachers try to prepare their students to the examination modalities as much as possible.

Moreover, apps get more popular in the language classroom as well. For example, a lot of students, and teachers as well, enjoy the quiz app "kahoot" very much. Padlet, quizlet and lerningapps.org are other examples of widely used apps in language classes.

Many teachers try to include authentic material that is appealing to students in their lessons. Therefore, songs, videos, TV show/film sequences, newspaper articles and photographs, amongst others, are usually part of a language lesson as well. When teaching students about the culture in one of the countries where the target language is spoken, many teachers also bring real objects they picked up when travelling to this country to the classroom. However, also when talking about more general topics, real objects such as brochures, maps, public transport timetables or ads can be a great asset because many teachers feel that by using real objects, they can engage their learners more.

Summary

Although the tools and techniques used in foreign language teaching differ from partner country to partner country, several common points can be identified. Books are used in a traditional form, and electronic versions are used more and more often, communication technologies are also developed that allow the use of materials available on the Internet, various types of applications that allow creation, for example, tasks or online tests, and finally the conduct of classes using communication applications.

In all partner countries, the approach to language learning changes with the age of the students. In kindergarten and primary school, teachers take advantage of the fact that such young children learn languages naturally and allow them to learn through play or by answering questions related to daily activities, the weather or feelings. In the later stages of learning, teachers focus more on grammar and other aspects of the language.

Great importance is attached to cooperation in solving tasks, teachers show students the benefits of working together and learning from each other. Learning takes place most often with the use of technological devices and various types of software. Teachers pay attention to the fact that their students use a foreign language and have the opportunity to learn it through immer. Learning a foreign language often takes place, for example, by watching television programs.

In most countries, foreign languages are learned through play and games in kindergarten and in the younger years of primary education. In older classes, social games are also used, e.g. TABU, which is to encourage students to speak and help practice vocabulary.

In Poland, like in most European countries, the teachers' interest in the use of information and communication technologies in learning foreign languages is growing. As digitization of schools expanded, teachers began to include in their teaching methods the usage of such devices as mobile phones or interactive boards, learn how to use webquests etc. In some countries the dual method is very popular, classes are conducted alternately by a Polish teacher who teaches grammar, spelling, text translation and a native speaker (consolidates this material during a conversation). Also the method of combining e-learning with face-to-face meetings with the teacher during classroom classes is used more and more.

To summarize, it is worth noting that in addition to traditional activities and tools and materials used for teaching foreign languages such as course books, pictures, party games in most countries, applications such as Kahoot quizlet and Padlet have become popular in most countries in connection with the digitization of foreign language teaching. Using these materials or applications makes the language classes even more interesting.

2. Most popular visual aids in classes

In the second question: **What kind of visual aids are most commonly used in foreign language classes in your country?** Partners replied as follows:

Jaitek

Educational institutions normally rely on publishers for the production of materials to use in class with students (Dorado & Gewec, 2017). Regarding the materials created for foreign language classes, these are commonly composed by books, flashcards, and a digital version of these two resources that can be visualized online using any technical device.

On one hand, flashcards are used to reinforce the vocabulary using a visual support. There are two different types of flashcards: one where the vocabulary word is written and another one that has an image that represents that word. This resource is normally used by the teacher in a plenty of ways: Placing the flashcards around the class (both with the image or the word), the teacher can say the name of one of the vocabulary concepts out loud. Then, students have to look for the position of the flashcard that corresponds to that concept and point it with their hands.

One student can take one flashcard randomly and put it up on his/her head. Then, using YES/NO questions, the student has to guess which flashcard has been taken.

Placing all the flashcards down, students have to relate the word of the vocabulary concept with the corresponding image by playing a memorizing game.

There are plenty of games that can be used to study vocabulary using flashcards.

On the other hand, the digital version of the book allows students to follow the activities all together and visualize the materials, such as songs or stories in a video or audio format. Moreover, digital versions of the books also contain additional online activities that students can use to go deeper into the topic.

However, foreign language teachers also use external resources and materials with their students. YouTube is commonly used to use songs that help students internalize grammatical or vocabulary concepts in a more dynamic and attractive way. There are YouTube channels that generate a lot of visual materials to learn foreign languages. In the case of learning English, there are channels, such as “Super Simple Songs”, with nursery rhymes videos that help young students memorize songs with simple vocabulary concepts, useful to start learning the basic concepts and structures of a language. For those students in higher courses, teachers also use TED videos, which deal with different interesting themes that are sometimes useful to initiate debates.

Pinterest is also used by teachers as it provides them with images, worksheets and ideas that can be used in class with students. By having an account on the platform, you can save the materials you like and download them so you can use them both, online and in printed versions.

Moreover, films are also a current visual aid used by teachers to reward students’ effort done during the semester.

Innoventum

Visualization plays an essential role when it comes to teaching, especially younger learners. New words always have to be presented with a picture visualizing the word, and if it’s not possible they need to be visualized by showing the actual object in the classroom or doing the movement attached to the verb.

Digitization of schools happened quite early in Finland, compared to other European countries. Even if the vast majority of language teaching in Finland is still delivered via textbooks, using their digital equivalents is becoming more and more popular. Finnish language teachers and tutors don’t hesitate to use such devices as smartphones or interactive boards. Still, the main material used in language classes is an exercise book, used both traditionally and electronically. Types of the books vary according to the age of its users, differing forms of exercises - the younger pupils are, the more visualization - pictures and action-based teaching they contain.

Alongside the books and exercises the teachers also use games, worksheets, posters, mind maps, flashcards, or online learning environments, such as SanomaPro’s Bingel or Bingelespecially, which combines language exercises from the book with an aspect of a mobile game. Using mobile games in classes is really popular with the pupils. One of most widely used web applications for vocabulary learning as <https://quizlet.com/>. or Educaplay, which adds fun and playfulness.

One of the most popular visual methods in foreign language teaching is the use of mindmaps. The big advantage of this method is that it doesn;t require any kind of devices or befor-hand preparation.

As it happened in most European countries, in 2020, the number of teachers using technological devices for teaching has significantly increased as Covid-19 pandemic has forced teachers to deliver their teaching digitally.

Ekos

It seems that the use of visual methods in foreign language lessons is very rare. Most often it is limited to using photos, tables and other graphics contained in the book, or additional materials currently available more and more online. However, a lot depends in this case on the creativity of the teacher in conducting classes.

Still, for the time being, the most common visual materials used in teaching foreign languages in Poland - like posters or a mind map and Leitner's method - also known as the method of flashcards - are those, which doesn't require any kind of devices. Flashcards are cards most often containing on the one side a word or phrase in a foreign language, and on the other side a translation in Polish, there are various types of flashcards - sentences to be completed, definitions, picture-word. In the case of this method, a self-teaching record is also used - a box with compartments separating the study material from the already mastered one.

The combination of two methods, for example, creating visual notes and flashcards is also a good method - the student creates notes on his own, thanks to which he can remember the material from the lesson better and prepare a tool for revision of the material. Another popular technique is the method of visual notes a method which is useful not only for learning languages, but also other school or academic subjects. When creating notes, students should use several different colors of pens, highlighters or felt-tip pens to highlight important words (dates or names). They also can use color codes in order to group different issues with specific colors. It is also good to use symbols to represent individual words or whole formulas. Symbols improve memory.

Today, publishers that specialize in textbooks and workbooks for teaching foreign languages are increasingly adding codes to access more interactive tasks and materials available online. Such activities allow students to diversify the classes, which makes them attractive, and gives the teacher new opportunities to develop topics discussed during classes.

Storytelle

Recent research has shown how well younger English language learners respond to picture books (Mourão 2013), a format where interdependent verbal and pictorial input support the comprehension of a narrative (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006).

With this format, the learners/readers can react and respond as well as interpret and interact.

- illustrations in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) – coursebooks
- visual sensory preference and more image-based learning style

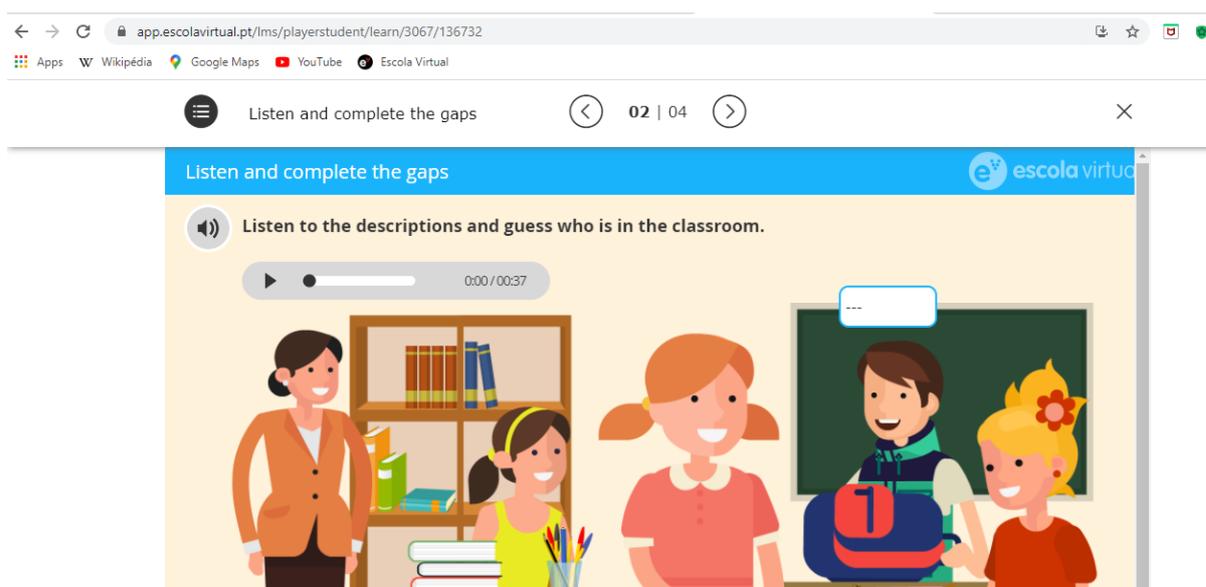
Coursebook writers in Portugal are usually experienced teachers and are 'products' of training courses which predate the current educational interest in developing learners' visual literacy so they may neither have had the experience of nor any theoretical input about this type of approach.

So, Visual Representations in Portuguese-Produced ELT Coursebooks.

Foreign languages learning in Portugal needs to be much more exploratory (helping the learners to discover patterns and features in the language) and much more experiential (providing learners with much more experience of the language in use). Portuguese produced coursebooks tend to have an informative focus (language as a system) and an instructional focus (providing practice exercises) which overpowers the more socio-cultural aspects of the learning process.

LE teachers also tend to use other platforms to create more attractive visual content, especially for the younger age groups - 1st cycle (grades 1 to 4, ages 6 to 9). One example is the Wordwall platform <https://wordwall.net/> that can be used to create both interactive and printable activities.

Also, Virtual School is the tool most used by teachers in Portugal. Complete and simple to use, it assumes an essential role in the daily life of teachers. Hundreds of digital educational resources, catalogued by subject and discipline, such as 3D videos, animations, experiments, interactivity, among many others, support the exploration of the curriculum in the classroom context. <https://www.escolavirtual.pt/>



The techniques also change depending on the students' level. In primary school, it tends to be more communicative and collaborative but, as learners grow older and start achieving higher levels, they tend to focus on their own success as they start facing the reality of having good marks to access university, vocational school, or whatever aim they might have.

Decroly

According to Lola Reeves (Trinity College London trainer and teacher in Spain and Portugal), students learn easier when they are exposed to the content of the subject, as it happens in physical education or art due to the high degree of TPR (total physical response) activities that can be performed in those subjects. For example, if a teacher says "we are going to use red watercolour" and he or she is holding that watercolour, learners will immediately understand what they are going to do as they know what that product is, they can actually see and touch it. We can say that these activities are very contextual. This leads us to think we could apply this contextuality to other subjects such as EFL by using visual aids that help learners understand and use the language in context.

In Spanish schools, role-playing and games are quite widespread together with ICT tools, which are a fundamental part of the lessons (projectors, computers, mobile apps, tablets, digital books, etc.). The digital board is also common although about 15% of Spanish schools have not included it yet. Visual materials have a key role when teaching foreign languages (through videos, flashcards, digital books, online games, mobile interactive applications, PowerPoint presentations, graphics and photos) and they facilitate to a great extent the development of online lessons, which turns them into a fundamental tool considering today's situation. They bring dynamism to the lessons and help acquisition of new vocabulary. Teachers agree that including visual aids to their lessons bring positive results.

Auxilium

Most commonly used visual aids are the pictures provided in the course book. First of all, as already mentioned, every student owns a course book, which means using it is not only less complicated for teachers because they do not need to bring any extra material to the classroom, but also it is a good use of resources to use what is already available anyways.

Apart from pictures in the course book, printed picture cards are other commonly used visual aids and a lot of teachers like to use them. One of the benefits is that when laminated, for example, they can be reused. Apart from time-efficiency and effective use of resources, those kinds of aids are popular because they are independent from any eventual technical difficulties. As mentioned above, many teachers print pictures and put them on the black board, where every student can see them or they let the students match them with word cards. This is often done for the purpose of vocabulary teaching, but also as a starting point for conversations, discussions etc.

Many teachers also try to include as much authentic material in their teaching as possible, so real objects the students can look at or even touch are often used as visual materials too. Using photographs for grammar teaching is another strategy that is used quite often. Particularly when teaching a specific tense, photographs are often used. Some teachers show their students private photos of themselves, for example from a trip, others prefer to use pictures from the internet. The kids should then explain what they see in the pictures by using the appropriate tense. Moreover, real graphs and diagrams that show statistics about hotly debated issues from countries where the target language is spoken are, particularly in upper level language classes, widely used as well.

Mind maps as individual students' work or as the result of a brainstorming process are highly popular too. Some teachers prefer to do that the conventional way, using pen and paper or chalk and the blackboard. Others, who have access to technical equipment, like to use websites like [mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com) to create a word cloud with the students' responses. Mind maps as a product of collaboration are often displayed on the blackboard or projected for everyone to see, while mind maps which were produced by the students are either presented by them or just shown to the teacher. Mind maps or drawings are also especially popular at the beginning of the school year, to get students reflecting about their expectations for the upcoming school year, pre-knowledge or stereotypes they associate with an introductory topic (such as in what comes to their minds when thinking about Italy in their very first Italian lesson).

In lower level language classes, visual dictionaries or worksheets including elements of visual dictionaries are another frequently used tool. They form the basis for the further language production of students. In CLIL lessons (Content and Language Integrated Learning), the use of visual dictionaries is state of the art too. Even though only a few Austrian schools offer CLIL classes at the

moment, the concept is getting more and more popular and will probably play a greater role in the future.

Summary

To sum up - all countries still use traditional course books in the process of teaching foreign languages. However, the current events related to the global pandemic have forced many teachers to introduce technological solutions in their lessons, apart from traditional forms of knowledge transfer.

Most of the partner countries use not only traditional but also digital versions of course books, as well as various types of applications to create and share materials for students, to create visual content that makes lessons more attractive.

The most popular technique used in teaching foreign languages, and not related to modern technologies, are flash cards. They can be used not only to revise the material, but also to be used for various types of games and activities during lessons in the class to activate students and make classes more attractive.

Teachers also often use mind maps, graphs, and charts especially to illustrate lesson topics of discussion. In addition, teachers often use photographs or printed pictures of real-world subjects, parlor games or online games as part of their topics.

The above-mentioned tools seem to be the most popular in all partner countries and therefore the most used in foreign language teaching.

In some countries, TEDvideos or the YouTube platform are also used during language classes. It can therefore be concluded that despite the general progressive digitization in foreign language teaching, the more traditional materials have not faded into the background, they have rather been combined together.

3. Popularity of teacher-created materials

Regarding the creation of visual resources by teachers themselves within their own country, our colleagues answered the question **“Do language tutors in your country tend to prepare visual aids themselves, or prefer using already created material?”**:

Jaitek

As it has been mentioned before, teachers in Spain rely on the creation of educational materials from publishers. There are companies that create educational books and resources for schools and formation centers for teachers to use them in class with students.

Regarding the resources created for learning a foreign language, companies create a wide variety of visual and text materials, as they understand that learning a new language from the beginning needs a big support for teachers. Language learning materials are normally composed of flashcards, visual stories, videos, books (both textbook and digital book) and a CD with songs or audios .

As there is a lot of material already created, some teachers prefer to focus on it instead of creating their own materials. Moreover, they also use already created material from the Internet such as videos, from Youtube, or worksheets from different repositories, but not of their own.

However, there are some teachers that do prefer to create their own resources. These materials are normally gamified so they can attract students and motivate them in the use and learning of the language. They can be physical materials or online materials. For this second type of resources, there are several programs and applications that teachers can use to create their own materials:

- For creating videos: Powtoon, VideoScribe, Camtasia
- For creating visual images: Canva, Paint, Photoshop
- For creating presentations: Genial.ly, Prezi, PowerPoint
- For creating interactive images and breakouts: Genial.ly

Genial.ly is a tool that offers a wide variety of possibilities for creating proper material. You can create presentations, interactive images, breakouts, games and more. There are a lot of templates that you can follow but also there is the possibility to create materials from the very beginning.

Innoventum

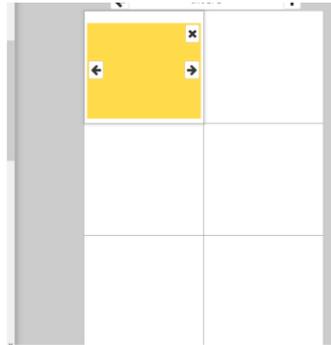
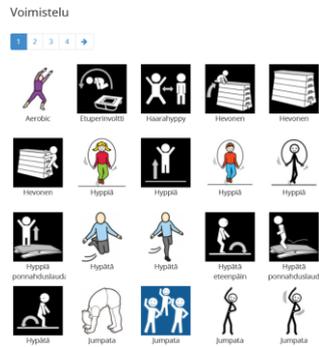
It always depends on the teacher, as it is always easier and less time-consuming to create a digital visual aid than for example preparing flashcards by hand - the younger teachers/tutors are, the more digital visual aids they use to keep their pupils interested.

Those teachers which have required IT and graphical skills and are willing to spend a certain amount of time for its preparation use programs like Powerpoint and Prezi to create visual presentations, canva as the simple and free online tool to create graphic aids, and Camtasia for creating videos.

The tools worth mentioning here are: Papunet - a tool to create pictures and a base of already created pictures which can be used for work with persons with speech impairment or children.

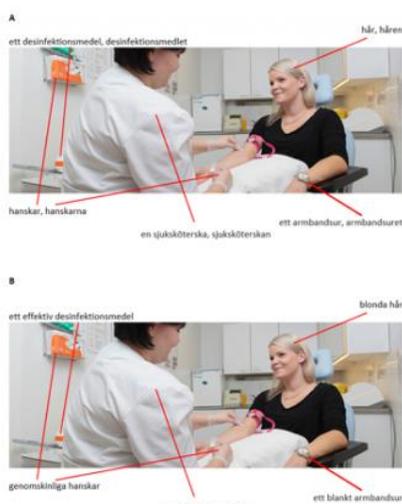


<https://kuvapankki.papunet.net/Image>



<https://kuvatyokalu.papunet.net/#/muokkaa/1909118>

Students are encouraged to create visual materials by themselves as a part of learning. A good example here can be the idea of adding object's names in learned language on pictures where we can spot them.



D

Patienten har det blanka armbanduret och de blonda häären.
Sjuköterskan använder genomskinniga hanskar.
Det effektiva desinfektionsmedlet är viktigt verktyget för sjuköterskan.
Patient ligger på den härliga sjuköterskan.
En härlig sjuköterska beundrar patientens blonda häär.

It can be easily done using tools like Coggle or a similar digital tool that would be helpful in visualizing the language.

EKOS

Significant number of younger teachers, usually those in their 30ies, who are well versed in technology, are looking for free and editable visual materials online. They consider it as the simplest way to keep their classes interesting while spending little time on preparation and matching aids to their needs. Of course, there are also teachers who prepare their visual aids from scratch, but it requires IT and graphical skills and a certain amount of preparation time.

To give an example, a 30 y.o. Japanese teacher in Rzeszów uses simple online tools and free graphics to create his own flashcards containing vocabulary that he teaches in their classes, that he sends to his students every week. Sometimes it is enough for him to simply search for already created and available visualizations online, and prepare his own set.



Ex.1. Flashcards 1

If any of those easy to find visual aids are not meeting his requirements he uses simple graphic programs like MS Paint, online tools like Canva or online flashcards creators to prepare his own set.

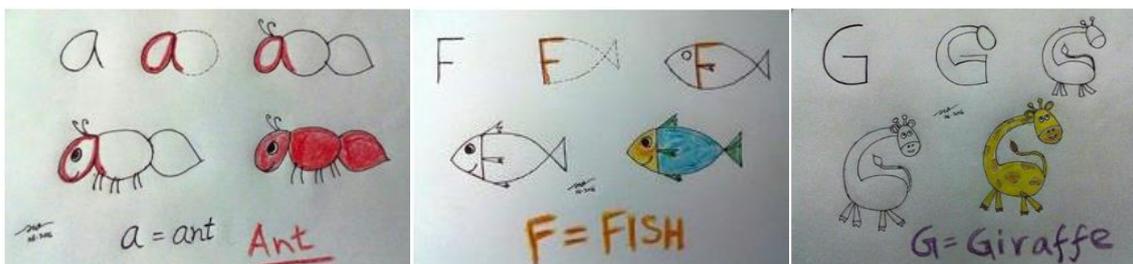


Ex.2. Flashcards 2

One of the most common visualization aids used in foreign language classes in formal education is PowerPoint presentation. Teachers at all levels of education either ask their students to prepare their own presentations on different topics or use their own presentation to give a lesson. In Poland this tool is used mostly in schools and universities, it is rarely or never used in private foreign language lessons or in private language schools.

When it comes to teaching foreign language in first classes of primary school or even in kindergartens, few young teachers admitted that they tend to use surrounding items (like for example toys), as visual aid for teaching very basic level of foreign language classes.

One visualization technique worth mentioning is creating pictures using the first letter of the new word. Teachers engage students by asking them to create different pictures by themselves.



For creating visual aids teachers in Poland use several popular programs and applications like Canva, Paint, Photoshop, Prezi and PowerPoint.

Storytelling

Although the use of diversified materials in foreign language teaching is recommended, the coursebook, in general, continues to be used on a daily basis in the Portuguese education system. However, it seems to be not only a reality of our country, as Sheldon (McGrath 2013: 8) states, the coursebook is considered, for both teachers and students, the pillar of any LE programme.

Authentic materials are also recommended for LE teaching, and currently the main source to obtain these materials is in the media. The internet is accessible to virtually all students, either at home, in libraries, at school or in other places and through it they have access to magazines, newspapers, catalogues, videos, films, among others, constituting an accessible and almost inexhaustible source to obtain curricular materials.

However, in practice it is found that acquiring, selecting and making teaching materials requires effort on the part of the teacher, especially in terms of time, and therefore this may contribute to the teacher not using them as much as they would like.

This effort is even greater for materials designed by teachers themselves. As Siqueira (2012: 15) states, this is a significant challenge because "the design and development of teaching materials is rarely part of initial teacher study programmes, yet this is an activity that not only opens a window of opportunity for teacher creative autonomy, but also poses a series of challenges for which teachers are not formally prepared."

Decroy

Teachers in Spain tend to use already made materials in class. Lately, there has been an inclination towards using original materials as copyright must be respected, but teachers feel most of the things they could make have already been done before, so they take some of here and there to make their own. This way, they have materials specifically created for their students but they nourish many great ideas all over the world.

There are many online platforms and programmes in use nowadays in order to adapt materials to our group of students. Some common examples of these are Kahoot, Quizlet, Quizziz and Flippity (to create whole units as well as activities and games that students can use interactively), PowerPoint and Prezi (to create presentations), Paint, Photoshop and Gimp (to create flashcards and edit images) or Magisto, iMovie or VivaVideo (to create and edit videos).

In Spain, paper and online books are in use, which are a great source of content for the English class. Teachers usually follow these books' units and combine them with activities created by them, usually with the above-mentioned apps.

Auxilium

Most language teachers in Austria would prefer using already created material if they found it appropriate. Because language teachers usually spend a lot of time preparing for classes, correcting homework, exams and so on, they appreciate good material that is ready to use. Not only do they value ready to use visual aids because of a lack of time to prepare them themselves, but also because

it can be quite difficult to find license-free, appropriate and good quality pictures that fit the learning goal and can be used in the language classroom.

There is a wide range of websites that offer teaching materials, including high quality official websites, but also more informal websites where teachers share their materials. Also, websites where teachers sell their materials exist. Although the large number of teaching material websites can be overwhelming to teachers who first start searching for good materials, most teachers have found a few websites they usually trust and from which they often download materials. It must be added though that even teachers who use already created material most often adapt it to their needs. Some teachers, however, enjoy creating their own visual material and would rather not use already created materials because they prefer to have teaching material that completely meets their and their students' needs.

Summary

To sum up - teachers in all mentioned countries prefer to use visual materials they already possess, or to look for available free materials online. Their approach is easy to understand as creating their own materials takes a lot of time and some skills - especially when it comes to digital visual materials. Undoubtedly, creating their own teaching materials would be more popular in all mentioned countries, as in all of them certain number of teachers were doing it anyway - if they were given a right tool, and were taught how to create decent and interesting materials with a little to no effort, or were able to do it in their working hours - not as an additional preparation in their free time. It turns out that it's the younger teachers who are eager to put in extra work to make their lesson, and they focus on making gameful materials using popular online tools or programs allowing them to do it easily.

Nowadays, due to the necessity of online teaching, teachers of all ages are encouraged to focus on visualizations in their classes. They are getting more and more motivated to get creative in order to keep students interested and well- prepared for exams while not having an opportunity to see them face-to-face.

4. Best practices

In the next question of national reports, all partners were asked to briefly explain **3 best practises used while teaching foreign language in their country, while focusing on practises related to studying foreign language online, using online platforms, apps or other tools, while supervised by teacher/tutor.**

Jaitek

Jolly Phonics: learning how to pronounce words in another language is a difficult task, as you have to know the exact sound of the phonemes that compose the words. In order to make this job easier, there is a methodology called Jolly Phonics that is an alphabetic teaching method based on the phonetic aspect of the letters. It proposes the learning of the alphabet but not in the order of the traditional alphabet, but phonetically. Each letter is assigned a song, a gesture, a visual card and a story. In this way, children, when learning the sound "s" accompany this sound with a movement of

their body as if imitating a crawling snake. This relation makes it easier for the students to practice the sound of the phonemes separately to later introduce them in different words. This methodology is available online as there are a lot of videos on the YouTube channel and it is very useful to use them with the whole group of students when learning a second language. Teachers can ask students to make a circle and pronounce together the sound of the phoneme that they are working on. Then, the teacher will show them the movement related to the sound and the whole group will perform it together. The teacher can also ask them individually to do both tasks so he/she knows if the students are pronouncing it correctly. After doing it several times, the teacher can show them the video with the song of the phoneme and ask students to perform, both the sound and the movement, whenever the video pronounces the letter. Finally, the teacher can read them the story about the letter and can ask students to read some of the words that appear on the story that contain that phoneme.

Duolingo: When learning a second language it is important to start learning vocabulary to formulate sentences. It is easier for students to learn vocabulary that is related to a theme and that is inside a group of words that are linked to the same word-structure, category or theme. Duolingo is a very trendy application among adult students thanks to its flexibility and easy interface. This application has different language possibilities to study. You have to create an account, select the language you want to study and start using the app. Teachers can ask students to create an account on this app to reinforce the vocabulary studied in class in a more autonomous way.

Digital breakouts: students usually feel more motivated when they have to face something that interests them and that challenges them. Digital breakouts, in which students have to solve different mysteries and find different clues, is a very good choice to incorporate every single aspect of the learning process of a language. Teachers can include any vocabulary words or grammar that they desire, as well as specific exercises or sections to reinforce listening skills (videos or podcasts) or speaking skills. Genial.ly is a very useful application that enables teachers to create very easy breakouts, also offering a lot of templates that can be used and modified to incorporate any particular aspect of the language. Google forms can be also used to create simple breakouts with multiple choice questions.

Innoventum

BEST PRACTICE - EXAMPLE 1 - THE REPETITION METHOD

The Repetition method, that was developed in autumn 2015 under the leadership of Maria Ahlholm, Docent at the University of Helsinki, in collaboration with Finnish as a Second Language teacher students and experts bases on oral language learning, The aim of this new method was to produce a teaching method and material that could be quickly adopted to support the teaching of the Finnish language to asylum seekers.

The development of the method has been done in collaboration with the Teachers Without Borders network's language guide project. The second phase of the Finnish Language Says Welcome project (Suomen kieli sanoo tervetuloa)- Learning the Language of Inclusion`` focuses on designing democracy education material that can be used to support the integration of parents of young children and young people who came to the country alone!

The learner is constantly supported by a "talking dictionary" that stands next to give words. Thus, in a teaching situation, a grammar guide that is used as a dictionary is utilized. He always moves behind the learner who speaks. By touching the hand of the dictionary, the student chooses the correct answer from the dictionary.



Pic. 1. Learning with “talking dictionary”

BEST PRACTICE - EXAMPLE 2 - TACTILE EXERCISES

Tactile exercises are included in "digital-tactile pedagogy" developed by Heini Syyrilä (who was Finnish Language Teacher of the Year in 2017) acknowledges that all learners are different and enables pupils “to learn a language whatever their level of ability.”

Her students are motivated to use the resources that best suit their learning style, and to learn and advance at their own pace, through a variety of assessment methods.

This particular tactile exercise uses Lego bricks to teach the principles of word order in German language. Students work in pairs by forming the sentences, and then they read them aloud and translate into Finnish.



Pic. 2. Learning German using lego bricks

BEST PRACTICE - EXAMPLE 3 - Kuvako-project

KUVAKO (also known as PICCORE)- is a 3-year research and development project at the Humak University of Applied Sciences, funded by EU Home Affairs Funds. The project is managed by the Humanities University of Applied Sciences (Humak) and its partners are the University of Applied Sciences of Southeast Finland (XAMK), Pohjois-Savon Opisto ry and the Finnish Association for the Developmental Disabilities. After the end of the project, Papunet will take care of the maintenance and further development of the images produced during the project.

The app contains 1000 photos of people representing Finnish everyday life, society and asylum. The images are organized into different categories and can be searched by keywords. You can complete the pictures by drawing or adding text to them. Users can also import their own images into the app and combine them with other images. In-app images are also available for free from Papunet's image bank.

The aim of the project was to facilitate the interaction between asylum seekers and reception center staff through image communication. Project's goal was to develop a picture-based mobile application which helps people from different cultures communicate with one another. It's goal is to fulfill communicative needs for situations where people do not share a common language. Producing material (pictures) for a Finnish language course for asylum seekers was one of the main goals of the KUVAKO-project.



Kuvako app

The app has already proven to be useful for the officials who work with undocumented migrants, especially asylum seekers in a particularly vulnerable position, who are the main target group of the project. App creators believe that asylum seekers, as for example, children, illiterate people and the disabled who have come to Finland alone, must have an equal right to get information they need and to be understood despite the language barrier. Due to its focus on image-based communication KUVAKO project, which focused on everyday communication situations in the early stages of the reception process, helped to make it happen.

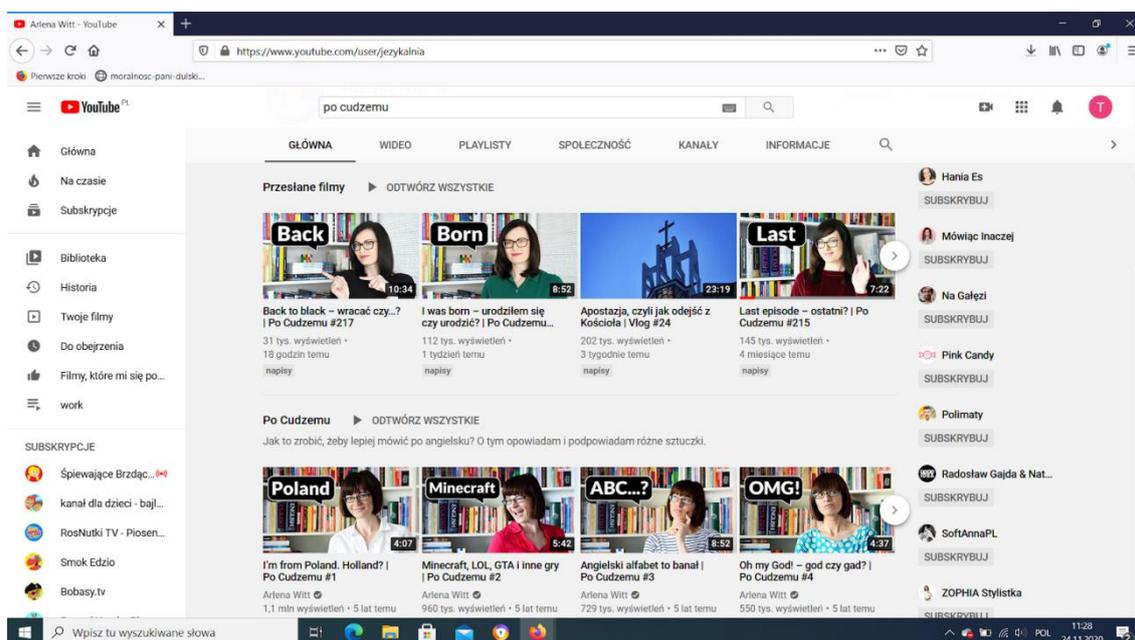
EKOS

BEST PRACTICE - EXAMPLE 1 - TUTOR - YOUTUBER

Even if it's still not very popular in Poland, some Polish language teachers are starting to meet their students' needs by using popular media for teaching. A great example here can be a young English teacher, who has become a youtuber and created her own Youtube channel called "Po cudzemu" where she focuses on teaching English words, phrases and pronunciation using scenes from popular movies or series to present them. This kind of visualization turned out to be a great memorizing

technique and attracted a huge amount of viewers. The secret behind the success of this method is the fact that it refers to students' preferable way of spending free time. Moreover, it shows the students an exact life situation in which they could use the new learned phrase. Even if this method seems to be extraordinarily effective, it wouldn't work for all teachers. It's the naturalness in front of the camera and great sense of humor of the tutor-youtuber that are making this kind of language lesson the perfect example of learning through play.

The huge advantage of using Youtube channels as a teaching tool is the ease of getting constant feedback from learners. Reading comments under this specific channel we can see almost only positive feedback - young fans of the Arlena channel point out that here they can learn much more interesting things than those offered by a teacher during an ordinary English lesson at school.



Link to the YouTube Channel - <https://www.youtube.com/user/jezykarnia>

BEST PRACTICE - EXAMPLE 2 - VIRTUAL REALITY

Next best practise example - learning a foreign language in virtual reality is also really promising, even if it's not generally available yet. Travelling to a place where the language is used on a daily basis, and where we are surrounded by it is without any doubt, tne of the most effective ways to learn a foreign language. As it's not always possible for many different reasons, the alternative may be to use the language immersion method in a virtual environment.

Despite all advantages of this method, it won't become popular in most teaching facilities anytime soon due to its complexity and required technology. Currently the University of Rzeszow is planning and developing a language course using VR goggles for its students, yet it will still take some time until it will pass the test phases. Not only higher education facilities look with hope at this new solution. The Polish startup 1000 realities has created modern software for learning foreign languages, using virtual reality technology. The main idea here is to learn language by fully immersing learners in the virtual world.

This tool makes it possible to move away from the tedious memory mechanism of acquiring material and makes it possible to learn through practice. The VR Language application consists of several scenes in which the user is located.



Promoting video - <https://youtu.be/NsxPDfpXnNQ>

Moving through specific scenes, the student communicates with a virtual native teacher inside the application, practicing communication in a foreign language, while learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures in practice and learns how to break communication barriers.

BEST PRACTICE – EXAMPLE 3 – AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)

Augmented Reality (AR) is a field of technology that already finds its great application in education. There are more and more mobile applications that can help us keep our students entertained, add variety to predictable writing or speaking, illustrate the linguistic material under discussion, and even save a lesson.

The AR application will recognize the object you are looking at and generate a 3D animation or movie for you and superimpose it on what is on the camera screen (the background can be a classroom, meadow, teacher and students - it depends on what will be in the camera lens).

Using AR in class offers many possibilities. It is possible, for example, to diversify the activities by organizing them outdoors and using the application, students can search for various subjects (this can be used, for example, by implementing a topic related to Easter and, thanks to the appropriate application, arrange a hunt for virtual eggs for students), AR can also be used for language exercises in the classroom. Students can describe characters displayed thanks to the application, create stories, assign superpowers to characters, write letters to displayed characters, etc.

Some applications offer us free color job card packages. They are in PDF format and ready to be printed. If we do not want to print cards, we can simply display the pictures on the tablet screen, computer monitor or on the wall using a projector.

Then we just run the application on the phone and "scan" by applying it to the displayed (or printed) image to bring the given character to life.



Pictures to bring to life with animal characters



Animated animals

Storytelling

In addition to the formal teaching of English, other language learning approaches are being used in some Portuguese schools.

BEST PRACTICE 1

In 2011, together with the British Council, the Portuguese Ministry of Education piloted a Bilingual Schools Programme aimed at teaching part of the curriculum of the 1st cycle in English, with the support of assistant English teachers.

In 2015 and 2016 new bilingual programmes were set forth, this time involving schools from pre-primary and the 2nd cycle.

BEST PRACTICE 2

Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) projects using English as a learning vehicle have also been developed in the last decade through partnerships between schools and higher education institutions. One of these projects, English Plus, started as a school-led initiative in 2010 and has since then involved English, History and Science teachers from two state-run schools in Northern Portugal and nearly 300 students from the 3rd cycle.

BEST PRACTICE 3

Other innovations include Awakening to Languages (AtL), a plurilingual approach which promotes contact with a variety of languages and cultures that may or may not be part of the school curriculum. Since 2000 AtL projects have been developed in pre-primary and 1st cycle schools by student teachers and postgraduate students from the University of Aveiro.

Decroly

In Spain, the use of online books is increasing. In many schools, students have a Chrome Book or an online version of a book they can access in a computer or tablet, and paper is almost never used. This is, firstly, a very good method to reduce the use of paper and be more respectful with the environment. However, it is also an advantage for the learning and teaching processes as the teacher and the students have every information they want within reach.

Another tendency that is in vogue is the creation of online blogs or accounts in social media where teachers share a very wide range of ideas and materials, such as teaching methods and didactic ideas for other teachers, information of what is done inside the class for the students and their families, or future projects and homework so the students can follow. It is a way of keeping contact outside school and also giving visibility to the teachers' job and letting people know them.

Finally, gamification is also popular in schools. There are many platforms teachers use to create activities and games for their students. Some widespread examples can be:

- *Kahoot and Quizizz*: the teacher can utilise already created activities or create their own. It consists of 2 gaming-based platforms where students can play individually or collaboratively and learn as well as consolidate the language.
- *Quizlet*: it is very useful to encourage the students to study at home. Instead of, for instance, having to memorise lists of vocabulary or grammatical rules, they can do that through online games. The teacher can create the unit as he or she wants, using words, images and sounds and also follow their students progress. There is also the option of doing a "live competition" where the students can prove what they know, individually or in groups.
- *Flippity*: it is a database with many models anyone can edit to create their own game. Here, you can create a quiz, a scavenger hunt, a hangman, board games, matching games, a bingo, and a lot more.

Auxilium

The most commonly used platform for online foreign language teaching in Austria is Moodle. Especially during times of distance learning, the structured framework the learning management system provides for learners is really valuable. The teacher can upload materials, set up discussion forums, establish upload folders for students' works as well as award points and provide feedback. Additionally, almost all foreign language teachers use a web conference tool for their online language classes. Which tool is used depends on the respective school's policies, but the most popular one is Microsoft Teams. Most teachers find the web conference tool to be the most appropriate substitute for in person classroom teaching. Therefore, it is widely used for communication purposes, conversations in breakout rooms or for clarifying tasks.

Apart from Moodle and a web conference tool, most teachers also include apps or other tools in their online language teaching too. For example, Padlet is used to gather information and to brainstorm. Mentimeter is also used for brainstorming. The students type words they associate with the given topic on their smartphone and the website creates a word cloud, also emphasizing words that were mentioned more often. Some teachers also like to use a quizlet. The teacher can add a set of vocabulary, for instance, and the app then helps students who work with it to memorize the words. This tool is also popular because students can use it whenever and wherever they want, as there is an app for smartphones available. One of the most popular tools, not only during times of distance learning but also in the 'real' foreign language classroom, is kahoot, a tool with which the teacher creates a quiz that the students answer either in teams or individually. Due to the highly competitive character, the majority of teachers report that their students really enjoy kahoot games and consider them great fun.

Summary

While listing the best foreign language teaching practises in their country used in their country, some of project partners focused on online tools which are popular all around the world - like Moodle, Kahoot, Quizlet or Duolingo, proving their usability Nowadays, teacher in many European, and also non-European- countries are either already using those tools and platforms for online education, or ale learning (f.ex. via webinars) how to use them.

At this point of the report there were also listed methodologies that may be popular in some countries, but not necessary in others yet, like Jolly Phonics etc.

The most interesting to read were several examples of teachers' innovative and creative approach to their classes and how it influenced the popularity and efficiency of their classes.

Most mentioned practices were focusing on learning one foreign language, there weren't many mentioned tools where, as in our VisualDictionary, students can learn several languages at one, using one tool, and while working on the same material - for example same text sample, learning vocabulary they need in several different languages. Most tools and practices were also focusing on general language speaking skills not focusing on specific branches - like for example technical language. Nevertheless, all mentioned best practices are bringing something new in the methodology of teaching foreign language - showing that there is still a place for improvements here - and, unlike in some other branches - people are really open minded when it comes to trying new methods of teaching.

5. Teachers approach to new ideas and experimentations

In the last question of national reports, all partners were asked **if they would say that language teachers/tutors in their country have an open mind towards new ideas and experimentations with what is new in the field of foreign language teaching, and how would you describe their attitude.** The answers were as following:

Jaitek

In the last question of national reports, all partners were asked if they would say that language teachers/tutors in their country have an open mind towards new ideas and experimentations with what is new in the field of foreign language teaching, and how would you describe their attitude. The answers were as following:

Jaitek

According to Ingrid Mosquera (2017) in the case of languages, there is an overcoming of the mere learning of grammar and vocabulary. This is done by opening the range towards the culture of other countries, the promotion of autonomy and self-evaluation, as well as the development of the critical spirit and curiosity in the students, providing them with strategies that help them in their learning process and in their communication in real life. Consequently, when we talk about current trends in language teaching, it is inevitable to refer to communicative approaches, in which grammar is relegated to a secondary level and language and interaction become more important.

Some teachers, especially the youngest ones, are willing to experiment and try new resources, tools, games and methodologies. They try to use Project Based Learning or other methodologies where gamified resources are included. They seem to be active, motivated and passionate.

On the contrary, there are other teachers who do not want to change the traditional and old-fashioned methodology when teaching a second language. There could be many reasons that support this point of view and it could be claimed that those teachers feel secure in their comfort zone and do not want to experiment with new and unknown techniques.

Innoventum

Finnish language teachers have proven their open-mindedness toward new teaching methods for years. In Finland, studying the minimum of two languages - one of them must be Swedish (or Finnish for Swedish-speaking pupils) is compulsory for all pupils. As learning a new foreign language gets easier with each language we master, we could assume that those pupils would choose any language they want for their second foreign language, and maybe think about learning the third one, but, as for today, they choose English in nine cases out of ten. Even if English language is with no doubt one of the most useful and commonly-used languages in the world, a variety of choices could help students choose languages of their liking instead of encouraging them to follow this scheme. It starts changing now as one of the main goals of the Government KeyProject for Languages is promoting and providing pupils with a wider language repertoire.

What is more, since 2016 foreign language curriculum has shifted its focus from grammar and learning to properly read and write, more towards oral and communicative language skills. This change requires teachers to respond by using a variety of different exercises and tools.

EKOS

Although a great number of young Poles study foreign languages - especially English - for long years, often they simultaneously study it in regular foreign language classes in school and take private lessons. According to the estimates of the Polish Association for Quality in Teaching Foreign Languages PASE, approximately one million Poles polish their language skills during the courses. The main reason behind it is that when it comes down to it, many of them are still afraid to say the word.

Frankly speaking, it is quite difficult to learn to speak a foreign language fluently in Polish schools. Of course they are exceptions, but most teachers use the same, not so effective scheme when it comes to teaching - they focus more on grammar and reading, then listening, and above all speaking skills. Moreover, most of the older teachers do not want to change the traditional and old-fashioned methodology when teaching a second language and do not want to experiment with new techniques and tools. The situation looks quite different with younger teachers who are usually willing to try new resources and tools and even came up with different kinds of games to keep their students interested and avoid relying only on old-fashioned methodologies.

Teachers and tutors in Poland are reluctant to use technology in their classes. According to research in the project 'Smartphone and tablet in children's hands', 21 out of 30 teachers are skeptical about new technologies at school. Their statements emphasize unfavorable trends related to technologies that "fool children" or "make it difficult to concentrate" (Cackowska, Kopcewicz, Nowicki 2017). Their stand may be the result of study programs in pedagogy that are not adapted to the digital reality. Therefore, if teachers and tutors want to adopt modern methodologies in their classes, they have to themselves search for knowledge, learn and are supported by Teachers' Training Centers, which organize demonstration lessons and workshops for teachers throughout the country. Demonstration lessons, often carried out using pedagogical innovation, are linked to new technologies available in schools.

Even if the above mentioned research is quite new, we have to bear in mind that today, in 2020, the situation considering the usage of technological tools in education has dramatically changed. At that moment, in Poland, as in most countries in Europe, most of school' language classes and private language lessons are now conducted online using different video platforms and quite few online tools. The demand on visual aids has drastically increased, which suggests that new tools like Visual Dictionary will be warmly welcomed by all kinds of tutors.

Storytelleme

According to the research, carried out for Sandra Fradão's PhD thesis at the University of Lisbon, English teachers show a predisposition to use technologies in their teaching practices with a view to a positive impact on students' learning. However, this intention is not anchored in a vision of learning with technology. It will be necessary for them to put aside traditional methodologies and see technologies as an engine to design situations in which students learn better, also assuming them as vehicles that can lead to change and innovation (Chagas, 2011; Costa, 2012; Coutinho, 2005).

Teachers, although having a very positive attitude towards the benefits brought by technologies, are unaware of the tools available to do so and how to integrate them into their practices in favour of student learning.

Decroly

It could be said that the teachers' minds usually change with the generation. With this, we do not want to say it depends on the teacher's age, but on their adaptation to the present time. It is true that we can always find teachers who prefer to stick to what has always been done and they are not very open to change but the majority of the team are always seeking for new ideas that allow them to adjust to their students' needs. We can then argue that, inside the nature of the teacher, there should be a researcher and an analyst that puts their own performance in a balance and is able to discriminate what should be changed.

Auxilium

The majority of language teachers in Austria are open-minded and interested in new developments in the field of foreign language teaching. Sometimes, new ideas suggested by scientists and researchers are not easily accessible to language teachers in the work life, but most language teachers are willing to try out new things and experimentations. The field of language teaching is a particularly dynamic one and language teachers tend to be really open-minded about learning, developing and adapting their own teaching. Foreign language teaching in Austria is orientated towards the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and the CEFR, as well as the national language curricula, promote communicative language teaching. Therefore, language teachers are mostly communicative people themselves, also curious to find out about new developments, ideas and experimentations. Most language teachers are grateful for inspiration and new ideas on how to make their language classes more engaging and more fun as well as how to improve the learning outcomes even more. Some teachers feel limited by the standardised national examinations, but in fact, language teachers in Austria have a lot of freedom to use new, modern methods and teaching techniques and, as already mentioned, the majority of language teachers are willing to seize that opportunity to use new language teaching methods and improve their own teaching style.

Limitations and difficulties

Some limitations and difficulties in the field of visual teaching aids in the foreign language classroom in Austria need to be mentioned as well. Unfortunately, technical equipment cannot be taken for granted in Austrian classrooms. While a few schools are lucky enough to be equipped with smart boards in every classroom, other schools do not even have a computer in every classroom. Classrooms without projectors that are actually working are not unusual and even if they work, depending on the time of the day, the sun might be shining too much and the projector might be too weak, so students cannot properly see what the teacher would like to project. Moreover, Wi-Fi is not everywhere available across schools. Although the vast majority of teachers own a private laptop and most students have a smartphone, schools are not as well equipped. Therefore, teachers who want to use digital tools often have to bring their own private laptops to school and ask the students to use their smartphones during the lesson for teaching purposes. When developing new digital tools for teachers to use, it should be taken into account that unfortunately not all teachers might be able to use them because of limited access to technical equipment. However, this situation might be changing right now due to the ongoing Covid-situation that requires the education system to be digitized.

Summary

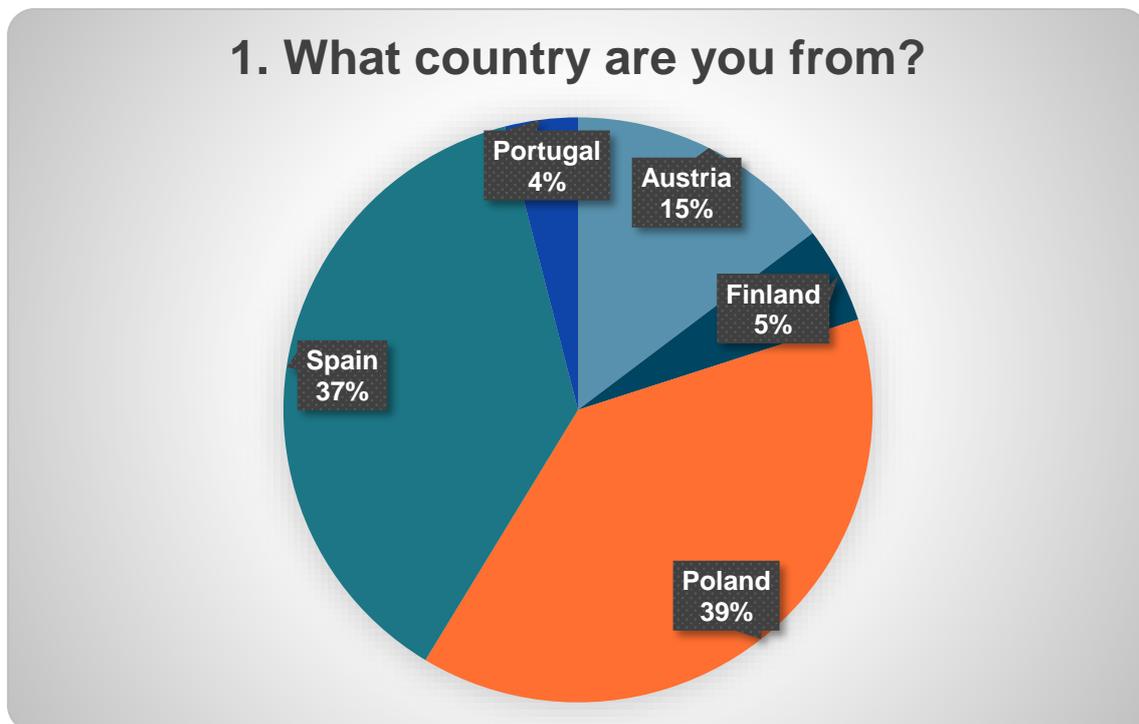
As it was mentioned in a previous question, foreign language teachers and their students are quite open minded when it comes to learning foreign languages. This sentence is particularly true for the younger generation of teachers, who were living all their lives in the world that has become a “global village” and realize that knowing how to actually speak the language is more important than perfectly knowing grammar rules. Nowadays the old way of teaching foreign languages (through focusing on grammar) meets the new way (focusing on ability to communicate).

The development of technology has given a huge opportunity to improve teaching methodologies. Even if different countries still have different levels of digitization of their schools, as in some countries all classrooms are equipped with computers, interactive boards etc, others still may have problems with Wi-Fi connection.

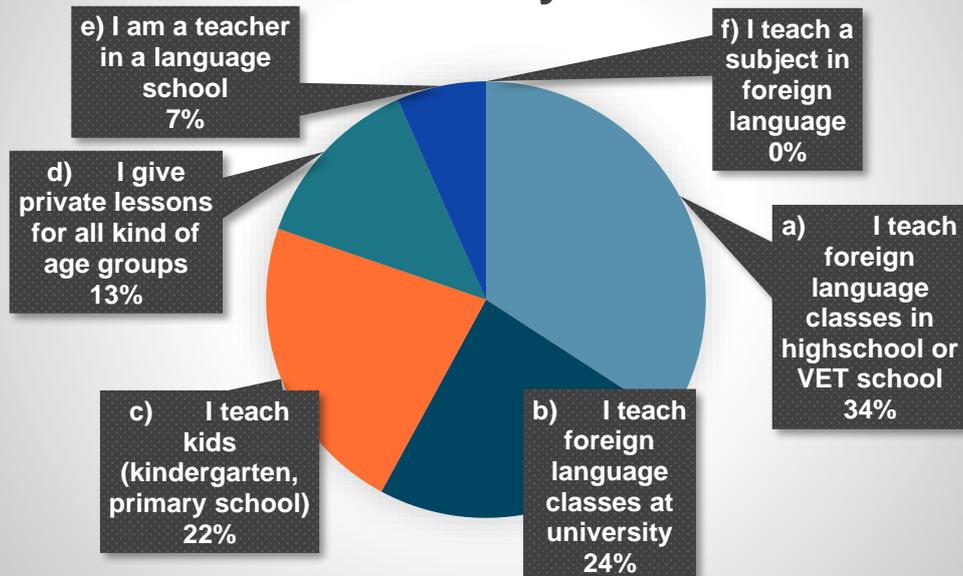
Level of school digitization, if it is high, motivates, and if low doesn't stop teachers' willingness to make their classes more interesting. It got a bit easier in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic and the necessity of introducing online teaching, as students are now not relying on school computers, but using their own, and teachers ought to use a wide variety of online tools in order to make their classes happen.

Teachers questionnaire analysis

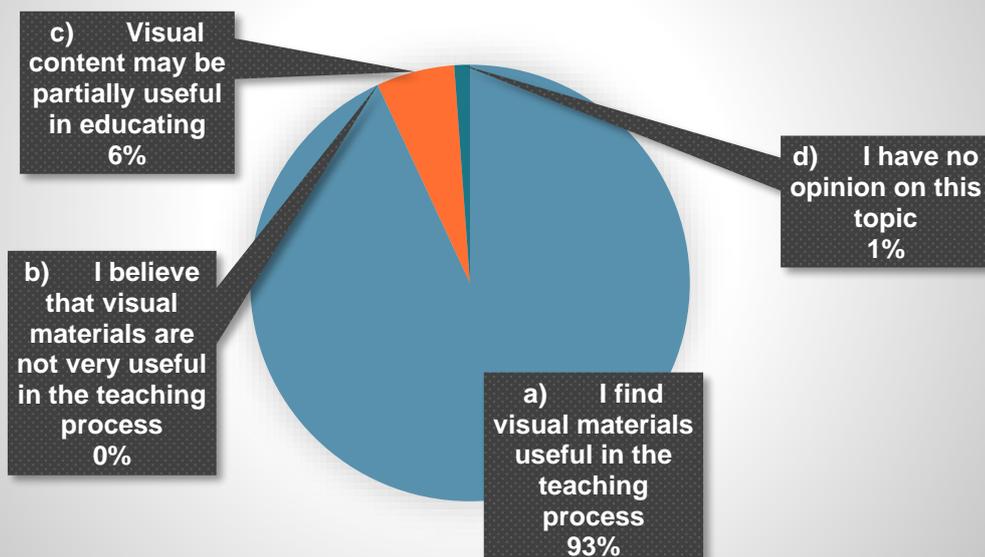
The aim of the teachers questionnaire is to show an approach to visual methods used in foreign language teaching in partner countries and also their further use in this field and development.



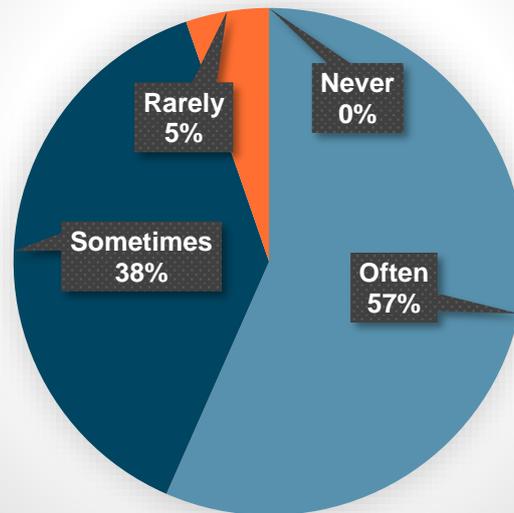
2. What kind of foreign language teacher are you ?



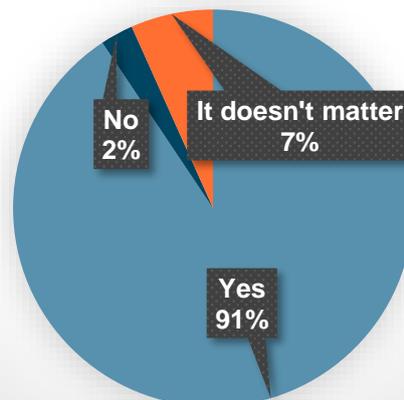
3. Do you find visual materials useful in the teaching process?



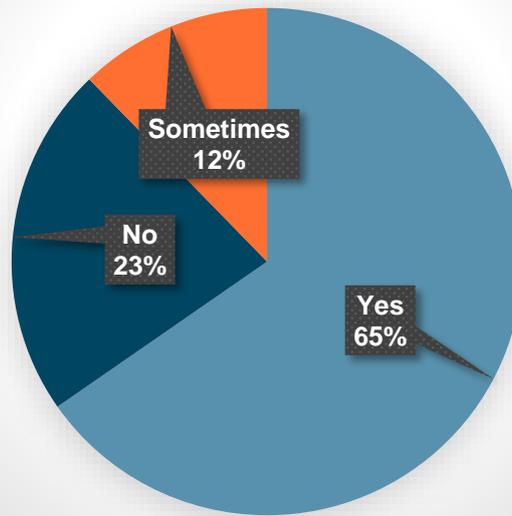
4. How often do you use visual methods in your classes



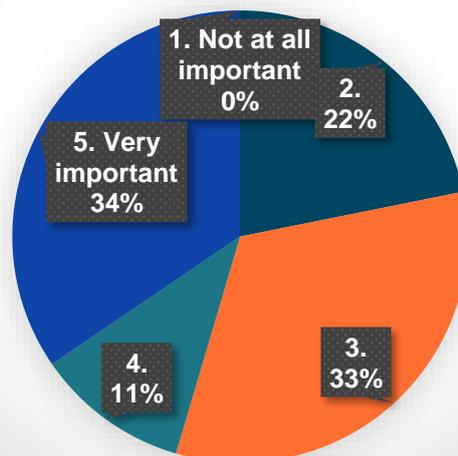
5. Would you say that colorful materials are more useful in teaching process than a white - and - black ones?



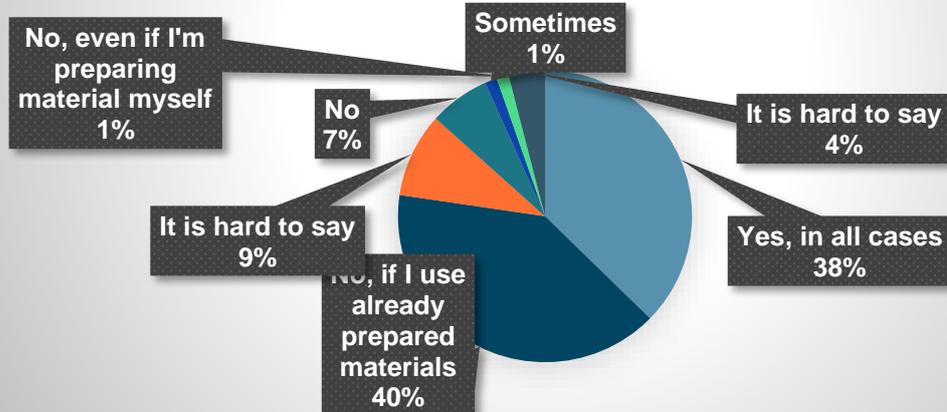
6. Do you use real objects for visualisation?



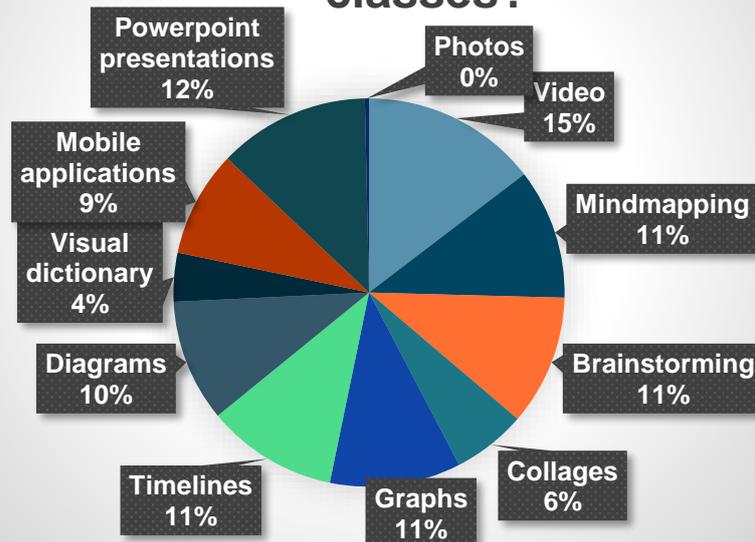
7. In your opinion how important is to make visual materials adjustable to students language level?



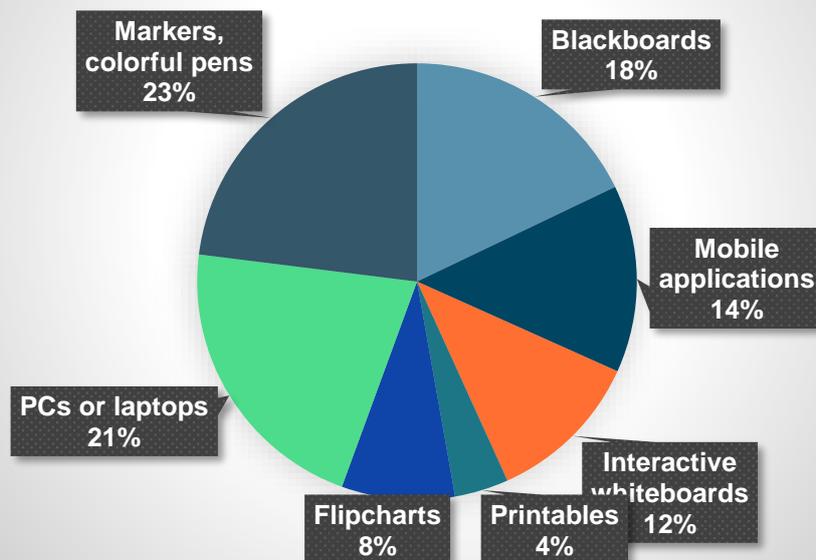
8. Would you say that preparing for classes in which you would use visualization will take significantly more time than preparing for regular classes?



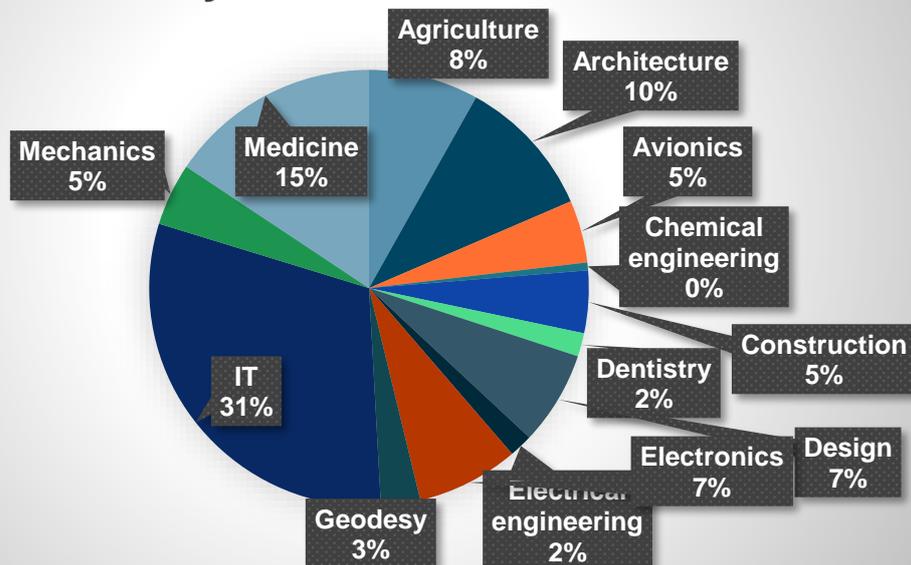
9. Which of the following visualization methods do you use in your language classes?



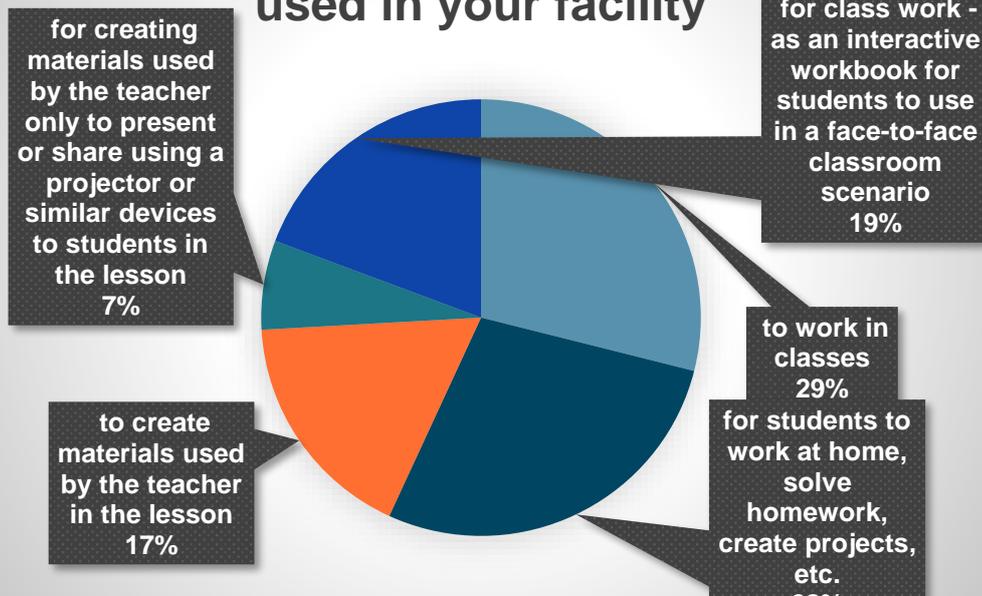
10. What tools for presenting visual methods are used in your classes?



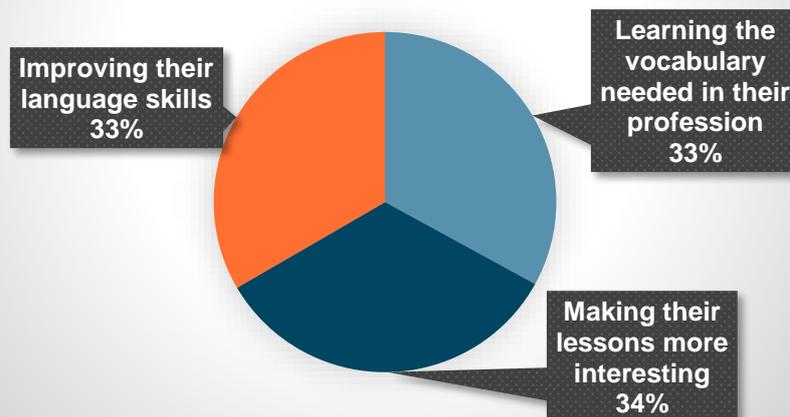
11. What Visual Dictionary topics would you be interested in?



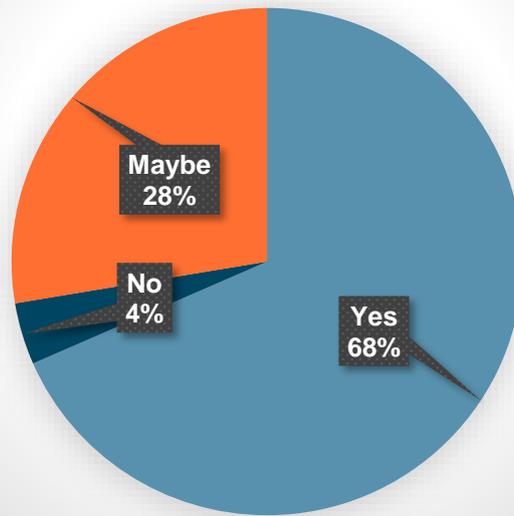
12. How would such a dictionary be used in your facility



13. What kind of results would users of dictionaries expect from working with that tool?



14. Would you be interested in the Visual Dictionary and its expansion?



When asked **What results do you expect from using Visual Dictionary?** respondents answered, **that it should :**

- be used as personal dashboard for creating projects
- include examples
- images should clearly represent their meaning
- include expressions and not only words
- to be flashy, easy to use for kids as regular dictionaries may be seen as boring to them
- easy to use easy to understand
- provide opportunities for practising and memorising, such as flipping cards or matching activities
- make the lesson more interesting,
- help to learn new vocabulary,
- make lessons more interesting,
- more creativity and better memory of the words,
- fascinate my students,
- improve vocabulary learning,
- improve visual memory,
- wider wordstock for visual learners,
- the visualization makes learning more interesting and facilitates memorization,
- acquire vocabulary better than in the traditional way,
- make lessons visually attractive,
- students learning process will be reinforced by the visual aid,
- give more autonomous students Improve skills Lessons will be visually attractive,
- students learning process will be reinforced by the visual aid,
- learning vocabulary will be more quickly,
- feel attracted to learn new vocabulary in a more enjoyable and significant learning,
- give them materials to build their reading and writing skills Visual elements to present to students

- motivate students
- be interactive, responsive
- be a tool students could use anytime,
- increase students' willingness to study,
- improve remembering words and phrases
- provide quicker acquisition of the material
- enhance the process of learning vocabulary
- improve student's language skills
- be easy to navigate, with translations into Polish.
- enable build on developing language using relevant collocations
- improve efficiency of classes

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire about using visual methods in teaching of foreign languages

The following questionnaire is designed to check teachers' level of knowledge about available visual methods and how they are currently used as educational tools.

It also seeks to collect opinions on the usefulness of the visual dictionary and topics that may turn out to be useful in the teaching process.

Every answer is important and by giving your opinion, you can affect the outputs of the Erasmus+ - funded Visual Dictionary project.

Thank you for your time!

1. What country are you from?
 - a) Finland
 - b) Poland
 - c) Spain
 - d) Portugal
 - e) Austria

2. What kind of foreign language teacher are you ?
 - a) I teach foreign language classes in highschool or VET school
 - b) I teach foreign language classes at university
 - c) I teach kids (kindergarten, primary school)
 - d) I give private lessons for all kind of age groups
 - e) I am a teacher in a language school

3. Do you find visual materials useful in the teaching process?
 - a) I find visual materials useful in the teaching process

- b) I believe that visual materials are not very useful in the teaching process
- c) Visual content may be partially useful in educating
- d) I have no opinion on this topic

4. How often do you use visual methods in your classes?

- a) Often
- b) Sometimes
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

5. Would you say that colorful materials are more useful in the teaching process than a white - and - black ones?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) It doesn't matter

6. Do you use real objects for visualisation?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes

7. In your opinion, how important is to make visual materials adjustable to students' language level?

1 2 3 4 5

1 - Not at all important

5 - Very important

8. Would you say that preparing for classes in which you would use visualization will take significantly more time than preparing for regular classes?

- a) Yes, in all cases
- b) No
- c) No, if I use already prepared materials
- d) No, even if I'm preparing material myself
- e) It is hard to say
- f) Another answer

9. Which of the following visualization methods do you use in your language classes?

- a) Graphs, timelines, diagrams
- b) Visual dictionary
- c) Mobile applications
- d) Powerpoint presentations
- e) Videos
- f) Mindmapping, brainstorming
- g) Collages
- h) Another answer

10. What tools for presenting visual methods are used in your classes?

- a) Mobile applications
- b) Blackboards
- c) Interactive whiteboards

- d) I use only printables, so no specific tool is needed
- e) Flipcharts
- f) PCs or laptops
- g) Markers, colorful pens etc.
- h) I'm not using any tools
- i) Another answer

11. What Visual Dictionary topics would you be interested in?

- a) Agriculture
- b) Architecture (landscape, urban)
- c) Avionics
- d) Chemical engineering
- e) Construction
- f) Dentistry
- g) Design
- h) Electrical engineering
- i) Electronics
- j) Geodesy
- k) IT
- l) Mechanics
- m) Medicine
- n) Another answer

12. How would such a dictionary be used in your facility ?

- f) to work in classes
- g) for students to work at home, solve homework, create projects, etc.
- h) to create materials used by the teacher in the lesson
- i) for creating materials used by the teacher only to present or share using a projector or similar devices to students in the lesson
- j) for class work - as an interactive workbook for students to use in a face-to-face classroom scenario
- k) Other

13. What kind of results would users of dictionaries expect from working with that tool?

- d) Learning the vocabulary needed in their profession
- e) Making their lessons more interesting
- f) Improving their language skills
- g) Another answer

14. Would you be interested in learning a language through the Visual Dictionary and/or learning how to create its further sections (expansion)?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Maybe

15. What results do you expect from using Visual Dictionary?

Thank you for contributing to our project by filling this questionnaire

Project Partners

