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International Federation of Language Teacher Associations
Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes

#3| SEPTEMBER 2026
The Nordic-Baltic Region Newsletter



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The Nordic-Baltic Region Newsletter



NBR President's Notes:

Languages are the Soft Armor of Democratic Societies

In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to speak multiple languages is far more than a practical skill—it is a transformative mindset. Across the Nordic and Baltic nations, where history, trade, and culture have long intersected across borders, multilingualism is not merely an educational goal; it is a foundational pillar of our shared identity and future resilience.

As language educators, we witness daily the profound impact that foreign language acquisition has on our students. Beyond the obvious communication benefits, learning several languages yields cognitive, economic, and socio-cultural advantages that shape better thinkers, stronger communities, and more adaptable global citizens.

Brain research consistently confirms what language teachers have long observed: learning multiple languages fundamentally alters how the human mind operates. Navigating between different linguistic systems exercises the brain's executive control, sharpening problem-solving,



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task-switching, and critical-thinking skills. Multilingual individuals demonstrate greater mental agility, allowing them to process complex information and adapt to changing environments with ease. Studies show that managing multiple languages acts as a buffer against cognitive decline, delaying the onset of age-related memory conditions.

Language is the lens through which we view the world. When students learn a new language, they gain far more than vocabulary and grammar—they acquire cultural literacy. In the Nordic-Baltic region, where diverse linguistic families—North Germanic, Finno-Ugric, and Baltic—exist side by side, understanding our neighbors' languages fosters mutual trust, deepens historical appreciation, and strengthens regional cohesion. Multilingualism breeds empathy, breaking down stereotypes and allowing young people to navigate cultural nuances with respect and curiosity.

For relatively small, export-driven economies like those in the Nordic and Baltic states, international cooperation is essential. Being able to communicate in different language(s) enables career mobility and opens doors in international business, diplomacy, technology, and academia across Europe and beyond. Having multilingual employees enables businesses to build authentic relationships with foreign partners rather than relying solely on a single lingua franca. While English remains vital, proficiency in additional languages—such as German, French, Spanish, or regional neighbors' languages—provides a distinct advantage in global markets providing a competitive edge to a company.

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Teaching languages today goes beyond textbooks and grammar drills. It is about instilling confidence, fostering open-mindedness, and equipping the next generation with the tools to build bridges in a divided world. Our shared mission is clear: to champion language education at all levels, advocate for linguistic diversity in school curricula, and inspire our students to embrace the rich, rewarding journey of polyglotism.

By opening the door to multiple languages, we do not just teach words—we unlock worldviews.

KInd regards,

Outi Vilkuna
puheenjohtaja / ordförande / Chair
Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto SUKOL ry
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Congratulations!

Renata Emilsson Peskova

President of the Icelandic Association of Language Teachers

on becoming the

Treasurer of NBR

We are delighted to welcome you into this important role and look forward to your valulable contribution to our association!

Together for languages, learning and connection!

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Ly Leedu,
a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of Estonian as a Second Language, Multilingua Language School, Education Quality Manager and Estonian Language Teacher

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Teaching Beyond the Classroom: Language, Literature and Place-Based Learning on Muhu and Saaremaa

Across Europe, language teachers are increasingly seeking ways to connect classroom learning with authentic cultural experiences. One example of this approach was the summer school Language, Literature and Community: Creative and Literature-Based Learning Paths for Teachers, organised by the Association of Teachers of Estonian as a Second Language on the islands of Muhu and Saaremaa.

The programme explored how literature, cultural heritage and local environments can enrich language learning through place-based and experiential approaches. For teachers, it also offered an opportunity to become learners themselves and reflect on methods that could be transferred to their own classrooms.

Why Place Matters in Language Learning

Literature provided a unifying theme throughout the programme. Sites associated with Juhan Smuul, one of Estonia's most renowned writers, and the linguistic legacy of Johannes Aavik, a pioneering reformer of the Estonian language, demonstrated how literature can be experienced not only through texts but also through landscapes, communities and shared stories.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Ly Leedu,
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The journey began on Muhu Island, where participants visited Smuul's birthplace and explored local handicraft traditions. A particularly memorable activity focused on the uniquely Estonian letters Õ and Ö, highlighting the close relationship between language, culture and identity.

En route to Saaremaa, the group visited Kaali Lake, home to one of the world's most famous meteorite craters. By combining science, folklore and local history, the visit illustrated how interdisciplinary learning can support language development through authentic opportunities for discussion, interpretation and cultural exploration. Later, a walk through Kuressaare's historic old town revealed how local stories can transform heritage sites into meaningful learning environments.

Literature Beyond the Book

The second day began at the Aavik Museum, where participants explored playful approaches to language learning inspired by the work of Johannes Aavik. The museum provided an excellent example of how literary and linguistic heritage can be transformed into engaging educational experiences.

A visit to Kuressaare Castle followed, demonstrating how historical sites can support language learning through storytelling, inquiry and discussion. Together, these experiences showed how literature and heritage can extend beyond books and become living resources for language education.

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a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of Estonian as a Second Language, Multilingua Language School, Education Quality Manager and Estonian Language Teacher

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Exchanging Ideas and Classroom Practices

Professional learning formed an important part of the summer school. Through networking sessions and workshops, teachers exchanged experiences from language camps, explored ways of connecting literature with language teaching, discussed cooperation between schools and libraries, and shared strategies for encouraging reading.

Participants also reflected on the growing role of artificial intelligence in language education and considered approaches for supporting learners' attention, memory and engagement. Practical sessions introduced movement-based activities and cooperative learning techniques that could be readily adapted to a variety of teaching contexts.

The Role of Professional Communities

Some of the most valuable learning took place beyond the formal programme. Conversations during bus journeys, meals and evening gatherings created opportunities for reflection, inspiration and new professional connections.

These informal exchanges highlighted the importance of professional communities in sustaining teachers' enthusiasm, wellbeing and continuous professional growth. The experience reinforced the idea that teachers learn not only through organised training but also through meaningful dialogue with colleagues.

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Lessons from Muhu and Saaremaa

The final day included visits to Panga Cliff, the Angla windmills and the ruins of Maasi Castle. Together, these sites offered further insights into the cultural landscape of Saaremaa while showcasing the educational potential of heritage locations beyond the classroom.

The summer school confirmed that literature, cultural heritage and local environments can serve as powerful resources for language education. When learners encounter language through places, stories and communities, learning becomes more authentic, memorable and meaningful. Participants returned home with practical ideas, renewed inspiration and a deeper appreciation of how place-based learning can enrich language teaching and learning.



Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Ülle Türk, a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English

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Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit



EATE at 35: still learning together

This year has been special for the Estonian Association of Teachers of English (EATE), as the association will celebrate its 35th anniversary on 23 November. Such milestones offer an opportunity to look back at the road travelled so far and make plans for the future. This is what we did during our annual summer seminar, which took place at Pärnu Koidula Gymnasium on 24 and 25 August.

EATE was founded on 23 November 1991 in Tartu. At a time when Estonia's educational landscape was changing rapidly, teachers of English saw a need to work together, exchange information about methods and materials, and take part in further training. The inaugural meeting was attended by about 100 teachers and university lecturers. During the meeting, the association's statutes were adopted and a committee of 11 members was elected. Support came from our sister organisations in Sweden and Finland, the Open Estonia Foundation, London International House, the British Council, Tartu City Council and the Ministry of Education.

The association's continuity has depended on the work of many committed members and chairs. Ülle Kurm led EATE from 1991 to 1995, followed by Mare Jõul from 1995 to 1997, Carmen Ruus from 1997 to 2001, Juta Hennoste from 2001 to 2007, and Leena Punga from 2008 to 2015. Each chair has left their own mark on the association. Today, EATE is chaired by Erika Puusemp. Its seven-member committee brings together teachers and university colleagues from different parts of Estonia.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Ülle Türk, a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English

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One of EATE's proudest achievements is its journal, OPEN!, published annually. The first EATE newsletter appeared in 1992, only a year after the association was founded. What began as a modest newsletter has developed into a substantial annual journal, bringing together theoretical articles, reports and practical classroom experience. Its pages preserve the association's history, but they also keep a professional conversation alive: practising teachers and university lecturers can share ideas, describe projects, reflect on challenges and learn from one another. For many years, OPEN! was edited by Ilmar Anvelt, who saw the publication develop into its present form. Though it is now available online, we still publish printed copies, which are given free of charge to all those attending our summer seminars.

Over the years, EATE has kept its original purpose while responding to new needs in language education. One of its traditional events, the two-day summer seminar, is usually held at the end of August in Pärnu. It offers participants fresh ideas before the school year begins and, equally importantly, gives colleagues time to meet, talk and share experiences.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Ülle Türk, a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English

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This year's jubilee seminar, *Engaging Readers, Building Thinkers*, brought together nearly 200 people, who could choose between 34 different workshops and seminars. It is particularly noteworthy that 24 of these were delivered by teachers and university lecturers from Estonia who are members of EATE. The programme reflected the breadth of contemporary English-language teaching: reading and children's literature, classroom debates, plurilingual learning, computer-based assessment, and the thoughtful use of artificial intelligence. The plenary presentation by Krista Kaer of Varrak Publishers, on the challenges of translating literature into Estonian, was particularly warmly received.

In addition to our traditional activities, we have tried to engage more directly with teachers. To that end, we launched an Erasmus+ project, Personalisation of Language Learning with the Help of AI. Running from November 2024 to April 2026, the project enabled ten teachers from different schools in Estonia to take part in study visits and training courses across Europe. The experiences shared on EATE's website reveal a practical approach: exploring new tools while keeping critical thinking, creativity, communication and human connection at the centre of learning.



Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Ülle Türk, a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English

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In the last couple of years, we have started to work with language learners as well. We have organised two Open Public Speaking Competitions so far. The 2025 competition for upper-secondary students was attended by 42 competitors. The 2026 competition for Grades 7 and 8 proved particularly popular, as 62 students from all over Estonia took part. The competitions combined impromptu and prepared speeches, encouraging participants to research a topic, connect ideas and express them clearly. These are skills that can prove useful far beyond the competition room. As the competitions have been so popular, we have already planned similar events for the next two years.

The anniversary year also made space for gratitude. EATE named Meeri Sild an honorary member in recognition of her contribution to language education and educational technology in Estonia. At the Appreciation Evening on 24 August, the association also honoured nine English teachers for their work as inspiring teachers, creative educators and supportive colleagues. Such recognition captures something essential about EATE: its strength lies not only in events and projects, but in people who share their knowledge generously and encourage one another.

And then it was party time. After a busy day of workshops, discussions and conversations, the evening offered a welcome chance to relax before the start of another demanding school year. Kaie Seger engaged the hallful of people in line dancing, while Kaisa Ling and Rene Paul Allkivi entertained us with their vaudevillian blues performance. There was also plenty of time to meet up with friends, share ideas and simply enjoy being together.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Ülle Türk, a member of the Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English

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For 35 years, EATE has brought English teachers together when they have needed advice, inspiration or the company of colleagues who understand the work. We hope to continue doing so: learning from one another, welcoming new members and finding reasons to meet again.

Here's to the next 35 years to the Estonian Association of Teachers of English!

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Eve Zekker
Vorstandsvorsitzende des Estnischen Deutschlehrerverbandes

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Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit



Das Jahr 2026 begann für den Estnischen Deutschlehrerverband (EDLV) mit einem Thema, das auch die späteren Veranstaltungen prägte: Wie kann guter Deutschunterricht neue Entwicklungen aufgreifen und zugleich menschliche Begegnungen fördern? Unter dem Motto „KI macht es möglich, wir machen es menschlich“ trafen sich am 28. März Deutschlehrerinnen und Deutschlehrer aus ganz Estland zur Jahrestagung am Deutschen Gymnasium Tallinn.

Nach der musikalischen Eröffnung durch Schülerinnen und Schüler und den Grußworten der Gastgeber sowie der Botschafter Deutschlands und Österreichs wurde auf die Arbeit des Verbandes zurückgeblickt. Auch die Frieda-Preise wurden verliehen: Als Macherin des Jahres wurde Diana Kollin-Poom ausgezeichnet, als Macherinnen der Jahre Aimi Jõesalu und Mall Matto. Das fachliche Programm widmete sich anschließend der künstlichen Intelligenz im Deutschunterricht. In Vorträgen und Workshops diskutierten die Teilnehmenden, wie KI Lehrkräfte unterstützen, Lernspiele ermöglichen und neue Lernwege eröffnen kann – und welche Rolle dabei weiterhin menschliche Kreativität und pädagogisches Urteilsvermögen spielen.



Greetings from Estonia

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Die Fragen nach zeitgemäßem Lernen, anregenden Unterrichtsmethoden und dem Austausch unter Kolleginnen und Kollegen begleiteten den Verband auch in den Sommer. Zwei weitere Höhepunkte des Estnischen Deutschlehrerverbandes waren das Sommercamp für Schülerinnen und Schüler in Kloogaranna und das Sommerseminar für Deutschlehrkräfte in Narva-Jõesuu.

Das Sommerseminar stand zudem im Zeichen eines internationalen Nordplus-Projekts, dessen Ergebnisse nun dauerhaft für den Unterricht zur Verfügung stehen.

„Freizeit“: Deutschlernen im Sommercamp

Vom 26. bis 29. Juli trafen sich 30 Schülerinnen und Schüler aus ganz Estland zum Deutsch-Sommercamp in Kloogaranna. Das Thema lautete „Freizeit“ – also alles, was man in der freien Zeit gern unternimmt. In Workshops wiederholten und erweiterten die Teilnehmenden ihren Wortschatz und ihre Grammatikkenntnisse. Außerdem entwarfen sie eigene Wappen.

Auch außerhalb der Workshops blieb viel Zeit für gemeinsame Aktivitäten. Bei freundlichem Sommerwetter konnten die Kinder schwimmen, ein Geländespiel spielen und verschiedene sportliche Angebote ausprobieren. Ein Grillabend gehörte ebenfalls zum Programm. Besonders kreativ wurde es bei den kleinen Theaterstücken: Die Schülerinnen und Schüler entwickelten Märchen nach Motiven deutscher Märchen, versetzten sie aber in die Gegenwart. Auch ein nächtlicher Alarm sorgte für ein besonderes Camp-Erlebnis.

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Das Camp verband so Deutschlernen mit Bewegung, Kreativität und gemeinsames Handeln. Ein herzlicher Dank gilt den Betreuerinnen und Betreuern Diana Kollin-Poom, Margit Laidvee und Kalle Lina sowie Rebecca Küsel, der Freiwilligen des Goethe-Instituts._



Austausch und neue Impulse in Narva-Jõesuu

Vom 12. bis 14. August kamen Deutschlehrerinnen und Deutschlehrer aus ganz Estland zum Sommerseminar des EDLV nach Narva-Jõesuu. Im Hotel Liivarand standen praxisnahe Workshops, neue Ideen für den Unterricht und der kollegiale Austausch auf dem Programm.

Margit Laidvee von der Tartu Kesklinna Kool eröffnete das Seminar mit dem Workshop „Sinnvolle Bewegung als praktisches Werkzeug im Deutschunterricht“.

Greetings from Estonia

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Dabei ging es darum, Bewegung gezielt in den Sprachunterricht einzubeziehen. Kalle Lina zeigte, wie Animations- und Kurzfilme im Deutschunterricht eingesetzt werden können. Diana Kollin-Poom stellte das Lernspiel „Demokratiekuchen“ vor, während Inga Kotelnikova von der Hochschule Harz der Frage nachging, ob Drillübungen eine vergessene Methode oder weiterhin ein hilfreiches Instrument sind.



Am zweiten Seminartag präsentierte Anneli Kesksaar von der Tallinna Südalinna Kool unter dem Titel „KI, mach mir ein Spiel!“ Beispiele dafür, wie sich mit künstlicher Intelligenz interaktive Lernspiele gestalten lassen. Auch ihr Hund Bianka war Teil der Präsentation. Anschließend informierte Leiterin der Spracharbeit des Goethe Instituts Helen Aedla über Neuigkeiten des Goethe-Instituts.





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Das Seminar bot außerdem Gelegenheit, Ida-Viru kennenzulernen. Die Gruppe fuhr mit dem Schiff von Narva-Jõesuu nach Narva, nahm dort an einer Stadtführung teil und besuchte das Narva Eesti Gümnaasium und die Narva Eesti Põhikool. Die örtliche Deutschlehrerin Viktoria Openko begleitete die Gruppe und unterstützte die Organisation vor Ort.



Am letzten Seminartag leitete Lukas Mayrhofer aus Österreich, Vertreter des Hueber Verlags, zwei Workshops: „Kleine Gesten, große Wirkung“ zum Einsatz von Bewegungselementen und „Saksa keel on lahe!“ zur Motivation Jugendlicher mit dem Lehrwerk Gefällt mir!. Neben den fachlichen Impulsen prägten gutes Essen, schönes Wetter und die angenehme Gesellschaft die gemeinsamen Tage._

Greetings from Estonia

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Vorstandsvorsitzende des Estnischen Deutschlehrerverbandes

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Nordplus: internationale Zusammenarbeit mit bleibenden Ergebnissen

Ein wichtiger Bezugspunkt des Sommerseminars war das internationale Nordplus-Horizontal-Projekt NPHZ-2024/10028. Unter dem englischen Titel Making learners "moral agents of change": Innovative approaches to working on history in films in the German classroom arbeiteten Partner aus Estland, Dänemark und Norwegen zusammen. Im Mittelpunkt stand die Frage, wie Filme über die Geschichte deutschsprachiger Länder im Deutschunterricht genutzt werden können, um neben Sprachkenntnissen auch kritisches Denken und die Auseinandersetzung mit gesellschaftlichen Fragen zu fördern.

Im Rahmen des Projekts entstanden zwei Materialsammlungen, die im Bildungsportal E-Koolikott veröffentlicht wurden: „Zeichentrickfilme" mit Materialien zu Animationsfilmen und „Filme im DU" mit Unterrichtsmaterialien zu Spiel- und Dokumentarfilmen. Kalle Lina stellte die Sammlungen beim Sommerseminar vor. Diana Kollin-Poom präsentierte außerdem den „Demokratiekuchen", ein Lernspiel der norwegischen Rafto-Stiftung, das im Projekt erprobt wurde.

Im Spiel entwickeln Kleingruppen zunächst einen eigenen Staat und überlegen anschließend, welche Grundlagen eine Demokratie braucht. Dazu gehören etwa freie Wahlen, Meinungs- und Pressefreiheit, unabhängige Gerichte und der Schutz vor Diskriminierung. Danach setzen sich die Lernenden auch mit Gefahren wie Zensur, Korruption, Machtmissbrauch und Wahlbetrug auseinander. Sie diskutieren, begründen ihre Entscheidungen und suchen gemeinsam nach Lösungen. Demokratie wird so nicht nur zum Unterrichtsthema, sondern zu etwas, das die Schülerinnen und Schüler im gemeinsamen Handeln selbst üben.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Eve Zekker
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Mit dem Ende des Projekts endet die internationale Projektphase. Die erarbeiteten Materialien und Methoden bleiben jedoch erhalten und können weiterhin im Unterricht eingesetzt und weiterentwickelt werden. Sie verbinden Deutschlernen mit Film, Geschichte und Demokratiebildung und eröffnen Lehrkräften neue Wege, komplexe Themen altersgerecht und lebendig zu vermitteln.

„Zeichentrickfilme“:
https://e-koolikott.ee/et/oppematerjal/80c135c5-5e24-423f-a173-7bc881acfee7

„Filme im DU“:

https://e-koolikott.ee/et/oppematerjal/f50e732c-c8af-4b5f-9604-3464c62514b5

Zusammenarbeit mit dem Goethe-Institut und der Deutschen Botschaft

Auch nach den Sommerveranstaltungen wurde die Zusammenarbeit des EDLV mit seinen Partnern fortgesetzt. Vom 21. bis 24. September organisierten das Goethe-Institut und die Deutsche Botschaft in Estland vier eintägige Fortbildungen an vier verschiedenen Orten in Estland (in Tallinn, in Narva, in Tartu und in Pärnu) zum Thema künstliche Intelligenz für Deutschlehrkräfte. Die inhaltlich gleiche Fortbildung wurde in vier verschiedenen Städten Estlands angeboten und ermöglichte Lehrkräften aus unterschiedlichen Regionen, sich mit den Auswirkungen von KI auf das Sprachenlernen auseinanderzusetzen.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Eve Zekker
Vorstandsvorsitzende des Estnischen Deutschlehrerverbandes

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Unter dem Titel „Künstliche Intelligenz kann Deutsch. Aber kann man mit Hilfe von KI auch Deutsch lernen?“ – ging es um die Frage, wie der Einsatz künstlicher Intelligenz das Schreiben, Lesen und Sprechen verändert. Die Teilnehmenden beschäftigten sich außerdem damit, wie zuverlässig KI als Feedbackgeberin oder als Sprachpartnerin ist.

Geleitet wurde der Workshop von PhD Elke Lackner, Medien- und Sprachdidaktikerin an der Universität Graz. Ihre Arbeit bewegt sich an der Schnittstelle von Sprachenlernen, digitalen Medien und künstlicher Intelligenz. Als Forscherin, Lehrende und Bildungsbloggerin verbindet sie wissenschaftliche Perspektiven mit konkreten Fragen aus Unterricht und Lernalltag: Was bringen neue Technologien tatsächlich für das Lehren und Lernen – und wie lassen sie sich sinnvoll einsetzen?

Die Fortbildung knüpfte damit an ein Thema an, das bereits die Jahrestagung des EDLV im Frühjahr geprägt hatte. Zugleich zeigte sie, wie wichtig die Zusammenarbeit zwischen dem Deutschlehrerverband, dem Goethe-Institut und der Deutschen Botschaft ist, um Lehrkräften aktuelle fachliche Impulse und Gelegenheiten zum Austausch zu bieten.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Kai Tammik, a member of the Management Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English

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Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit



From English Classroom to an International Adventure

In the autumn of 2026, I found myself thinking about how to motivate my English students, particularly those with a special talent for languages. Many student competitions are well organized, but I wanted to find an opportunity that offered more. To me, learning a language also means discovering other cultures and gaining the confidence to communicate with people around the world. With this in mind, I began looking for an experience that could bring these opportunities to a young learner.



I did some research and found HIPPO, an international English language competition for young learners worldwide. I contacted the organizers in Italy and, after giving it some thought, decided to try it and got permission from my school's headmaster to take part and she agreed to support us financially. The competition has four rounds. The first round is computer-based and takes place at the participating students' own schools. Because each student pays a participation fee and so, we decided to give a certain number of students a first-time opportunity, so we held an extra preliminary round to select those who would begin the HIPPO journey.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Kai Tammik, a member of the Management Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English

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For our first time taking part, we selected 14 students from the basic school. After the first round, three of them advanced to the second round. Then came a wonderful surprise: one student qualified for the World Finals in Spoleto, Italy. Thankfully, the school board supported us and helped with the travel expenses. Parents were also excited because it is such a big olympiad with 108,000 participants, involving more than 3,200 schools and 78 countries. So they were also willing to put effort into this journey. On the last Sunday of September, we started our trip to Italy by plane, and after landing in Rome, we took the train to Spoleto, where the competition was held.





The first day was arrival day, and in the evening we had an opening parade through the city and an opening ceremony at Piazza della Libertà, where stilt dancers (trampotrieli- in Italian) performed an amazing dance and fire show. The whole event was so positive, and participants from around the world created a united atmosphere, like HIPPO's motto: English Without Borders. For the rest of the evening, we had a chance to go sightseeing and get to know this magical historic city in central Italy's Umbrian region.

Greetings from Estonia

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Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit

The World Finals were held in a conference hotel near beautiful mountains, and communicating with students from around the world was an experience in itself. The next day, the finals began with a speaking test, and on the third day, the remaining parts of the Olympiad were planned. The Olympiad has seven age categories, and participants demonstrate four English skills: speaking, writing, grammar, and reading. The final evening, we had a fabulous ceremony celebrating all the finalists who had made it to Spoleto, as well as the winners. This time, we didn't make it to the podium, but we were among those who gained an experience of a lifetime.

Looking back, the most important part of those four days was not the competition itself. Those four days were filled with learning the language, building confidence, excitement, exchanging experiences and cultural differences, and, most of all, joy and fun in learning. And in my mind, this should be the most important thing in education. It is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for so many students around the world and a way for teachers to grow personally and professionally. Participation is not free, so that may be why some schools and countries cannot participate. But as one option for motivating students who are talented at learning English, this journey is a wonderful way to do that, and there may be ways to support teachers who want to give their students at least a chance to participate in this cultural language-learning experience. Schools, local organizations, education authorities, and other supporters may have a role to play in helping motivated young learners participate. I am very thankful to my school, Kose Gymnasium, and the headmaster who supported this adventure.

Greetings from Estonia

Prepared by Kai Tammik, a member of the Management Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English

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Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit

As I sit here saying "Goodbye" to Spoleto, I feel incredibly grateful for this adventure and for everything it has taught me as a teacher. I would encourage all language teachers to remain curious, to look beyond the classroom and to explore the opportunities that the world has to offer our students — and ourselves. The sense of unity, enthusiasm and positive energy that we experienced here is something I will take home with me. I hope it will give me renewed strength and inspiration to return to the classroom, share the experience with my students and encourage them to discover where their own languages can take them.

After all, sometimes the best way to inspire our students is to remain curious learners ourselves.







Greetings from Estonia

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EVÕL
Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit

Developing competencies in multilingual crisis communication

Abstract. This paper describes crisis communication training for future emergency dispatchers at the Rescue College of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. In multilingual Estonia, effective emergency response requires skills in addition to Estonian, Russian and, in some situations, English. Drawing on two large-scale empirical studies, it highlights the importance of language skills for emergency services communicating in these three languages. Developed with the Estonian Emergency Response Centre, the training programme combines professional language courses with emergency call-proceeding practice in English and Russian. Through language-for-specific-purposes teaching, simulation-based learning, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL), students develop the linguistic, intercultural, and interactional skills needed for clear communication in high-pressure emergencies.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Russian for Specific Purposes (RSP); intercultural communication; mediation; simulation-based learning; Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

1. Multilingual crisis communication in Estonia

The communication of Estonian public sector and internal security agencies with Estonian residents in three languages is determined by historical factors and preferences of the current migration policy. The table below demonstrates an overview of Estonia's language landscape, highlighting key statistics from the latest Census (2021).

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Estonia's Language Landscape (Census 2021)

Category	Details
Ethnic diversity	243 different ethnic nationalities
Estonian language	67% as a mother tongue; 17% as a foreign language
Foreign languages (population 15–74)	**English:** 48% **Russian:** 24% mother tongue, 39% foreign language
Ukrainian refugees (by July 2026)	ca. 30,511; **Main languages:** Ukrainian, English, Russian

English is the most widely spoken foreign language, followed by Russian. However, the proportion of the Russian-speaking population is higher in the capital city of Tallinn (over 40%). It is also important to note that the share of people speaking only their mother tongue is highest among Russians: 40% of Russians living in Estonia do not speak any other language. A significant proportion of Ukrainian refugees settling in Estonia speak not only Ukrainian but also English and Russian. The importance of Russian-language skills in crisis communication in Estonia has been highlighted in several studies. This paper draws on the results of two surveys conducted between 2021 and 2023.

A nationwide experimental survey examined the comprehensibility of trilingual emergency SMS warnings and effective ways to communicate vital crisis information. Led by the Rescue and Safety Policy Department of Estonia's Ministry of the Interior, the project involved qualitative analysis by

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our Language Centre. Warnings were issued in Estonian, Russian transliterated into the Latin alphabet, and English. Feedback was collected through a LimeSurvey questionnaire containing closed and open-ended questions. The findings showed differences in comprehensibility between Estonian- and Russian-speaking respondents. Although most participants found the messages generally understandable, many criticised the trilingual format, especially Russian written in Latin script. Some regarded it as difficult to read or even suspicious, resembling spam while older Russian speakers in particular preferred Cyrillic. Others preferred warnings only in Estonian and English and questioned the inclusion of Russian. Overall, respondents favoured clearly structured, visually readable messages in their preferred or primary language that met the expectations of official crisis communication.

A study of emergency calls in Estonia conducted in 2021–2022 found that Russian speakers were over-represented among callers to the emergency number 112 relative to their share of the population. This pattern did not, however, apply to calls concerning social problems: 67% of these calls were made in Estonian and 32% in Russian, broadly reflecting Estonia's overall linguistic distribution. Although Russian speakers made a disproportionately high number of calls to 112 overall, they often contacted the service to seek information rather than to report social problems. The arrival of Ukrainian refugees may also have influenced call patterns. These findings raise the question of whether state helplines and alternative support services should be promoted more actively among Russian-speaking residents. They similarly underline the need for emergency dispatchers to have a strong command of situation-specific Russian, supported by specialised training.

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2. Training emergency dispatchers for multilingual communication

Calls to 112 cover three main emergency areas: police, rescue, and medical assistance. However, the Emergency Response Centre (ERC) also receives non-emergency calls concerning a wide range of social and everyday issues, including sexual abuse, school bullying, alcohol- or drug-related problems, financial hardship, chronic health concerns, minor offences, and conflicts not requiring police intervention. The ERC receives more than one million calls annually, with approximately half of them non-emergency calls and more than one-third of all calls made in Russian.

Emergency dispatchers are trained at the Rescue College of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (EASS). Student places are state-funded, while recruitment is managed by the ERC. Applicants' Estonian and Russian language skills are assessed during recruitment. In accordance with professional standards, future dispatchers must demonstrate at least C1 proficiency in Estonian and B1 proficiency in Russian; other foreign languages are optional. The eight-month programme includes Russian for Specific Purposes and Proceeding Emergency Calls in Russian, both comprising 70 hours. An equivalent number of hours is allocated to

[1] See: Luht-Kallas, K., Laanemaa, E., Taukar, M., Hatšaturjan, A., Kapura, J., Kibar, T. and Põld, M. (2023) 'Assessing the comprehensibility of SMS warnings: An example of crisis communication in the Estonian trilingual landscape', *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 97 (104014). DOI: 10.1016/j.ijdrr.2023.104014. (Accessed: 23 September 2026).

[2] See: Häirekeskus *[Estonian Emergency Response Centre]* (2022) *Kokkuvõte uuringust: Numbrile 112 tehtud kõnedes esinevate sotsiaalsete probleemide kaardistus. [Summary of the study: Mapping social problems occurring in calls made to emergency number 112].* Tallinn: Häirekeskus. Available at:

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comparable courses Professional English and Proceeding Emergency Calls in English for students who do not need instruction in Russian. The latter mostly include students whose mother tongue is Russian but proceed the calls orally in English while inserting the written information in Estonian, thus requiring extra effort in interconnecting the mental processes in various languages. Another layer in the foreign language instruction is added by the fact that while the Russian-speaking callers are mostly local and use their mother tongue, the calls in English are primarily made by non-native speakers, thus involving varying degrees of contextual knowledge and verbal skills. Both language strands combine LSP instruction with scenario-based professional training.

The foreign language courses initially make use of a blended learning strategy, while the practical training takes place in a specially equipped classroom, that is, in a simulation centre replicating the tools and databases used by the ERC. Much of the training is provided by the ERC staff, who supervise both content and procedure, while language teachers focus on linguistic and communicative aspects. The proceeding of calls is based on real-life situations and actual locations. Below is a sample call template that we use in training covering the main information the caller should provide to the dispatcher.

A sample call

TYPE of EVENT	Fire in a building (**suspected fire**, alarms on, no obvious signs)
PRIORITY	1
THE PRIMARY INFORMATION given to the dispatcher	Hi, the smoke alarm in my neighbour's flat has been on for 15 minutes. I knocked on their door, no answer, nobody opened.
ADDRESS, directions	The alarm is in Madise Street 3-6, Narva I live in flat number 5.
CALLER	Sven Göralsson 56133512
Background information	Morning
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, given to the dispatcher when asked further questions	No visible flames, no smoke. Three floors, stone building. ATS is on the ground floor. An old lady lives there alone, but she's usually in church at this time.
INSTRUCTIONS to the CALLER	Please meet the rescuers downstairs, open the main entrance.

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3. Communication, interaction, and mediation in emergency calls

The main challenge in teaching the dispatchers is understanding their role in our society. Once this role is clear, it becomes easier to identify which skills need to be developed. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), there are four fundamental communication skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Recently, the framework expanded to include the concept of mediation, along with descriptors for it. In this paper, we use the following four modes of communication:

- **Reception:** listening and reading
- **Production:** speaking and writing
- **Interaction:** a combination of reception and production
- **Mediation:** acting as a bridge between two individuals or sources who cannot communicate effectively on their own.

The mediator decides what information to ask for or provide, based on the caller's needs. As this is exactly what dispatchers do, our training must address all four communication modes. How do these modes operate in proceeding emergency calls? In the given process, dispatchers need to use reception, interaction, mediation, and production skills in an integrated and often overlapping process. Dispatchers must simultaneously understand the caller, obtain and clarify essential information, organise and relay relevant details to the appropriate emergency services, and provide clear instructions to the caller. The table below illustrates how these modes are applied during an emergency call.

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Stage	Dispatcher's actions and skills developed	Example
Reception	Listens to the caller, understands the information provided, and identifies the key facts. Develops listening comprehension skills, particularly the ability to understand speech in stressful situations. The dispatcher also reads and follows the questions displayed in the emergency call system.	Identifying **what** happened and **where** it happened.
Interaction	Asks follow-up and clarifying questions and supports the caller in communicating the necessary information clearly. Develops dialogue management skills, including asking appropriate questions, understanding responses, and maintaining communication. At the same time, the dispatcher reads questions from the system and inserts the caller's answers in Estonian.	"Is anyone injured?" "Can you see any fire or smoke?"
Mediation	Selects, organises, and summarises the information received. Determines the incident type, category, and priority; makes decisions on the basis of the available information; and relays relevant information to the appropriate emergency services.	Transforming the caller's description into concise, structured information that can be used by responding services.
Production	Gives clear instructions to the caller and communicates relevant information to other services. Develops spoken production skills, particularly the ability to give clear, appropriate, and situation-specific instructions. The dispatcher also records the necessary information in the system.	"Move to a safe distance." "Try to stay calm." "Stay on the line."

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In other words, proceeding emergency calls integrates all four communicative modes. The dispatcher must be able to understand information as well as ask questions, select and restructure relevant information, make decisions based on it, and communicate appropriate instructions clearly. The process involves all three types of mediation: text mediation, which includes summarising the information received; communication mediation, which involves helping the caller formulate and clarify relevant information; and conceptual mediation, which entails structuring and interpreting the situation and determining the appropriate incident category. Mediation involves acting as an intermediary between people or between people and sources of information. A mediator must determine what information needs to be elicited and what information should be conveyed, taking into account the needs of the interlocutor. This is precisely what emergency dispatchers do when proceeding emergency calls. Their professional tasks therefore draw on all four modes of communication, making the development of reception, interaction, mediation, and production skills an essential component of dispatcher training.

Greetings from Finland

SUKOL
Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto ry

Prepared by Anna Halme | Photos: Anna Halme, Jenna Latvala-Suominen / SUKOL

Artificial Intelligence and the Good Life

At SUKOL's spring training days in Turku (April 2026), topics of discussion included the ethical use of artificial intelligence and the building blocks of a good life.

SUKOL's spring training days were held in Turku this year. The weekend began with a city walk offered by the local association, the Language



Teachers of the Turku Region, followed by a self-paid dinner at the cozy restaurant Koulu. On Saturday morning, participants gathered at Turku Teacher Training School (Turun norssi) for training on topics related to AI and ethics, among other things. In her opening remarks, Katrina Vartiainen, principal of Norssi upper secondary school, reminded the audience that AI will play a major role in the future, but precisely for that reason, interaction and cultural skills in face-to-face encounters will be even more vital.

AI can weaken thinking

The opening lecture of the day was delivered by Outi Veivo from the University of Turku. Her topic was the responsible use of AI in language teaching. In her presentation, she questioned whether we want to outsource all our thinking to AI or if it would literally make more sense to use it merely as a tool to assist human reason.

Veivo quoted brain researcher Katri Saarikivi, according to whom cognition can be divided into intelligence (äly) and reason (järki). Intelligence includes memory, reasoning, vocabulary, and processing and analytical

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abilities, whereas elements of reason include flexible thinking, metacognition, creativity, situational awareness, empathy, meaning, purpose, morality, and ethics. AI does not currently handle these components of human cognition related to reason better than humans, but it is difficult to predict where we will be in five years.

According to research results presented by Veivo, AI offers learning opportunities, but it affects the entire learning process; thus, it should be integrated into teaching under teacher guidance. Veivo noted that the results contain no surprises for teachers. However, it is comforting to confirm through research just how important teachers still are. Without pedagogical and ethical guidance, AI can weaken a learner's critical thinking and deep learning.

What happens to reason?

According to recent studies, "language model dependence"—or extensive use of AI—increases so-called cognitive rigidity and can reduce creativity. In writing tasks, for instance, AI can offer ideas to an individual, but at the group level, its use reduces the diversity and originality of output. Using a language model as a writing assistant can even paralyze critical thinking and affect reasoning skills.

Veivo highlighted a central question for teaching and learning: when learners use AI, is it cognitive offloading (kognitiivinen keventäminen) or cognitive outsourcing (kognitiivinen ulkoistaminen)? In the latter, all personal thinking is transferred to the AI, which generates the answers and solutions. Personal thinking and evaluation decrease, dependency grows, skills may deteriorate, and errors might go unnoticed. In cognitive offloading,

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Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto ry

on the other hand, AI serves as an auxiliary tool, but the learner thinks, evaluates, and decides how to use it. Their knowledge and skills strengthen, understanding deepens, and memory develops.

Veivo used the concept of "critical AI literacy," the development of which is part of an EU citizen's digital skills. There is a wealth of guidance material available regarding AI and digital skills, from global to school levels.

Critical AI literacy

"How far the concept of literacy stretches!" Veivo marveled. The newest extension to multiliteracy is AI literacy: the knowledge and skills needed to understand, use, and critically evaluate AI technologies and their applications. AI literacy helps readers make informed decisions and utilize AI to achieve their goals without needing to understand the technical details of the systems. It includes the ability to obtain information about AI risks and to use AI ethically and responsibly. Teachers are also required to adapt, as AI involves a great deal of new information to absorb. Beyond AI usage skills, digital pedagogical competence and the ability to evaluate the pedagogical benefits of AI are required. Responsible AI use also includes awareness of relevant legislation.

Based on research, Veivo listed basic principles for language teachers. Everything begins with teachers acquiring AI literacy themselves and remaining ready to develop it. Crucially, ethical perspectives must be systematically taken into account, setting ethical guidelines for oneself and learners. Data security must be kept in mind. It pays to look for biases in AI-generated information and strive to minimize them. Veivo also emphasized avoiding environmental burdens where possible, as AI programs are heavy consumers of energy and water. It is worthwhile to spend time with learners reflecting on the situations where AI is truly needed and what alternatives exist.

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In a survey conducted by Veivo among teachers, one question asked: How often do you estimate learners use AI in ethically questionable ways? Sub-options included "in situations where its use is not allowed," "without stating that they used it," and "in a way that distorts the assessment of the learner's competence." Only 0–5% of respondents estimated that this rarely or never happens, while 32–49% estimated that it occurs frequently.

Critical AI literacy relies on human reason. Veivo concluded her presentation with the insight that language teaching is more important than ever—not only to enable interaction with machines, but especially face-to-face.

The good life



Arto O. Salonen from the University of Eastern Finland summarized his lecture's message: we can influence the future, and humans want to live a meaningful life for others and the world. In the pursuit of well-being over recent decades, improving material living standards has been emphasized. However, the criteria for a good life are subtly shifting. A quiet revolution of values is underway. In a 2023 survey titled How Are We Doing? A Look at the Finnish Mindset, over half of respondents agreed with the statement: "I aim to improve my quality of life by reducing work and consumption."

According to news reports, a problem in Finnish society is that we do not consume enough—the welfare state has been built on consumption. On the other hand, Finland's Earth Overshoot Day fell on April 1st this year. "If everyone lived like us, we would need three Earths, and we only have one,"

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SUKOL
Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto ry

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Salonen said. The standard of living is like the set in a play. A set is needed, but without a good plot, the play is not a play. How do we build a plot for life that sustains us and makes life worth living?

According to Salonen, sustainable well-being is achieved when moving from monologue to polyphony, and from detachment to belonging. The essential task is to create conditions in which everyone can feel valuable and meaningful as they are. Every Finn is part of global socio-ecological systems. For instance, nearly half of Finland's water footprint is generated outside national borders.

Experiencing belonging helps people thrive, as it gives life meaning, expands the circle of care, and fosters awareness of one's own sphere of influence. "Does what we do matter?" someone might ask, to which Salonen posed a counter-question: what actually does? The scale of individual events is relative. A moon landing may seem monumental, yet out of all the countless stars in billions of galaxies in the universe, it was merely a visit to one moon of one planet in one solar system.

"Markets try to turn desires into needs," Salonen said. Needs relate to basics like nutrition, which are universal and unquestionable, whereas desires are individual and open to question. If the measure of a society's sophistication is that future generations appreciate our actions, we must move from overconsumption to moderation, and from material well-being to the non-material.

More on AI in workshops

Two of the training day's themed workshops focused on AI. Veijo Vaakanainen provided practical tips for lower secondary school. Petteri

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Hyvönen introduced the possibilities of AI in the everyday life of an upper secondary language teacher. According to Hyvönen, AI should be delegated tasks that you know how to do yourself but lack the time for. For instance, AI makes a great partner for creating exercises, brainstorming, or providing feedback. Hyvönen suggested dictating feedback to AI while correcting a student's work. One can either use a simple transcript or give further prompts such as: "Make the feedback clear and structured. Start with a positive note, even if I start with a correction." AI can also be asked to append a note directing students to supplementary material at the end of every feedback item.

Anne Siltanen and Eerika Grönlund's workshop was aimed at vocational secondary language teachers. The session shared everyday "gems"—practices that simplify teaching and life. One gem involved AI: Siltanen spoke about AI agents she created for various languages. For example, Annie, an English-language agent, generates feedback in English based on Finnish text if the text begins with the word "feedback." Annie writes clear, pedagogically sound, and encouraging feedback, but also states directly if there are errors or shortcomings in the work. If creating an agent seems too laborious, AI can simply be used to translate a teacher's quick notes into pedagogical English.

The vocational secondary workshop also discussed offline gems that step away from digital tools. Working with notebooks and handouts remains a staple for many language teachers. Siltanen and Grönlund also presented new national core curriculum standards for second national and foreign languages through practical exercise examples.

Content for different levels

In their workshop, Susanna Ylihärsilä and Tuula Kivelä offered assessment

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tips for non-formal adult education language credit courses. Liisa Taimen demonstrated how to add drama and movement to primary/lower secondary language teaching. Drama exercises foster confidence in using the language while developing interaction and teamwork skills, which are crucial for building good group cohesion.

Parallel programs by language associations were available for English, Spanish, French, Swedish, and German. As a new feature, Russian teachers and mother tongue teachers hosted a joint workshop where Larissa Aksinovits covered teaching heterogeneous groups.

SUKOL organized the training in cooperation with the Language Teachers of the Turku Region and the LUKKI project. The engaging program attracted over a hundred language teachers. It was a long but rewarding day, supported by the local association's board members: the day began with a grounding mindfulness session and featured a refreshing exercise break in the Turku dialect in the afternoon.

Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by Audronė Auškelienė, Vice-President of the Association of Language Teachers of Lithuania, Director of the Public Service Language Centre

Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija - LKPA

Brain-Based Learning: How Students Really Learn

Erasmus+ Teacher training course
"Brain-Based Learning: Understand How Students Really Learn"

From August 10 to 15, Ričardas Pagojus, a lecturer delivering professional development training at the Public Service Language Centre (PSLC), participated in the Erasmus+ mobility "Brain-Based Learning: Understand How Students Really Learn" in Budapest, Hungary. The mobility was organised as part of the PSLC's Erasmus+ project "Transforming the Teacher's Role in a Rapidly Changing World" (2025-1-LT01-KA122-ADU-000327204).

The teacher chose this week of intensive professional development to gain a deeper understanding of how students learn and how teaching can be adapted in light of the latest findings in neuroscience. Throughout the training, he actively engaged in practical activities exploring the principles of attention, context, emotions, memory formation, and motivation. From the very first day, he demonstrated curiosity and a strong desire to understand the mechanisms underlying learning. This enthusiasm enabled him to quickly grasp the key concepts of the course and relate them to his own professional experience.

Throughout the course, the teacher not only examined learning processes but also designed activities and lesson structures based on scientific evidence. He explored a range of techniques, including priming, pre-testing, elaboration

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Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija - LKPA

strategies, and retrieval practice, and reflected on how these approaches can increase student engagement and support the long-term retention of knowledge.

He actively contributed to discussions, shared his professional experience, and confidently explored ways of transforming traditional lessons into learning experiences that are more engaging, creative, and responsive to students' needs.

At the end of the week, the teacher returned to his school with a wealth of new ideas, practical tools, and a clearer understanding of how to help students learn "smarter, not harder." He strengthened his ability to guide students towards effective learning strategies, increased his own professional motivation, and broadened his perspective on teaching and learning. His experience on the course is an inspiring example of how a sustained interest in the science of learning can enrich everyday teaching practice and contribute to creating a learning environment in which students can experience greater engagement, confidence, and the genuine joy of learning.



Greetings from Lithuania

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Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija - LKPA

Generation Z Student Well-Being in the Spotlight of Higher Education Researchers

On 15–16 October 2026, the international conference **Creative Ways of Knowing and Acting: Changing Conditions and Opportunities** in Educational Research was held at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.

At the conference, Jūratė Patackaitė, President of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania and a lecturer at Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution, presented a paper co-authored with colleagues from the institution's Faculty of Business Management: Associate Professor Dr. Kristina Samašonok, and lecturer and Head of the Training and Cooperation Development Department at Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution Laima Paraukienė. Their presentation, entitled *Factors Influencing Generation Z Students' Well-Being in Higher Education and Measures to Enhance It*, was delivered as part of a symposium organised by the Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training Network.

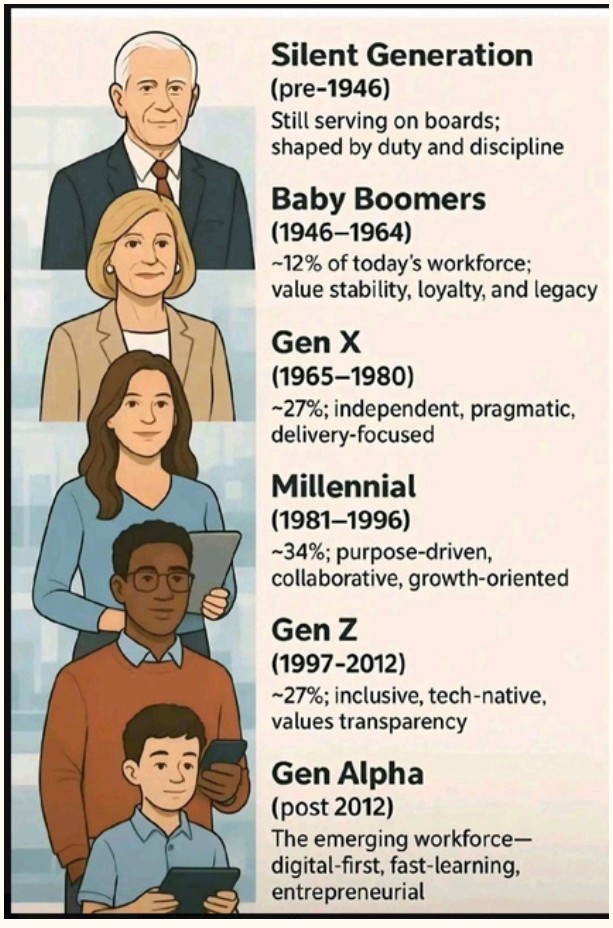


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The research highlighted that student well-being is a complex phenomenon shaped not only by psychological factors but also by the study environment, the organisation of the study process, curriculum content, access to information and social relationships. Key measures to enhance student well-being include clear and accessible communication, a balanced study workload, well-planned assessment schedules, teaching methods tailored to students' needs and a supportive study environment. The findings emphasise that promoting student well-being should be an ongoing institutional effort based on understanding and responding to students' needs.



The research is also relevant to the Erasmus+ project *INnovative TEaching and LearnIng of GENeraTions Z and Alfa in Higher Education* (INTELLIGENT; Project No. 2024-1-LT01-KA220-HED-000256404). The project aims to develop and implement more effective, engaging and technologically advanced approaches to entrepreneurship education for Generation Z and Generation Alpha students. To achieve this, an innovative methodology is being developed that combines theoretical and practical learning approaches with virtual reality, business simulations and artificial intelligence.

Greetings from Lithuania

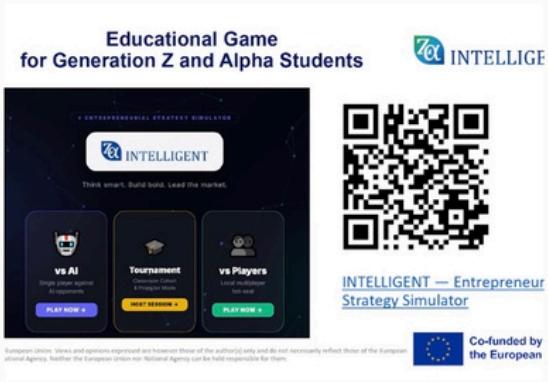
Prepared by members of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA): Jūratė Patackaitė, President of the Association; and Danutė Belazarienė, Lecturer at the Centre of Foreign Languages, Vilniaus Kolegija / Higher Education Institution

Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija - LKPA

As part of the project, an educational game has been developed to engage Generation Z and Generation Alpha students in entrepreneurship education through innovative and interactive methods. The game is now available to play, and registration is open for the practical training session organised within the INTELLIGENT project, which will take place on 2 February 2027.

We invite you to join us!





- Register for the INTELLIGENT project training on **2 February 2027** at Didlaukio 49, Vilnius, or join online via MS Teams!
- International Practical Conference "INTELLIGENT", 2 February 2027 – Fill out form



Greetings from Lithuania

Prepared by members of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA): Dr Teresė Ringailienė, Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages at Vytautas Magnus University and Danutė Belazarienė, Lecturer at the Centre of Languages at Vilniaus Kolegija / Higher Education Institution

Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija - LKPA

Members of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LTAL) – Lecturers at Vytautas Magnus University's Institute of Foreign Languages – Participate in an International Erasmus+ Project

In autumn 2026, a new Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership project (KA220-HED), *English as the Basis for Experiential Pedagogical Training* (E4EPT; Project No. KA220-HED-A4B421EA), was officially launched. The Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) at Vytautas Magnus University was represented at the project's launch meeting by its Director, Dr Teresė Ringailienė, Deputy Director Almantė Meškauskienė, and lecturer Daiva Pundziuvienė. All three are also members of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LTAL), contributing to the development of foreign language teaching and pedagogical practice.

Running for 36 months, from 10 November 2026 to 10 October 2029, the project brings together partners from three countries. Latvijas Universitāte (Latvia) coordinates the project, with the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Spain) and EduFutura, a non-governmental organisation based in Croatia, as partners.

The project aims to strengthen university teaching staff's capacity to implement flipped and blended learning through an experiential professional development model that integrates digital pedagogy and the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI). It will develop, pilot and evaluate an English-language professional development course designed to support the adoption of digitally enriched teaching practices in higher education.

The participation of LTAL members in this project highlights their commitment to international cooperation, the development of pedagogical competencies and the promotion of innovative teaching practices in higher education.

Greetings from Lithuania

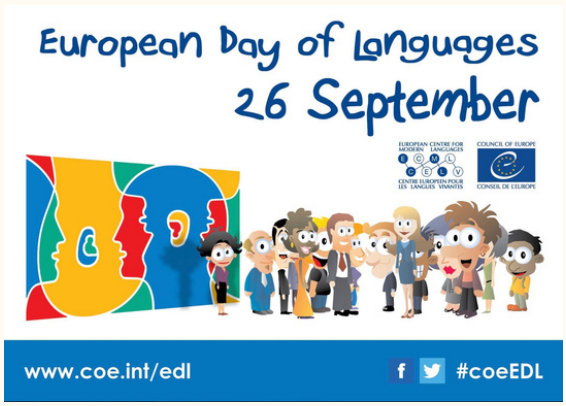
Prepared by members of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA): Prof. Jolita Šliogerienė, Head of the Department of Foreign Languages at VILNIUS TECH; Prof. Roma Kriaučiūnienė, Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages at Vilnius University; Jūratė Patackaitė, President of the Association and Danutė Belazarienė, Lecturer at the Centre of Languages at Vilniaus Kolegija / Higher Education Institution

Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija - LKPA

LKPA 20 metų

The European Day of Languages events at Lithuanian higher education institutions





VILNIUS TECH: Languages, music and creativity

This year, VILNIUS TECH's Department of Foreign Languages dedicated almost an entire week to celebrating the European Day of Languages, culminating in a fun and lively karaoke evening! First-year Creative Industries students were particularly active, enjoying the opportunity to relax, unleash their creativity and express themselves through music. The event showed that languages are about more than learning. They also help people connect, create and express themselves.

Vilnius University: Multilingualism and intercultural understanding

On 25 September 2026, the Faculty of Philology at Vilnius University hosted the Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding Academy for school students, entitled "Studying Two Languages – Discovering Two Cultures." The event was organised by Vilnius University's Institute of Foreign Languages to celebrate the European Day of Languages and highlight the importance of language learning and multilingualism.

Greetings from Lithuania

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Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija - LKPA

The programme included lectures, creative workshops, practical language activities and presentations of foreign language study programmes. Students had the opportunity to explore English, Spanish, French and German, learn more about studying these languages and discover the study opportunities available at Vilnius University. The Academy aimed to encourage students' interest in foreign languages, highlight the connections between languages and cultures, and develop intercultural communication skills. It also emphasised that learning other languages helps people better understand different cultures, broaden their horizons and access more opportunities for personal and professional development.

Vytautas Magnus University: Multilingualism and international career opportunities

Vytautas Magnus University's Institute of Foreign Languages invited school students to explore multilingualism as a way to discover different cultures and open up new professional pathways through activities dedicated to the European Day of Languages. During the discussion "Navigating through Multilingual Worlds: From Culture Shock to Global Careers," master's students shared their experiences, while a representative of Alliance for Recruitment presented labour market trends and career prospects for multilingual professionals.

The event highlighted that knowledge of foreign languages not only helps people better understand other cultures but also gives them an advantage in the global labour market.

Greetings from Lithuania

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Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija - LKPA

LKPA 20 metų

Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution: Languages bring people together and open up new opportunities

This year, the Foreign Language Centre at Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution celebrated the European Day of Languages through a range of initiatives promoting interest in languages, multilingualism and intercultural communication. During Languages Week, the institution's community was invited to take part in the "Let's Bust the Myth!" challenge, engaging in conversations, answering questions and challenging common misconceptions about languages. At meetings held at the Faculty of Business Management, a representative of the international company group Pineca Group introduced the company's activities, shared insights into the labour market and discussed employers' expectations and the skills needed in today's workplace.



Another initiative was the Lithuanian Language Club "LABAS" ("HELLO"), designed for students who wish to learn Lithuanian or improve their existing language skills in an informal setting. Volunteers were also invited to become ambassadors of the Lithuanian language and culture and support others in learning. These initiatives demonstrated that language learning not only helps people discover other cultures and understand one another better but also opens up new opportunities for study, professional development and international careers.

Greetings from Sweden

Språklärarnas Riksförbund
The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by Mia Smith
President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

As the autumn leaves fall in Sweden, we await a new government, a new curriculum, new syllabi and a new teacher education. And as this happens, everyday life continues in our schools.



I had the pleasure of visiting our sister association STÍL in Reykjavik to celebrate its 40th anniversary. It was a truly inspiring evening, and from Sweden we send our warmest congratulations on 40 years of remarkable work. At the celebrations, I presented the situation for language education in Sweden, focusing on the past, the present, and the future. A summary of this presentation can be found in this newsletter.

Furthermore, we plan the annual conference for our members in a new format this year. Instead of offering a full day of lectures, we will present a sequence of six lectures and three informative presentations from partners over three afternoons in the same week. We hope that this format will suit the needs of our members and look forward to interesting lectures. The lectures will cover French, mother-tongue tuition, English, Spanish and German, as well as a general lecture.

Photo: Tryggvi Már Gunnarsson

Greetings from Sweden

Språklärarnas Riksförbund
The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by Mia Smith
President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Language Education in Sweden - past, present and future

Language education in Sweden has changed considerably over the past century – in terms of which languages are taught, how they are taught, and how multilingualism is viewed. Today, with major educational reforms planned for 2028, another period of change is approaching.

From grammar to communication

Before 1945, German was the dominant foreign language in Swedish schools. After the Second World War, English gradually took over, while German and French remained important. In 1994, Spanish was introduced as an alternative to German and French, and today it is the most common modern language. Teaching methods changed too: the traditional focus on grammar and translation gradually gave way to oral interaction and communication. Another important milestone was the Home Language Reform of 1977, which strengthened the position of pupils' first languages and reflected a growing recognition of multilingualism in Swedish society.

English – but what about other languages?

Today, English has an exceptionally strong position. It is compulsory, required for admission to upper secondary education and studied by all upper secondary students. Swedish pupils also achieve very high results in English.

Greetings from Sweden

Språklärarnas Riksförbund
The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by Mia Smith
President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

The picture for modern languages is less straightforward. In compulsory school, they are elective, with Spanish by far the most common choice (50% of the students), followed by German (19%) and French (14%). The subject also faces a shortage of qualified teachers. At upper secondary level, modern languages are mandatory on some programmes and can be chosen on others. An important incentive has been the merit-point system, which rewards further studies in mathematics, English and modern languages. At upper secondary level, however, participation in modern languages remains lower than many language educators and other stakeholders would like to see, partly due to programme structures and timetabling constraints.

This raises an important question: **is English enough?**

A multilingual school system

Sweden's linguistic diversity is also reflected in mother tongue tuition. A total of 187 languages are represented, and around 314,000 pupils – 29 per cent of all pupils – are entitled to tuition. Around 173,000, or 55 per cent of those entitled, actually participate.

Participation falls considerably at upper secondary level, however, and the concept of mother tongue tuition itself has also been challenged politically. Its future is therefore part of the wider discussion about multilingualism in Swedish education.

Greetings from Sweden

Språklärarnas Riksförbund
The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by Mia Smith
President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

2028 – a year of change

Major reforms are planned for 2028, including a new curriculum, new syllabi and a new grading system. There will be greater emphasis on basic skills and less use of digital tools, particularly in the lower grades.

The new syllabi are also expected to address not only what should be taught but ***how***. Teaching strategies will draw on the science of learning, including retrieval practice, spaced repetition, careful progression, activation of prior knowledge and management of cognitive load. For language teachers, however, much of this may sound surprisingly familiar. Repeated vocabulary practice, revisiting previously learned material and providing scaffolding are hardly new ideas in the language classroom.

For language education, however, some of the proposed changes may create challenges. The current merit-point system will disappear, with no replacement yet proposed. National tests will be replaced by centrally graded final examinations without an oral component. This is particularly noteworthy for language subjects, where communication and oral interaction have become increasingly important over several decades.

What does the future hold?

The history of Swedish language education shows that priorities change. German gave way to English, grammar-focused teaching developed towards communication, and multilingualism gained greater recognition.

Greetings from Sweden

Språklärarnas Riksförbund
The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by Mia Smith
President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

The reforms ahead raise some fundamental questions.

- **What role should language skills play in society?**
- **Which languages should be taught?**
- **And how should they be taught?**

The answers will help shape the next chapter of language education in Sweden.

Webinar - Talk about literature!



The first webinar this autumn was with Katherina Dodou from Dalarna University. The topic was conversations about literature in the English classroom, and there were plenty of examples from Sweden and Norway. The topic was very much appreciated and attracted a high number of participants. We thank Katherina for her time and effort.

Music, books and culture

A large part of our activities are featured online, as a way to reach members across our very large country. Besides our webinars, culture is very much in focus. In German, Der Superhit 2027 is now prepared, as is La coupe des chansons 2027 in French.

Greetings from Sweden

Språklärarnas Riksförbund
The Language Teachers' Association of Sweden

Prepared by Mia Smith
President of the Language Teachers' Association of Sweden



In Spanish, we have a new twist on music through La canción del mes, presenting one song each month. Along with the song are teaching materials as well, and at the end of the school year, the students will get to vote on which song is the best. In August, the song was **La Graciosa** by Quevedo & Elvis Crespo, and the song of September was Dai Dai by Shakira & Burna Boy. Which one do you think the students like more?

Culture also comes in the shape of a German online book club, where the novel Issa by Mirrianne Mahn will be discussed during the first meeting. Interested in the book? You can find it here.

Greetings from Latvia

Prepared by Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena,
the President of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English
Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

Updates from the Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE)



The highlight of this quarter for the Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE) was undoubtedly its 34th Annual Conference, held at Ulbroka Secondary School, Latvia. The conference theme, English Language Teaching: Tradition, Innovation, Inspiration, resonated with many participants, providing a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, explore new approaches to English language teaching, and gain inspiration for the year ahead. As Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena, President of LATE, emphasised, **"The strongest teaching grows from a balance between proven practice, innovative ideas, and the inspiration we gain from one another."**

Reflecting the conference theme, Saule Ķūrena created a distinctive programme design that embodied the association members' openness to change and willingness to embrace innovation. The design was complemented by the words "Learn and Teach English", whose initial letters form LATE, creating a meaningful connection to the association while highlighting its core values of learning, teaching, and professional development.

Greetings from Latvia

Prepared by Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena,
the President of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English
Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

The conference was formally opened by Normunds Balabka, Headmaster of Ulbroka Secondary School; Luīze Utāne, Chair of the Education, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Committee of the Ropaži Municipality Council; Ieva Siliņa, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Science; and Kathy Leach, British Ambassador to Latvia.

The conference programme continued with a lively and engaging presentation by **Grant Kempton** (Pearson), entitled "Living the Dream or Larping?" The presentation highlighted the need to adapt to a rapidly changing world and to reconsider approaches to English language teaching. As emphasised during the presentation, changes in the world require changes in education and teaching practices. English is not simply a school subject to be studied; it is a practical skill essential for communication, connection, and participation in today's world.



Greetings from Latvia

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the President of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English
Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

Anna Parr-Modrzejewska (Macmillan Education) emphasised the importance of formative assessment and the use of practical tasks and relevant examples in the classroom. Particular attention was given to clear success criteria, peer assessment and meaningful written feedback, which can help students understand how to improve rather than simply providing a test result. The importance of establishing a clear lesson aim was also highlighted, ensuring that classroom activities and assessment remain focused on meaningful learning outcomes.



Anna Parr-Modrzejewska, Macmillan Education

Alongside the plenary sessions, the conference offered 16 practical workshops across the two days, with participants able to choose one workshop each day. The programme covered several broad areas. Digital innovation and AI featured the creative use of technology with coursebooks and AI-supported writing and grammar practice. Assessment and academic skills were addressed through workshops on exam speaking, peer evaluation and differentiation in academic writing.

Greetings from Latvia

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Other sessions focused on wellbeing, confidence and communication through SEL, stress management, voice and drama-based activities, while creative and learner-centred approaches included collaborative work with literature, game-based learning, educational escape rooms and presentation skills.

Participant feedback repeatedly highlighted the value of practical, ready-to-use ideas and opportunities to experience activities first-hand. Particularly positive feedback was received for Diāna Bolgare's drama-based workshop, which combined movement, voice and speaking activities; Rita Skara-Mincāne and Inta Augustāne's workshop on the Jigsaw Strategy, praised for its well-designed, classroom-ready materials; Sofija Anuže's session on effective presentations; and Liene Paneva and Ilona Ceļmalniece's workshop on exam speaking, which offered practical materials and a systematic approach to developing students' speaking skills. Across the workshops, teachers valued ideas they could adapt immediately for their own learners, and several participants commented that they wished they had been able to attend more than one workshop each day.





Practical ideas in action during the workshop sessions

Greetings from Latvia

Prepared by Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena,
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Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

Fleur Yerbury-Hodgson (Oxford University Press) led a session on social-emotional learning (SEL) in the secondary classroom, focusing on the growing importance of supporting students' mental wellbeing alongside their academic development. The session offered practical ideas for developing self-awareness, self-management and relationship skills, and for integrating SEL more meaningfully into everyday classroom practice.

Robert Buckmaster (The English Ideas Project) turned the discussion to the relationship between tradition and innovation in English language teaching. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of the field, Buckmaster presented the topic in a clear and engaging way, using relevant examples to illustrate key points and connect ideas with classroom practice. He encouraged teachers to question the assumption that newer automatically means better, reminding participants that technology should serve learning rather than become the focus of it.



The PechaKucha presenters after their fast-paced 20 × 20 session

The PechaKucha session brought together Rob Buckmaster, Tatjana Kunda, Andrew Ellis Doxsey, and Joseph Jack Horgan, who introduced participants to the PechaKucha presentation format and explored its potential for use in the classroom.

Greetings from Latvia

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the President of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English
Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

The classic PechaKucha format follows a strict 20 × 20 structure: 20 slides, each shown for 20 seconds, resulting in a presentation of just 6 minutes and 40 seconds. The emphasis is on strong visual storytelling, with more images and fewer words. The speakers stepped outside their usual presentation styles and demonstrated the format themselves, creating an engaging and dynamic session that impressed the audience. Beyond introducing a different approach to presenting ideas, the session showed how creative constraints can support student engagement and participation: when learners have limited time and space, they must decide what really matters, communicate more precisely and find creative ways to tell their story. Many participants later identified PechaKucha as one of their key takeaways from the conference and said they planned to try the format with their own students.

The second day opened with a series of presentations addressing current developments and professional opportunities in English language education. **Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena** and **Inga Linde** introduced participants to the benefits of IATEFL membership and shared key themes, emerging trends, and professional insights from the IATEFL 2026 Conference in Brighton. The session also featured a special video greeting from Jon Burton, Chief Executive of IATEFL, who invited Latvian teachers to join the international IATEFL community and to take part in its 60th International Conference in Birmingham in 2027.

Antra Roskoša from the State Education Development Agency's Department of Professional Support for Teachers focused on cooperation between state methodologists and English language teachers in the 2026/2027 school year. Following this, **Lidija Andrejeva** provided updates on the 2025/2026 national English language examinations, highlighting higher average results across all three examination levels compared with 2025. Particularly

Greetings from Latvia

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encouraging was the increase in learners reaching CEFR B2 and C1 levels. Oral performance was particularly strong at the optimal and higher levels, while listening was the strongest component in Grade 9. The results also pointed to areas for further attention, particularly writing at Grade 9 and higher level and listening at the optimal level.

Caterina Zougli (Express Publishing), an ELT specialist and transformative education strategist, explored the principles of deep learning through her session, *The Treasure Hunt: Unlocking the Hidden Forces of Deep Learning*. Using the metaphor of a treasure hunt, she examined how attention, motivation and memory shape learning, while encouraging teachers to look beyond language accuracy towards deeper meaning, confidence and personal growth. Among the ideas participants took away were the importance of curiosity, belonging and learner voice, as well as the teacher's role as an "identity architect".



Caterina Zougli, Express Publishing

Greetings from Latvia

Prepared by Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena,
the President of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English
Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

LATE places particular importance on welcoming future English language teachers into the professional community and encouraging them to engage with the association early in their careers. This is especially meaningful at a time when attracting and retaining new teachers remains an important challenge. The conference therefore includes dedicated presentation time for university students and recent graduates to share their research and classroom-based projects. Once again this year, three University of Latvia graduates presented their work. **Alma Emīlija Liepa** presented on the use of escape rooms to promote target language use when teaching English as a second foreign language in Grade 3. Her case study showed that escape rooms increased both the frequency and complexity of students' spoken target language use. Later in the day, she also led a practical workshop on designing and using educational escape rooms, offering teachers ideas for promoting communication, collaboration, motivation and active engagement in the classroom. **Annija Rundāne** explored the use of formal writing tasks to improve students' consistency in using British and American English in Grade 11, while **Agija Goča** focused on the use of debates to develop argumentation skills among students at vocational secondary schools.



Džefrijs Grīnvalds, Klett Latvija

Džefrijs Grīnvalds (Klett Latvija) addressed the challenges of teaching English in classrooms with diverse levels of language proficiency. The presentation explored how writing tasks can be used to differentiate learning through peer

Greetings from Latvia

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and self-evaluation, allowing more advanced learners to remain engaged while providing appropriate support for those who require it. Particular emphasis was placed on the teacher's active involvement in writing activities, with teachers encouraged to participate alongside students and model the process, helping to motivate learners and create a more supportive learning environment.

Joseph Jack Horgan (Jelgava Spīdola State Gymnasium) presented a project-based learning approach centred on the creation of Wikipedia pages in a C1-level English II course. Rather than completing a traditional research paper, students developed their own Wikipedia entries, putting their research, writing, and language skills into practice. The presentation demonstrated how such a project can provide an engaging alternative to conventional assignments and offered practical recommendations for teachers interested in incorporating project-based learning into English language teaching.



Joseph Jack Horgan, Jelgava Spīdola State Gymnasium

Greetings from Latvia

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Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

Ivars Dominiks Zeps (Riga State Gymnasium No. 1) explored the development of students' understanding of stylistics and academic language. The presentation addressed common challenges in academic writing, including the use of informal expressions and basic vocabulary, and introduced approaches to helping students recognise and apply appropriate stylistic features. Practical tasks and strategies for developing more sophisticated vocabulary and strengthening students' academic writing skills were also discussed, with participants particularly appreciating the specific examples, tasks and materials that showed how academic language can be promoted in everyday English lessons.



Ivars Dominiks Zeps, Riga State Gymnasium No. 1

Greetings from Latvia

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the President of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English
Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

The conference exhibition was another important part of the programme, giving participants an opportunity to explore new teaching materials and resources, meet representatives of publishing and educational organisations, and discuss the latest developments in ELT. LATE's publishing and educational partners also supported the conference by contributing speakers to the programme and providing materials for participants' conference bags.



Participants exploring teaching materials and resources in the conference exhibition area.

Greetings from Latvia

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Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

LATE is especially grateful to Ulbroka Secondary School and its team for hosting the conference and for their invaluable practical support throughout its planning and delivery. We also sincerely thank our publishing and educational partners whose contributions helped make the conference programme and exhibition possible. LATE greatly values its long-standing cooperation with the British Embassy Riga, the British Council in Latvia and the U.S. Embassy Riga, whose continued engagement supports the association and its wider professional activities. Our thanks also go to all speakers, workshop leaders and volunteers who contributed their time, expertise and energy to the conference.



Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena, President of LATE

Greetings from Latvia

Prepared by Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena,
the President of the Latvian Association of Teachers of English
Laura Ende, a LATE Board Member

The event brought together a wide range of perspectives on English language teaching, highlighting the importance of continuous learning, openness to new approaches, and the exchange of ideas within the teaching community. From innovative classroom practices and assessment approaches to student wellbeing, professional development, and the changing role of technology in language education, the sessions offered both practical ideas and opportunities for reflection. Educators at different stages of their professional journeys had the opportunity to share their experiences, explore new perspectives, reconsider approaches to teaching and strengthen connections within the professional community.

The spirit of this exchange was perhaps best captured by a quote from British musician Phil Collins, chosen by Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena, President of LATE, for the programme: **"In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn."** The quote captures the idea that teachers remain learners throughout their professional lives, sharing knowledge while continuing to grow themselves.



Members of the LATE Board, who also formed the Conference Organising Committee

Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by Renata Emilsson Peskova ,
the president of the Association of Language Teachers (STÍL)



STÍL Celebrates 40 Years of Supporting Language Teaching in Iceland

The Icelandic Association of Language Teachers (STÍL – Samtök tungumálakennara á Íslandi) celebrated its 40th anniversary on 26 September 2026, bringing together language teachers, former and current members, students and partners at Veröld – House of Vigdís in Reykjavík. Appropriately, the anniversary celebration took place on the European Day of Languages.

Four decades of cooperation

STÍL was formally founded on 17 October 1985, with its first board meeting held in January 1986. The founding members were the associations of teachers of Danish, English, French and German. Over the years, the organisation has broadened considerably. Today, it also brings together teachers of Spanish, teachers of Icelandic as a second language through Ísbrú, and heritage-language educators through **Móðurmál – the Association on Bilingualism.** Associations of Italian, Norwegian and Swedish teachers have also been members at different points in STÍL's history.

Greetings from Iceland

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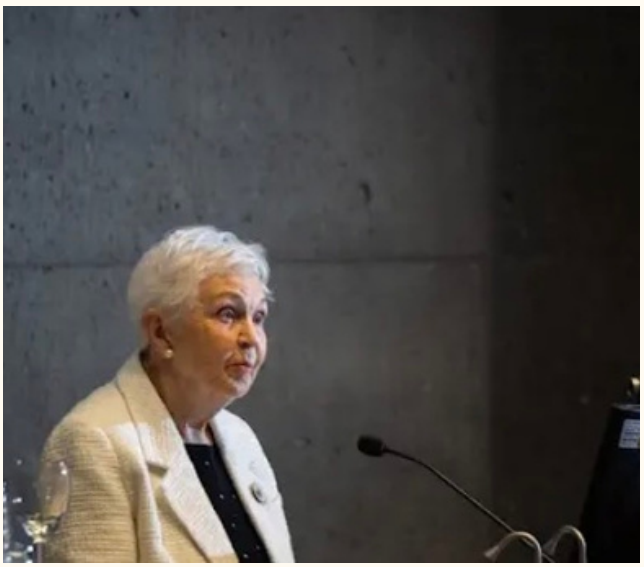
Throughout its history, STÍL has worked to strengthen language education and provide opportunities for teachers' professional development through courses, workshops and conferences. International cooperation has also been an important part of its work. For example, STÍL participates in the International Federation of Language Teacher Associations (FIPLV), the Nordic-Baltic Region (NBR) and cooperation with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML).

Celebrating the past – and looking ahead

The anniversary programme combined reflection on the association's history with perspectives on the future of language education.

Two long-standing language educators, **Auður Hauksdóttir** and **Auður Torfadóttir**, looked back at the circumstances that led Icelandic language-teacher associations to join forces four decades ago. Their contribution highlighted the importance of a common professional platform for collaboration, innovation in language education, continuing professional development and solidarity among language teachers.





Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by Renata Emilsson Peskova ,
the president of the Association of Language Teachers (STÍL)

The Nordic dimension of the celebration was particularly important. **Mia Smith, President of the Swedish Association of Language Teachers,** gave a presentation entitled Language Education in Sweden. She traced developments in Swedish language education, discussed current practices and challenges, and offered a glimpse of curriculum changes planned for 2028. Her presentation invited participants to consider how teachers and learners can respond to the changing needs of the future.





The programme also gave a prominent place to the learners themselves. **Almar Steinn Þorgeirsson**, recipient of the STÍL Student Award 2026 and now a student of Spanish at the University of Iceland, spoke about The Magic of Languages. Drawing on his experience of learning Spanish at upper-secondary school, he described how language learning had broadened his horizons and opened new possibilities for his future.

Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by Renata Emilsson Peskova ,
the president of the Association of Language Teachers (STÍL)

Languages matter – perhaps more than ever

The anniversary was not only an opportunity to look back. It also provided a moment to underline the continuing importance of language education in Iceland.

As a small language community with extensive international connections, Iceland depends on linguistic competence. At the same time, its linguistic landscape is becoming increasingly diverse. STÍL therefore sees language learning not simply as a school subject, but as a means of gaining access to other cultures, widening perspectives and strengthening communication across communities. In a world marked by conflict and division, knowledge of languages can also contribute to dialogue, democracy and peace.



Greetings from Iceland

Prepared by Renata Emilsson Peskova ,
the president of the Association of Language Teachers (STÍL)

The anniversary also marked the return of Málfríður, STÍL's journal for language teachers. A special anniversary issue was prepared for the occasion, with the hope of reviving the journal after a period in which it had not been published.

Forty years after Icelandic language teachers first decided to join forces, the original idea behind STÍL remains highly relevant: language teachers need spaces in which they can meet across languages, educational levels and professional traditions. The anniversary celebrated what has been achieved, while also reaffirming STÍL's commitment to professional collaboration and to strong and diverse language education in Iceland for the decades ahead.







Online sources for learning languages

NBR, Nordic Baltic Region of FIPLV
https://www.facebook.com/groups/677820838960243

https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/europeandayoflanguages

https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/translation/european-day-languages-events-2023_en

https://edl.ecml.at/
https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanDayofLanguages/

https://www.facebook.com/translationeuropa/
https://ihworld.com/news-blog/ih-blog/our-favourite-idioms-from-across-europe/

https://europeisnotdead.com/european-nationality-related-idioms/

https://www.omniglot.com/language/idioms/index.php

Language teachers' associations in the Nordic-Baltic region

FINLAND Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto SUKOL RY (SUKOL) www.sukol.fi

ICELAND Association of Foreign Language Teachers in Iceland (STIL) FIPLV http://stil-is.weebly.com

SWEDEN The Language Teachers' Organization of Sweden https://spraklararna.se/

ESTONIA Eesti Võõrkeeleõpetajate Liit (EVOL) (Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers) www.voorkeelteliit.eu

LITHUANIA Language Teachers Association of Lithuania/Lietuvos kalbų pedagogų asociacija (LTAL/LKPA) https://lkpa.vdu.lt

LATVIA The Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE) https://late.lv/

NORWAY Norwegian Association for Teachers of German

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