Unifying Through Language

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# Project Portfolio

## Table of Contents

[**Project Portfolio 1**](#_28qw63tw8yu3)

[Table of Contents 1](#_fznjfwv84q5w)

[Project report 3](#_h5enk518uqxv)

[Description of activities and reaching the stakeholders 6](#_daay15q72uoz)

[Sustainability of the project 7](#_4ql1tejughrj)

[Summary of the results and annexes 8](#_86oradvxl6q3)

[A) Researching and writing the theoretical background 8](#_ckezp0agehaw)

[B) Creating user personas 8](#_uii261bbfhes)

[C) Creating end product content 9](#_e2pp3w2mi5lv)

[D) Testing the content on the target group 10](#_s3rxu67d70ru)

[E) Designing the end product 11](#_3e4934lnnls8)

[Project action plan 12](#_ydx08nzi2jhq)

[Communication to stakeholders 15](#_a4p1pulccp8i)

[Project coverage 16](#_iijyeez9khqz)

[**Annexes 16**](#_p3q5q4y7vc97)

[Annexe 1: The Language Levels 16](#_d3nyn56g4k6t)

[**1. Overview of proficiency levels 17**](#)

[**1.1. CEFR and RLD 17**](#)

[1.2. Global RLDs 18](#_dlbbpwti9oo)

[**2. Estonian language proficiency at A2-B1 19**](#)

[2.1. Curriculum of Estonian language studies 20](#_wvxboobe66iy)

[2.1.1. Sample curriculum for A2 20](#_2n6it9bg4z4b)

[2.1.2. Sample curriculum for B1 21](#_8uth9w1yglm3)

[2.2. Vocabulary 22](#_4vd4ns2uytpz)

[**References 24**](#_x2kuv9cudgg4)

[Annexe 2: Methodology of Language Learning 25](#_fgwcdokyukxo)

[**Referaat 25**](#_ec9fqro7fvrv)

[**Tallinn 2023Introduction 25**](#_s35x1d6x0jkp)

[Methodology of Language Learning 26](#_30j0zll)

[The methodology 26](#_3znysh7)

[Language learning 27](#_2et92p0)

[**Language learning 29**](#_tyjcwt)

[Interactivity 31](#_3dy6vkm)

[Examples 31](#_1t3h5sf)

[Frequent Practice 32](#_4d34og8)

[Spaced Repetition 32](#_2s8eyo1)

[Examples 32](#_evafl6akraen)

[Resource diversity 34](#_35nkun2)

[Application in language learning 34](#_1ksv4uv)

[Critical Look 34](#_44sinio)

[Goal setting 35](#_z337ya)

[Strategies for Learning Languages 35](#_3j2qqm3)

[Critical Look 35](#_1y810tw)

[Interest and motivation 36](#_4i7ojhp)

[Definitions 36](#_2xcytpi)

[Strategies and Tactics 36](#_1ci93xb)

[Critical Look 36](#_3whwml4)

[Contextual learning 37](#_2bn6wsx)

[Definition 37](#_qsh70q)

[Advantages and Tactics 37](#_3as4poj)

[Critical Look 37](#_1pxezwc)

[Metalinguistic awareness 38](#_49x2ik5)

[Definition 38](#_2p2csry)

[Benefits and Practical Applications 38](#_wkhm5do0ydr8)

[Critical Look 38](#_147n2zr)

[Self-observation 39](#_3o7alnk)

[Definition 39](#_23ckvvd)

[Benefits and Applications 39](#_gaqt9bi4g9ez)

[Critical Look 39](#_ihv636)

[The sociocultural aspect 40](#_32hioqz)

[Definition 40](#_1hmsyys)

[Benefits and Applications 40](#_a1eaduvpr6i4)

[Critical Look 40](#_41mghml)

[Annexe 3: Theoretical Background of Gamification and Media Participation 43](#_faadgf5fznl5)

[**Theoretical Background of Gamification and Media Participation 43**](#_ljhh8e1ria81)

[Gamification and Language Learning 43](#_7lddzmdxfu4)

[The Case of Duolingo 43](#_26ddhkbffbks)

[How does Duolingo work? 44](#_2locfwkhfj1x)

[Pros and Cons of Duolingo 44](#_pzmp3dln3vy7)

[Terms and Definitions 45](#_whn4ahho50tt)

[How does Gamification work? 46](#_6aaex73byf0u)

[What are game mechanics? 46](#_a8st737hicch)

[Gamification in a Museum 46](#_r7s64rsacdt6)

[The Case of Victoria and Albert Museum 47](#_r9fcjkdjt6ju)

[Gamification Process and Tools 47](#_gmhkrl5ovswz)

[References and bibliography 48](#_7nbf8a1b7wfg)

[Annexe 4: The Feedback Report 49](#_gjlvqyu4t9h7)

[Report 49](#_5m4la0mpuomb)

[IMPORTANT OBSERVATION 51](#_ynosldwbj550)

[Words that caused difficulties 51](#_e2i37r2nyovu)

## Project report

Our Unifying Through Language project was focused on creating a type of interactive and pedagogically appropriate material for museum visitors who are studying Estonian. We worked with the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum. More specifically, in regard to the exhibition which will be opening in 2024 celebrating the 100th jubilee of the museum. This exhibition will showcase 100 items connecting to 100 untold stories about Estonian music and theater history. It is common for museums to have texts in both Estonian and English and sometimes Russian, but not common to have texts or programs that are focused towards those who are still developing their Estonian speaking skills. We wanted to make this problem a bit smaller with our end-product. The Unifying Through Language project also centered on making learning Estonian more relatable and interactive. We hope and expect that the people who will visit the museum next year and who fit in our persona — for example a university student from Germany who wants to learn Estonian for social purposes — can benefit from our product and their Estonian learning process will be encouraged.

Our goal was to find the best solution for this with the resources (for example time, money and information) we had. We knew we had to scale-down the initial ideas some of us came up with in order to do this. For example we discussed creating an app, but soon after realised this would be too difficult with our constraints. We ended up deciding on creating a sort of newspaper-pamphlet that incorporates most of the themes which will be in the museum exhibition. The pamphlet consists of crafty and fun “articles”, as well as a crossword-puzzle to help lock-in what they have learned from the newspaper and the exhibition itself. The content is appropriate for the language-level we have decided to target, which is A2 and B1.

At first we did most of the work and brainstorming with the whole group, as there were quite a few topics that needed to be discussed and questions that needed answers. We needed to decide on the persona we are targeting with our product, as well as what we are aspiring towards. Once we had enough information from the museum and had decided on most of the content, we divided our group of twelve into two groups. One was more focused on the content and creating the texts that will be in the newspaper and consisted of the people from our group who could speak Estonian. The other was more focused on the design of our end product and carrying out our ideas for how the product could be as gamified and interactive as possible. It ended up being less gamified as we might have thought in the very beginning but we are very content with what we have managed to create.

The way we divided roles was mostly based on the different skill-set, background and showing of willingness of our team members. This is where the interdisciplinarity of our project also showed. (Described in more detail in our mid-term report.) The basis of our project was teamwork. We had meetings every week, where we discussed the topics that were especially topical that week and answered any underlying questions. Every task someone took care of, was also discussed before and after it was done, ensuring everyone had the possibility to contribute and help each other out. We used Google Drive and Miro to be able to brainstorm online as well as during our meetings. One of the bigger tasks we decided to take on was creating a “theoretical bible” for any future project focusing on language learning and gamification to use. Sirli, Grigori and Kristofer wrote the theoretical background texts. An important part of our project was analysing the items from the museum and also going to visit the museum in person. The whole group went to visit the museum to be better acquaintanced with the space and the lay-out of where the exhibition will take place. Another important task was creating the persona for our product. We discussed this in detail during one of our meetings, after which Mykhailo created a visual summary of the persona consisting of three people. This is where the two groups came into play. The content group, consisting of Amelia, Sirli, Eliina, Eda, Kristofer and Sergei, created the texts for the articles and thought of the questions for the crossword puzzle and made sure they made the texts A1-B2-level-appropriate. The design team, consisting of Weikang, Burcu, Grigori, Mykhailo, Noémi and Nail, designed the newspaper in coordination with the content. Finally, Grigori and Amelia conducted a B1 Estonian lesson in Tallinn University to get feedback for the newspaper content. There the students from different backgrounds, many of which coincided with our user-persona, read through our texts and gave feedback on how interesting and understandable the texts were.

**Importance of the Problem**

Language learning, especially for non-native speakers, is often riddled with challenges, particularly in environments where the language is not actively spoken. In Estonia, like many other culturally rich countries, there is a gap in the language learning process for non-native speakers, especially in interactive and culturally immersive contexts. The "Unifying Through Language" project sought to address this gap by creating materials that blend language learning with cultural immersion, specifically tailored for the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum's upcoming 2024 exhibition.

**Problem Description**

Estonia's diverse cultural heritage, especially in the realms of theatre and music, is a rich tapestry that deserves to be explored by all, regardless of their language proficiency. However, language barriers can impede this exploration, particularly for non-native speakers who are still in the process of learning Estonian. Traditional language learning materials often lack the cultural context and interactive elements that can make learning both effective and engaging. This project aimed to create resources that not only aid in language learning but also deepen the understanding and appreciation of Estonian culture.

**Choice of Methods**

Given the project's objectives, we chose a multifaceted approach combining pedagogical strategies, cultural immersion, and interactive design. To ensure the effectiveness of our methods, we referenced studies and statistics on language acquisition, especially in museum settings, and aligned our strategies with proven educational frameworks.

1. **Pedagogical Approach:** We based our language learning materials on the CEFR A2 and B1 proficiency levels, ensuring that the content was challenging yet accessible to our target demographic. This choice was backed by research indicating the effectiveness of targeted proficiency level materials in language acquisition.

2. **Cultural Immersion:** By collaborating with the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum, we ensured that our materials were not only linguistically relevant but also culturally rich. This immersion strategy is supported by studies highlighting the importance of cultural context in language learning.

3. **Interactive Design:** To engage learners actively, we incorporated interactive elements like crossword puzzles and gamified content in our materials. This approach is grounded in the principles of experiential learning, which suggest that active participation enhances retention and understanding.

4. **Feedback and Iteration:** Post-development, we conducted trial sessions with potential end-users, collecting feedback to refine our materials. This iterative approach is a cornerstone of user-centered design and ensures that the final product truly meets the learners' needs.

**Effectiveness of Chosen Methods**

The chosen methods proved effective in achieving our project goals. The pedagogical approach ensured that the materials were educationally sound, the cultural immersion deepened the learning experience, and the interactive design made the learning process engaging. Feedback from trial sessions allowed us to fine-tune our materials, ensuring they were well-received and effective.

In conclusion, the "Unifying Through Language" project stands as a testament to the effectiveness of integrating pedagogical soundness, cultural richness, and interactive elements in language learning materials. This project not only aids language learners but also fosters a deeper appreciation and understanding of Estonian culture.

## Description of activities and reaching the stakeholders

The key stakeholder of our project is the Theatre and Music Museum of the Estonian History Museum. The team collaborated closely with the museum to learn how our ideas can be integrated into the exhibition. The museum is where our idea will eventually be conducted in the form of a newspaper for Estonian language learners. In order to get to know the limitations of the space and gather ideas, the team visited the museum. This project and connections with the museum will be a way to bring Estonian learning materials to wider audiences that connect with our personas. It helps to create a welcoming space for language learners from different backgrounds.

The second important stakeholder is Estonian language learners. The newspaper we created offers an interactive and playful way of learning by reading, introducing new vocabulary and revising words in the form of a crossword puzzle. We chose A2 and B1 language proficiency levels and created three personas around those levels. The first persona is a 26-year-old Russian-Estonian who speaks Estonian on a sufficient level, lives in Jõhvi and is working in a local cafe. The persona wants to participate more in the Estonian culture, be more competitive on the job market and blend in with society. Our second persona is a 20-year-old German foreign student studying BA at Tallinn University. He wants to learn the language, especially casual and fun vocabulary to communicate with friends. The last persona is a 31-year-old Pakistani who works remotely for an IT company in Tartu, but lives in Tallinn. She wants to get over the language barrier to keep her job and stay in Estonia. She needs to pass the language test and knows vocabulary related to her profession. All of the personas need a prejudice-free environment for language learning. In addition, the museum setting provides a valuable opportunity for learners of Estonian to also get to know the culture.

The indirect stakeholders of our project are language learning institutions. The theoretical outlines of our project can benefit similar project groups and language learning institutions in the future. We have created and tested our materials: our team members conducted a trial class to try out the newspaper materials, for which we received positive feedback. Language learning materials for the A2 and B1 Estonian proficiency levels tend to be sparse, something which our project wishes to help with. In addition, associating museums with language learning and other cultural institutions is not common in Estonia. Our project can lead the way to similar projects.

## Sustainability of the project

We have talked with the museum workers working on the specific exhibition our end product is aimed at and they agree with us that the product - a newspaper - could also be repurposed for any exhibition later on. If need be for some reason, the museum can modify the existing product, such as replacing the AI-generated pictures with photos from the museum itself. They agreed with us upon our visit to the museum mid-way through our project that they can take on the printing and folding that comes with a paper product, such as a newspaper. At the time, though, the idea was to make a sort of foldable pamphlet or a brochure, but the notion still stands.

The museum is responsible for marketing the newspaper further and ensuring that it is actually being used for the exhibition. They can explain to the guests who wish to have the newspaper how it is supposed to be used and should be able to help with questions on the exhibitions.

## Summary of the results and annexes

The project had several steps and completed tasks towards creating the final result. As stated before, the goal of the project was to create something that helps Estonian language learning of levels A2 and B1 in the museum environment. As also described before, the process to create the final end product took several steps and results that helped the project team to create something that can be used in the upcoming exhibition. The steps consisted of A) Researching and writing the theoretical background, B) Creating user personas, C) Creating end product content, D) Testing the content on the target group and E) Designing the end product.

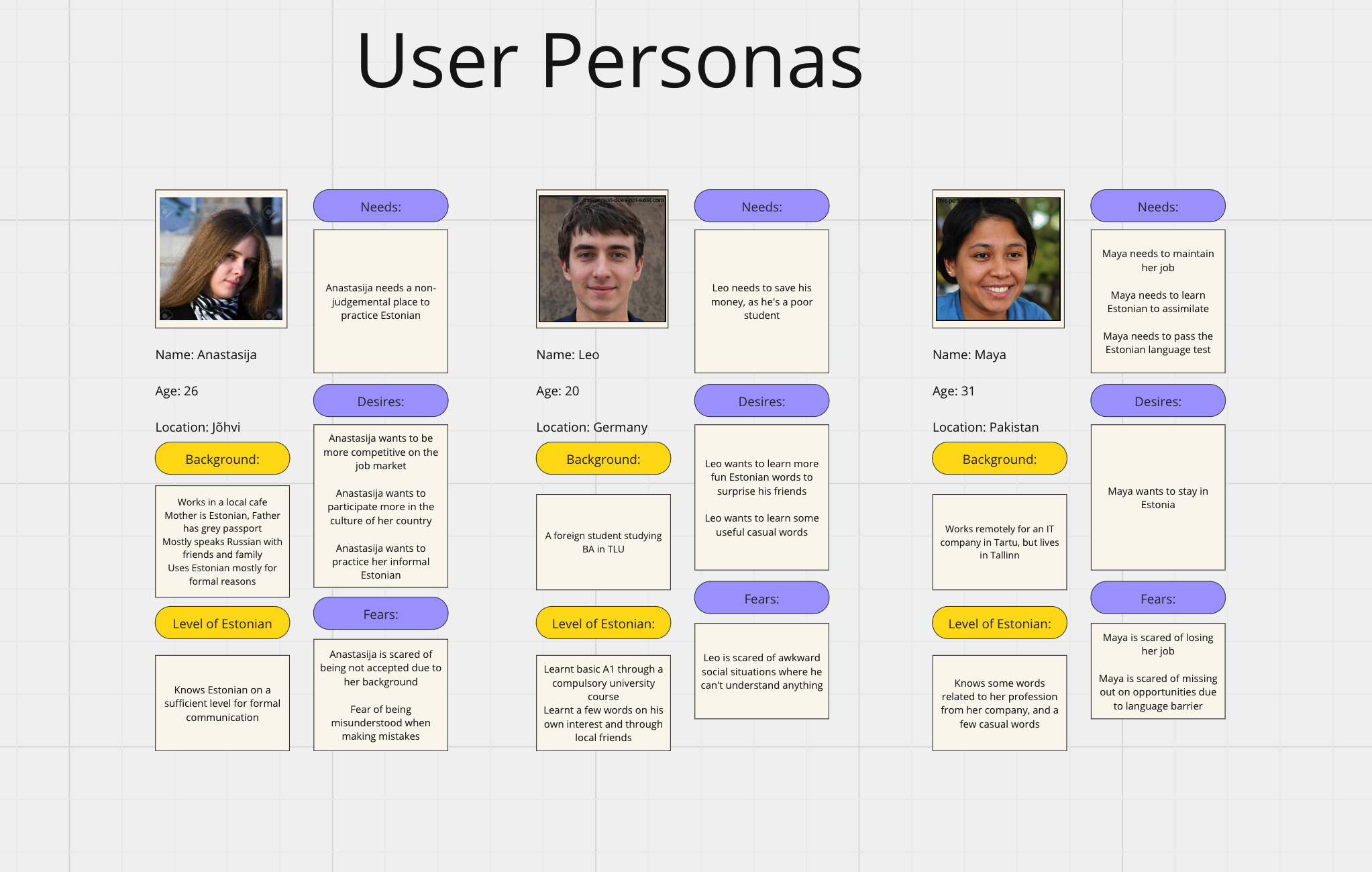
### A) Researching and writing the theoretical background

Researching and writing the theoretical background or “Theoretical Bible” was important for one of our set goals of making the Estonian language learning relatable and interactive. The “Theoretical Bible” consists of topics of language learning and gamification which was written to be helpful for this project or future utilization. Sirli focused on “The Language levels” (Annexe 1), Grigori on “Methodology of Language Learning” (Annexe 2) and Kristofer on “Theoretical Background of Gamification and Media Participation” (Annexe 3).

### B) Creating user personas

To better understand the target group of the project’s end users, we created User Personas using the application Miro, that illustrate who are the people who will use our end product.

**User Personas:**



### C) Creating end product content

The content group, consisting of Amelia, Sirli, Eliina, Eda, Kristofer and Sergei, created the texts for the articles and thought of the questions for the crossword puzzle and made sure they made the texts A1-B2-level-appropriate. The list of items chosen in November are the following, shown with the specific themes they are embedded in as columns in the newspaper.

| **Nr.** | **Theme** | **Item** | **Story focus** | **Subsection in "newspaper"** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Nature | Nukitsamees play costume | Short summary of the movie | Movie review |
| 2 | Sport | Georg Ots caricature | This is Georg, he loves swimming and singing, escapes from shipwreck because of lungs | Comic (max 6 images) |
| 3 | Love | "Mu isamaa" blueprint | Invitation to start learning lyrics for the most important song at 2025 song festival; few lines from song with translation | News |
| 4 | Death | Ruja diaries | Who was U.Alender, Ruja's significance, Estonia disaster, first verse of "Nii vaikseks kõik on jäänud" | Orbituary |
| 5 | Superstition | "Kratt" photo | Short summary of "Kratt", Estonia theatre bombing, superstition with the play & its curse | Breaking news |
| 6 | Rarities | Arvo Pärt's music sheet | Very concise biography of Pärt, why he's important to Estonians | Persona focus/inteview |
| 7 | Estonians in the world | Järvi dynasty | Travel review of Pärnu & Järvi music festival | Travel review |
| 8 | Innovations | UP FOR VOTING | "I am 32 y.o. Aadu from Keila and want to learn to play (weirdest item to be voted :D)" | Classified ad |
| 9 | Deficiency | Anne Veski's microphone | A criminal contraband has been confiscated, warning example | Crime section |
| 10 | Politics | Sõnajala band cassette tapes | A "retro throwback" article with some of the lyrics from "Tulge kõik" and some fun facts about the band | Throwback |
| 11 | Geniuses who have died young | Mattiiseni isamaalised laulud | A short editorial including the idea of the importance of the singing revolution and a sort of thought/question that directs you to think "would I have joined in?" (the impact of singing together as estonians) | Editorial |
| 12 | Childhood | Lotte stage model | Short description of the Lotte story, internationally most famous character, Lottemaa | Theatre ad |

### D) Testing the content on the target group

Grigori and Amelia conducted a B1 Estonian lesson in Tallinn University to get feedback for the newspaper content. The feedback was analyzed and “The Feedback Report” (Annexe: 4) written. Based on that the changes were made to the content.

### E) Designing the end product

The end product of the project is a newspaper as an interactive and pedagogically appropriate material. The newspaper consists of articles in Estonian, A2-B1 levels. The newspaper also has a crossword-puzzle as an interactive part. The design team, consisting of Weikang, Burcu, Grigori, Mykhailo, Noémi and Nail, designed the newspaper in coordination with the content. The pictures were mostly generated by the AI as placeholders, but will be changed after the final design for the museum exhibition is decided and pictures sent. We are waiting for the response from the museum.

**Newspaper: page 1**



**Newspaper: page 2**



## Project action plan

| Activity and short  description | Timeframe  (which month) | Stakeholders | Person  (name + study field)  or team responsible |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Brainstorming and developing ideas  about the end product in terms of the design, the project’s stakeholders and the user personas | September,  October,  November | visitors of the  exhibition,  museum workers | Everyone |
| Analysing the list of 100 items for the exhibition | September | visitors of the  exhibition | Everyone |
| Deciding on creating a theoretical bible:  determine what needs to be researched before  moving on to create the content and  design of the end product | early October | our group | Everyone |
| Creating the theoretical bible  (strategies for language teaching;  overview of lang. proficiency levels; strategies for gamification) | October,  (November) | visitors of the  exhibition,  similar  future projects  in ELU or any other walks of life | Grigori (psychology),  Sirli (public and business management),  Kristofer (communication management) |
| Creating the list of the most favoured items  we want to work with | mid–October | museum workers  visitors of the exhibition | Eliina (Japanese studies) |
| Previous Projects Analysis:  what form previous ELU projects  have chosen for the portfolio | mid–October | assessors of our ELU project,  future ELU projects | Burcu (communication management) |
| Meeting the museum workers, visiting the museum: communicating goals and strategies with the curators of the exhibition in person, being introduced to the rooms where the exh. is going to take place | mid–October | museum workers | Everyone |
| Presentation about the project | 20th October |  | 1st group:  Sirli (public and business management),  Mike (digital learning games),  Amelia (cultural studies),  Burcu (communication management),  Weikang (communication management),  Kristofer (communication management).  Nail (Digital Learning Games)  2nd group:  Eda (translation studies),  Grigori (psychology),  Noémi (Estonian studies),  Eliina (Japanese studies),  Sergei (public and business management) |
| Finishing the theoretical bible, brainstorming  about end product,  discussing our main ideas about the user personas | November |  | Everyone |
| Creating the user personas in Miro | mid–  November | visitors of the  exhibition | Mike  (digital learning games) |
| Deciding on the format of our  product (newspaper), crossword and vocabulary sections,  a native-speakers group is formed | mid–  November |  | Everyone |
| Creating the list of selected items and  their thematic framework for the newspaper | late  November | the group,  visitors of the  exhibition | Eda (translation studies),  Grigori (psychology),  Sirli (public and business management),  Amelia (theory of culture),  Eliina (Asian studies),  Sergei (public and business management) |
| Establishing and revising content | November,  early Dec. | museum workers,  visitors of the  exhibition | content group  (same as above) |
| Evaluating the content: checking it for language–appropriacy | end of  November | museum workers,  visitors of the  exhibition | Everyone |
| Testing the newspaper in a B1 language class | end of  November | B1 lang. class | Grigori (psychology)  Amelia (theory of culture), |
| Editing the content,  shaping and fulfilling the design | December | museum workers,  visitors of the  exhibition | content team design team:  Weikang (communication management),  Burcu (communication management),  Mike (digital learning games),  Nail (digital learning games),  Noémi (Estonian studies) |
| Final presentation:  delivering our project to ELU-stakeholders  by summarising what was aimed,  what has been and  what is left to be done to meet our goals | 14th December | ELU-stakeholders | Everyone |
| Seeing the project implemented:  sending the end product  to the museum and discussing  further involvement in the exhibition | December  and beyond | curators of the  exhibition | to be specified |

## Communication to stakeholders

## Project coverage

As stated before, the Theatre and Music Museum of the Estonian History Museum, as well as Estonian language learners, are the direct stakeholders of our project. Additionally, language learning institutions and other cultural institutions are the indirect stakeholders of our project. The museum is also our partner in this project and will help us to implement the practical usage of our final product – the newspaper. Therefore, the museum will be responsible for the marketing of the newspaper during the exhibition.

Currently, the exhibition is still in the preparation stage, and we have not yet determined the methods and channels. However, here are some possible ways:

1. On-Site Newspaper Distribution: Distribute printed newspapers to each visitor at the ticket counter before they explore the exhibits, offering them an entertaining and engaging visiting experience.
2. Educational Material for School Groups: Considering that museums often host school groups, our newspaper can be utilized as an educational resource for language learning. Specifically, the museum can incorporate the newspaper into guided tours for school visitors.
3. Digital Version for Online Promotion: If feasible, we can create a digital version of the newspaper that can be promoted on the museum's various online platforms, such as its website.

# Annexes

# 

## Annexe 1: The Language Levels

# **Overview of proficiency levels**

# **CEFR and RLD**

The Council of Europe has developed instruments promoting innovative language teaching methods, particularly the communicative approach, facilitating the learning of foreign languages. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) categorizes language proficiency into six levels (A1 to C2) under Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User categories. The concept of these levels originated in the 1970s for English and French and was extended to other languages. In 2001, the CEFR was launched, offering a versatile framework applicable to all languages. It uses descriptors to specify language mastery, graded from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient). To address concerns about broadness, Reference Level Descriptions (RLD) for national and regional languages provide detailed specifications for different CEFR levels. (Council of Europe, 2023)

CEFR is a comprehensive framework that provides a common basis for the description of language proficiency across various European languages. It helps learners to assess their language skills and helping educators design appropriate teaching and assessment methods. One key aspect of the CEFR is its focus on "can-do" descriptors, which outline the specific language skills and tasks learners can perform at each level. These descriptors are not language-specific, ensuring their relevance and applicability across different languages. The CEFR emphasizes communicative competence, encouraging learners to focus on practical language use in real-life situations. This approach promotes effective communication and language learning, making it more accessible and relevant for learners. (Council of Europe, 2020)

Moreover, the CEFR is adaptable to various contexts, accommodating the needs of learners, teachers, and certification authorities. It provides a flexible framework that can be customized to suit the requirements of different languages and regions. This adaptability ensures that the CEFR can be widely implemented, fostering consistency and comparability in language education and assessment practices across different countries and languages. Additionally, the CEFR is instrumental in curriculum development, assessment design, and teacher training. By providing clear guidelines and benchmarks for language proficiency, it assists educators in creating well-structured and effective language learning programs. It also aids in the development of language assessments, ensuring that they align with the defined proficiency levels and are reliable measures of learners' language skills. (*ibid*)

Reference Level Descriptions (RLDs) are detailed content specifications for different CEFR levels, specifically tailored for national and regional languages. These descriptions provide comprehensive guidelines for what learners should be able to do at each proficiency level, offering a clear and specific roadmap for language learning and assessment.

RLDs are valuable tools for several reasons:

1. **Precision**: RLDs provide precise and detailed information about language proficiency expectations at different CEFR levels. They offer specific examples of tasks, skills, and language use relevant to each level, ensuring a clear understanding of learner expectations.
2. **Customization**: RLDs can be customized to suit the unique linguistic and cultural characteristics of individual languages. This customization ensures that the descriptions align closely with the nuances and complexities of each language, making them highly relevant and effective for learners and educators.
3. **Curriculum Development**: RLDs serve as a foundation for designing language curricula. Educators can use these descriptions to structure their teaching materials, lesson plans, and classroom activities, ensuring that they align with the proficiency levels outlined in the CEFR.
4. **Assessment Design:** RLDs provide a basis for developing language assessments. Test developers can use these descriptions to create exams that accurately measure learners' language skills at specific CEFR levels. This alignment between assessments and RLDs enhances the reliability and validity of language proficiency tests. (Council of Europe, 2020)

In conclusion, the CEFR's emphasis on practical language use and its adaptability to diverse contexts make it a valuable tool for language learners, educators, and policymakers. Together with the RLDs, it provides a standardized and transparent framework that Unifying Through Language group found to be the best benchmark of defining our target groups’ language proficiency levels.

1.2. **Global RLDs**

The CEFR framework divides languages speakers into three main groups: basic users, independent users and proficients users. These groups are, in turn, divided into two (1 and 2).

Table 1 describes the different levels in more detail:

*Table 1. Global RLDs. Source: Council of Europe*

| **Proficient user** | C2 | Understands everything heard or read, summarizes information, reconstructs arguments, and expresses thoughts fluently and precisely, differentiating nuances in complex situations. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C1 | Understands demanding texts, expresses ideas fluently and spontaneously, uses language flexibly for various purposes, and produces clear, well-structured, detailed texts on complex subjects. |
| **Independent user** | B2 | Understands complex texts, interacts fluently with native speakers, produces clear, detailed texts on various subjects, and discusses viewpoints on topical issues, presenting advantages and disadvantages. |
| B1 | Understands main points of standard input, handles common situations while traveling, produces simple connected texts, describes experiences, and gives reasons for opinions and plans. |
| **Basic user** | A2 | Understands basic expressions related to personal information, communicates in routine tasks, describes simple aspects of personal background, environment, and immediate needs. |
| A1 | Understands and uses familiar everyday expressions, introduces oneself and others, asks and answers basic questions, and interacts in a simple way with clear and slow speech. |

Unifying Through Language group studied the levels and decided to target their project to Estonian learners at levels A2 and B1 specifically. A1 would have proved difficult due to the very limited vocabulary which makes it difficult to tie the language learning element together with the culturally sophisticated and nuanced nature of the objects displayed at the museum. At the same time, language learners currently at B2 level would likely be able to understand the main idea in the museum’s original texts, posing as challenge for the LIFE group as non professional language teachers to come up with an engaging and relevant concept. It would also push aside learners at lower levels, while group believes those at a higher level will still benefit from the texts customised for more basic levels.

**2.** **Estonian language proficiency at A2-B1**

Generally, A2 level proficiency in a language already allows individuals to handle personal situations; however, it falls short in public and work contexts. According to the Estonian law, individuals with this proficiency can work in roles with specific and clearly defined duties, routine language use, and limited written tasks such as composing short standardized documents or filling forms. For instance, A2 level is sufficient for jobs in public service or local government assistance, as well as roles like train conductors, security guards, ticket inspectors, cloakroom attendants, bouncers, and orderlies. In business settings, beginners proficient at this level can manage routine situations effectively, greeting politely, asking and explaining briefly, referencing additional sources of information, and responding to simple customer queries, albeit with frequent language and spelling errors.

Initiating Estonian language studies at this level (e.g., attending an Estonian-language vocational school or high school) requires significant effort and perseverance to quickly socialize and progress to higher language proficiency levels. While many people have accomplished this in various countries, full social integration typically requires at least reaching level B1. Citizenship cannot be obtained with A-level language proficiency. (Ilves, 2008)

**2.1.** **Curriculum of Estonian language studies**

In Estonia, there are several institutions and language schools where individuals can learn the Estonian language. Several universities and colleges in Estonia offer Estonian language courses for both beginners and advanced learners. These courses are often open to international students. There are also private language schools in bigger cities like Tallinn, Tartu, and Narva that offer Estonian language classes. These schools cater to both expatriates and local residents interested in learning the language. Integration centers in Estonia provide language courses and other integration-related services for newcomers, including immigrants and refugees. These centers are aimed at helping people integrate into Estonian society, and they often offer language classes as part of their extensive integration programs. As an informal option, various cities in Estonia have language exchange meetups (called keelekohvik or language cafe) where people can practice languages with native speakers.

Here, the curriculums offered by Keeltekeskus Kaja (2023), one of the acknoledged language schools in Tallinn, is used as a reference to give an overview of the syllabus applied to the two highlighted language levels.

**2.1.1.** **Sample curriculum for A2**

This curriculum aims to develop Estonian language proficiency at the A2 level, enabling learners to handle everyday communication situations that require direct and simple exchanges on familiar topics. The curriculum focuses on developing listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Upon completion, learners will be able to:

* Understand phrases and frequently used words related to important areas, short and simple statements, and basic information in everyday texts.
* Comprehend short, simple texts and personal letters, as well as find information in straightforward texts.
* Communicate in everyday situations requiring simple exchanges on familiar topics and participate in conversations, though not yet leading them.
* Describe family, living conditions, educational background, and current or previous work using phrases and sentences.
* Take notes and compose very simple personal letters.

**Course Content:**

The curriculum covers various topics, including greetings, personal information, education, work, services, home, daily life, health, leisure activities, shopping, food and drink, people and communication, environment, culture, languages, travel, transportation, and sightseeing.

Writing tasks include filling out forms, inquiries to authorities, describing surroundings, writing postcards, invitations, and resumes, composing official and informal emails, taking notes, and expressing opinions.

**Language Focus:**

The curriculum emphasizes grammar topics such as the alphabet, pronunciation, sentence structure, pronouns, question words, numbers, prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, adjective comparison, singular and plural forms, affirmation and negation, verb forms in present and past tenses, imperative and conditional moods. (Keeltekeskus Kaja, 2023a)

**2.1.2.** **Sample curriculum for B1**

This curriculum aims to achieve proficiency in Estonian at level B1, enabling learners to effectively communicate in most situations in Estonia.

Upon completion, learners will be able to:

* Understand basic information in clear everyday speech on familiar topics, as well as slow and clearly articulated content in radio or television broadcasts.
* Comprehend texts consisting of frequently occurring words or words related to their work or interests.
* Engage in spontaneous conversations on familiar topics.
* Describe experiences, events, dreams, and intentions using simple sentences. Express opinions, briefly justify and explain viewpoints and plans. Retell stories, read, or heard texts.
* Write simple texts on familiar topics. Compose personal or simple formal letters.

**Course Content:**

The curriculum covers topics such as introductions, personal details, education, professions, services, daily life, health, leisure activities, shopping, food and drink, social relationships, environment, culture, languages, travel, transportation, and weather.

Writing tasks include filling out forms, inquiries to authorities, composing advertisements, describing surroundings, diary entries, blog posts about events, letters to friends from travels, workday descriptions, resumes, formal and informal letters, summaries of articles, and short presentations.

**Language Focus:**

The curriculum emphasizes grammar topics including noun cases (singular and plural forms, concordance), compound words (formation and declension), agent and action nouns, comparison of adjectives, cardinal and ordinal numbers, basic spelling rules, pronunciation, verb conjugation in the present, simple past, and future tenses, imperative and conditional moods. Infinitive forms, participle forms, indefinite and imperative mood, word order in sentences, adverbs and prepositions, conjunctions, punctuation (introduction), interrogative words. Synonyms and antonyms are also covered. (Keeltekeskus Kaja, 2023b)

**2.2.** **Vocabulary**

In 2018, Institute of the Estonian Language (EKI) published extensive lists of Estonian vocabulary for language proficiency levels A1-C1. These lists are based on the European Framework of Reference for Languages and other linguistic studies. The determination of vocabulary size was influenced by various factors, including existing vocabulary lists, language textbooks, and a corpus of Estonian language texts.

The process involved several stages. Initially, an electronic database was created using existing vocabulary lists. Outdated words were removed, and additional words were incorporated from Estonian language textbooks and a large corpus of Estonian texts. The frequency of words in the corpus helped categorize them into different proficiency levels. For example, words belonging to the top 500 in frequency were classified as A1, words in the 500-1000 range as A2, and so on.

The final vocabulary sizes for each level are as follows:

* A1: 743 words
* A2: 2005 words
* B1: 4455 words
* B2: 7685 words
* C1: 12,225 words

These lists are designed to cater to the needs of adult language learners and are particularly useful for developing appropriate learning materials. It's important to note that the vocabulary from each lower level is included in the vocabulary lists of the higher proficiency levels, ensuring a progressive learning approach. (Kallas & Koppel, 2018)

Unifying Through Language group uses these lists to compare their final texts to the vocabulary listed under B2 to make sure that they are consistent with the level of the given target group. Lists will also provide valuable input for the text creation, helping to come up with variable and engaging vocabulary appropriate for the context of the exhibition.

## 

## Annexe 2: Methodology of Language Learning

**Tallinna Ülikool**

**Grigori Komaško**

**Methodology of Language Learning**

# **Referaat**

# **Tallinn 2023**Introduction

## Methodology of Language Learning

In this essay I will outline the methodology of language learning. The essay will be in a relatively free academic style and those who do not want to read it can go straight to the conclusions.

Language learning is a multifaceted and multi-level process that covers many cognitive processes, the complexity of which is difficult to understand in one short essay. This work concentrates more on describing the methodology of language learning, as well as the possible application of specific techniques. The essay describes the most common methods and specific techniques that help in a difficult process.

This essay is in many ways a compilation of the theoretical foundations of language learning methodology from sources such as [(Richards & Rodgers, 1997)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?mpzN3r),[(Hinkel, at.a.)(Dueñas Vinuesa, 2002)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?pvkqjO) as well as from open and other free sources.

**Terms**

To be on the same page, let's first understand the terms.

### The methodology

The methodology can be considered in two sections: both theoretical, and it is formed by the branch of philosophical knowledge epistemology, and practical, focused on solving practical problems and purposefully transforming the world. The theoretical strives for a model of ideal knowledge (in the conditions specified by the description, for example, the speed of light in a vacuum), while the practical is a program (algorithm), a set of techniques and ways of how to achieve the desired practical goal and not sin against the truth, or what we consider true knowledge.

To put it simply and clearly, methodology is a comprehensive way to solve a problem. In our case, we are naturally interested in the practical and not the philosophical part.

It’s hard to define learning without a lecture on neurobiology, so we won’t go into depth of detail. I propose to consider the process of directly assimilating new information as a neuro process of forming new connections. I will quote one of the professors. It is impossible to teach anyone, we cannot manually weave neural connections in someone’s brain, the task of teachers is to create an environment suitable for learning.

### Language learning

Language learning is a complex and multifaceted process, and different methodological approaches can be applied depending on the objectives and context. There are several key methods and schools in this direction.

**Structuralism:** This approach focuses on the formal structures of language, such as phonemes, morphemes, and syntax.

Linguists following this methodology often analyze language corpora or conduct experiments to determine the underlying rules of a language.

I think to achieve our goals and ideas, this factor is secondary; let’s not frighten a random student who comes to the exhibition with morphemes, syntaxes and other scary linguistic words.

**Generativism:** This approach, proposed by Noam Chomsky, argues that language structures are generated by the brain's internal grammar. Thus, the study of language focuses on identifying this "universal grammar."

A complex and comprehensive approach, I myself am very superficially familiar with the works of Chomsky, so I will not take upon myself the responsibility of making a deep comment, I am simply not competent in this matter.

**Cognitive Linguistics:** This methodology views language as a tool for organizing and communicating thoughts. Here the emphasis is on semantics and pragmatics, and how language relates to human experience and cognitive processes.

And here, I think that we can shine, create something that will correspond to experience, perhaps something universal, something understandable and similar in different cultures.

**Sociolinguistics**: This approach looks at language in the context of social factors such as ethnicity, gender and class. Research is often based on observations and interviews.

The more theoretical and statistical part, I think that we will have to rely on statistics at some points, but it seems doubtful to me that we will be able to build the entire project based on this concept.

**Computational Linguistics and NLP (Natural Language Processing):** These are branches of artificial intelligence where the methodology is often associated with statistical models and machine learning for automatic language processing and analysis.

Language is important not only as a tool of communication with the environment, but it is also a tool of thinking.

Complex, applicable to both machine and organic intelligence, a possible overkill in our case.

Let's leave the introduction and description here and move on to the body of the problem.

# Language learning

The process of learning languages depends on many factors, including individual preferences, learning style and even psychological readiness. But there are several general principles and techniques that can make the process more efficient:

1. Interactivity: Interacting with native speakers or language exchange partners can significantly speed up the learning process. Real practice often turns out to be more effective than theoretical study.
2. Frequent Practice: The warm-up (or "forgetting") effect is real. The more often you practice, the more easily the information is consolidated into long-term memory.
3. Spaced Repetition: This psychological principle implies that information is better absorbed through periodic repetition at varying intervals of time.
4. Variety of Resources: Using a variety of learning materials (audio, video, text, apps) can help ensure a more complete understanding of the language.
5. Goal Setting: Setting specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound goals (SMART methodology) can make learning more organized.
6. Interest and Motivation: It is easier to learn what interests you. If you are motivated from the start, your chances of success increase significantly.
7. Contextual Learning: Try learning words and phrases in context, this helps the brain create "semantic clusters" and remember them more easily.
8. Metalinguistic Awareness: Understanding how languages in general function can help you learn a new language more quickly.
9. Self-Observation and Reflection: This allows you to evaluate which methods work best and adjust your learning strategy.
10. Sociocultural Approach: Understanding the culture associated with a language can help in understanding the nuances and use of language in real life.

**Learning a language is not just an academic exercise, it is immersion in a new culture and way of thinking.**

I plan to deepen the description and usefulness of all these principles and techniques, which will provide enough understanding of the methodology to develop specific language teaching strategies.

Oh oh, there will be another list next, or maybe eleven, feel free to comment, change and add anything you want on the topic.

**Interactivity**

Interactivity in the context of language learning involves the process of sharing information, ideas or feelings between two or more people. This approach is different from passive learning, where the student only listens or reads without interacting with the world or other people. A very important aspect, not just in studying but also in updating and applying what has already been learned, the ability to apply knowledge, test it in practice, this is an important aspect in motivating and encouraging further learning.

#### **Examples**

* Conversations with Native Speakers: This is perhaps the most effective way to practice. Interaction with native speakers can take place in an informal setting, through social networks or specialized platforms for language exchange.
* Language Cafes: These are events where people gather to practice languages. Typically, participants are divided into groups according to their language proficiency level.
* Role-Playing Games: In an educational context, role-playing games can be used to simulate real-life situations, which helps to put the material learned into practice.
* Discussion Articles or Videos: This can be an effective way to immerse yourself in the culture and current topics in the target language.
* Online Forums and Chat Rooms: These are a good way to practice writing and learn how native speakers use different phrases and structures in a natural setting.
* Partnering with a "Language Friend": Some people prefer a long-term partnership with someone who also wants to learn a language. This can be a mutually beneficial exchange.
* Interactive Learning Platforms: Modern technology provides a variety of interactive learning platforms that simulate real-life communication.
* Social Networks and Blogs: There are many social platforms where you can post, comment and interact with others in your target language.
* Interaction with the Teacher: One of the most traditional forms, but interaction in lessons with the teacher is also considered a form of interactivity

### Frequent Practice

For the most part, this factor is based on a complex multifactorial, very complex, neuroprocess that I do not fully understand, but understanding it can take several lifetimes.

Learning process

And the process of forgetting is no less complex.

Scientific papers are written and careers are built on this point alone.

I think to understand the process at a sufficient level, one laconic sentence will be enough for us.

#### **Examples**

* Daily reading in a foreign language: This could be reading books, news or articles. This not only improves comprehension but also expands vocabulary. In addition, when reading literature one can encounter a variety of styles and contexts of language use.
* Listening to audio: Listening to radio, podcasts, audio books, or music in the target language helps improve your listening comprehension and comprehension of spoken language. It is also a good way to immerse yourself in the culture and customs associated with the language.
* Daily communication: Finding a language exchange partner or participating in conversation clubs. Regular communication in a foreign language allows you to practice speaking and listening in natural conditions.
* Writing: Keeping a journal, writing an essay, or even communicating on social media in the target language. It improves writing skills and helps form thoughts in a foreign language.
* Gaming methods: Using educational games or apps to learn a language. This may include crosswords, quizzes, card games, and more. Games make learning more fun and interactive.
* Immersion through media: Watch films, TV series or videos in the target language with or without subtitles. This not only helps in understanding the language, but also provides context for cultural awareness.

#### **Critical Look**

This method also has its disadvantages such as: Information Overload: Frequent practice can lead to information overload, especially for beginners.

Lack of structure: Some students require a more structured and sequential approach, where material is presented in a logical sequence.

Continuous interaction with language does not always mean effective learning. Frequent Practice may lack professional feedback, which is important for correcting mistakes and improving skills. Frequent Practice methods sometimes focus on language at the expense of understanding the cultural context that is an integral part of language learning. This can lead to a superficial understanding of the language and its use.

#### 

### Spaced Repetition

Spaced repetition is a teaching technique that involves repeating the material being studied at certain intervals that increase over time. This technique is based on the forgetting curve, which was proposed by psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus. The point is that information is better absorbed and consolidated in memory if it is repeated not immediately, but after increasingly longer intervals of time.

#### **Examples**

* Vocabulary Study: Instead of repeating the same word over and over again in one day, you spread the repetitions over several days or even weeks. This can be done using apps like Duolingo and the like.

Thus, in my opinion, there is a more complete immersion in the language environment. A similar approach can be useful in learning grammar.

* Phrases and Idioms: By introducing idioms or phrases into your distributed repetition program. This will not only help you remember them, but also better understand the context in which they can be used.
* Writing and Pronunciation: Writing sentences with new words or phrases and then repeating them over several days or weeks can help you improve your writing and pronunciation skills.
* Review of Material Covered: Even after you think you have mastered the material, regular, distributed repetition will help you maintain your level of knowledge and not forget what you have learned.

The essence of the method is to “refresh” your memory at a time when you are on the verge of forgetting the material. This, as research shows, significantly improves the assimilation and long-term retention of information.[(Gui & Wu, 2023)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?gWFb0Q), [(Su et.al., 2023)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?ZprN7W)

Moreover, if you analyze the worksheets that your language teacher at university gives you, you will see an excellent example of the use of this method.

**Application in language learning**

**Vocabulary:** One of the most common uses of this technique is to expand and reinforce vocabulary. Cards with new words or phrases can be repeated in a pattern where the intervals between repetitions increase depending on how well you remember the material.

**Grammar:** Complex grammatical rules and structures can also be taught through spaced repetition. In this case, it is important not only to repeat the material, but also to practice its application in different contexts.

**Listening and Pronunciation:** Even listening comprehension and pronunciation can be improved using this technique. For example, you can repeat listening to individual phrases or dialogues in the target language.

**Integration with other methods:** Spaced repetition can be successfully combined with other methods and techniques such as interactivity, resource diversity and contextual learning.

**Tools and Platforms**

There are many applications and programs that use the principles of spaced repetition. Examples include Anki, Duolingo, and Quizlet. These platforms usually offer flashcards for review and automatically adjust the intervals between them based on your memorization success.

**Critical Look**

Although effective, the method is not perfect. It requires regularity and discipline, and can also be monotonous, which reduces motivation.

Moreover, precisely because this method is very monotonous, it must be integrated with others to be effective. Otherwise, it will turn out like with an old-fashioned school curriculum, methodical memorization so that you can safely forget everything later.

### Resource diversity

Resource diversity means using different materials and methods to learn a language. This can include everything from textbooks and apps to movies, music and social interaction. The idea here is to make learning more fun and effective by tailoring different types of content and activities to suit your learning style.[(Tomlinson & Tomlinson, 2011)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?LTDK2R)

#### **Application in language learning**

**Textbooks and Workbooks:** These are classic tools for the systematic study of grammar, vocabulary and phraseology.

**Language Learning Apps:** Duolingo, Rosetta Stone and other apps offer interactive lessons and use techniques such as spaced repetition.

**Podcasts and Audiobooks:** A great way to practice listening and expand your vocabulary on the go.

**Movies and TV Series:** Apart from being entertaining, it is a good way to understand context and cultural sensitivities.

**Social Networks and Forums:** Allow you to practice writing and speaking in real-life settings.

**Language Exchanges and Clubs:** Real communication with native speakers or other language learners.

**Online Courses and Webinars:** Offer a structured approach and the opportunity to interact with a teacher.

**Music:** Helps you immerse yourself in the language environment and improve your pronunciation.

**News Sites and Blogs:** A great way to keep up with trending topics and practice reading.

#### **Critical Look**

Despite the obvious benefits, a variety of resources can lead to disjointed learning if not applied systematically. There is also a risk of "overload" from too many sources.

Goal setting is one of the critical aspects in any learning process, including language learning.

**Goal setting**

Goal setting is the process of setting specific, measurable, and achievable goals to be accomplished within a specific time period. In the context of language learning, this might mean identifying the level of language competence you want to achieve or specific skills you want to develop.[(Locke & Latham, 2002)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?dOM1y7)

#### **Strategies for Learning Languages**

**SMART goals:** Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound. This principle helps make goals more specific and easier to achieve.

**Short-term and Long-term Goals:** Short-term goals may include learning a certain number of words per week, long-term goals may include achieving a certain level of language proficiency.

**Self-monitoring and Adaptation:** Regular assessment of progress and possible adjustment of goals. If you notice that a goal is too easy or difficult, don't hesitate to change it.

**Tracking and Reporting:** Using technology or journals to monitor your progress can be very helpful.

**Involvement and Feedback:** Communicate your goals to friends, family or teachers. Feedback and support can be very motivating.

#### **Critical Look**

Goal setting is not a panacea. Too many goals or too high expectations can lead to stress and demotivation. Balance and a realistic approach to setting goals is key.

### Interest and motivation

Interest and motivation are two related but separate components that play a critical role in the successful learning of a language or any other discipline.[(Dörnyei, 2001)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?KLCqYv)

#### **Definitions**

**Interest:** This is a subjective feeling of curiosity or attraction to a particular topic or activity. It can be either internal (the intriguing aspects of the language itself) or external (the desire to travel, work, or communicate in another language).

**Motivation:** It is an internal or external incentive to achieve a goal. In the context of language learning, this could be the desire to get a good job, communicate with people of a different culture, or personal satisfaction from learning new skills.

#### **Strategies and Tactics**

**Self-determination:** Knowing what interests you about a new language can help you focus your efforts and improve your motivation.

**Objectives and Goals:** As we discussed earlier, clearly defined goals can serve as a great motivator.

**Social Support:** Connecting with other language learners or native speakers can increase interest and motivation.

**Positive Achievements:** Even small achievements in the learning process can significantly increase motivation levels.

**Variety and Flexibility:** Using a variety of resources and methodologies can make the learning process more interesting, which in turn has a positive effect on motivation.

#### **Critical Look**

Interest and motivation are not static; they may change over time or under the influence of various factors. Therefore, it is important to regularly reassess them and, if necessary, adjust your approach.

### Contextual learning

Contextual learning is a very interesting and promising area in pedagogy and learning psychology. The effectiveness of contextual learning has been proven in a number of studies, which have shown that students learn and retain language skills better when they are integrated into meaningful tasks, projects and real-life scenarios.[(Matusov et al., 1994)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?R3k2un)

#### **Definition**

Contextual learning involves learning in "real" or near-real settings where the knowledge and skills acquired will be applied. In the context of language learning, this could mean, for example, learning spoken language in situations that simulate real-life communication.

#### **Advantages and Tactics**

Increased Relevance: Learning material is perceived as more relevant when it is related to real-life situations.

**Application in Practice:** Contextualizing educational material makes it easier to apply in real life.

**Depth of Understanding:** When material is studied in context, it is easier to understand its nuances and details.

**Interdisciplinary Approach:** Context often requires knowledge from different areas, which promotes complex development of skills.

**Motivation and Engagement:** Working with real-life problems is usually more motivating than abstract learning tasks.

#### **Critical Look**

Contextual learning is not always applicable or effective. For example, some basic skills and knowledge are best learned in isolated settings before moving on to more complex tasks. Additionally, creating “real” learning situations can be resource intensive.

### Metalinguistic awareness

Metalinguistic awareness is a truly profound and challenging aspect of language learning. This aspect of language learning methodology is especially important in the context of learning a second and third language. [(Nshiwi, 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?Jw3s51)

#### **Definition**

Metalinguistic awareness is the awareness and understanding of language structures and functions, and the ability to think about language as a system. It's not just knowing grammar or vocabulary; this is the ability to analyze and reflect on the topic of language, its use and relationships with culture, context, etc.

#### **Benefits and Practical Applications**

**Effective Learning:** Understanding how a language works can speed up your learning process.

**Critical Thinking:** This is a skill that is required not only for language learning, but also in academic science, including psychology.

**Intercultural Competence:** Understanding how language relates to culture can help in effective intercultural communication.

**Transfer of Skills:** If you have mastered one language and understand how its structures and functions correlate with your native language, it can make learning other languages easier.

**Autonomy in Learning:** Students who understand how language works can learn more effectively on their own, choosing the most appropriate methods and resources.

#### **Critical Look**

However, it is worth considering that too much focus on metalinguistic awareness can distract from the practical use of language. Theoretical understanding is useful, but if it is not complemented by practice, its value may be limited.

### Self-observation

Self-observation and reflection have deep roots in psychology and education, and they are very useful in language learning. In the context of language learning methodology, it refers to the process of students' self-observation and self-analysis of their language skills, the learning process and the use of learning strategies. This includes tracking your progress yourself, becoming aware of your successes and learning difficulties, and reflecting on how best to use and develop your language abilities.[(Jenny X. Montaño-González, 2017)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?V6ev6c)

#### **Definition**

**Self-observation:** This is a process in which an individual actively evaluates and analyzes his thoughts, feelings and behavior. In the context of language learning, this may include analyzing errors, assessing progress, etc.

**Reflection:** This is a deeper level of self-observation that involves not only evaluating but also thinking about how to improve or change current practices.

#### **Benefits and Applications**

**Conscious Learning:** Self-observation and reflection can lead to a more conscious and focused approach to learning.

**Adaptation and Flexibility:** Understanding your own strengths and weaknesses allows you to be more flexible in your approach to learning material and adapt your teaching methods.

**Motivation and Self-Esteem:** Reflection can increase motivation and self-esteem, adding personal meaning and value to the learning process.

**Critical Thinking:** Both of these processes require critical thinking, which is an important skill in the academic and professional world.

**Personal Growth:** These processes promote personal and professional growth by helping the individual become more aware and effective in their actions.

#### **Critical Look**

Not all people are equally inclined to introspection and reflection, and in some cases this can even lead to “paralysis of analysis,” when excessive thinking interferes with action.

### The sociocultural aspect

The sociocultural aspect in the methodology of language learning is based largely on L. S. Vygotsky’s theory of sociocultural theory of development, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural tools in the process of cognition and learning. The sociocultural dimension in language learning includes learning through social interaction, the practical application of language in social contexts, and an understanding of how cultural norms and values influence language use.

#### **Definition**

The sociocultural perspective in language learning focuses on the role of social and cultural context in language learning and use. This approach is based on theories that view learning as a sociocultural process, such as Vigotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development.

#### **Benefits and Applications**

**Contextualization:** Understanding language in its sociocultural context allows students to better understand the meaning and use of language structures.

**Intercultural Competence:** This helps in adapting and communicating effectively between different cultures.

**Realities and Idioms:** Cultural awareness can help in understanding idioms, slang and other linguistic features.

**Social Integration:** Language is not just a means of communication; it also serves as a tool for social integration and identity formation.

**Communicative Competence:** This aspect helps students not only know the language but also understand how and when to use it in various social situations.

#### **Critical Look**

As always, there is another side to the coin. Focusing too much on sociocultural aspects can create a sense of "cultural relativism", where linguistic structures and rules can be ignored in favor of "cultural specificity".

**Conclusion**

As it becomes clear with a fairly brief but consistent review of numerous well-known methods of language learning, this is a multi-level, complex process that requires a long and multidisciplinary approach.

At the moment, the work includes 10 different methodologies in the study of foreign languages, with the possibility of their specific application, as well as with a critical look. The work is more of a description and quick reflection on methodology than an in-depth description of processes and methods. This work and its possible addition are in the hands of the next students who may work on it.

However, this essay will allow you to keep the main approaches to learning languages before your eyes and select and modernize the necessary approach depending on the specific situation.

So it can be useful to groups engaged in projects in a similar area, and can also be supplemented by different students in the future, which can lead to a complex essay written by several authors, useful and effective.

## Annexe 3:

## Theoretical Background of Gamification and Media Participation

This paper is going to introduce the topics of Gamification and Media Participation in the context of language and culture learning and will be used as a theoretical background developing a project of gamified language learning environment for the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum’s exhibition in March 2024. It was created as a part of Tallinn University’s LIFE project “Unifying Through Language” 2023.

## Gamification and Language Learning

“Learning a new language is time-consuming and requires perseverance to keep practicing; **without adequate motivation, students are likely to quit**.” (Shortt et al. 2023)

“[...] Factors such as anxiety, motivation, attitude, and abilities [...] affect language learning processes and outcomes.” (Dehghanzadeh et al. 2019)

“Scientific literature suggests that **gamified environments** [...] **could increase learners’ motivation**, engagement, and provide them with freedom to fail without fear during their learning.” (Dehghanzadeh et al. 2019)

“Teaching methods and strategies should be designed in such a way as to consider learners ’ experiences and increase their motivation and interest” (Dehghanzadeh et al. 2019)

“Game-like elements present a motivating environment that can increase language accuracy and confidence.” (Shortt et al. 2023)

## The Case of Duolingo

“**Duolingo** is one of the most dominant and influential mobile language learning applications (apps) on the market today” (Shortt et al. 2023)

“**Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)** is one of its subcategories focusing specifically on the context of language learning.” (Shortt et al. 2023)

## How does Duolingo work?

“Users start out by choosing a desired  **target language** and can take a placement quiz if they already have some background knowledge. “ (Shortt et al. 2023)

“The lesson system is **built around specific topics**  such as family, food, and travel; **each topic introduces some grammar and cultural concepts** with very limited explanations but the lessons themselves focus mostly on introducing new vocabulary and drills.” (Shortt et al. 2023)

“The exercises offered include translation, multiple-choice word recognition questions, and spelling.” (Shortt et al. 2023)

## Pros and Cons of Duolingo

“Overall, research findings indicate a positive correlation between the use of Duolingo and foreign language performance.” (Shortt et al. 2023)

| **PROS** | **CONS** |
| --- | --- |
| * interactive and engaging gamified nature of the design * chunked presentation of information * flexibility of use * easy access (free-of-charge and cross-platform) * the feedback on activities and mistakes | * distractions with using a mobile device for learning * the types of activities too repetitive and over reliant on translation and receptive skills (listening and reading), less writing and speaking * difficult to interpret the learning progress in terms of real-life language use |

## Terms and Definitions

Sociological approach in the case of media, the **participation culture** is “taking part in social processes which means it can be any kind of human interaction together with interactions with texts and technologies” (Carpentier, 2013, p.71).

“**Active participation** [...] is defined as the interaction of visitors with the environment both physically and mentally” (Robson et al., 2014).

“**Social interaction** is another important element that affects the experience in museums. It is a great advantage for museums that **visitors can interact with each other**, and it is extremely important that they learn new information from the collections exhibited in the places they visit. Gamification is one of the approaches that will help increase this interaction among visitors and collections” (Ciolfi & McLoughlin, 2012).

**“**Stories that are mainly **interactive** can be considered as **closed systems**, in which the audience can act but cannot interfere with the story. Closed systems presuppose interaction but not participation. [...]

**Open systems** allow participation, i.e. the audience can influence the result and change the outcome” (Gambarato, 2012: 75).

| Closed systems or making interactive choices of the story world, e.g. Netflix’s “Black Mirror” episode “Bandersnatch”, “The Choices” game  Open systems or creating and modifying the story world, e.g. “The Truth About Marika” transmedia storytelling world |
| --- |

**Gamification** is adding game mechanics into nongame environments to increase participation. The goal is to engage with consumers, employees and partners to inspire, collaborate, share and interact. E.g. website, online community, learning management system or business’ intranet. (BI Worldwide)

## How does Gamification work?

“Gamification works by providing audiences with **proactive directives** and **feedback** through game mechanics and game dynamics added to online platforms that lead to the accomplishments of business goals and objectives.” (BI Worldwide)

“A compelling gamification experience taps into a participant’s emotions and demonstrates, easily, the best activities an audience can complete that make an impact on mutually shared goals.” (BI Worldwide)

## What are game mechanics?

“Game mechanics are the **rules** and **rewards** that appear in a program on a digital platform. Examples may include points, levels, missions, leaderboards, badges and progress. Game mechanics are how participants engage with a gamification program and receive next steps and feedback on accomplishments.” (BI Worldwide)

## Gamification in a Museum

“The museum landscape is changing and museum users are looking for experiences that are interactive and engaging in comparison to passive experiences as observing objects in glass display with their hands on their backs.“ (Madsen, K. M, 2020)

The “museums have been using gamification as a way to increase engagement and enhance learning experiences in museums. (Madsen, K. M, 2020)

“Nicholson (2012) focuses on [...] **Meaningful gamification** as creating a space where participants can explore this space, engage with play, discover what is meaningful to them and reflect on their own experience to be transformed.” (Madsen, K. M, 2020)

The “studies have also shown that visitors’ biggest motivation (80%) for going to a museum is to have fun” (Lui & Idris, 2018).

| Add-on Games: location-based mobile games  Game-Based-Learning: quiz (gain simple knowledge about the cultural heritage), Augmented Reality (AR), virtual reality, mixed reality, video games and their interactive capabilities to gamify the museum or cultural heritage experience |
| --- |

## The Case of Victoria and Albert Museum

“For example, The Victoria and Albert Museum in England created an application for university students in collaboration with teachers and designers.” (Walker & Froes, 2011)

“Students were asked to laugh out loud and watch other visitors’ reactions. They were also asked to guess what comments were made by other visitors about a piece, secretly take photographs of visitors’ ankles in front of a Tudor-era bed, and write messages to other visitors. “ (Walker & Froes, 2011)

“Teachers and curators observed that such unusual practices in a museum, which actually is a place students find quite boring, make them feel good. At the same time, students learned a lot of new information with this application. By enabling the students to see objects that would not normally attract their attention, this gamification activity helped them observe these objects from a different angle and question their thoughts and perceptions of a museum” (Walker & Froes, 2011)

## Gamification Process and Tools

The gamification process provided by the study done by Çetin, Ö. & Erbay, F. in 2021:

1. Understanding the target audience of the museum well
2. Determining the content of the exhibitions
3. Transmission of information via gamification
4. Visitor engagement

The tools for gamification provided by the study:

* information boards
* maps, diagrams, charts
* audio and video
* graphic design
* treasure hunt
* touch screens and search buttons
* digital devices (but need maintenance and some people might not be able to use them)
* visitor exit surveys

“The game should be prevented from becoming the main product of museums andshouldalways be related to the museum’s mission and contents of the exhibitions. [...] **The contents of the games should match the mission of the museums**.” (Çetin, Ö. & Erbay, F. 2021)

“In terms of the benefits and challenges of gamification, as long as practices allow the visitor to have a meaningful visit and fun in the museum, they are considered beneficial by all museum professionals who participated in the study” (Çetin, Ö. & Erbay, F. 2021)

## Annexe 4: The Feedback Report

## Report

The test was carried out on November 30, 2023 with a group of university students studying Estonian at level B1. A total of 7 students took part in the test, which is naturally not enough for proper statistics, but enough for initial conclusions. After looking at the Excel file, you will see 9 answers, two were provided by us ourselves during the creation of the test.

Before the test, students were told why we were doing this test; the test was anonymous and non-evaluative. We explained to the students that it is rather they who evaluate our work on the texts. The explanation was in Estonian and English to ensure understanding.

A group of students was divided into two groups, the first consisting of 3 people who read the text alone, and the second consisting of 4 people who read the text aloud in a group, all doing the test individually. The division into two groups was not initially planned, but occurred voluntarily, according to the preferences of the students. During testing, students could use texts and, if necessary, *sõnaveeb.* Since the reader of the newspaper will not be limited in resources.

During the reading, I approached the “independent” students to make sure that they understood the text and to answer any questions if that arose. There was one question. “What does the word **Kratt** mean?”

Mostly we spent time with a group that was busy reading aloud to answer their questions in the process.The questions were largely for self-testing and to clarify the underlined words.

Many rated the texts as difficult to read, but not difficult to understand. What do the test results show (see Excel file)

Basically, the majority answers are correct, however, difficulties (the percentage of correct answers is less than 88.9%) caused questions

* **Number 10** (Mis põhjustas Anne Veski skandaali?)
* **Number 12** (Millistel aladel Arvo Pärt peale kompositsiooni veel tegutses?)
* **Number 13** (Mis eristas ansambli Sõnajalad muusikat teistest esinejatest?)

Taking into account that the level of language in one group is different, which was noticeable in the wording of the questions and direct and informal communication before and during the test. It can be concluded that the texts are complex enough to be interesting and easy enough for most students of Estonian language at level B1 to understand.

However, some students commented that some texts were difficult to read due to long words and a large amount of numerals, however, there were no serious problems when reading long words and reading numbers, they simply did not like them. (like many who study Estonian language)

Personally, I believe that texts should not be simplified, otherwise they will become uninteresting and will not provide the challenge or complexity necessary for learning. Although, to be honest, the group is too small for a suitable study, but **SUFFICIENT FOR OUR PROJECT.**

## IMPORTANT OBSERVATION

In the group of reading aloud, there was one student, due to her age, who had witnessed many of the cultural events described, and happily shared her memories with the group, which had a great impact on the reading process and the interest of all other members.

The vocabulary section is a really good idea that was appreciated.

“Single students” were more likely to describe the texts as incomprehensible and doubted their knowledge, but this did not greatly affect the answers. I am inclined to attribute this more to self-esteem and an underestimation of one’s own knowledge, which is typical for some students, rather than to the complexity of the text. Otherwise it would have scored less well in the test itself.

## Words that caused difficulties

**Bombing tekst:**

- “Kahjustatud”

- “Needus”

- “Heidetud pihta … süttis”

**Arvo Pärdi tekst:**

- “Helilooja”

- “Loomisel”

**Sõnajala tekst:**

- they had a general question about the band

- Nende arust siiani kõige lihtsam

**Obituary:**

- “Isamaaline”

- “Hukkunud”

**Mattiiseni tekst:**

- “Kokkukuuluvust” - unity

Mu isamaa on minu arm:

- “Kestma” - to last

**Pärnu tekst:**

- Märkus: pikad sõnad

- Tekst üldse pikk

- “Edelarannik” — northwest coast

- “Eelistatuima” — preferable, preferred

- “Eestvedaja” - the leader

**Nukitsamees:**

- “Sõnajalapuhm” - a fern

“Lotte”:

- “Kambahing” - “Group” (This needed to be explained)

- “Luuakse huvitavaid leiutisi” - “To create/make interesting inventions”

**Krimi uudised:**

- “Salakauba vedu” — black market

- “Vastav” - proper “Luba” - permission

**NOTES:**

- Pärt easier than "Estonian theater damaged in bomb blast"

- Numbers were hard to read (out loud)

- The Pärnu text is the most difficult

- The simplest: instrument teacher search ad

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