

- Discover language biographies

Competences¹:

- Competence in the construction and broadening of a plural linguistic and cultural repertoire (C 2).

Note:

The activities are designed to communicate a positive, appreciative and respectful attitude towards multilingualism and language diversity: every language has a place – in the lives of individual students as well as in the language repertoires of their class, and ultimately their school.



Worksheet: a task for the pupils to complete



Solution: for the teacher



Material: provides pupils with the basis to carry out activities, games, or go into more depth on the topic



PowerPoint Presentation: available upon request

Table 1

¹ Competences are based on the FREPA, *A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (see Literature at the end of this document). Individual competences are divided into three groups using the letters “K”, “A” and “S” (pp. 24 – 59).



Activity 1

“Our Language Tree”

Topic:

Visualizing language repertoires

Description:

This activity is great for painting a picture of the language repertoires of a class. Students work together to make a colorful poster, the “language tree”, discovering the diversity of the languages and linguistic competences of their classmates. The final poster should be hung in the classroom so that other teachers can recognize and work with the language diversity of their students.

Resources²:

- Can analyze communicative repertoires (S 1.6);
- Can assign value to linguistic knowledge / skills, irrespective of the context in which they have been acquired (A 17.2);
- Knows that each individual belongs to at least one linguistic community and that many persons belong to more than one linguistic community (K 2.2);
- Sensitivity to plurilingualism in the immediate or remote environment (A2.5);
- A wish to discover other languages (A 8.5).

Duration:

30 – 45 minutes

Copy Templates:

- 📄 Language Tree
- 📄 Leaf and cloud
- 📄 Language tree caption

Materials:

- 1 piece of A1 poster paper (or flipchart paper)
- 20 leaves of each color: yellow, orange, red, blue, green
- 1 cloud in another color per student e.g. pink
- colored pens /markers /pencils
- glue sticks

² Competences are based on the FREPA, *A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (see Literature at the end of this document). Individual competences are divided into three groups using the letters “K”, “A” and “S” (pp. 24 – 59).



Activity:

0. Preparation: Draw the outline of a tree (CT 1.1) onto the poster paper (or cut it out from cardboard). Leave enough space at the roots and branches. Cut out the leaves and clouds in different colors (CT 1.2).
1. Introduction: Present the bare tree to the class and explain that it will become a “language tree”. What reactions do they have?
2. Development: Each leaf represents a language and each color represents a language competence. Label and place each leaf on the tree, starting with the language roots: let each student name the languages they use, grew up with and come into contact with at home. Write each of these languages on a leaf and glue it to the roots of the tree. Continue to do so with all competences according to the overview/caption (CT 1.3).
3. Extension: Ask students to reflect on what languages they would like to learn in the future. Each student writes down their languages on a cloud and sticks it in the free space around the language tree.
4. Conclusion: Take a final look at the finished language tree as a group. Discuss and comment on it together. Discussion points may be: What is particularly striking? What questions might still be open? What could this tree be used for? How it could be useful for the class? Where will the class hang it? etc.

Variation:

The teacher could also instruct individual groups of students to conduct a small survey amongst their classmates, asking them about their language competences. This then requires an adapted layout of the language tree (in stages), but it enforces the students’ self-reliance and autonomy.

Notes:

All students may participate and all of their languages and varieties thereof (such as dialects etc.) should be equally acknowledged and included. There should be open discussion about what it actually means to really know a language well, who decides that, and why we sometimes feel insecure about actually counting certain languages as belonging to our repertoire if we do not speak them perfectly. All language proficiency levels should be respected.

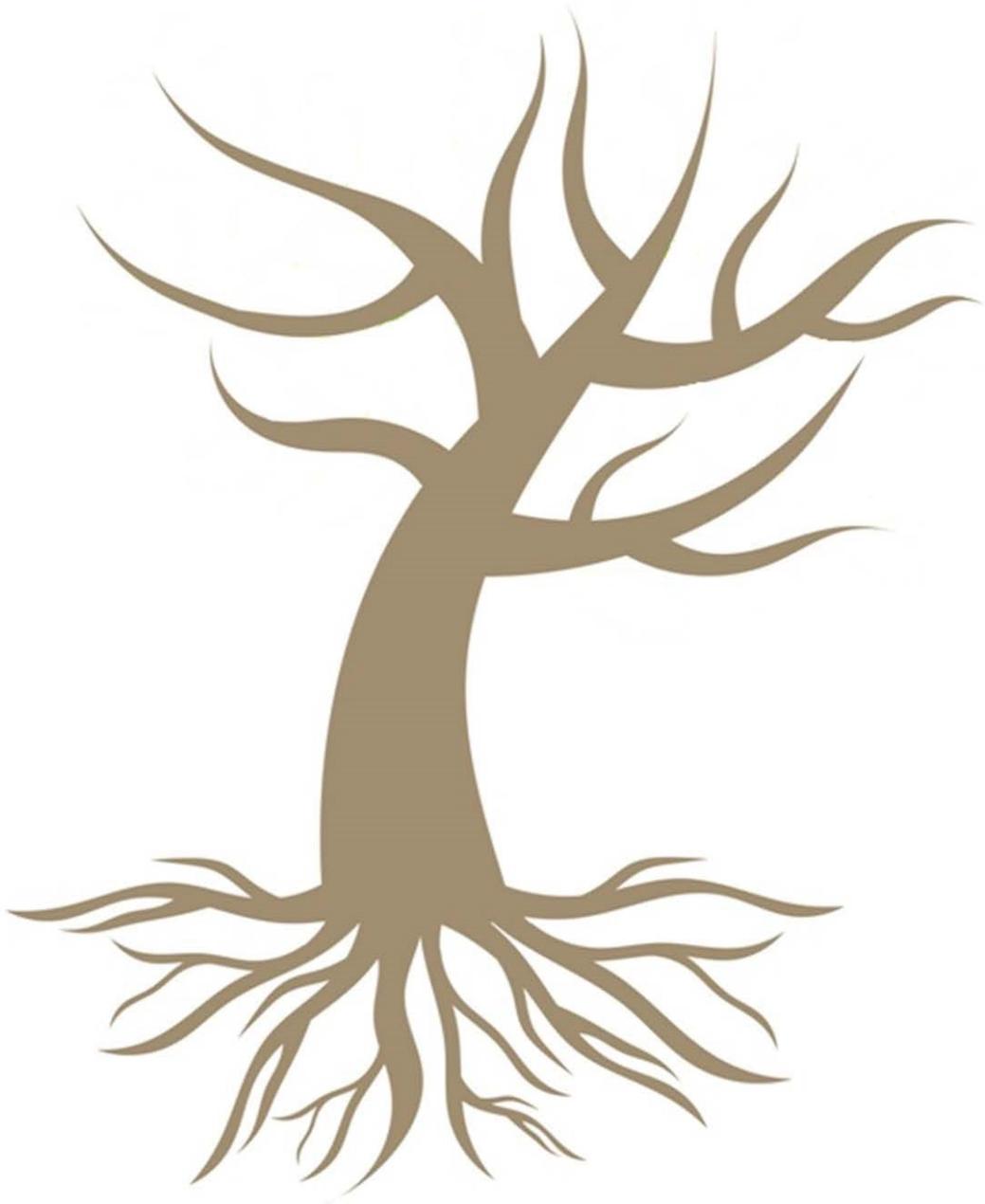


Figure 2

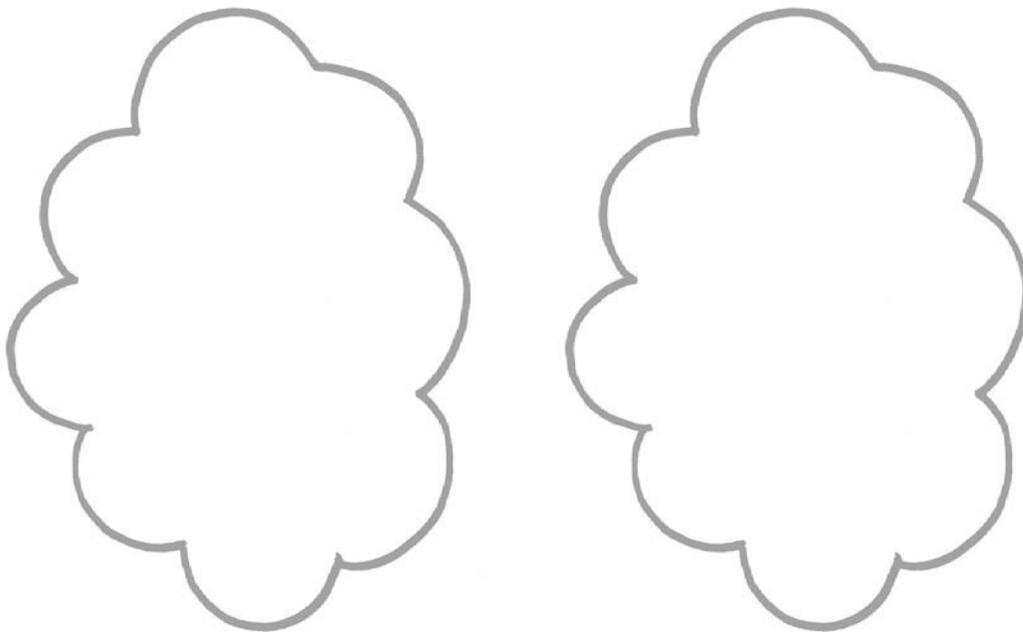
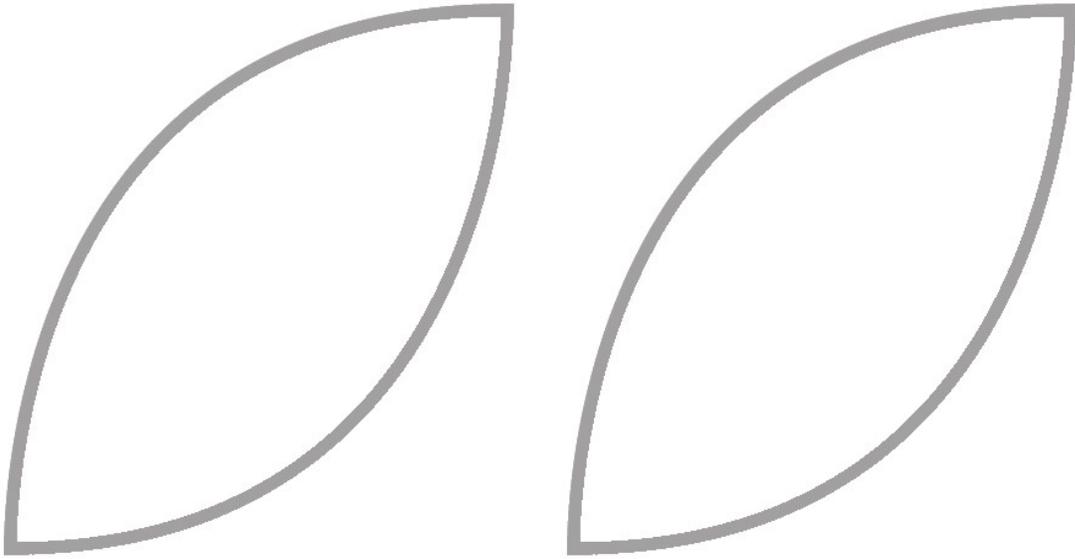


Figure 3

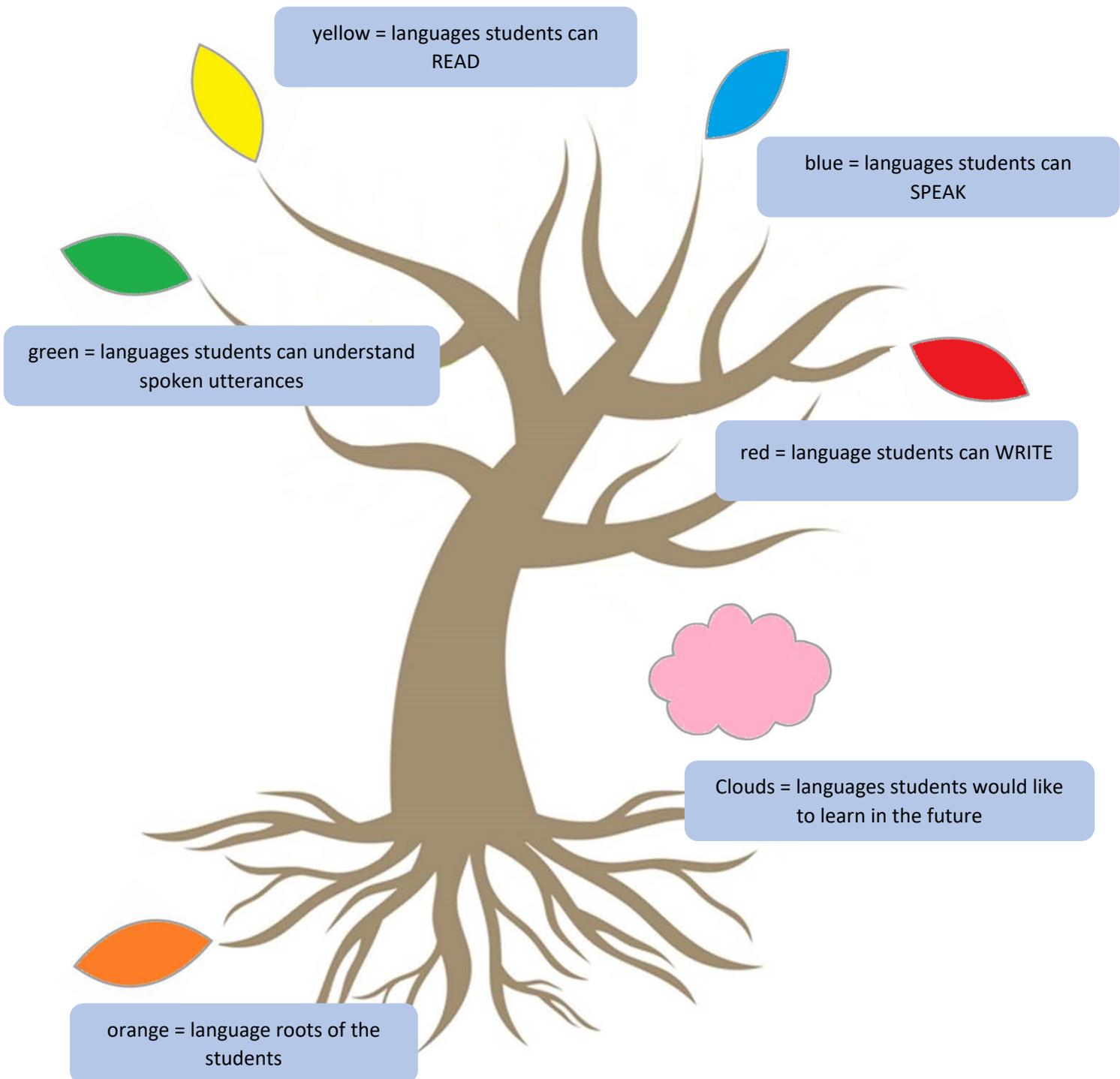


Figure 4

Activity 2

“Individual Language Portraits”

Topic:

Visualizing language repertoires

Description:

This activity is a good way to let students visualize their individual language repertoires. Students bring their personal language portraits to life in a creative way, thus contemplating and discussing their language competences and language acquisition.

Resources³:

- Can analyze communicative repertoires (S 1.6);
- Assigning value to linguistic skills and knowledge, irrespective of the context in which they have been acquired (within school / outside of school) (A 17.2);
- Knows that each individual belongs to at least one linguistic community and that many persons belong to more than one linguistic community (K 2.2).

Duration:

30 – 45 minutes

Materials:

- copy templates for all students
- white A4 paper
- pencils / pencils coloring
- glue sticks

Copy Templates:

- ✍ Language Zoo
- ✍ Outline “girl”
- ✍ Outline “boy”

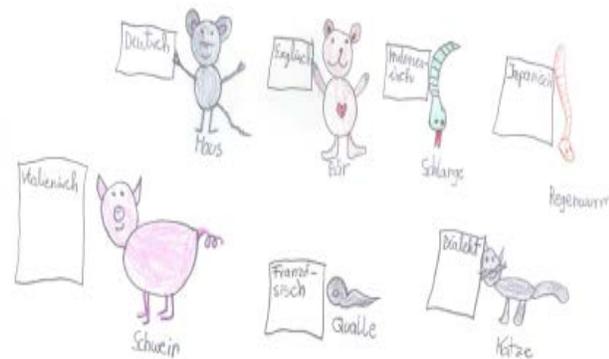


Figure 5

³ Competences are based on the FREPA, *A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (see Literature at the end of this document). Individual competences are divided into three groups using the letters “K”, “A” and “S” (pp. 24 – 59).



Activity:

0. Preparation: Copy worksheets, put out materials.
1. Introduction: How can we display which languages we already know and which languages accompany us through our lives?
2. Development: Students are asked to visualize and illustrate their language repertoires - as a language zoo or in the form of a figure or tree.
 - a. *Language Zoo* (CT 1.4): Ask students to imagine what their languages (varieties/dialects) would look like if they were animals – what would their qualities be and how would they live together? Don't forget to ask for short descriptions!
 - b. *Language Girl/Boy* (CT 1.5/1.6): Students try to feel where in their bodies their individual languages (and varieties/dialects) are located and what colors and patterns they would assign them. Remember to make a key!
 - c. *Language Tree* (empty sheet of paper): Students draw a tree, their "language tree". In the section of the roots and trunk they write down the languages they have grown up with. In the branches they write the languages that they learn and study in school, recognize in their environment, get to know in their free time and vacation, and want to learn in the future. Remember to make a key!
3. Extension: The depictions and drawings are laid out or hung up in the classroom and students take a "gallery tour". At an agreed signal, students stop at one depiction that they found particularly interesting. Thus, some or all of the portraits will be presented and discussed in more detail in the group.
4. Conclusion: Students reflect upon the exercise and what they discovered and gained from the presentation of the language portraits. The drawings will be copied and exhibited, while the originals stay with their owners.

Variation:

Instead of a gallery tour, students can present their portraits to each other through a conversation carousel: the class forms an inside and an outside circle with their chairs and students sit facing each other. Each pair then has 2 minutes to present their portraits to each other and then the students in the outside circle move around to the next seat (clockwise) and they do the same again, this time with their new partner.



Figure 6

Mein Sprachenzoo – Il mio zoo delle lingue – My language zoo

Ich heie – Mi chiamo – My name is

Ich gehe in die Klasse – Frequento la classe – I'm in class

Mein Alter – La mia et – My age

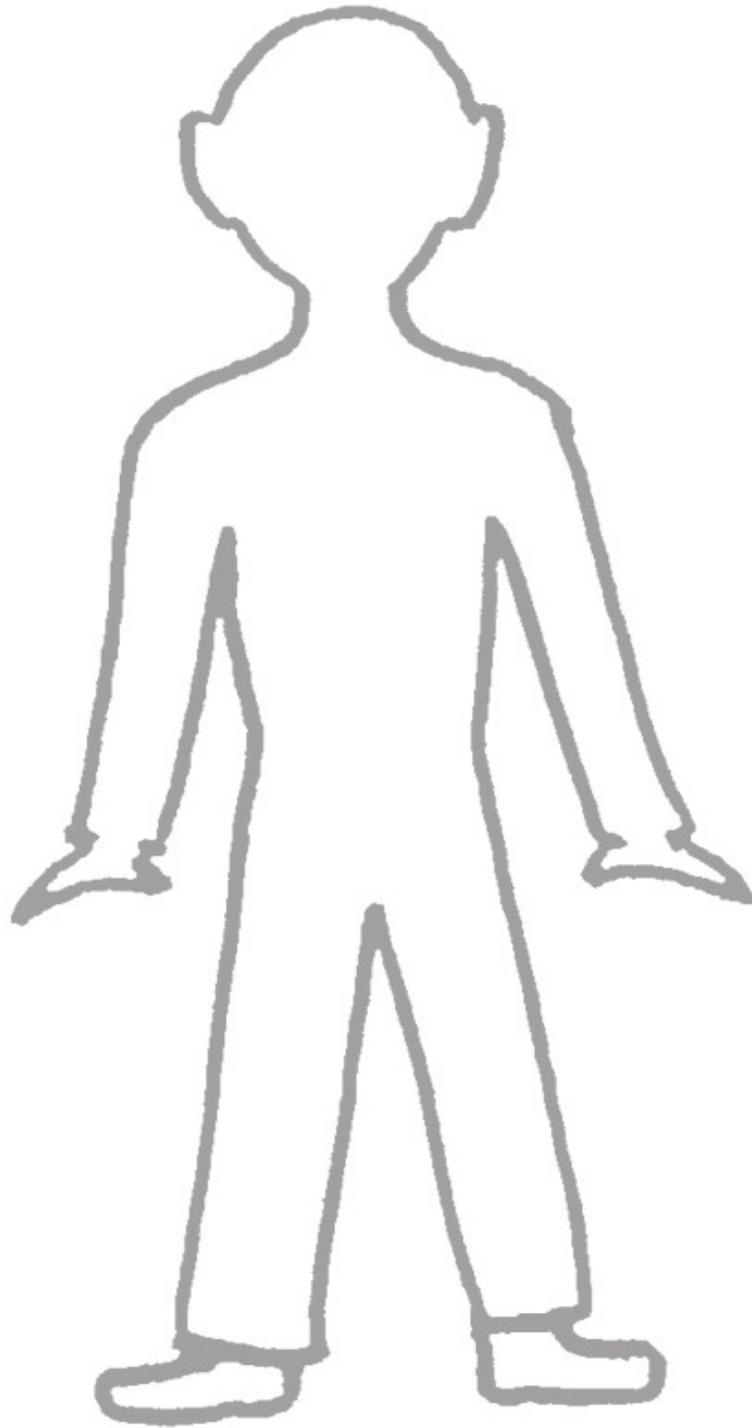


Figure 7

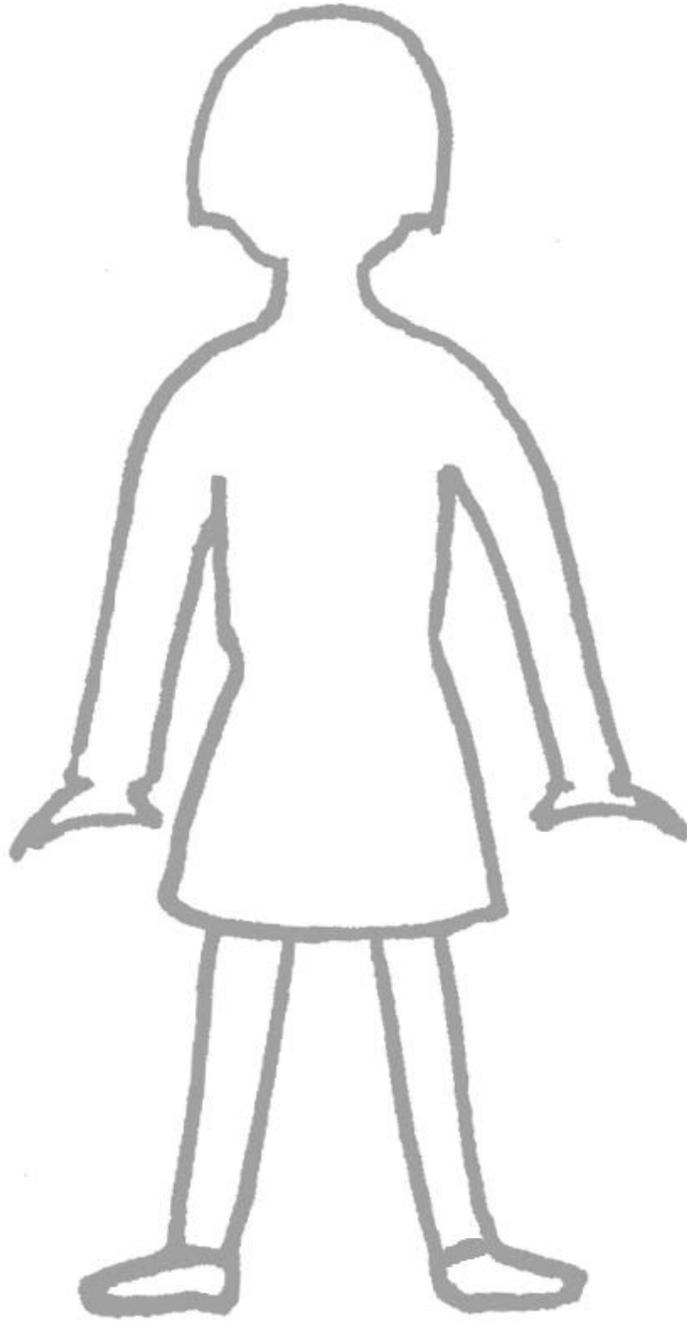


Figure 8



Activity 3

“Discovering Language Biographies”

Topic:

Visualizing language repertoires

Description:

Celebrities and stars are often seen as role models by young people and are therefore well-suited to present a topic in a positive light. By getting to know the language biographies of famous athletes, musicians, actors and other celebrities, students have the possibility to identify with these multilingual profiles. They will discover how valuable multilingualism can be, feel validated in their multilingualism and experience increased motivation to learn languages. This activity is very useful for consolidating the topic of language biographies, as it leads into thinking about language biographies on an individual level.

Resources⁴:

- Can analyze communicative repertoires which are plurilingual or in a plurilingual situation (S 1.6);
- Assign value to linguistic skills and knowledge, irrespective of the context in which they have been acquired (within school / outside of school) (A 17.2);
- Knows that each individual belongs to at least one linguistic community and that many people belong to more than one linguistic community (K 2.2);
- Sensitivity to plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in the immediate and remote environments (A 2.5);
- A wish to discover other languages (A 8.5).

Duration:

30 – 90 minutes

Copy Templates:

- ✍ “Wer am io?” – 12 Stars Mix
- 📄 “Wer am io?” – 12 Stars Mix
- 📁 Language biographies texts collection

⁴ Competences are based on the FREPA, *A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (see Literature at the end of this document). Individual competences are divided into three groups using the letters “K”, “A” and “S” (pp. 24 – 59).



Materials:

- Copy templates (the CTs can be enhanced, if needed)
- Scissors, paper, glue
- Poster 7 “Wer am io?” from the SMS traveling exhibition “Languages: on our doorstep and around the world” (optional)

Activity:

0. Preparation: Copy worksheets, get materials ready, set up poster 7 (optional).

1. Introduction: To what extent are people we see every day in the media multilingual?

2. Development: Ask students to match the short language biographies with the people in the pictures (CT 1.7), write the names of these down (if known) and put the letters for the solution word in the correct order (CT 1.8). This can be done individually, in pairs or small groups. Then, there will be a panel discussion about which stars are especially interesting due to their multilingualism and what they use their languages in their respective careers.

3. Extension: Now students can create and write their own language biographies, using the texts from the text collection (CT 1.9) as models and inspiration if needed.

4. Conclusion: Language portraits can be edited, presented or exhibited in a classroom gallery or portfolio. They may also be complemented by illustrations (language tree/ language zoo/ language portrait) and/or be extended as time progresses.

Variation:

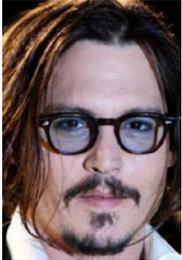
Not all 12 celebrities (CT 1.7) have to be included in the activity, a smaller selection would also suffice as a start. Another option would be to enlarge the biographies and pictures (CT 1.7), cut them out individually and use them as a memory game, or have the group create a large poster with them.

Note:

All languages and varieties (and of course dialects etc.) are understood to be equal. Open discussion should be encouraged about what it means to really know a language, who determines the parameters, why we so often feel insecure to count a language as part of our repertoire just because we do not speak and know it perfectly. We insist that all language proficiencies as well as all contexts of acquisition should be respected.



„Wer sono iö?“ – Stars and their language biographies

		<p>I am a U.S. American actor and became world-famous because of movies like „Titanic“. Besides English I speak German because of my German ancestors.</p> <p>I</p>
		<p>I am a singer. I was born in Colombia and my dad is Lebanese. My mother tongue is Spanish, but I also speak English, Italian and Portuguese. I also sing songs in Arabic.</p> <p>T</p>
		<p>I was born in 1987 in Berlin, and now I am a midfielder for FC Schalke 04. I can play in German, English, Italian and Turkish – but, I also speak some French and Arabic.</p> <p>G</p>
		<p>I am a singer and my name has only four letters. I was born in Lebanon, but my family had to flee because of the war, first to Paris and then to London. My first language is French and, despite my dyslexia, I learned English, Spanish, Italian and I have studied Chinese for nine years.</p> <p>M</p>



„Wer sono iö?“ – Stars and their language biographies



I am a U.S. American actor and many know me as „Captain Jack Sparrow“. While travelling the seven seas I have also had the chance to learn some French and German.

L



I became famous as a model, but everybody knows me as a TV host. I come from Switzerland and I speak Italian, German English, French and Dutch.

L



I was born in former Yugoslavia but when I was a child, my family moved to Great Britain where I learned English and still live today. With most of my family I like speaking Albanian.

U



I am from St. Ulrich and in 2012, I became a world champion in figure skating. In addition to Ladin, Italian and German, I also speak English and French.

L



„Wer sono iö?“ – Stars and their language biographies

		<p>I have become famous as basketball player and speak English, which is my mother tongue, as well as Italian and a little Serbian and French.</p> <p>I</p>
		<p>I was born in Milan but I grew up in Trentino. As a pilot and an astronaut, I have travelled a lot - also in space! My mother tongue is Italian and I also speak English, German, French and Russian. I would like to learn Chinese.</p> <p>U</p>
		<p>I am a singer, actor and photo model from South Korea. I speak Korean, Chinese, Japanese and English.</p> <p>A</p>
		<p>We are a Pop music band from Val Badia. The three of us are all related to each other and have already recorded three albums. We sing our songs mostly in Ladin. But we can also sing in Italian, English and German.</p> <p>N</p>

→ Solution: All of us are _____!



„Wer sono iö?“ – Stars and their language biographies



Figure 9

(1) MIKA



I am a singer and my name has only four letters. I was born in Lebanon, but my family had to flee because of the war, first to Paris and then to London. My first language is French and, despite my dyslexia, I learned English, Spanish, Italian and I have studied Chinese for nine years.

I



Figure 10

(2) RITA ORA



I was born in former Yugoslavia but when I was a child, my family moved to Great Britain where I learned English and still live today. With most of my family I like speaking Albanian.

T



Figure 11

(3) JOHNNY DEPP



I am a U.S. American actor and many know me as „Captain Jack Sparrow“. While travelling the seven seas I have also had the chance to learn some French and German.

G



Figure 12

(4) SHAKIRA



I am a singer. I was born in Colombia and my dad is Lebanese. My mother tongue is Spanish, but I also speak English, Italian and Portuguese. I also sing songs in Arabic.

M



„Wer sono iö?“ – Stars and their language biographies



Figure 13

(5) KEVIN PRINCE BOATENG



I was born in 1987 in Berlin, and now I am a midfielder for FC Schalke 04. I can play in German, English, Italian and Turkish – but, I also speak some French and Arabic.

L



Figure 14

(6) SAMANTHA CRISTOFORETTI



I was born in Milan but I grew up in Trentino. As a pilot and an astronaut, I have travelled a lot - also in space! My mother tongue is Italian and I also speak English, German, French and Russian. I would like to learn Chinese.

L



Figure 15

(7) JANG KEUN SUK



I am a singer, actor and photo model from South Korea. I speak Korean, Chinese, Japanese and English.

U



Figure 16

(8) CAROLINA KOSTNER



I am from St. Ulrich and in 2012, I became a world champion in figure skating. In addition to Ladin, Italian and German, I also speak English and French.

L



„Wer sono iö?“ – Stars and their language biographies

 <p>Figure 17</p> <p>(9) KOBE BRYANT</p>		<p>I have become famous as basketball player and speak English, which is my mother tongue, as well as Italian and a little Serbian and French.</p> <p>I</p>
 <p>Figure 18</p> <p>(10) MICHELLE HUNZIKER</p>		<p>I became famous as a model, but everybody knows me as a TV host. I come from Switzerland and I speak Italian, German English, French and Dutch.</p> <p>U</p>
 <p>Figure 19</p> <p>(11) LEONARDO DI CAPRIO</p>		<p>I am a U.S. American actor and became world-famous because of movies like „Titanic“. Besides English I speak German because of my German ancestors.</p> <p>A</p>
 <p>Figure 20</p> <p>(12) GANES</p>		<p>We are a Pop music band from Val Badia. The three of us are all related to each other and have already recorded three albums. We sing our songs mostly in Ladin. But we can also sing in Italian, English and German.</p> <p>N</p>

→ Solution: All of us are **MULTILINGUAL!**

Philip:

Schon seit meiner Kindheit haben wir zuhause Deutsch gesprochen. Meine Mutter ist zwar in Griechenland geboren und aufgewachsen, aber sie spricht neben Griechisch auch Deutsch. Da mein Vater aus Österreich kommt und somit Deutsch spricht, haben sie mir Deutsch als Muttersprache beigebracht.

Ich bin in Luxemburg geboren und habe dort die deutsche Sektion einer internationalen Schule besucht. Meine zweite Sprache war dort Englisch, aber natürlich sprach ich zu dieser Zeit viel besser Deutsch. Als wir nach Singapur zogen, begann ich in der englischen Sektion der Deutsch-Europäischen Schule Singapur.

Es dauerte nicht lange und mein Englisch war zumindest gleich gut wie mein Deutsch. In der Schule wurde somit Deutsch meine zweite Sprache, und als dritte habe ich Chinesisch gewählt. Als ich in der siebten Klassen an das College wechselte, belegte ich Chinesisch als Fremdsprache und hatte somit das erste Jahr überhaupt kein Deutsch. Aber da es keinen Anfängerkurs für Chinesisch gab, merkte ich nach einem Jahr, dass es zu schwierig war. Zudem verlernte ich zunehmend mein Deutsch.

Deshalb habe ich mich entschieden, in den Deutschkurs des College zu wechseln. Allerdings lerne ich weiterhin Chinesisch mit einem privaten Lehrer außerhalb der Schule.

<http://germanuwcsea.blogspot.it/2011/11/meine-sprachbiografie.html>



Kevin:

I'm 14 years old and during my life, I've heard and seen written many different languages. My primary language is English. My family taught me how to write, read, talk and understand English. My second language is French. I've been studying French for practically my whole life. I mostly learn French in school but my mom first introduced it to me since she was enrolled in a French second language course during high school.

I also have an extensive Finnish background from my mother's side of the family and I have been exposed to their language throughout my life. I see my Finnish relatives at least once every two years. Personally, Finnish is very difficult for me to understand and learn. I only recognize a few basic conversational words and can barely follow a conversation.

English, French and Finnish are the three languages that I have been involved with for my entire life. But there are also other languages I have seen written or/and heard spoken: Spanish, Thai, Chinese, German, Russian, Swedish and Hindi.

<https://sites.google.com/site/kevinmbrunobilingueblockg/my-language-biography>

Marco:

Sono americano e, anche se sono cresciuto in una famiglia italiana, sono sempre stato incoraggiato a parlare soltanto inglese. Ho imparato l'italiano solo anni dopo da solo...

Sono riuscito ad imparare 8 lingue e alcune di queste le parlo in modo scorrevole. In altre sono un po' una frana ma riesco a comunicare. Ho imparato queste lingue usando diversi metodi e quindi penso di avere una certa esperienza sull'argomento.

Lo spagnolo, che ho imparato a scuola, è stato la mia prima lingua straniera. La maggior parte degli altri studenti che hanno frequentato le lezioni con me e hanno usato gli stessi libri ancora adesso non sanno contare fino a dieci in spagnolo. Io posso stare alzato tutta la notte e raccontare barzellette in spagnolo e l'ho fatto più di una volta – ci sono dei trucchi ...;) Ho imparato lo spagnolo col sistema tradizionale, prima imparando a leggere e a scrivere, imparando la grammatica e il lessico e molto più tardi ho imparato a parlare e ad ascoltare.

Dopo ho incontrato e sposato una ragazza polacca, così ho cominciato a studiare prima il russo e poi il polacco che parlo in modo scorrevole. Per il polacco ho usato un diverso approccio: pensavo che non fosse importante leggere o scrivere in quella lingua poiché quello che desideravo era comunicare con la famiglia di mia moglie. Parlare e capire erano la cosa più importante, così ho ignorato la lingua scritta e la grammatica. È stata un'esperienza completamente diversa. Potevo parlare la lingua in modo scorrevole ma ero un analfabeta! Più avanti ho cercato di rimediare al problema ma ancora adesso faccio molti errori quando scrivo.

Così è cominciata la mia passione per le lingue. Più avanti ho rispolverato la mia conoscenza del francese imparato alle scuole superiori e lo parlo in modo abbastanza corretto. Ho imparato il tedesco e l'italiano. Per l'italiano ho assunto un insegnante che venisse al mio ufficio una volta alla settimana.

<http://www.linguesenzasforzo.org/article-come-ho-imparato-8-lingue-piu-o-meno-109025772.html>



Aziza:

I speak English and Afrikaans and some conversational French – I can read and write a little, about Grade 2 level. We spoke Afrikaans at home (my parents are bilingual) but I attended an English medium school. At the start I felt embarrassed when children found out that I was Afrikaans speaking – they used to make fun of children whose home language was not English.

I was very good at English from the start. One of my fondest memories is of the time that I was reading in the playground when in Grade one and the older kids called their friends to come and listen to me. I think I have a flair for languages – I can't recall being read to by either of my parents.

<http://paulroos.co.za/wp-content/blogs.dir/22/files/2012/07/Paper24.pdf>



Gregor:

Ich wurde in New York geboren, und somit müsste meine eigentliche Muttersprache Englisch sein, aber meine Mutter war Schweizerin und mein Vater war Deutscher, also wurde meine Muttersprache Deutsch.

Für weniger als ein Jahr lebte ich in Amerika und lernte Englisch sehr schnell. Als wir in die Schweiz zogen, wurde Englisch fast überflüssig, wobei meine Eltern einen Englischkurs für mich arrangiert hatten, um mein englisches Vokabular zu erweitern. Ich verlor beinahe meinen deutschen Akzent, wenn ich Englisch sprach.

Sieben Jahre lebte ich in der Schweiz. Danach zogen meine Familie und ich für drei Jahre nach Singapur, wo ich Englisch und Französisch lernen musste. Nach Singapur zog ich zurück in die Schweiz und ich wusste, falls ich dem Gymnasium beitreten sollte, müsste ich Latein lernen. Da ich das aber nicht wollte, ging ich an eine andere Schule.

Nach einem Jahr ging meine Familie aber nach Singapur zurück und ich wollte ans College, aber ich war auf Platz 26 der Warteliste, also musste ich zuerst an die Oberschule, wo ich nur Französisch weiter lernen konnte. Nach der Oberschule besuche ich nun das College, wo ich Deutsch, Englisch und Französisch lerne.

<http://germanuwcsea.blogspot.it/2011/11/die-geschichte-meiner-sprache.html>

Chiara:

Adesso sto pensando di imparare le lingue straniere. Ho studiato l'inglese per 12 anni a scuole. Alla fine del liceo, ho superato l'esame di maturità di livello avanzato con l'81%. Al ginnasio e liceo ero nella classe con inglese esteso. Però non parlo ancora un inglese perfetto. Ho finito il liceo 11 mesi fa, e non da allora non studiavo più l'inglese. Recentemente ho deciso di studiarlo da sola per non dimenticarlo. Ho intenzione di imparare molti vocaboli e vorrei anche guardare film con i sottotitoli in inglese. Fortunatamente anche il mio ragazzo conosce l'inglese così potremmo guardarli insieme. In futuro mi piacerebbe iscrivermi al corso e passare l'esame CAE.

La mia seconda lingua che imparo è l'italiano. Ho iniziato a studiarlo al liceo (cioè, nel 2011). Alla mia classe non piaceva l'italiano, loro avevano brutti voti. Io ero la migliore del gruppo. Spesso ricevevo 6 (miglior voto). Solo io nella mia scuola ho sostenuto l'esame di maturità dell'italiano. Ho scelto il livello base e ho ricevuto 90%. Purtroppo dopo la fine del liceo ho dimenticato molte cose e avevo alcuni problemi a parlare quando ero in Italia. Grazie a questo sito ho la motivazione e la possibilità di ricominciare a studiare l'italiano.

Terza lingua è l'ucraino. L'ho iniziato nell'ottobre 2014. Studio la filologia ucraina, così sono in contatto con la lingua ogni giorno e faccio progressi rapidamente. Ucraino è molto simile al polacco, il vocabolario e coniugazioni di parole sono molto simili.

Due anni fa, al campo della lingua, ho incontrato una ragazza della Turchia. Mi ha affascinato il turco. Ho comprato il libro, e provato imparare la lingua ma ho rinunciato dopo un po' di tempo.

Una volta ho comprato anche il libro per studiare il danese perché mi è piaciuta questa lingua quando era in Danimarca nello scambio culturale con altri studenti. Comunque, si ho finito per comprare un libro.

In futuro vorrei iniziare il russo.

<http://lang-8.com/1115511/journals/282690473951673584891940555206989481006>

Literature:

General:

Candelier, Michel. 2012. *FREPA A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures. Competences and resources*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

<https://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/documents/ECML-resources/CARAP-EN.pdf?ver=2018-03-20-120658-443> (last accessed 19/03/2019)

Schader, Basil. 2001. *Sprachenvielfalt als Chance. 101 praktische Vorschläge*. Zürich: Orell Füssli.

Activity 1:

Schader, Basil. 2001. *Sprachenvielfalt als Chance. 101 praktische Vorschläge*. Zürich: Orell Füssli.

Activity 2:

Similar visualizations of language repertoires in a class can be found here: Schader, Basil. 2001.

Sprachenvielfalt als Chance. 101 praktische Vorschläge. Zürich: Orell Füssli. S. 47

Chiappelli, Tiziana/Manetti, Claudia/Pona, Alan (Ed.). 2015. *La valorizzazione dell'intercultura e del plurilinguismo a scuola. Sperimentando la varietà attraverso lingue, linguaggi, scritture*. Pistoia: Saperi aperti Società Cooperativa. http://www.itcmarchi.it/sito/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/C_331_intecultura_2.pdf (last accessed 16/08/2018)

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List of figures:

Figure 1: ©Eurac Research.....	1
Figure 2: ©Eurac Research.....	5
Figure 3: ©Eurac Research.....	6
Figure 4: ©Eurac Research.....	7
Figure 5: ©Eurac Research.....	
Figure 6: https://goo.gl/images/4ZjsQq	
Figure 7: http://maledive.ecml.at/Portals/45/figures.pdf	11
Figure 8: http://maledive.ecml.at/Portals/45/figures.pdf	12
Figure 9: https://biografieonline.it/	18



Figure 10:
<https://www.facebook.com/ladiescircle16/photos/a.771266536326969/1559069314213350/?type=3&theater> 18
 Figure 11: <http://coolwallpaper.com> 18
 Figure 12: <http://wallpaperswala.com> 18
 Figure 13: <http://lovelyshakira.com> 19
 Figure 14: <http://wawpaper.com> 19
 Figure 15: <http://p5.focus.de> 19
 Figure 16: <http://top10point.com> 19
 Figure 17: <http://empowernetwork.com>
 Figure 18: <http://www.stud-center.com> 20
 Figure 19: <http://good-wallpapers.com> 20
 Figure 20: <http://goo.gl/images/4visY9> 20

List of tables:

Table 1: ©Eurac Research 20