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## SZTUKA ULICZNA I JEJ ZASTOSOWANIE W NAUCZANIU JĘZYKÓW OBCYCH

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**Adnotacja.** Teraz system edukacji osiąga nowy poziom, wprowadzając do swojego arsenału nie tylko tradycyjne metody nauczania, możliwości technologii informatycznych, ale także metody oparte na wykorzystaniu elementów sztuki współczesnej. Celem artykułu było przeanalizowanie zjawiska sztuki współczesnej jako sztuki ulicznej i jej potencjału w nauczaniu języków obcych. Aby osiągnąć cel, wykorzystano metody analizy informacji, syntezy, opisu językowego, interpretacji, systematyzacji, uogólnienia. Praca z zaangażowaniem sztuki ulicznej w proces nauczania języka obcego może obejmować kilka etapów – zapoznanie się z pracą artysty, zrozumienie jego pomysłu i przekazanie tego pomysłu w języku obcym. Ponadto można korzystać z takich zadań, jak opisywanie obrazów, tworzenie własnych historii, omawianie pomysłów, nadawanie tytułów w języku obcym własnym dziełom artystycznym i tym podobne. W związku z tym wykorzystanie elementów sztuki ulicznej w procesie nauki języków obcych umożliwia realizację funkcji komunikacyjnej, poszerzanie aktywnego i pasywnego zasobu leksykalnego oraz kształtowanie kompetencji społeczno-kulturowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** nauka języków obcych, sztuka współczesna, sztuka uliczna, przestrzeń, metody nauczania, dyskurs.

## STREET ART AND ITS USE WHEN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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**Abstract.** Currently, the education system is making use of not only traditional teaching methods, information technologies, but also methods based on the use of elements of modern art. The purpose of the article is to analyze *street art* and its potential in teaching foreign languages. The methods of information analysis, linguistic description, interpretation, systematization, generalization, etc. have been used. Involvement of *street art* in the process of learning foreign languages can include several stages – getting acquainted with the artist's work, comprehending his idea and conveying this idea in a foreign language. In addition, you can use such types of tasks as describing pictures, creating your own stories, discussing ideas, giving titles to your own artwork in a foreign language, etc. Thus, the use of elements of street art when teaching foreign languages makes it possible to implement the communicative function, to expand students' active and passive vocabulary, and form sociocultural competences.

**Key words:** foreign language teaching, modern art, street art, space, teaching methods, discourse.

## ВУЛИЧНЕ МИСТЕЦТВО ТА ЙОГО ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ПРИ ВИКЛАДАННІ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

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**Анотація.** Наразі система освіти виходить на новий рівень, вводячи в свій арсенал не тільки традиційні методи навчання, можливості інформаційних технологій, але й методи, які ґрунтуються на використанні елементів сучасного мистецтва. Метою статті було проаналізувати такий феномен сучасного мистецтва як вуличне мистецтво та його потенціал при навчанні іноземним мовам. Для досягнення поставленої мети були використані методи аналізу інформації, синтезу, лінгвістичного опису, інтерпретації, систематизації, узагальнення. Робота з залученням вуличного мистецтва у процес навчання іноземній мові може включати декілька етапів – ознайомлення з роботою художника, розуміння його ідеї та передача цієї ідеї іноземною мовою. Крім того, можна використовувати такі види завдань, як опис зображень, створення своєї історії, обговорення ідей, надання назв іноземною мовою власним художнім роботам тощо. Отже, використання елементів вуличного мистецтва у процесі вивчення іноземних мов дає можливість реалізовувати комунікативну функцію, розширювати активний і пасивний лексичний запас, формувати соціокультурні компетенції.

**Ключові слова:** навчання іноземній мові, сучасне мистецтво, вуличне мистецтво, простір, методи навчання, дискурс.

**Introduction.** One of the components of the new realities in the field of education is the even greater necessity and importance of mastering a foreign language, the knowledge of which can be attributed to an integral skill of a modern specialist. Foreign language proficiency helps to expand people's horizons, allows getting to know foreign culture, traditions, and customs much better, promotes the development of thinking and memory, and, allows successful self-realization in the professional sphere.

In modern society that is rapidly developing, and when the education system is reaching a completely new level, the arsenal of foreign language teaching methods is rather rich. It includes both traditional teaching resources, the main of which are still textbooks, as well as various reference books, magazines, dictionaries, audio and video recordings, films, podcasts, and the aids which appeared due to the rapid development of information technologies and Internet in particular. They involve the use of educational technologies based on the use of interactive multi-modal platforms – web 2.0 platforms (Herring, 2015). Another group includes methods based on the use of elements of modern art (photographs, graffiti, street art, etc.). They not only contribute to the formation and development of students' value orientations (Gerkerova, 2021), open up new opportunities for creative development of both teachers and students, but also allow them to free themselves from the monotony of traditional education, to develop new ideas and solve more interesting and complex problems when learning a foreign language.

One of the examples of contemporary art is *street art*. It is “one of the largest art movements that has achieved huge popularity and is still rapidly developing as an art form. Street artworks mainly appear in urban areas and in public locations such as exterior walls of buildings, highway overpasses and bridges, and remarkably define the outlook of many neighborhoods and cities all around the world” (Hencz, 2022). Street art is created in a vast variety of ways with a wide range of techniques, from traditional graffiti (Pandyreva, 2022) and spray paint to using such kinds of material and medium as stencils, stickers, posters, textiles, LED lights, mosaics, video projection (Hencz, 2022), sculpture, stained glass. Quite literary, street art is the art that can be found on the street. Defined as “public-space artwork that is created for consumption outside of the typical art gallery setting,” street art is essentially synonymous with “public art” (“Street Art” vs. “Graffiti”: What’s The Difference?, 2020).

Being located in public spaces, street art is closely connected with such concept as *space*. The term *space* is often described as a fundamental category of human life (Hasse, 2007: 15). In everyday life, this term is used, for example, for a more detailed description of the environment, emotional states or geographical location. The latter, in particular, emphasizes why people are concerned about the issue of space. Only when a person is able to comprehend and describe the space around him/her, we can speak about the location of an individual (Neckel, 2009: 51–52). This practice of existence is essential for the human experience and is unthinkable without spatial references, geographical location, symbols in space, situational meanings, and without physical feelings.

In science, the construction of space and its significance for our human existence, life, and experience is studied from the perspective of a wide range of disciplines. In a scientific context, the definition of space as well as its conceptual descriptions are very diverse, and many references are made to human existence (Schroer, 2012: 30). A starting point for the definition of space is offered by natural sciences, which understand space as the arrangement of material things in a place (Hasse, 2007: 18).

In the course of time, a broader approach to space appeared. According to this approach, space is not only defined and viewed as existing geographically, but it is also seen in context with human actions. From the perspective of sociology, geography, and cultural studies, space is created depending on the individuals and groups acting in this space (Schroer, 2012). Thus, there is an interaction between the actions of people and the space in which they act.

For space nature, this assumption means that, on the one hand, it is shaped by people's actions and on the other hand, its shape directly affects future actions. This influence of space on human actions is based on the individual perception and subjects' reaction to space shape. Thus, the shape of the space experienced always depends on the perspective of the individual and the context in which he is (Schroer, 2012: 10).

In the context of social design and discussion processes, actions in space are thus necessarily communication oriented. Thus, language becomes relevant as a central element of human action for the constitution of sociality in cultural contexts (Schützeichel, 2004: 275).

Street art is a popular and common phenomenon of urban life. Its bright forms and colors, mysterious signs and provocative slogans can be seen on the walls of buildings, street lamps and railings, park benches, trains, and trees (Jakob, 2009: 73–74). Thus, street art becomes a means of continuous shaping social space. People depict their personal needs, interests, and attitudes by crocheting, spraying, and pasting images on different public surfaces in the urban space. The function of addressing passers-by and conveying meanings merges with the meeting of basic needs connected with the city functionality (Jakob, 2009: 90). Therefore, Reineke (Reineke, 2012: 17) describes street art as an important communicative element in public space.

Thus, the **research purpose** is to analyze the peculiarities of such phenomenon of modern art as *Street Art* and its potential when teaching foreign languages.

The **research objectives** are to consider the concept of *space* and its role when learning foreign languages in particular; to analyze *street art* as a means of shaping social space and an important element of interaction in public places; to focus on describing *street art* as one of the incentives to learning foreign languages; to discuss the tasks based on elements of *street art* which can be used in class when teaching foreign languages.

The **research material** includes 120 examples of street art works from Internet sites.

To meet the objectives **the method** of information analysis, the synthesis and analytical methods, the methods of linguistic description, interpretation, systematization, and generalization have been used in the work.

**Results and discussion.** Stylistically, all drawings, graphics, caricatures, fragments of sentences, etc., which are sprayed, painted or pasted in public places, belong to street art. The first forms of the use of signs for communicative purposes in public space can be seen in cave paintings of Stone Age (Blanché, 2010: 21). The goals of such exploitation of public space were and are at present the protection and transmission of information, the marking of territories and the demonstration of power (Reinecke, 2012: 28), in other words, the purpose implied formation of spaces.

In the 1970s, the modern form of graffiti in its many variations appeared in New York (Jakob, 2009: 75). Today, street art is used as a general term for all forms of public space decoration (Lunn 2006: 6). Different variations of decorating are interesting, especially considering their functions and significance to artists. The variants, originally called graffiti, can look very simple, just like marings, or complex, like fragments and frescos.

The goals pursued by these pieces of work are as diverse as the artists who create them. We can say that artists' works reflect their personal view of social circumstances and seek to be perceived publicly. In this context, Krause and Heinicke (Krause & Heinicke, 2006: 60) say that the artist "becomes visible" because he or she makes his or her existence visible in his or her works.

This "optical exploitation of public space" is viewed as playing with existing spatial as well as social structures (Stahl, 2009: 21). Thus, street art is classified, on the one hand, as a reaction to the social status quo, and on the other hand, as a kind of open-air public gallery (Krause & Heinicke, 2006: 9). In addition to its function as an exhibition space, the space itself becomes a factor that shapes the work (Stahl, 2009: 17).

The purpose and function of street art is the interaction between the artist and the viewer. Therefore, Jacob (Jacob, 2009: 90) identifies street art as a channel of communication in the city. Artists transform their thoughts into visual signs. From the point of view of the theory of space, this transformation of thoughts into visual signs describes the extent to which artists shape public space with the help of their actions and their works. In this way, they manage to help shape urban space (Krause & Heinicke, 2006: 62) by placing their viewpoints in spaces that are also important to others and have an idea. At the same time, the artist manages to use the viewer as a mediator of his messages through minimalistic visual impulses in the sense that the viewer perceives the depicted signs and, if necessary, transmits them (Blanché, 2010: 27). After all, only viewers can help the works reveal their effect, creating meanings through the interaction between the artist, the work and the recipient. The work becomes an intermediary between the artist and the recipient (Blanché, 2010: 25–26). Thus, there is an interaction that takes place in a meeting which is distant in time but close in space and which is realized through several expressive features. Therefore, it is necessary for an artist to define his/her idea as clearly as possible, despite the limitation of means needed for this (Krause & Heinicke, 2006: 60).

However, the discussion becomes alive only because of people who perceive the works and who have the desire and the necessary skills to decode the meanings depicted in the signs, colors, and shapes (Jakob, 2009: 90). The reduced form of representation, in particular, requires the ability to see, read, and interpret details. In addition, it is necessary to have a certain amount of knowledge about the social context in order to be able to classify the work and its idea (Reinecke, 2012: 118). Thanks to the actions of some people, street art acquires its full development. Moreover, all these actions take place in a certain space.

Addressing life topics, as well as the provocative nature of street art, can be of help at a lesson focused on the discussion of meanings. This approach goes hand in hand with the fundamental goal of the process of learning a foreign language – to be able to perform linguistic actions properly in the language studied. In the context of foreign language didactics, this ability and the ability to act are described as discursive competence, a set of skills, abilities, knowledge, and attitudes. They are used to participate in social processes of meaning discussion and opinion formation (Gee, 1990: 142; Hallet, 2012: 9) and should be developed when teaching foreign languages through authentic and substantive discussion of meanings (Legutke, 2010: 74).

The environment of foreign language learning should be a reflection of space life structures and the discussion of meaning in order to facilitate discursive discussion processes relevant to real life. It is the linguistic, cultural, motivational, and physical aspects of all participants in the educational process that shape actions and discourses in the classroom. Taking into account the interdependence between actions and space, spatial conditions, as well as linguistic actions in teaching foreign languages should be taken into consideration equally. Thus, there is a question about the design of the educational environment both as a geographically localized class and as a socially constructed or discussed space. In that way, the desired discussion processes are formed not only by the location of educational places in the room, but above all, by social factors. This may be the result of the cultural influence of the participants, the social relations of the participants with each other, individual competences and interpersonal needs, intrapersonal traditions, as well as external demands (e.g., curricula, school management, and parents). Such complexity of situations, in which meanings are discussed, indicates the high demands placed on the students' competences. They must perceive the needs of others as their own, evaluate them and act (linguistically) accordingly. Hence, life and school discourses will intersect when students use all their competencies (Dausend, 2014). After all, even if the discourses in foreign language learning are always formed in accordance with the requirements and goals of the curriculum in comparison with the discourses of the real world, students use the competencies they have acquired in their real world. In linguistic terms, this means that foreign language discursive competence cannot be considered only from the perspective of the language studied. To reach their goals, learners rather use their natural, general linguistic competence, which includes aspects of different linguistic systems (Hufeisen, 2011: 267–268). This integration of learners' general linguistic competences into discourses that reflect learners' world can facilitate authentic and meaningful discussions of ideas (Dausend, 2014).

In order to stimulate and support content discussion, the discursive learning environment must be attractive and provide the necessary linguistic means for students to discuss the content and produce language using already existing competences.

As for educational requirements for the process of learning a foreign language, competencies and content are specified in educational tasks, which contain the necessary impulses that motivate students to linguistic actions. Therefore, learning tasks should be designed in such a way that they encourage learners to bring all their perspectives to the discourse and thereby expand it.

Street art is characterized by social participation. Bright shapes and colors, mysterious signs and provocative slogans, as a common phenomenon in public space (Reinecke, 2012: 17–18), usually convey a specific statement (Jakob, 2009: 73–74). Artists' goal is social participation through their works and participation in discussions (Jakob, 2009: 90). Thus, street art can be used in the classroom to integrate these discourses into the context of foreign language learning. Additional value for foreign language discourses can be, firstly, a reference to the life world of street art, and secondly, a provocative, interesting, and relevant content.

Street art is used to symbolically and semantically construct public space through concrete actions (Dausend, 2014). Thanks to this function and presence in public space, street art is part of students' life. "Visual occupation of public space" (Stahl, 2009: 21) is mostly a familiar image for students, and they can see the works in their immediate surroundings. Together with its presence in the environment, street art has become part of youth culture in recent years and is becoming more and more known in the context of fashion, music videos, etc. The use of street art as a stimulus for discussions can be related to the knowledge of the debate subject and its relevance to everyday life. In addition, works can be used to integrate relevant topics of everyday life into discussion processes in a condensed, expressive form (see Fig. 1).

After all, even if street art is connected with a specific location, it is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon. Works often deal with aspects that are relevant in the local context and can be geographically localized. Alongside this local significance, many of the works are globally comprehensible or touch on the topics which are important beyond the region. Thus, on the one hand, students' prior knowledge from different contexts can be connected, and on the other hand, relevant topics can become the content of the lesson. They do not necessarily have to aim at the target language and culture if students are asked to discuss the meaning in the target language or get the result in the target language as their learning task.

In addition to the reference to the students' life experience, the expressive nature of concepts offers a variety of impulses to begin discursive discussion processes. In class, you can consider the motivations of graffiti artists

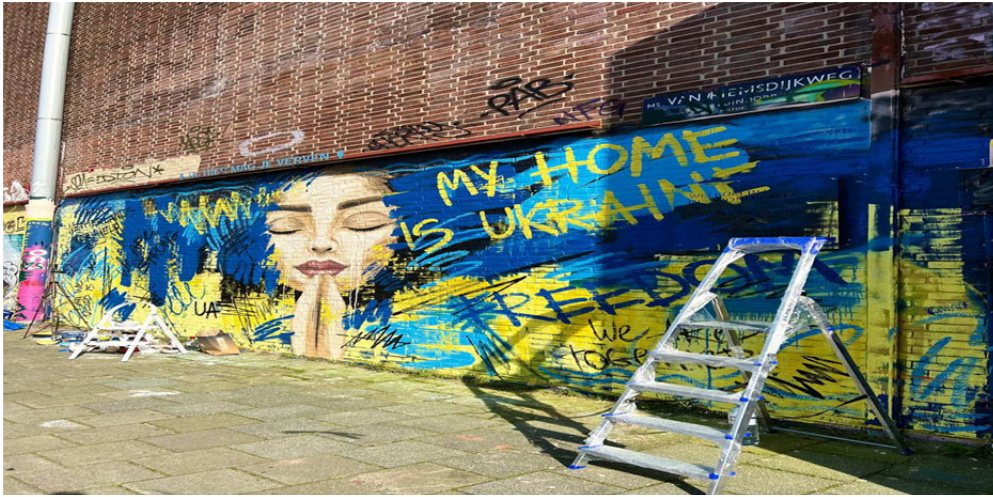


Fig. 1. Ukraine protest in Amsterdam by Hendrik Jan de Boer

and ordinary artists, describe their works, discuss their ideas and evaluate the design of social spaces. The content is always the result of the artist's actions in space preserved in the works (Krause & Heinicke, 2006: 60) addressing relevant and acute problems. While this requires the ability and skills to see and read details, it also offers a variety of opportunities to express your own opinion. If we choose the works that describe values, norms, and attitudes, then students have many impulses to discuss meanings with their classmates. Thus, it is provocative statements that can arouse the need to respond to them and stimulate discursive discussion processes between individuals (Lunn, 2006: 20–21).

This expressiveness of the works in combination with limited creative complexity can help in gaining easy access to the artist's ideas. It is not so much about normative interpretation but description of the work and its idea from the point of view of the impressions awakened in each viewer. It leads to the emergence of a collection of different views on the work in the classroom, which can be used as a basis for meaning discussion.

Thus, it is possible for beginners to use the works that do without or almost without a language. It allows the students with insufficient command of a foreign language to work with them in the classroom (see Fig. 2).

The artist centered a circle and honed on shapes growing out of emulating pages of an open book. From the open book, she filled it with the words *justice*, *love*, and *equity*, and some other words.

Thus, at the first stage of learning, it is possible to achieve understanding on the part of the students that goes beyond their linguistic competence. This understanding is the basis for further verbalizing content assumptions using the target language at the second stage. In this way, these works offer great potential by providing learners with opportunities for multiple verbal actions through immediate visual stimulus. The works can be not only just described but also thought over and and discussed. The method of dealing with a sample of street art depends on the learning task and students' level of language proficiency. We can find a lot of samples which can be used when applying interdisciplinary and cultural approaches when learning different topics. Strong social and sociocultural ideas of the works, which can be both locally and globally influential, are suitable not only for the development



Fig. 2. "WestSide Baby's Community"

of linguistic competences, but also for the development of the transcultural competence. Street art can be of use when promoting artists' ideas.

In addition, we can also consider the processes related to space design. The locations, where the works are placed, become part of the staging, and the effects of the actions in space on its form can be analyzed.

The clearly expressed visual language of the works can be used in the classroom to develop such competencies as the perception of linguistic elements and the verbalization of your own thoughts. The clearly visual focus of the works also facilitates discussion despite language barriers. In this way, students can participate in discussions of the works using all their linguistic and cultural competences and discover their environment through authentic conversations in a foreign language.

Involvement of street art in the process of learning foreign languages can include several stages – getting acquainted with the artist's work, comprehending his idea and then conveying this idea in a foreign language using appropriate learning tasks.

These three stages are focused on three areas of requirements for educational tasks. At the first stage – getting acquainted with the artist's work – all perceptual and descriptive activity is aimed at forming the initial opinion to the work. Students perceive certain aspects of the work and its spatial arrangement. This can be done either by visiting the works in the city, or by taking photos or videos. They describe what they see and relate it to what they know. By doing this, their prior knowledge is stimulated and they can rely on the skills they have already acquired during the description. On the one hand, referring to what they already know makes it easier for students to access new things, and, on the other hand, it activates existing competencies in order to be able to develop them in the future. When working on the tasks of the first stage, students act discursively, telling others about their ideas and, for example, preparing a short description of the work together. Spatial dimensions become extremely relevant in these discourses because, on the one hand, students create their own space in which their discourses can take place, and on the other hand, the aspect of spatial linking of street art is an aspect that needs to be described and discussed.

The aspect of space also remains relevant in the second stage – comprehending the artist's idea, when students make the first analyses and interpretations. They use the descriptions made at the first stage as the basis for further tasks. Based on the characteristics obtained, students can make their conclusions about works and discuss them. Students must support their ideas with arguments that follow from the descriptions of the works. The aspect of space should always be taken into account, as technical tasks can vary depending on the location and the spatial design of the environment. In this way, students get a deeper understanding of the work, in the interpretation of which the location of the work in space can play an important role. Thus, learners' discourses relate to aspects of space and spatial design in addition to target language content and competences.

After discussions and interpretations, the insights gained are used to create students' own products in their further linguistic activities. Students reproduce the results of the first two steps and develop them further by presenting their ideas, discussing them, presenting them in the form of texts, etc. Students express their linguistic reactions. Students react to the work with their linguistic action, but form their own discursive space beyond the concept of the work. This means that the artist's ideas serve as impulses for starting students' speech actions and related independent formation of educational and living space. Responding to the artist's ideas with their own assumptions and ideas, students expand the discursive situations they created in the first two stages of the learning activity. They respond to the work in the same way that passers-by might respond, to feel like participants in the discourse of both the learning space and the living space. They can participate in discourses that extend beyond their original discursive space (e.g. in the classroom, in an Internet blog, etc.) and feel how different spaces are arranged and connected with each other. In addition, they create a linguistic product in the language studied, and which is formed under the influence of spatial phenomena and contributes to the development of their linguistic competence.



**Fig. 3. The Homeless Bill of Rights**

We are living in a world-wide housing crisis, of which the single most visible and unbearable symptom is the street homeless person.

The picture shows a homeless man holding a poster with the inscription “Keep your coins, I want change”. Under the poster there is a cup for coins. The picture is very simple. The statement attracts your attention at once. This street art work offers many possibilities, for example, to draw attention to an existing problem in society and to a play on words we can see here.

At first students can describe the picture and explain its separate elements, and then they clarify their interconnection. They can offer the definition of the words written – *keep, coins, change* and explain the function of these words in the work. They can also translate these words and show the difference in translations. They explain the meanings of the words in the picture and show their associations with the problems in society.

At the third stage, the teacher can offer different types of exercises for students to convey the artist’s idea in a foreign language: 1) picture descriptions: students can describe images in a foreign language using vocabulary related to graffiti, street art, colors and shapes; 2) creating stories: students can make up stories based on the pictures, using new words and expressions to describe what is happening in the pictures; 3) discussing ideas: students can discuss the ideas embodied into the works and give their opinions of what they see; 4) creating their own artworks: students can create their own street art works using the works of the artists they know as a source of inspiration and give them titles in a foreign language; 5) writing comments in a foreign language, etc.

Students use all their ideas to discuss the artist’s concept. The open-ended nature of the assignments allows them to include more interpreted statements as well as their own ideas about the topic.

The examples suggested demonstrate the potential of using street art to engage students in discussion. The tasks should be tailored to the learning group and can also be used to differentiate within learning groups. Open-ended requirements, such as describing works or expressing your own opinion, allow students to work on the assignments according to their competence level. They deal with the content of the works together and can start discussions of the meaning using all the linguistic and cultural diversity. At the same time, they can feel how actions shape space.

**Conclusions and perspectives.** The description of the first initial steps (getting acquainted with the artist's work, comprehending his idea and conveying this idea in a foreign language) for the use of street art in foreign language teaching clearly demonstrates how we can make use of the content from everyday life to initiate discursive discussions of meaning in the classroom. It can be shown that street art can be used as a means and as a purpose of the authentic discourse. First, it is a means to initiate discussions of meaning in informative, student-centered tasks; secondly, the topic of space and spatial design is thematized as an immanent part of street art in the classroom. Human action, spatial design and their respective interaction are manifested in street art as a minimalist, written, and symbolically presented thought in public space. The works and their statements continue to shape public space, enabling discourse between artists and viewers. Students experience these discourses of their life through street art in the classroom. They develop learning content using a variety of approaches and test linguistic and cultural learning content in different task formats – description of images, creating stories, discussion of ideas, giving titles in a foreign language to your own artworks, writing comments, etc.

The tasks are always designed to provide an opportunity to discuss meanings and reflective thinking processes in specific cases of applications. Linguistic and cultural competences are formed integrally and comprehensively. Street art offers not only an extra-curricular learning task, as the learning space when studying foreign languages is also changing.

The tasks which can be used in class when learning foreign languages and which are initiated by modern art and street art in particular, offer students an independent, individually coordinated, multilingual, multi-level choice of materials. It allows practicing communication skills, expanding students’ active and passive vocabulary and forming sociocultural competences, making mastering a foreign language extremely interesting and effective. In general, using street art works in class can be a very exciting and effective way of learning foreign languages that will help students both improve their linguistic skills and expand their cultural horizons.

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