



# **Education for Sustainable Development in Foreign Language Learning in Poland**

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN	United Nations
Comdev	Communication for Development
C4D	Communication for Development
SD	Sustainable Development

## **ABSTRACT**

Education is a key element of the 2030 Agenda, because with its help it is possible to achieve all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Education is also one of such goals and one of its targets (Target 4.7) includes spreading knowledge about sustainable development, which should be implemented at all levels of education. This thesis aims to explore whether ESD is present in foreign language teaching on the example of English classes in a Polish primary school. Since learning a foreign language covers all areas of life, including issues related to sustainable development may be a good solution in primary school. The work examines both the work of a teacher who included topics related to SD in her lessons, the materials she used, and the frequency of these topics in the main textbooks for grades 6 and 7 of primary schools in Poland. This also leads to a discussion about ESD in Polish schools and to conclusions on what ways of implementing ESD in English lessons can bring the intended effects. The work also contains recommendations for further research.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, learning foreign languages has become widespread almost all over the world. Within the environment of dynamic international markets, teaching a foreign language at schools is as a matter of course put on a par with mathematics and other compulsory subjects. For obvious reasons, the language spoken by most of the western world is almost always English. A second foreign language is increasingly being included in the curricula, but the latter is usually treated as an additional rather than an obligatory subject. A question arises: what really learning a foreign language involves? Seemingly, the first thought that may come to one's mind is the desire to master the language system perfectly. However, since the 1970s, it has been noticed that within the learning process, the cultural aspects of the country from which the language comes are equally important. Therefore, it should also be one of the components of learning. In the 1990s, while setting the standards of language education, the CEFR<sup>1</sup> emphasized the intercultural aspect, which goes a bit further, because in addition to the culture of the target country, one's own culture and other cultures also play a significant role. (Council of Europe, 2020, p.27) All the above means that learning a language can not only give a student the ability to use it in the target country, but also broad knowledge of international topics. The intercultural aspect, therefore, makes it possible to include ESD in the foreign language curriculum, and thus to partially implement SDG 4 as well as to raise the awareness of the remaining SDGs. This paper will focus on examining the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development in foreign language teaching and its impact on students in one of Polish schools. In addition, the project will also focus on examining English learning textbooks in grades 6 and 7 of primary schools in Poland and additional materials addressing issues related to sustainability. The study will address the following two interrelated questions:

1. Is ESD implemented into the foreign language learning curriculum in Polish primary schools and how?
2. What are the ways to successfully implement ESD in teaching English in Polish primary schools?

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<sup>1</sup> CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

This study is related to the field of Communication for Development and Social Change, as ESD is a part of the development activities of the 2030 Agenda, one of the most crucial documents of our times. It examines and emphasizes the key role of education in global development and presents how learning foreign languages provides opportunities to communicate and at the same time learn to practice sustainability. As the researcher is a foreign language educator herself, the study also contains her personal comments.

## **2. Literature Review**

This chapter provides an overview of selected literature relevant to this research. First, it explores the field of Communication for Development and Social Change as well as the approach represented by the United Nations. Then, the field of Education for Sustainable Development is outlined in relation to the 2030 Agenda, as well as the issue of how ESD fits into the foreign language teaching curriculum is discussed with its intercultural aspect and the possibilities of its practical application in the classroom are explored. Finally, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is presented in order to provide a well-established perspective on foreign language teaching.

### **2.1 Communication for Development and Social Change**

The field of Communication for Development has evolved over the last century, taking on various definitions depending on the ongoing social processes at a given time. As Hemer & Tufte note: *"Reasserting its truly inter- and multidisciplinary character, Comdev continues struggling with differing approaches and perspectives, while digging both deeper and broader into the humanities and social sciences, (...)"* (Hemer & Tufte, 2016, p. 15). Comdev multi-disciplinary character makes it possible to adapt the concept to a given phenomenon, so that not only the original concept is used, but also its new elements are created to meet the needs of the situation.

There are many definitions of Comdev; however, the most general one is aptly formulated by Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada:

*Communication for development is the use of communication processes, techniques and media to help people toward a full awareness of their situation and their options for change, to resolve conflicts, to work towards consensus, to help people plan actions for change and sustainable development, to help people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to improve their condition and that of society, and to improve the effectiveness of institutions.*

(Fraser and Restrepo- Estrada, 1998, p.63)

This definition demonstrates both the complexity of the field and also the importance of the role of individuals in society since it is them who are responsible for changes.

Hence, the awareness of what opportunities they have in order to introduce these changes is essential. Technological progress provides them with tools such as the media or information and communication technologies. Nevertheless, the concept of sustainable development also plays a vital role in all these activities because progress in one area definitely should not entail harmful consequences in others. The effectiveness of the activities depends on the qualitative knowledge that individuals ought to acquire throughout the development process so that their activities will be long-term and focused on specific solutions.

## **2.2 United Nations' C4D approach**

In order to include the theory of communication for development within the framework of this study, it is necessary to take a closer look at the UN approach to C4D, which also includes education for sustainable development.

The Organization of United Nations distinguishes 4 'strands' within the concept of Communication for Development emphasizing that individual approaches often interpenetrate and build on each other. *Behavior Change Communication (BCC)* constitutes the first strand in which social change and individual change are perceived as two cooperating processes. Its other adopted name is '*Strategic Communication*' focused on 'ideation', i.e. promoting and disseminating innovative ways of thinking through communication in various environments. BCC assumes that "*individual behavior is*

*shaped by social, cultural, economic and political contexts, (...)"* (United Nations, 2011, p.7), placing emphasis on improving the transmission of messages so that they achieve the intended goals. The second UN approach is *Communication for Social Change (CFSC)* which accentuates participation in decision-making processes, thus giving voice to citizens, including those from marginalized social groups. This communication is based primarily on dialogue in which each citizen can express their needs in terms of what could make their lives better and then move on to collective actions that are supposed to lead to development both at the level of individuals and collectives. The third strand, i.e. *Communication for Advocacy* also plays a significant role focusing on strengthening public participation in the processes which directly affect their lives as well as on policy and program decisions and power. In addition, Advocacy Communication is also responsible for ensuring the equitable allocation of resources and funding decisions. The last approach, *Strengthening an enabling media and communication environment* concentrates on combining all the previous ones to create an environment in which media channels also constitute an essential factor, including social media, which are to be a useful tool in the process of change, freedom of speech and participatory debates. (United Nations, 2011, p.7-8)

### **2.3 Education for Sustainable Development**

All the problems that the modern world is facing are mainly caused by the inept actions of people and the mistakes they make. They are often related to ignorance or lack of awareness of the great impact individual actions have on global issues. Therefore, it can be plausibly assumed that it is the lack of proper education that causes an average person to live and act in an unsustainable way, thereby harming themselves, society, and the planet to a greater or lesser extent.

Considering the solutions to global crises, the concept of sustainable development was defined in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission Report as "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" (United Nations, 1987, p.37) It became a new paradigm of thinking and acting towards a future in which society, the economy and the environment are connected and operate in a sustainable way, without causing harm to each other. In order to achieve this objective, in September 2015, during the United Nations General Assembly, all 193 UN member states jointly adopted the resolution "Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development", declaring that by 2030 they will jointly strive to work towards world development, setting 17 sustainable development goals (Figure 1), divided into 5 areas (people, peace, planet, prosperity, partnership). The 2030 Agenda includes 169 tasks whose progress is measured according to 231 indicators. The main idea of the Agenda is to strive for a better life for people around the world, economic progress, as well as fight against hunger and conflicts while working to protect the environment and prevent climate change. Commencing a new era of sustainable development, they assure that "... no one will be left behind." (United Nations, 2015, p.5)



Figure 1 SDGs of Agenda 2030

While each of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals constitutes a vital factor in changing the world, many of them will be difficult to achieve without goal four: quality education. Education performs a fundamental role in social change and is the key to the development of the world. It is impossible to strive for "decent work and economic growth" (SDG 8), "industry, innovation and infrastructure" (SDG 9) or "peace, justice and strong institutions" (SDG 16) without working to advance education around the world. UNESCO has delineated the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework to guide educators in defining curricula that integrate sustainable development. It is also complemented by another document, i.e. Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA) focusing on SDG 4 - Quality Education.

Education for sustainable development is a concept that involves not only transmitting knowledge and the principles related to sustainable development, but also a kind of a process leading to social transformation. It is based on the idea of changing the way of

thinking in order to perceive global problems as a challenge to create a sustainable future. The very definition of Education for Sustainable Development has evolved over the last decades; however, in order to narrow the research framework, this work will focus on the latest definition derived from the 2030 Agenda. According to this document, education is based on gaining knowledge and awareness of the 17 SDGs. Education itself also represents one of the 17 goals (SDG 4). The SDGs are specified in subcategories called targets. Within SDG 4, the target that puts particular emphasis on education in the field of sustainable development is target 4.7 (Figure 2).

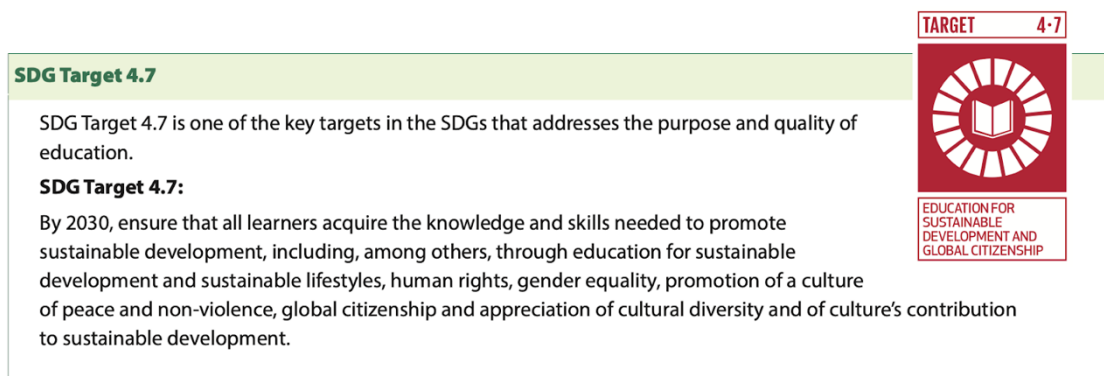


Figure 2 Target 4.7 of SDG 4 - Quality Education

During the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the issue of education has been and still is constantly discussed at the UN general assemblies. Particular importance is placed on its interdisciplinary nature, which is also emphasized in UN General Assembly Resolution No. 72/222 (2017) calling for “*Recognizing the importance of promoting a holistic approach to education for sustainable development and of encouraging the reinforcement of the interdisciplinary linkages of the three pillars of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental, including different branches of knowledge,*”. The interdisciplinarity of ESD expands the possibilities of development and action and constitutes therefore an essential link in achieving all SDGs. Its main purpose is to raise awareness and encourage a sense of co-responsibility and willingness to seek solutions to the issues raised in the SDGs. Change begins with individuals, which is why ESD's task is to strongly accentuate the role of the individual in the transformation process. A student who is aware of the impact his actions and decisions have on society or the environment is a future adult who will be able to live a sustainable life in society and to encourage the search for alternative values and solutions than those challenged by

consumer societies that contribute to global crises. Although the solutions are often based on dynamically developing technologies, the task of ESD is also to make students aware that technological progress is not always the right tool in solving problems, and what is more, it often brings problems with itself. Therefore, critical thinking is absolutely necessary in order not to get lost in the illusions of technology reliability.

ESD implementation is an extensive process divided into 5 action areas focusing on the following: (a) advancing policy, (b) transforming learning environments, (c) building capacities of educators, (d) empowering as well as mobilizing youth and (e) accelerating local level actions. (UNESCO, 2014, p.15) The theme of this project fits into area 2 - building capacities of educators in which one of the suggested actions is to call educators for interdisciplinary teaching founded on the principles of sustainable development. UNICEF provides a variety of resources to help educators reorient the curricula to address sustainability in the form of sourcebooks and other materials. This study will focus on the analysis of the concept of education for sustainable development under the 2030 Agenda and the possibilities of applying it in teaching foreign languages.

### **2.3.1 ESD in Foreign Language Learning Framework**

There exist different ways in which Education for Sustainable Development can be included in the foreign language teaching curriculum. In light of this, it is worth referring to the content-based instruction (CBI) mentioned by Laura Barbas-Rhoden who describes it as "a well-established instructional approach to language learning that integrates the target language and subject matters or content themes relevant to learners" (Rhoden, 2022, p.17) This approach allows incorporating the diversity of topics covered during foreign language lessons, so that they are focused on the interests of the learner, but also address the socio-environmental topics that are part of their lives. The methodology also emphasizes student participation, so that each student reflects on their socio-environmental experiences and learns about various concepts related to sustainable development at different levels (both local and global). Criticality constitutes an essential component in CBI based foreign language teaching which encourages students to reflect on their position in society and the world and to take further actions towards sustainable development. Furthermore, it fosters broadly understood emancipation thanks to which the role of every citizen without exception is strengthened.

Another inspiring approach to teaching is Project-Based Language Learning (PBL). It promotes language learning by means of creating a variety of projects that employ students' intellectual abilities to impart knowledge in a creative way and at the same time work on a previously defined goal. This methodology is somehow related to CBI, as each student has the opportunity to express themselves and their experiences through their contribution to the project. It is assumed that a high-quality project is characterized by being based on a real engaging issue which is then presented to students; the project inquiries, which lead to the construction of a public product, necessitate that students delve deeper into the issue, giving them the opportunity to express their own voice by the feel they belong to the project. (Ferry, 2022, p. 53) The duration of such a project has no imposed time frame and it can range from a short-term project lasting a week or long-term, such as a month or an entire semester. IPBL is confirmed to be one of the best forms of learning that gives the intended results; in relation to learning foreign languages, it helps to develop proficiency in the target language by constantly repeating the content throughout the project. Like any project, it also provides the opportunity of group work, dialogue, and joint decision-making, simultaneously exercising time management so that the project is carefully planned. PBL gives the opportunity not only to thoroughly explore the phenomenon under study, but also to investigate how language shapes meaning since it is mainly responsible for how we perceive the world and it affects our way of thinking and acting. Moreover, in relation to sustainable development, it is in English, a second language for the vast majority, that we find the most precise concepts and metaphors describing sustainable development, not necessarily precisely defined in native languages. Consequently, the PBL provides a wide range of possibilities for transmitting knowledge about sustainable development in the form of content which is then analyzed in a group where each participant searches for solutions to a given issue, acquiring not only new knowledge and experience, but also language skills to be effectively used in a multicultural society.

### **2.3.2 Intercultural aspect in ESD**

ESD is also related with the term "intercultural learning," which focuses on socio-cultural relations, as already mentioned. In this regard, its definition deserves to be explained in more detail. According to the definition, "Intercultural language learning involves the fusing of language, culture and learning into a single educational approach. (...) This not

only reformulates what it means to teach a language, but also provides new and richer ways of linking Languages to other learning areas.” (Dellit, n.d., p.6) Intercultural teaching has ascribed a new meaning to language teaching where the linguistic aspect is one thing, and the other is knowledge about the world in which the student will use the language. They are aptly illustrated by the words of one of the teachers participating in the Asian Languages Professional Learning Project (ALPLP) on the initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education who says: "(...) Every trip I make (...) I will now 'see' with different eyes and 'hear' with different ears.” (Dellit, n.d., p.10) To sum up, intercultural teaching endows students with a wider field of perception of the world and cultures other than their native ones, whereas language becomes a tool for discovering them.

Interculturality has become one of the declarations of the 2030 Agenda. In Article 36, one reads the following: “We pledge to foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility.” (UN, 2015, p.13) Within this line of thought, elements of culture, critical thinking and open relationships must be at the core of education to create a sustainable future for all. Intercultural education in the 21st century is predominantly attributed to the issue of migration, an intensifying phenomenon in Europe in the last decade. Knowledge about the diversity of cultures and equality of all people becomes a priority in building a conscious society open to this diversity. Intercultural education also puts emphasis on building relationships between natives and immigrants, noticing differences, accepting them and looking for common features that can strengthen the quality of these relationships. As Marco Catarci points out: “The stories and the instances of those who come from other contexts give an image of what society is like, and they constitute a “highlighter” of how it is made.” (Catarci, 2021, p.6) Interculturality is instrumental in identifying an individual's position in society as well as in understanding his or her role within it. It encourages emancipation and greater social sensitivity, and above all, it calls for unconventional thinking, not analyzing how it is, but looking for new, better possibilities for how it could be.

### 2.3.3 ESD in the classroom

There is a wide range of techniques that can be used to implement ESD in a foreign language teaching curriculum. Various types of resources provided, among others, by UNESCO, are intended to help educators both in spreading knowledge about sustainable development and in achieving target 4.7 in SDG 4. UNESCO distinguishes the following four learning techniques that are vital components of the entire process: simulations, class discussions, issue analysis, and storytelling. (UNESCO, 2012, p.15) *Simulations* are designed to grant the students the opportunity to put themselves in a situation given by the teacher which involves an issue from the world, and to come up with a solution to it. This is one of the best techniques because it demonstrates in a simple way, using an example of a situation, an issue that, when presented as a theory, might sound abstract to the students. *Class discussions* provide the students with the opportunity to share their own experiences related to sustainability, and the teacher, as a moderator, can use them to develop the topic and brainstorm solutions together. Active listening is also a contributing factor due to the fact that each student is open to the experiences of their peers. UNICEF recommends that discussions include "(...) three spheres of sustainable development - environment, society, and economy" (UNESCO, 2012, p.17) to see that they are closely related. *Issue analysis* represents a slightly more complex technique which thoroughly analyzes the selected problem, its possible solutions, all participating entities, including the key stakeholders and the costs of these solutions. This fosters to increase the students' awareness about the communities' problems as well as to find solutions allowing them to make a difference. Last but not least, there is a well-known technique of *Storytelling*. Providing children with knowledge about sustainability in the form of stories referring to the experiences of previous generations or world events, gives them not only knowledge but also moral values such as respect for other cultures and the environment. (UNESCO, 2012, p.19)

## 2.4 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

To understand the generally accepted language learning scheme, one should refer to the international standard for describing language competences, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which defines the language competences of people learning foreign languages around the world. Language skills are described on a 6-level proficiency scale from beginner language users (A1) to people who have mastered a given language to an almost native level (C1) (Figure3). CEFR promotes an 'action-oriented approach' which, in a broader sense, focuses on emphasizing practical knowledge that enables students to dialogue in a social environment, rather than merely passing through linguistic structures and pre-defined concepts. According to CEFR, a language user is a "social actor" for whom language is to provide appropriate tools for dialogue and action in society. (CEFR, 2020, p.22)

The recommendations of the Ministers of the Committee of the Council of Europe themselves advocate the "use of the CEFR as a tool for coherent, transparent and effective plurilingual education in such a way as to promote democratic citizenship, social cohesion and intercultural dialogue". (CEFR, 2020, p.21) This statement includes the concept of ESD which helps create an open and sustainable society.

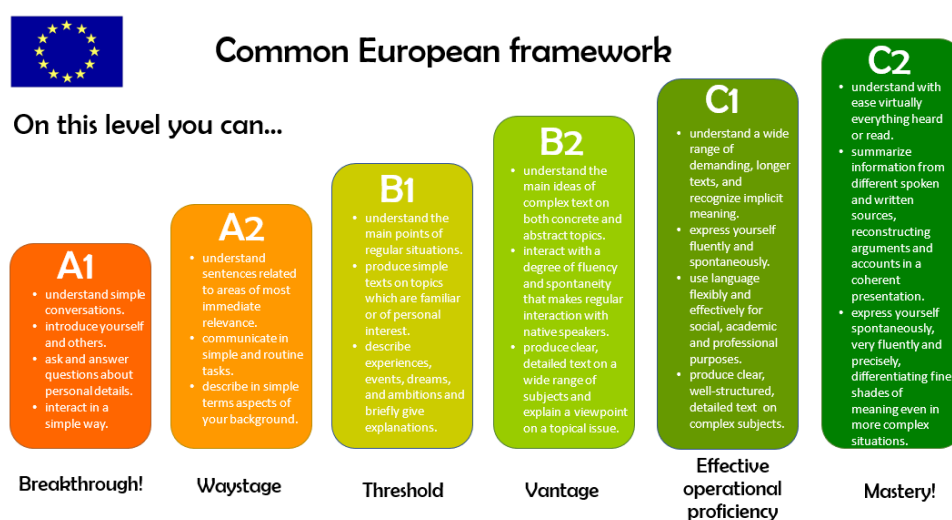


Figure 3 CEFR level scale by English EFL

The fields of Communication for Development and Social Change, Education for Sustainable Development theory, United Nations' approach to ComDev, Intercultural aspects in Foreign Language Learning and the foreign language teaching system presented in this chapter will provide the basis for defining the analytical framework of this study and the methodology applied as these approaches play a key role in research on the relevance of ESD in Foreign Language Learning and provide an opportunity to take a closer look at how they work in the classroom.

### **3. Analytical Framework**

In this chapter, an analytical framework for this study will be defined in order to examine the frequency of elements of education for sustainable development in the main English textbooks in Polish primary schools. It will be examined how frequently such elements occur and in what forms topics dealing with sustainable development are presented.

#### **3.1 Priority action area 2: Transforming learning environments**

To define the analytical framework for this study, it is first necessary to return to the original call to action under which UNESCO focuses on five priority areas, including, among others, transforming learning environments.

Priority action area 2 focuses on the key suggested actions for this work, which include transforming classrooms and calling for action for sustainability through, among others, project-based learning and action at the local level. (UNESCO) This work will explore whether and how these activities are present in the Polish primary school that was researched in this study. The study conducted during English classes aimed to shed light on whether such classes have the potential to exemplify transforming classrooms and calling for action for sustainability.

#### **3.2 Student Engagement in Social, Cultural and Environmental Sustainability Topics**

Another important issue is the interest and involvement of students in lessons about sustainability, which are often omitted or not discussed extensively during foreign language classes. In Chapter 5 (de la Fuente, 2022) it is rightly stated that foreign language lessons often focus on providing grammatical and linguistic knowledge that revolves around the basic concepts of everyday life, rather than going beyond this framework to

offer students content that will increase their awareness on sustainability. The solution to this problem is to call for educators to create their own foreign language teaching programs covering sustainability topics based on the 2030 Agenda with clearly defined learning goals, the effects of which will ultimately be checked.

### **3.3 Frequency of ESD topics during English lessons in Poland**

According to Polish educational law, in grades 4 to 8 of primary school, the weekly number of English classes should be 3, which amounts to 90 hours per year. (Education Law Act. Art. 47) During these classes, teachers should implement the issues of the Minister of National Education specified in the core curriculum. In the case of learning a foreign language, these topics mostly cover broadly understood issues combining elements of grammar and vocabulary. The scope of topics covers mostly issues related to students' everyday life, free time and narrow concepts related to culture, technology and the natural world. The regulation of the Minister of Education and Science on examination<sup>2</sup> requirements for the eighth-grade examination conducted in the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 school years specifies the skills that a student finishing primary school should demonstrate. In Polish schools, learning is mostly based on the main course textbook consistent with the core curriculum for a given year. Therefore, school textbooks should be examined to check whether their content covers topics related to sustainability. Taking into account that most knowledge is transferred in the 6th and 7th grades of primary school, this study will cover the main textbooks at these two levels.

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<sup>2</sup> In Poland, primary education ends with an exam in Polish, mathematics and English in the 8th grade of primary school.

## **4. Methodology**

This chapter provides background on the research methodology in which data was collected on the basis of an interview. The learning materials referred to in the interview as well as official English learning textbooks were analyzed in order to answer the research questions. The next part summarizes the observations and discusses the limitations of the research.

### **4.1 Selection of Informants**

During the entire process of preparation for this research, the author interviewed many people working in the field of education, predominantly people teaching English. Taking into account the years of experience, the diversity of the age range of the groups they teach as well as the level of professional practice, the author decided to interview one of the most experienced English teachers - Sylwia Bijak, who is a certified English teacher with 35 years' worth of experience in teaching children and teenagers. She works in one of public schools in Poland and teaches at all levels from primary school to high school (children and teenagers aged from 6 to 18). She is also the author of the innovation "The World Around Us", her own program addressed to teaching about sustainable development at all levels of education which she described in more detail in the interview for this work. The selection of this informant is relevant for this study because it focuses on a person who, in addition to the standard topics related to ESD included in the core curriculum for teaching English, created and implemented her own program approved by the school authorities.

### **4.2 Interview Based Case Study**

Case study was selected as the key research method due to the fact that it offers more possibilities than other research methods and "(...) can invest heavily in in-depth interviews or discourse analysis." (SAGE, 2008, p. 3) Since the key stage of this research was the interview with one of the language educators who provided the most data, this case study will be mainly interview-based. The interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed so as to focus in real time on the Interviewee and then on the analysis and conclusion drawing.

### **4.3 Document and media analysis**

The second part of the research will focus on the analysis of two official textbooks, documents and other sources such as films, which will allow for a full examination of the chosen learning process. The SAGE Encyclopedia states: “The standard approach to the analysis of documents focuses primarily on what is contained within them.” (SAGE, 2008, p.231) Therefore, the focal point of the study will be the content of official school textbooks for learning English in grades 6 and 7 of primary school in Poland and documents which are teaching aids such as worksheets. The content of this type of documents is usually not extensive and has a simpler form than other scientific documents. Therefore this study will concentrate on analyzing the documents in the context of both conveying content about sustainable development and transmitting linguistic knowledge. The work will examine how language is used to convey a given message, what vocabulary or expressions have been selected and how this content is received by students.

Each document carries a message passed from the author to the reader. Its form is usually in writing, but according to SAGE it can be different and can also include a film. Consequently, this discussion will also include an analysis of short videos that constitute a part of the lesson and are closely related to other documents because they carry a common message (topic/goal of a specific lesson). Additionally, the work will also examine how films are constructed, who the actors are, what the message is and what forms of communication are used to convey it.

### **4.4 Fieldwork and observations**

Fieldwork was conducted by means of interviews and discussions with 15 primary and secondary English teachers as well as private language school teachers in Gliwice, Poland, which allowed the researcher to take a closer look at different approaches to the work of the mentioned educators and explore the differences in these approaches. The researcher's observations, as she is a language teacher herself, also involved analyzing her own work and the use of teaching materials, as well as examining the frequency of topics related to ESD in the textbooks used.

The observations were conducting to the decision to analyze one specific case of a teacher using ESD in practice in order to present a model that could be an inspiration for other

teachers in implementing ESD in foreign language teaching. Data obtained during the discussions with other teachers proved that ESD is present in foreign language teaching mainly through topics included in school textbooks; however, the research does not analyze the work of these teachers in detail.

#### **4.5 Limitations**

ESD in foreign language teaching is a broad research area, difficult to cover in one master thesis. Examining the work of a larger number of teachers would be a long process which would not necessarily bring the expected results. The discussions conducted during the preparatory stage of the research allowed for a closer examination of the frequency of ESD use in teaching English and led to the selection of one person who adopted ESD in her teaching program. In light of the above, this work cannot discuss the frequency of ESD in teaching English at Polish schools; nevertheless, the analyzed case can show how, with the appropriate approach of the teacher, it can be done.

The limitations also result from the analysis of lesson examples and selected materials and textbooks for two classes (grades 6 and 7) and not all 8 grades of primary school, however, the key factor for choosing these 2 classes was the fact that in grades 6 and 7 students acquire the most knowledge necessary to passing the exam after grade 8 and thus completing primary education.

## **5. Analysis**

This chapter will explore the research questions by applying the analytical framework to an interview with one of the English teachers with 36 years' worth of experience and through the analysis of teaching materials. The main topics that emerged from the analysis were the SDGs, Education for Sustainable Development, and the Intercultural aspect of Language Learning.

### **5.1 Frequency of ESD topics in Foreign Language Learning**

Teaching foreign languages endows one with the opportunity to cover a wide variety of topics in lessons, regardless of the students' level of advancement. Each element of the language taught is closely related to the real world because each learned word has its own meaning, and each grammatical construction learned must be used in a sentence that also conveys the meaning. This fact is associated with the interdisciplinary nature of all the 17 SDGs. "When you look at the Sustainable Development Goals, you will find them all in every English textbook at all levels. Each of them raises issues that we talk about every day, even without using textbooks." (Interviewee) The SDGs are widely described setting specific targets; however, their complexity allows tailoring them to a specific situation or region, so they can be analyzed in categories appropriate to the students' age or level of advancement. "The way you present a given topic depends on the age of your students, the number of people in the group and their level of language advancement. Any topic can be taught at any level, yet the above factors determine how much knowledge will be transferred. As you can guess, the older the students and the more advanced they are in the language, the more detailed knowledge they will acquire." (Interviewee) Older students absorb knowledge faster, so they can acquire more of it because it usually does not require additional explanations or repetitions. It is more difficult for younger people to understand complex issues, so there is usually less knowledge, and it is transmitted in a simpler way. In younger grades, where a foreign language is introduced, there are fewer opportunities to discuss topics related to sustainable development because students must first gain some basic knowledge to start using the language, and this is usually related to everyday life topics. With age and language advancement, the complexity of topics increases, and they move from everyday issues to global ones. This allows for more frequent and more qualitative implementation of ESD in the curriculum. "Nevertheless, topics related to SD appear from the moment the learning begins, but are narrowed to basic concepts such as ecology, good relations between people in society or respect for

differences, e.g. due to disabilities. Their vocabulary and lack of language proficiency do not allow the students to discuss a selected topic fully in English, but by learning individual words and phrases they have the basis to be able to discuss these topics also in English over time.” (Interviewee) In younger grades, it is not so much language knowledge that plays a significant role but knowledge about sustainable development itself, so that children can naturally become familiar with the topic and shape their own values with age.

Looking at the very frequency of SD topics, it can be concluded that it increases with the level of advancement. “In younger grades (age 5-12), SD topics appear on average 1-2 times a month. From 12 years and older, it is usually once a week, depending on the number of language hours per week. Children in older grades usually have 3 or 4 to 5 hours of language lessons.” (Interviewee) The frequency also depends on the teaching program adopted by the teacher, depending on whether he or she follows the teaching mainly from the textbook or implements his or her own program or individual lessons. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the next paragraph.

## **5.2 Ways of implementing ESD in the classroom**

How ESD will be implemented depends on what learning effect is to be achieved. “You can communicate sustainable development in the classroom in many ways, i.e. based on textbooks content, videos or other materials from the Internet, or you can go a little further and create a larger project with the students which will be their joint work.” (Interviewee) In the conversation with the interview participant, it is confirmed that the most interesting and best way of learning turns out to be PBL which gives students the opportunity to actively cooperate and create some element of the project themselves, so that the knowledge acquired in it remains in the student's memory for a longer time. “In the case of the topics related to ecology, students were often asked to make observations at home or collect information about the issue under study on their own, then present it to the class and include in the project. In the later months of learning, it was clear that these projects stuck in their minds, students referred to them in conversations concerning similar topics.” (Interviewee) This substantiates the conclusion that "The high-impact experiences of PBL can leave an enduring influence on student beliefs, values and behaviors." (Ferry,

2022, p.60) Activities within the framework of the projects, because they were connected with the students' lives, left lasting values in them.

The interview demonstrates that the most common projects that required students' involvement outside school were most often connected with ecology and fair trade. “The students had to track the flow of garbage in their homes for a full month. Divide them into categories such as plastic, glass, paper, etc., observe their quantity and then report to the class.” (Interviewee) The process required students to be conscientious and systematic in checking waste whereas creating the report and drawing conclusions required language involvement as the report and class discussion were in English. Students also conducted field observations. “While shopping, the students were supposed to look for products with the Fair-Trade<sup>3</sup> symbol, and then, during a class discussion, tell what these products were, what country they came from, and if they bought them, what ingredients these products contained.” (Interviewee) The discussion was based on the issue of Fair Trade and on raising students' awareness of sustainable consumption and production, and in relation to their own experiences, including the problem of food waste.

In addition to classroom-level projects, the Interviewee also highlights the significant role of long-term school and extracurricular projects. One of them was the People to People International (PTPI)<sup>4</sup> project, initiated in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, still in use today. “Students aged 14-16, as part of PTIP, went to a nearby primary school for three years after school and taught English to younger students as part of additional classes. They also established contact with a school in California that was implementing the same project, so at the end they were able to exchange reports and common experiences.” (Interviewee) Activities in the local community sensitized students, who, as the Interviewee points out, often came from poor families. The involvement was not limited only to English lessons, but also to small celebrations like Christmas or Children's Day. Class members also included students from Ukraine and other countries. This project is an example of how long-term activities can help build in students values such as

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<sup>3</sup> a symbol placed on fairly produced and fairly traded products.

<sup>4</sup> PTIP programme aims to enhance international understanding and friendship through educational, cultural and humanitarian activities involving the exchange of ideas and experiences directly among peoples of different countries and diverse cultures. (LinkedIn PTPI)

cooperation and a sense of local community as well as set common goals that lead to building sustainable communities in which access to education is one of the goods.

Another example of a long-term project was the cooperation with the Silesian University of Technology in Gliwice and the Greenpower organization, during which students jointly created an electric Formula One car. “In the project, we wanted girls interested in technical skills to also have the opportunity to create a vehicle, which we later presented at various competitions in Poland.” (Interviewee) During the entire creation process, students aged 15-18 learned the technical language related to the project, acquiring new vocabulary and describing the activities one by one. As the Interviewee points out, this project was successful and was repeated as part of the Erasmus program with Northern Ireland and Spain. “The students recorded their progress on the eTwinning platform, so they could provide their peers from Ireland and Spain with information about the progress of their work. We went to the Goodwood Circuit with our electric car. The entire project lasted 2 years.” (Interviewee) The project brought generations together because both students, parents and teachers took part in creating the car. It also connected international communities, providing opportunities for young women to discover what were perceived as male skills, focusing on an ecological solution - creating a car. Language skills were acquired while students were creating the project, and then consolidated and used in practice while creating reports and contacting peers from abroad.

Class discussions constituted yet another activity the students liked. The discussions were preceded by an introduction in the form of a short film presenting the problem being discussed; then, relevant vocabulary was introduced, and, finally, a worksheet summarizing the lesson was created. These types of lessons were often based on scenarios provided by the British Council (UK's organization promoting education and culture with a focus on learning English). “One of our lessons was about the Kids Against Plastic campaign. The main element was a film about the campaign, but in order for the children to understand it, the vocabulary that appears in it was first introduced. Appropriate vocabulary was developed in order to fully understand the complexity of the problem. Learning did not end in the classroom. After the lesson, some students registered their activities in the application mentioned in the video. (Interviewee) Lessons linked to real activities such as specific campaigns make students inspired to participate in them. If it also involves a technological aspect, e.g. in the form of an app, it is even more interesting

for them and in this seemingly simple way their involvement can increase, which may turn into larger activities. Through a number of teaching aids such as interactive tasks, games and worksheets, children develop their vocabulary in English and learn new issues that are sometimes new to them even in their native language. In this way, knowledge about sustainable development complements linguistic knowledge.

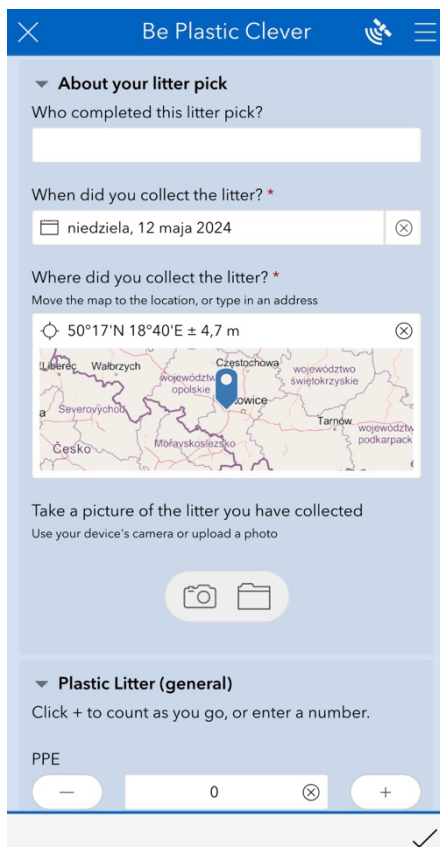


Figure 4 Screenshot of the app

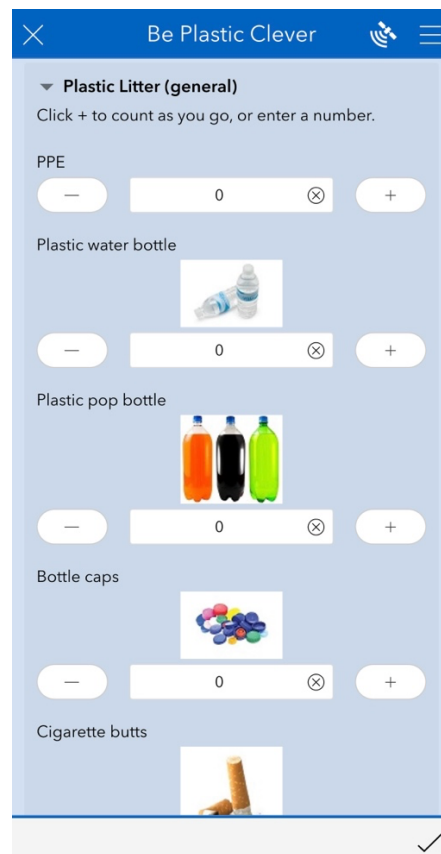


Figure 5 Screenshot of the app 2

Class discussions also concerned everyday topics such as transport and how a sustainable city should function. “Our discussion began with a question: How do you get to school? The students conducted a class survey to see what means of transport they used to get to school, which we then discussed in detail.” (Interviewee) The further discussion went into detail about what means of transport students use not only to get to school, how often buses run in their city and how many of their friends use them, whether they often use scooters or bicycles as an alternative, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of using individual means of transport. “At the end, the students had to write a short note about whether they could change any of the means of transport they use in various

situations to a more environmentally friendly one and how they could do it.” (Interviewee)  
This is another example of a discussion which, by drawing on students' experiences, was intended to influence their perception of important issues.

### **5.3 Document and media analysis**

The materials mentioned by the Interviewee, and collected in the form of ready-made British Council lessons raising the issues of sustainable development, were the subject of the analysis. The British Council organization provides materials for learning English on two platforms, namely Learn English Kids (for children aged 5 to 12) and Learn English Teens (for children aged 12 to 18), in the form of films, games, worksheets and ready-made lessons. Each lesson consists of a video presenting a given topic or a reading comprehension exercise, a preparation exercise (done before watching the video or reading), as well as two games and a worksheet focused on learning new words and definitions. The lesson ends with a discussion. This lesson plan allows for a smooth introduction to the topic of the lesson, transfer of knowledge, and then it moves on to the stage called "production" in which students demonstrate understanding of the knowledge they have acquired and are able to use it in various contexts. The following examples will present the lesson plan and its connection with ESD.

#### **5.3.1 Materials analysis**

*“One in a million plastic pick-up”* is a lesson on ecology and environmental pollution addressed to students aged 10 to 12, from the Learn English Kids platform. The lesson begins by preparing students to watch the film by introducing new vocabulary. Students see a scattering of words on the screen, which they must assign to the given definitions. (Figure 6) The exercise includes words and expressions related to the environment, such as *plastic production, litter, campaign, to reduce* and other more universal verbs that can also be used in contexts other than ecology.

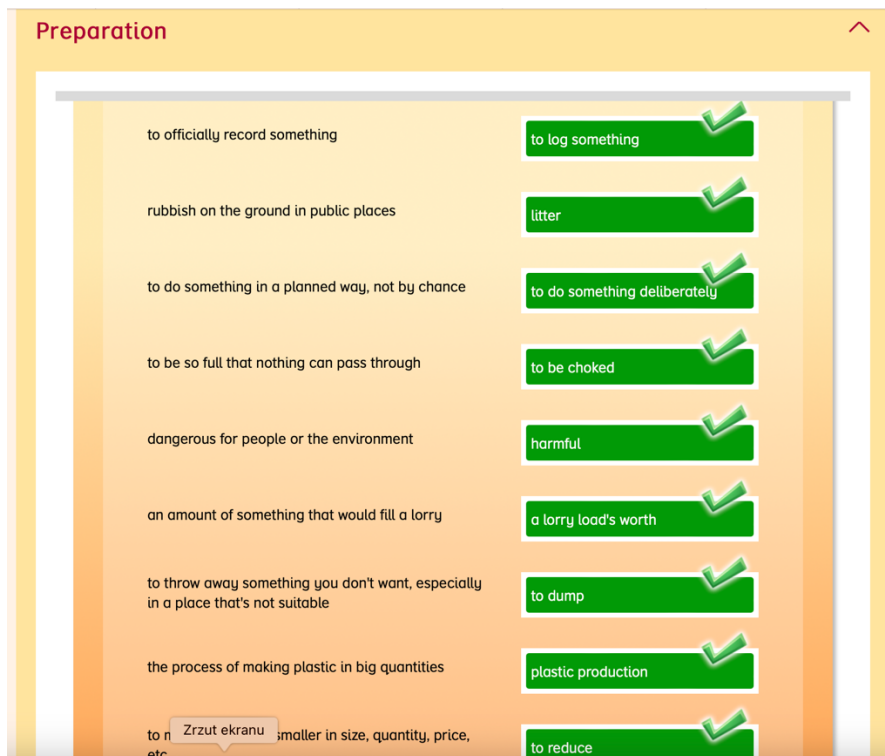


Figure 6 Screenshot of vocabulary exercise

Having learnt the vocabulary, students watch a video created by one of the UK's youth-led charity Kids Against Plastic (KAP) whose mission is to rid the world of single-use plastics. KAP gave speeches, among others, at the UN and initiated the #BePlasticClever campaign. The film begins with the introduction of two main characters, one of the co-founders of KAP, Amy, and Ali called the chief pick-up officer at KAP. Naming Ali (a child aged 10-12) a *chief pick-up officer* gives the recipients (children) an example that their peers can hold positions in charities. The characters start with a short introduction about the campaign's mission, and then short shots are shown demonstrating the consequences of abandoning plastic (beaches littered with tons of plastic, seas, seabirds that get poisoned by plastic and littered forests). After these shots, the characters propose a solution on how every citizen can reduce plastic litter by collecting one piece of plastic every day from wherever it happens to be. They can register their activities in the Kids Against Plastic app, which aims to collect one million pieces of plastic in a year. In just 1 minute and 46 seconds, the video provides all the important information and calls for action. After watching the film, students move on to an exercise related to the film in which they have to decide whether the given statements are true or false. The sentences cover the purpose of the campaign, the amount of plastic being thrown away and the consequences of this, as well as the solution to this problem. (Figure 7)

## Video zone: One million plastic pick-up – 1

Are the sentences true or false?

8 items remaining

1. Ali says the aim of the campaign is to collect and record one million pieces of plastic litter.  True  False
2. Amy says that you should only pick up the litter that you dropped yourself.  True  False
3. Ali says that lots of places will become full of plastic if we don't pick up litter.  True  False
4. Ali says lots of plastic goes into the ocean – about one lorry load per year.  True  False
5. Amy says that more and more plastic is made every year.  True  False
6. Ali says there is nothing we can do to stop plastic pollution.  True  False
7. Ali and Amy want people to help by collecting one piece of plastic every week.  True  False
8. Ali asks people to use the Kids Against Plastic app to record the litter they collect.  True  False

Finish

Try again

Figure 7 Screenshot of statements exercise

The next step is a short game in which the students use words from the film that need to be inserted into a sentence. After the game is over, the teacher initiates a class discussion by asking the students how each of them can help stop plastic pollution and what else they can do. The vocabulary introduced at the beginning of the lesson, then heard in the video and repeated in the game is thus acquired by the students. The subsequent discussion and its topic encourage students to use the phrases they have learned in relation to their lives and experiences, which makes it easier for students to remember new phrases.. (Figure 8)

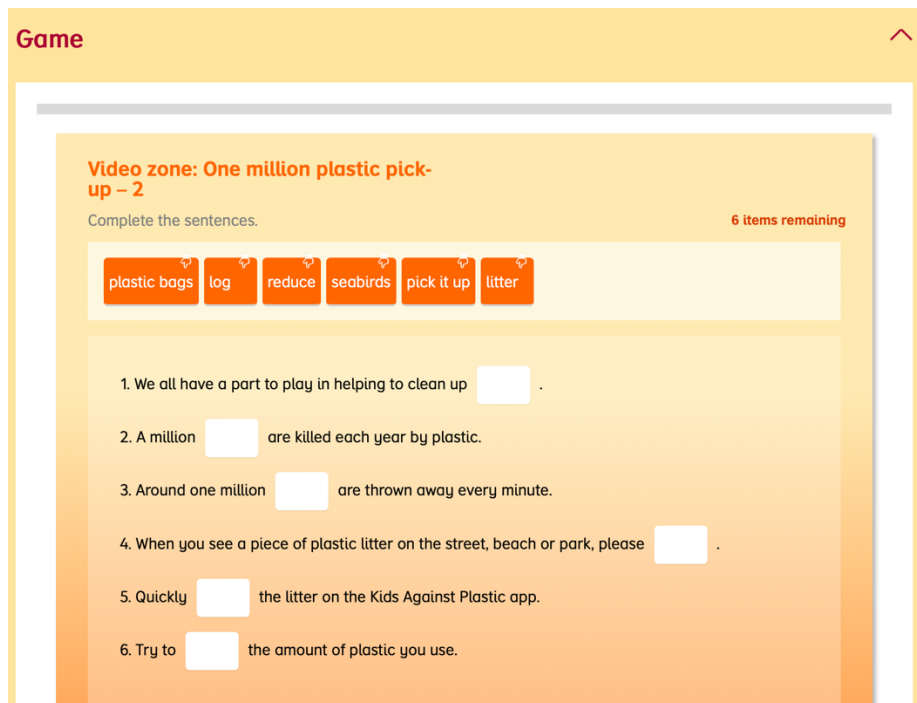
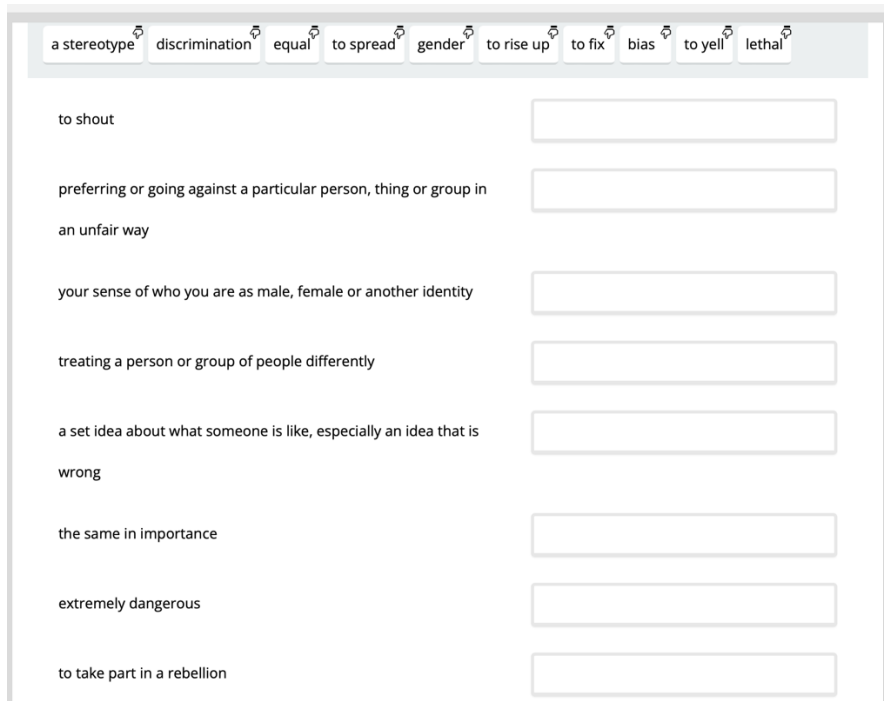


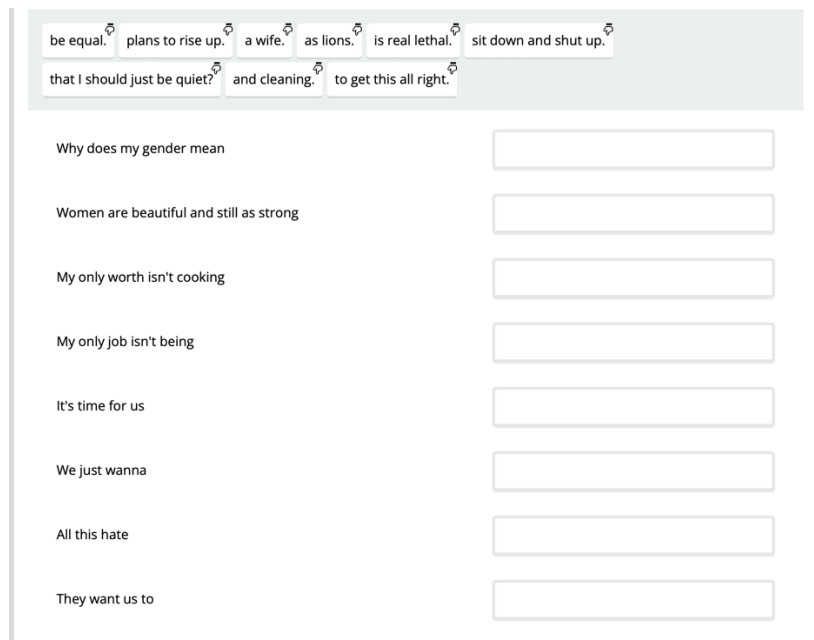
Figure 8 Screenshot of the game

Another example of a ready-made lesson plan is a lesson entitled "Break the bias" related to the International Women's Day 2022, whose main theme referred to gender equality. The lesson came from the Learn English Teens platform and was designed for children aged 15 - 18. The lesson plan was the same as the one described earlier, but the vocabulary was more advanced and connected with the topic of the lesson. The preparation exercise included words such as *bias*, *a stereotype*, *equal*, *gender* or *discrimination*. This time, the students were presented with a clip of a song created on the occasion of International Women's Day 2022 by Janet Taras. The clip brought up the issue of breaking the bias associated with gender inequality stereotypes related to women. At the beginning, the clip shows young girls wearing blindfolds which they then tear off. In the next scene, they are on equal terms with the boys, all dressed in white clothes and holding cards with the words "equal" written on them. The subsequent scenes display women in various professions, such as scientists, engineers, and boxers. The clip ends with a collective call to "break the bias."



*Figure 9 Screenshot of preparation exercise*

Students then move on to an exercise called “Check your understanding: matching,” which involves matching the second part of the sentence. The ensuing exercise involves inserting the word from the box into the gaps in the sentences. The sentences in both exercises come from the song and include words learned at the beginning of the lesson. During class discussion, students answer the question open to interpretation: “What’s the main message of the song for you?” The question is intended to elicit individual responses from students. Analyzing the lyrics of a song during classes encourages some reflection and offers the opportunity to obtain various interpretations of the text. Consequently, the discussion is based on the individual feelings and experiences of students, and this, in turn, can contribute more towards joint considerations regarding the discussed problem.



*Figure 10 Screenshot of exercise*

The issue of breaking bias is also discussed in the next two lessons whose main part is the screening of two British films. One of them is *Billy Elliot* (2000), directed by Stephen Dalry, about a boy in whom his father wanted to instill masculinity by sending him to boxing lessons. However, the boy wanted to devote himself to dancing, which aroused in him true passion and brought happiness. The film illustrates how deeply rooted stereotypes, cultivated in many people from an early age, cause inequality in various spheres of life, and at the same time it gives hope that breaking them is often the key to true happiness. The other film is *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002), adapted by Gurinder Chadha which also fits into the topic of the lesson as it raises social issues such as women's emancipation and tolerance towards differences, including racial differences. The film tells the story of two young girls who, following their dreams, want to devote themselves to their greatest passion, football. In both cases the desire is opposed by their parents who have different ideas about their daughters' happiness. The film becomes another example of how important it is to break stereotypes and follow one's own aspirations, sometimes different from the common ones.

Watching both videos makes students think about the topic again. Because the film presents characters similar in age to the students, it can also be an inspiration and allow them to identify with them. The discussion about films led to an exercise in which students debated gender-neutral language in relation to, among other things, professions. They learned the history of how masculine words such as fireman, salesman, as well as businessman and flight stewardess were transformed into firefighter, salesperson, businessperson and flight attendant, which led to a discussion about equality in professions that are increasingly performed by representatives of both sexes. This may serve as another example of combining sustainable development topics with linguistic issues which complement each other naturally through a common topic. The linguistic aspect is primarily the development of vocabulary, as in the previous topics, as well as noticing the evaluation of the language.

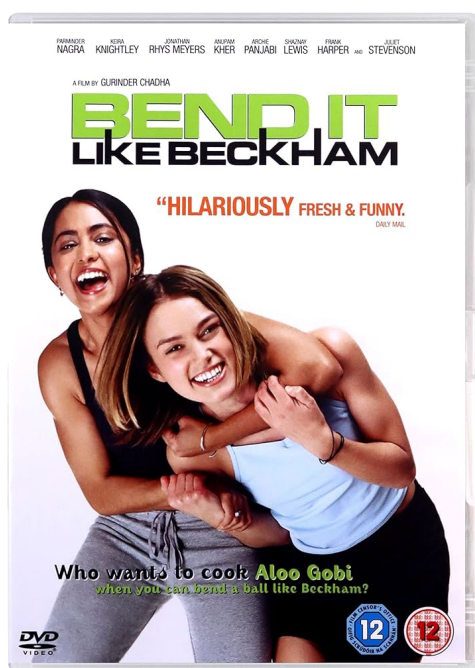


Figure 11 Bend it like Beckham (2002) film poster



Figure 12 Billy Elliot (2000) film poster

### 5.3.2 Textbook analysis

As previously mentioned, textbooks play a pivotal role during English lessons in Polish schools. Constructed upon the fundamental curriculum, they serve as the foundation upon which teachers design their instructional lesson content. Unfortunately, in Polish schools there is still a trend of conducting lessons only according to the textbook, without going beyond it and without activities that could interest and engage students more in the topics discussed. Taking this fact into account, treating the textbook as the main source of learning, this study will focus on examining 2 textbooks at 2 levels - for grades 6 and 7 of primary school. The core curriculum assumes that at these levels students acquire the most knowledge necessary to pass the exam in grade 8 and thus complete primary education. The textbook for grade 8 was not taken into account in this research, because in grade 8 only a review book is usually used to prepare students for exam tasks and consolidate previously acquired knowledge. When deciding on the selection of textbooks, most Polish schools rely on those from the largest educational publishing house in Poland, "Nowa Era", which provides textbooks and materials at all levels of education. A series of textbooks preparing students for the eighth-grade exam is called "Teen Explorer" and was created in cooperation with National Geographic. Junior Explorer 6 and Teen Explorer 7 textbooks will be examined to check whether topics related to sustainability appear. Additionally, the frequency of occurrence of such topics will be examined, along with examination of how particular types of issues are raised.

Junior and Teen Explorer books contain 8 chapters divided thematically according to the applicable core curriculum. Approximately 10-11 lessons are devoted to each chapter to complete the 90 hours planned for learning English in a school year.

Junior Explorer 6 devotes only 2 lessons to issues related to sustainability in chapters 7 and 8. The lessons discuss issues of ecology, pollution and promote green living. The first one is lesson 7b titled *Reuse, renew, recycle*, which deals with the issue of recycling. Students read a text from which they learn how to reuse things in different ways. However, although the topic sounds promising, only one paragraph of the text addresses the issue of recycling. Lesson 8b contains a text about pollution and its impact on the natural environment. Students learn vocabulary such as: care about, pollute, put in danger, recycle and do litter and participate in a discussion about the statements contained in the text. The teacher also presents an online trend called #trashchallenge, which involves

taking a photo of a polluted area, then cleaning it up and taking a photo after the change. Both lesson topics refer to SDGs 13, 14, and 15 within the natural environment, but to a very limited extent. Taking into account that 6th grade students complete 60 hours of English lessons in year 2, lessons on sustainability constitute only 2% of all lessons.

Teen Explorer 7 devotes an entire chapter to sustainability issues. Chapter 7 titled “Save the Planet” includes 8 thematic lessons related to the environment and social life. The remaining 2 lessons are a repetition of the knowledge acquired by students in this chapter.

The main assumptions of the chapter included on its first page are to master the understanding of texts relating to environmental protection, acquire vocabulary related to both environmental protection and factors that have a negative impact on it, and developing the ability to express one's opinions. The chapter ends with writing an e-mail to the youth organization. The first topic of the chapter refers to climate change (SDG 13) and highlights the impact of human activities related to waste production on the environment (SDG 12). The text contained in this lesson makes students aware of the consequences of the above-mentioned problems, and also calls for action by providing several ready-made solutions, such as: using reusable packaging or supporting local stores instead of large supermarkets. In the next lesson, students focus on learning 6 new expressions: natural environment, environmental protection, deforestation, pollution, recyclable and waste and issues related to them. This lesson focuses on mastering new vocabulary, word formation within the topic and the first attempts to discuss the topic being learned. In the next lesson, students learn 3 conditionals, which are presented in the form of statements relating to environmental protection:

**Zero conditional:** If you don't produce waste, you help to save the planet.

**First conditional:** If you use reusable objects, you will produce less waste.

**Second conditional:** If someone told you that producing no waste is possible, would you believe them?

As part of their practice, students complete tasks in which conditional sentences refer to environmental protection activities. Lesson four covers listening to the production of plastic and facts related to it, and explains to students what PET plastic is. After four lessons, in which students have mastered the necessary vocabulary about the environment

and conditionals, they are ready to conduct a dialogue with their peers, so lesson 5 focuses on expressing their own opinions about changing everyday habits for the benefit of the environment. Describing what effects unconscious actions may have and asking questions about peers' opinions on these topics are included. Lessons 6 and 7 are the second parts of lessons 2 and 3, covering the expansion of vocabulary and grammar issues necessary for further, more extensive discussion of environmental issues. The end of the chapter, after acquiring the knowledge mentioned above, is to write an e-mail to the youth organization in order to express the willingness to join this organization working for ecology.

Analyzing the aforementioned chapter, it can be concluded that it has precisely defined goals presented on the first page of the chapter, which not only encompass expanding vocabulary and grammatical issues but also entail fostering values in students by promoting awareness of environmental changes and the impact of human actions. This concept is consistent with the assumption of SDG 4 Target 4.7, which is to spread knowledge about sustainability and call for action towards it. The chapter consistently achieves its goals by first introducing students to the topic of climate change, environmental pollution and actions that can reduce it. Students learn new vocabulary listed in bold or in a table, including *global warming*, *extinction*, *reusable*, *decompose* and *rubbish*. The chapter also includes an element of word formation, where students create nouns and adjectives from given verbs. (table) These types of exercises increase the vocabulary of students, who will be able to express themselves more freely on the topics discussed in the subsequent discussion. It is also a good solution to introduce conditionals in the example of sentences related to the environment, because students can more easily learn them by association with the topic and then be able to create their own examples. Examining the frequency of SD implementation in this textbook, it can be concluded that these issues take approximately 10-11 hours, which is approximately 11-12% of lessons in the entire school year. The limited number of lessons and narrowing the topic to environmental issues mean that of the 17 SDGs, only 5 closely related ones are discussed (SDGs 11,12,13,14,15,16).

The above presentation and analysis of the content of both textbooks show that in the two key years of schooling for students, topics related to sustainability, i.e. those relating to the 17 SDGs, are covered in official textbooks to a negligible extent, which does not allow students to fully present the problem under study. In grade 6, it does not provide the

opportunity to consolidate the acquired knowledge and reflect more, because a given topic covers only one lesson, unlike grade 7, where these issues are repeated and supplemented with new content in subsequent lessons. Nevertheless, a key aspect is the fact that topics related to sustainability are included in only 2% of all lessons in grade 6 and 12% in grade 7. This may be due to the need to implement the core curriculum necessary to pass the exam after grade 8, which does not include this type of topics and due to the limited number of hours of English (3 hours a week in both years).

## **6. Discussion**

Based on the analysis of the materials and information obtained during the interview, a discussion will be held on what could be effective ways of including ESD in the foreign language teaching curriculum.

As de la Fuente assumes, thanks to the interdisciplinarity of education for sustainable development, it can be included in the foreign language curriculum, which means that "(...) environmental, social and cultural dimensions of sustainability can be addressed from various perspectives. (2022, p. 3) And although the entire ESD discourse includes many theories evolving over time, the 2030 Agenda with its 17 SDGs has slightly narrowed its framework, giving the opportunity to select goals and targets closest to students' lives, so that they can try to take real actions for sustainability in their communities. The accuracy of the assumptions of the 2030 Agenda may be debated by many, but considering the possibilities of youth activities, the simplest ones are enough to gradually work towards change. An interview with the teacher and an analysis of the materials she provided, as well as school textbooks, showed that topics related to sustainability are still very rarely present during English lessons in Polish primary schools. Hence the need to take actions such as Interviewee, who herself decided to include additional topics related to SD in her lessons based on additional materials from the British Council and film adaptations, which were the beginning of further discussion, for example on gender equality (SDG 5) is worth taking into account. The materials from the British Council presented in the Analysis chapter were one of the most common elements of Interviewee lessons, among others, due to the commonness of these materials in Polish education, which is based primarily on materials from Great Britain. The reason is primarily the fact that other English-speaking countries such as the United States and

Australia do not provide many materials for teaching English, and if they do, most of these materials are paid. Another reason is the fact that children in Polish schools learn British English, which is considered the original and most reliable variety of English. It is therefore difficult to assess whether the materials provided by the United States or Australia would cover the topic of ESD, and if so, how and whether such materials would be more accurate than the one presented by the British Council. In Poland, there has been a constant trend for years to complete the material included in the core curriculum by the end of the school year. A core curriculum that mostly covers issues from students' everyday lives, but does not encourage them to think critically, discuss global issues, or call them to activities in which they could use the knowledge acquired during lessons. The results of this study clearly indicate that there is a need to transform learning environments in Poland to be ready to implement ESD in the foreign language teaching curriculum, because language lessons, especially English, provide the opportunity to combine the necessary linguistic knowledge contained in the core curriculum with topics related to SD. Nevertheless, this first requires building the capacity of teachers, i.e. appropriate training in the field of ESD, so that they are able to skillfully implement ESD in their lessons. On the other hand, the Interviewee example proves that the willingness to go beyond the framework of the core curriculum is enough to create SD-related lessons that will gain students' interest. It would be enough to pick one of the SDGs or its targets and consider how it relates to the environment in which students live to design a 45-minute lesson that, as Interviewee did, will present the topic and English vocabulary related to it, and then strive to for discussion with students, which will result in ideas for joint activities on this topic in the local community.

## 7. Conclusion

The purpose of this degree project was to analyze the image of education for sustainable development in practice based on its implementation in teaching English in one Polish primary school. The work of one of the school teachers in Poland served as an example. The analytical framework applied in the study focused on Priority action area 2: Transforming learning environments, Student Engagement in Social, Cultural and Environmental Sustainability Topics and Frequency of ESD topics in English lessons in Poland. The book "Education for Sustainable Development in Foreign Language Learning" (Fuente, 2022) was also used as guidance, and its methods of implementing ESD in foreign language teaching were reflected in the lessons that the Interviewee described and implemented. The participants of this research were 15 English teachers who were interviewed to further investigate the frequency of ESD in foreign language teaching. After the pre-selection of the interviewees, one teacher was chosen due to the fact that this person not only implemented topics related to SD issues imposed by the program, but also implemented their own program. The choice of this information was purposeful, because it allowed for a deeper examination of how it is possible to include ESD in the curriculum of teaching foreign languages, especially English, and this information can serve as an example for other teachers.

An interview with a certified English teacher and the materials used in lessons dealing with SD constituted the subject of the analysis conducted in this research. The selection of documents and media for the analysis was made on the basis of the interview, as the topics most widely described by the Interviewee were selected. The materials were provided by the Interviewee after the interview had taken place. They consisted of ready-made lessons available on British Council teaching platforms, as well as British films publicly available on the Internet and official textbooks for grades 6 and 7. As the Interviewee pointed out, the lessons never focused solely on the implementation of material from the sources mentioned above, but were supplemented with their own in-class exercises created by the Interviewee in the original innovation "The World Around Us."

The interview revealed that some of the best forms of implementing ESD in foreign language teaching are various types of short-term and long-term projects. In the dialogue

with the Interviewee, M. Ferry's statement was confirmed: "We do not just understand an individual when we speak a different language; we come to understand the whole community and its history wherein that individual lives." (2022, p. 60) Therefore, at the same time, the goal of another type of learning called community-engaged learning is fulfilled, in which "(...) students learn with community partners as part of their work in a course." (Rhoden, 2022, p.26) PBL offers the students an opportunity to learn and understand how the society which they are part of functions. Through projects such as PTPI, students had the opportunity to feel their role in society by teaching younger people who lacked knowledge and thus promoting education available to all. At the same time, combining this type of education with jointly organized events strengthened the bonds and joint building of the local community. International projects also played a crucial role, providing various opportunities in the form of making new friends, strengthening international cooperation at the school level and initiating joint activities for sustainable development (SDG 17). The students not only acquired knowledge in the field of SD, but above all they had the best opportunity to improve their language skills, because they constantly repeated the newly learned vocabulary throughout the course of the project, mainly when communicating with peers from other participating countries.

As previously mentioned, the projects usually concerned topics connected with ecology or interpersonal relations. In order to specify how they relate to education for sustainable development, it is worth linking them to specific SDGs. SDG 4 - Quality education comes to the fore, because each of the described projects or lesson topics primarily concerns the spreading of education about sustainable development (Target 4.7), and the PTPI project can also be linked to Target 4.5, because it provides opportunities for access to education. The project involving the construction of the electric Formula One car fits into SDG 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure, because it promotes technological progress and innovation, and at the same time, by giving female participants the opportunity to join in the project and acquire technical skills, it reduces inequalities and in doing so works towards SDG 5 - gender equality. Class projects related to observing the flow of garbage in students' homes and means of transport raised issues included in SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities, because their goal was to reduce negative effects on the environment by implementing changes into everyday habits. In turn, the project regarding the observation of products marked with the Fair Trade sign which was intended to raise

students' awareness of fair trade was related to SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production.

The second common form of ESD implementation were class discussions which were first based on introducing the topic through language exercises and a short film, and then they moved on to a deeper discussion. According to UNESCO, this type of technique in the classroom provides a number of skills, including "(...) developing focus and purpose before speaking, active listening, building on the ideas of others, summarizing, and questioning." (2012, p.17), which also reveals an important role in language learning; therefore, it is a useful solution for transmitting both the knowledge about SD as well as the linguistic one. The discussion offers the opportunity to better understand the topic, to introduce it from different perspectives, which consequently allows the students to notice similarities and differences in their own and their peers' thinking. The sample lessons described by the Interviewee demonstrated that discussion in itself is not enough to implement the topic and transfer knowledge. It is necessary that the discussion should be preceded by appropriate exercises to introduce students to the topic and familiarize them with new vocabulary. Short videos are also valuable as they support illustrating the topic in a more understandable way. A video about the Kids Against Plastic campaign inspired children to get involved in the campaign and take real actions to reduce the amount of thrown away plastic that pollutes their neighborhood. The discussion about the means of transport made students reflect on how they can positively impact the environment by changing their habits. During three lessons on breaking the bias, the students held a series of discussions about prejudice, breaking stereotypes and gender equality in various spheres of life. In this case, discussions in subsequent lessons were expanded to include further aspects, thanks to which, students could learn about the topic from different perspectives ("Break the bias" song, "Billy Elliot" film, "Bend It like Beckham" film).

The complexity of the topics and the dynamic nature of the discussions meant that they often referred to more than one SDG. Again, as in the projects, the topic of the environment - SDG 11 - appeared very often. The series of lessons devoted to "Breaking the bias" referred to SDG 5 - Gender equality, SDG 10 - Reduced inequalities, and expanded on the topic of gender equality in professions also with reference to SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth. It should be noted that not every class discussion was

related to the project; however, a discussion was a permanent element in the project. Therefore, the mentioned SDGs can be treated as a whole.

When it comes to the language aspect and the combination of ESD with learning foreign languages (here: English), the interview and the analysis of documents and media prove that thanks to ESD, students primarily acquired vocabulary regarding global issues which they may encounter in adult life or when traveling abroad. In the younger grades (ages 5 - 12), the acquisition of linguistic knowledge was based predominantly on learning the vocabulary itself - nouns, verbs and adjectives related to the topic. In older grades (ages 12 - 18), students learned more complex phrases and took part in discussions, which was an additional opportunity to practice grammar tenses. When creating reports or narrating their observations, students used the past tense, while talking about everyday habits or beliefs they used present tense. At the end of the lesson they also expressed plans on how they would change their habits by speaking in the future tense. Taking into account the revised literature, the Interviewee's report, the document analysis and the Researcher's own observations, it can be concluded that Sustainable Development Goals, which cover all areas of life that people encounter every day from an early age, can be combined with any topic of a language lesson. As can be observed from the examples described, the lesson topic very often referred to more than one SDG. The lessons described by the Interviewee proved that students participating in lessons that included SD practiced all of the 4 basic language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). Listening and reading skills were developed by using materials from the British Council. Inter-school and international discussions along with cooperation developed children's speaking skills, while creating reports on their own activities for SD improved their writing skills. The best examples of combining ESD and language learning were international projects, because they can be used to illustrate an ideal learning process. Students first learn about SD and related vocabulary. Then, they practice through in class activities and discover various aspects of the topic through a discussion. Finally, they start a joint project which they then combine with peers from other countries by exchanging experiences (in English) and pursuing a common goal (acting for SD). Such actions meet the UN idea of calling for social transformation, a change in thinking and joint actions for a sustainable future.

By analyzing textbooks for grades 6 and 7 of primary school, the study found that they are not sufficient materials for spreading knowledge about SD due to the infrequency of

these topics appearing in them and the fact that they need to be supported by additional materials such as those from the British Council.

This degree project engages with the ComDev field by combining language lessons with activities for sustainable development according to the 2030 Agenda as well as promoting knowledge about SD among younger generations. This particular kind of knowledge will allow them to develop values and habits that, when practiced in adult life, can facilitate their active participation in creating a sustainable future for them and the communities they belong to. Due to the scope of the field of Communication for Development and Social Change and its constantly evolving definitions, this study focused on the UN's approach, because this is where the idea of Education for Sustainable Development researched in practice comes from. After analyzing activities in the field of ESD, it can be concluded that the approach adopted by the Interviewee fits largely into one of the four UN approaches to ComDev, namely the Behavior Change Communication (BCC), as it primarily promotes dialogue, the search of common solutions as well as the development of values and habits that strive for change at various levels, as well as becomes an example of activities in Priority Action Area 2 established by UNICEF.

This research analyzed the work of one teacher who decided to include ESD in her English language teaching program at primary and secondary schools in Poland and cannot be treated as an illustration of what ESD looks like in language teaching in Polish schools. Nevertheless, it is an example illustrating how ESD may be included in the curriculum and proves that the methods described in this project work and bring the intended results. There remains room for further research on what ESD in foreign language lessons looks like in other Polish or foreign schools, as well as at universities and other educational institutions. In a later study, as in this one, it would be beneficial to focus more on the methods of implementing ESD rather than on the frequency of implementation. Focusing on people who consciously practice ESD in teaching might allow to obtain valuable data conducive to defining specific teaching methods to transmit knowledge about SD while developing language skills. Returning to the research question after conducting the interview and analyzing the materials, it is also worth adding that ESD is an extensive topic described in various ways in many different handbooks and other sources that outline possible ways of implementing ESD-related topics in the classroom. However, as is commonly known, theory does not always go hand in hand with practice and what is

implemented in the classroom is often far from the proud-sounding patterns and guidelines, even if they are described in detail, taking into account additional factors. Interesting ways of adapting ESD in the classroom in language classes or other subjects have their purpose and certainly bring greater or lesser benefits in various areas of students' lives. The examples described showed that small interventions can change long-term behavior and are usefully combined with language learning. However, taking into account the entire concept of "sustainability", it is worth considering how this idea can go beyond the school environment and be adapted to the local context. For example, can such a simple exercise as observing the flow of waste at home draw attention to the broader problem of municipal waste management in the hometown and prompt an analysis of the city's policy on this issue? Or does the transport use survey reflect on the issue of sustainable public transport in a broader perspective? This is probably an interesting topic worth considering in further research, so that the ESD theory taught to students during lessons is transformed into practice in a broader local context, for example by encouraging students to analyze the city's policy on issues included in the SDGs. This could encourage students to take actions such as initiating contact with decision-makers in the city. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this would concern the promotion of ESD in practice, apart from the linguistic context, if further research was to take place in Poland, where English, as mentioned in this work, is not an official language. Actions on a larger scale could also be undertaken in cooperation with schools from abroad, where students, exchanging information about their research on the SDG policy in their cities, could jointly look for differences, similarities and problems, and then address their possible doubts or conclusions in letters not only to city authorities, but at state or European level. In this case, the linguistic context would also be fulfilled, where the communication language would be English. To sum up, when it comes to recommendation for future research, it is worth paying attention not only to the implementation of ESD in the classroom but also to possible initiatives in relation to sustainability policy in the local context.

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## Appendices

### Annex 1. Interview Guideline

#### Interview Details

Date:	
Location:	
Time:	
Participant name and surname:	
Participant gender:	
Participant's school:	
Participant's role at school:	

#### Questions

1. Has education for sustainable development appeared in your lessons?
2. Was the ESD implementation your initiative or part of the program/textbooks?
3. What were the lessons on sustainable development like?
4. Have students done projects on sustainable development issues? What did they look like? What was their effect?
5. Have you noticed that students are interested in the topic, did they later refer to the topics or demonstrate knowledge or not?
6. Did the children have tasks to do at home related to the topics of sustainable development?
7. How were these topics related to learning English?
8. How often did topics related to SD appear in lessons? In which years did they appear more often?
9. How do you evaluate the combination of ESD with learning foreign languages? Does this model work or not?

10. What class exercises do you find most effective?
11. Which SDGs appeared most often in lessons and which of them were students more or less interested in?
12. What learning tools do you consider the most effective in SD lessons?
13. Did students establish extracurricular cooperation related to SD?
14. What guided you when choosing topics related to SD?
15. did the children have knowledge about the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda or were these topics discussed generally?