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TEACHING AND LEARNING

THE PERCEPTION OF PLANTS BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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Abstract
Plants are frequently overlooked by people compared to animals. The study investigated primary school pupils' attitudes toward plants in a sample of 159 pupils aged 9–13 years, which is a common age range for research on environmental and plant-related attitudes in primary education. The sample size is typical for a school-based survey study in environmental and biological education, allowing for reasonable statistical power in descriptive, inferential and multidimensional analyses. Data were collected using a 38-item questionnaire with a Likert-type scale (5-point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"), a standard method for measuring attitudes in educational research. The questionnaire was divided into 6 factors following: 1. Importance of plants (9 items); 2. Interest to plants (10 items); 3. Necessity of plants (3 items); 4. Positive effect (4 items; 5. Animals and plants (4 items); 6. General attention (4 items); 7. Caring for or investment in plants (3 items). The influence of gender, grade level, ownership of garden and growing houseplants was examined. For the determination of psychometric characteristics of the research tool was the statistical methods like Cronbach's alpha and exploratory factor analysis used. The perception of plants was slightly positive. Gender and grade level were significant factors. On the other hand, ownership of garden and growing houseplants were insignificant.

Keywords: *Elementary school pupils, Likert type items, perception of plants, quantitative approach.*

AN ESTONIAN (L2) ONLINE COURSE FOR UNIVERSITY APPLICANTS: RATIONALE AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract
The rationale for establishing the course for university applicants in Estonian as a second language lies in the Estonia's ethnolinguistic composition and the particularities of its education system. Around 10% of new entrants to the University of Tartu come from upper secondary schools with Estonian-Russian bilingual instruction, having studied Estonian as a second language. This background does not always provide sufficient proficiency to manage university studies, where the curricula are delivered in Estonian. Successful participation in academic communication requires exposure to input across a range of registers. The e-course is designed to help secondary school graduates strengthen their Estonian language competence for academic purposes. The C1-level course is organised around the University of Tartu's four disciplinary domains (Social Sciences; Arts and Humanities; Medicine; Science and Technology). The modules are discipline-specific, with thematic content supported by authentic materials. Instruction takes place via Moodle. The course has been offered in 2024 and 2025 (3 ECTS; with 205 and 165 participants, respectively). The paper aims to outline the rationale and methodological principles of course design, as well as to evaluate initial experiences and identify areas for further development, drawing on feedback from both students and teachers. The course serves as an applied model for facilitating the transition from secondary to higher education for students whose mother tongue differs from the university's language of instruction. The model is also adaptable in other countries where a gap exists between the language of instruction and students' first language.

Keywords: *e-learning, CALL, course design, Estonian as a second language.*