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Good News from the World. The Environment on Advanced Level (Synonyms)

Recipient, subject: older teenagers, university students, and/either adult learners, Polish language for foreigners lessons, higher intermediate/advanced level (upper B2/lower C1)

Duration: 2 lesson units (90 minutes)

The lesson may be conducted at any time of the term. Nevertheless, it can also be an introductory lesson to the new (summer) term after the winter break, as it reflects on positive events (mostly climate protection-related, but not necessarily exclusively) which happened over the last year (or some other period – depends on the focus given during the lesson).

1. Subject: *Good News from the World. The Environment on Advanced Level (Synonyms)*

The lesson consists of content related to learning Polish as a foreign language at the advanced or pre-advanced (higher B2/C1) level, focusing predominantly on reading and speaking, followed by reinforcing advanced vocabulary knowledge related to the topic of the environment and its protection.

Furtherly, it aims to build students' environmental consciousness of climate change and our role in stopping it. The subject is supposed to motivate the students into responsible action toward protecting the environment despite the negative message from the media causing the feeling of helplessness in many people. Therefore, the course unit focuses on positive information on environmental protection.

2. A place in a course cycle

This course session is not the first encounter of the students who study Polish with the topic of environment. It was present at every level of their Polish language education¹. Apart from the repetition, the meaning of this theme is to add new vocabulary, focus on synonyms to the known lexis and structures, and widen students' points of view as much as their ability to argue it.

3. Objectives

a) In terms of knowledge, the student:

- learns new environmental information
- gets familiar with a Polish language portal dobrewiadomosci.net.pl
- becomes aware of the possibility of acting against the climate change

b) In terms of skills, the student:

¹ See i.e. Lekcja 19. Zielono mi! In: Stemppek I. et al. *Polski krok po kroku 2*, Kraków 2012, p. 126 – 131.

Lekcja 14. Świat wokół nas. In: Madeja A., Morcinek B. *Polski mniej obcy*, Katowice 2007, pp. 88 – 92.

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- practices reading with an understanding of journalistic texts in the Polish language
- knows how to express their opinion related to the piece of information read in the Polish language
- widen their vocabulary related to the environment
- becomes aware that the synonyms have contextual use.

c) In terms of attitude, the student is:

- more aware of their impact on climate change,
- actively participating in the discussion during the lesson,
- reinforced positively about acting to stop the climate change
- more consciously using the Polish language according to the desired intention and style.

4. Methods

A communicative and task-based approach to learning Polish as a foreign language, critical and conscious reading, reading-based vocabulary tasks, monologue, and discussion, arguing one's point of view.

5. Forms of work

Individual reading and tasks, collective discussion based on brainstorming, argumentation, and explanation.

6. Materials, resources, and teaching aids

Worksheets, board to write new information and ideas, mobile phones or computers to access the dictionary page during exercise 2 (synonyms matching).

7. Subject matter references

<https://dobrewiadomosci.net.pl>

<https://wsjp.pl/> - dictionary to work on synonyms and definitions of new vocabulary

8. Learning procedure

I. Introduction (15 minutes)

1. A discussion with the students (brainstorming) about news related to the natural environment encountered in the mass media during last year (or a shorter period – depending on the lesson context). Questions to the students:

Could they refer them shortly?

Were there predominantly positive or negative news?

What do they think is the reason for encountering mostly negative (or positive) information in the media?

How do they feel about it?

According to the message received from the mass media, what is our impact on climate change?

Do they feel motivated to try to stop climate change through their action?



What can we, the regular people, do about climate change? The language instructor and the students list ten activities to help the environment and write them on the board.

Also, during the discussion, the language instructor enlists on the board new and important vocabulary related to the natural environment.

2. Teacher asks if reading more optimistic news about the environment would motivate the students to act more against climate change. After the answers, the teacher passes smoothly to the next step – the reading exercise. The teacher explains that all the short texts are authentic and come from a web portal *Dobre Wiadomości*, dedicated to bringing optimistic and not sensational news to the audience. All the information is related to the natural environment and its protection.

II. Lesson proper – 75 min

1. 15 min. Introduction of the reading exercise. The students are supposed to match together pictures, titles, and leads of ten articles. Furtherly, the teacher asks the students to highlight while reading all the new vocabulary to explain after the exercise².

2. 10 min. After the reading exercise – a collective check of its correctness. Discussion on the new vocabulary and possible misunderstandings. The teacher avoids giving explanations but encourages the students to explain the lexis to each other exclusively in the Polish language.

3. 15 min. Vocabulary exercise based on synonyms matching – depending on the level of students, they are supposed to find the synonyms in the read texts which match the list of words given by the teacher or, if it appears too complicated – match the already highlighted words in the reading with the list of their synonyms³. After this exercise, the students should orally answer (during discussion) the following questions:

Can we exchange all the synonyms freely in the texts (focus, for example, on the pair of synonyms: *odrodzić się – zmartwychwstać*)? Why yes/no?

Would they always fit in the same context (i. e. *władze – rząd*)?

Do all the synonyms have 100% the same meaning (i. e. *ściana – mur*)?

Which of the synonyms has a broader meaning than their matching pair (i. e. *statek – kontenerowiec*)?

Can they give examples of collocations when their meaning differs⁴?

4. 15 min. Discussion on the read content. The questions asked by the language instructor may be as follows:

Which information seemed the most interesting? Why?

Which fact mentioned in the news seems to make a real impact on climate change?

Which article would they like to read in full? Why? Based on their answers, students receive the final task – finishing the chosen article according to their inspiration and knowledge (as if they were the journalists themselves).

² If the language instructor wishes to dedicate more time to the course session to the discussion and/or work with synonyms – it is possible to ask the students to prepare the reading exercise at home and be prepared to talk about it during the lesson.

³ The second version of the exercise requires additional preparation from the language instruction: the teacher can either highlight the words in the texts (simpler version) or highlight the sentences where the synonyms are located (middle-hard version).

⁴ The students can check the connotations and collocations of each of the words of the synonym pairs to find context when the two words stop being synonyms - the wsjp.pl can be helpful here.

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5. 15 min. Short writing task, which might be conducted in pairs or individually, as described in the previous point. If the time allows, students read aloud their written texts. Otherwise, they deliver them to the teacher after the class/present them at the beginning of the following course session⁵.

6. 5 min. Homework: the language instructor asks students to read the chosen article at home (the same as they have chosen to write their ending) – each student preferably received a different text to read. They have to prepare a short oral summary of the article for the next course session to present in front of the group. They can also mention to what extent their previously proposed ending differs from the actual development of the topic.

7. 5 min. Closure: The teacher asks the students about potential questions and observations.

9. Answers to the tasks in the working sheet:

Task 1 (reading)

Obrazek	12	11	5	2	7	1	8	4	10	3
Tytuł	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
Nagłówek	VI	I	V	IV	VII	II	X	III	IX	VIII

Task 2 (synonyms matching)

1. zasilać – napędzać
2. producent piwa – piwowar
3. odrodzić się – zmartwychwstać
4. trawa – trawnik
5. operacja – zabieg
6. utrata lasów – wylesienie
7. ochronić – uratować
8. władze – rząd
9. ściana – mur
10. kontenerowiec – statek

⁵ This part of the lesson can be assigned as homework – depending on the time left till the end of the session.