

Multilingual tuning of ABC posters

ABC posters are posters for preschool and early elementary school kids where the letters of the Latin alphabet are illustrated by a word that starts with such letter and, usually, also have a picture that illustrates such word.

For example, A can be represented by the word Apple in English, B by Banana, and so on. Such posters are hard to translate because, for example,

Apple = Pomme = Apfel = Mela =

Such easy words are not compatible in different languages, in the sense that they do not start with the same letter.

With the kind assistance of Ernster Verlag (and thanking various friends for suggesting words) it has been possible to provide words that are compatible in the five main languages of Luxembourg, namely Luxembourgish, French, German, Portuguese, and English.

Switzerland could aim instead for Swiss German, French, Italian, Romansh, and English. Belgium could aim for French, Dutch, German, and English.

We would also like to suggest the technical possibility of making a database that contains various choices of easy words that are suitable for ABC posters in the various languages based on the Latin alphabet, possibly with a level of preference (the best choice being the easiest choice, for example Apple beats Avocado). In fact, the words can easily be associated to files with illustrating pictures.

Then two parents with different mother tongues (based on the Latin alphabet) could just select their languages on the website. Then the website can automatically produce an ABC poster that is compatible in those two languages. Teachers may wish need to select multiple languages to promote language inclusion in class, however finding compatibility becomes harder the more languages one wishes to include, especially if the languages are not very close (for example, German and Portuguese).

In school, children memorise some words as representatives for words that have the same initial letters. And it is surely less confusing if the same word (and related illustrating picture) can be used for all the languages spoken by a child.