



Intellectual Output 3

DESCRIPTION OF DIGITAL TOOLS

1. Name of the tool/ Link

UniLang / <https://forum.unilang.org/>

2. Short description of the tool

UniLang (or UniLang Community) is an online language learning forum and space for resources and language learning collaboration.

Unilang is essentially a very large online forum with a specific focus on language learning. The Unilang group is a non-profit organization so all resources and conversations are developed or facilitate by members of the forum, who do not receive financial compensation (such as e.g. italki), but whose interest is in sharing and supporting language learning. All language learning resources are produced collaboratively by volunteers and can be edited by any member with access to the Internet.

All data, with few exceptions, is licensed under an open license: the UniLang Public License (similar to a creative commons license). Members are organized into related groups and coordinate themselves the projects of their interest. Through the forums, resources for language learning are also frequently shared, including online courses, video and audio resources, etc all with a specific focus on language learning

In addition to the language learning forums, the website provides a live chat feature for live interaction with other members where a chat-box supports a number of Unicode scripts, in order to allow members to write in different languages.

3. Which language competences can be developed with the help of this tool?

- Online collaboration: visually structuring and imparting information in a digital environment
- Mediation: explaining subject matter or new concepts to other group members
- Collaborating in a group to construct meaning
- Mediating strategy linking and activating prior knowledge
- Written Interaction and correspondence online
- Online goal-oriented co-operation (specifically on language learning)
- Online interaction through online conversation & discussion and goal-oriented online transactions & collaboration

4. The requirements concerning the tool



The unilang resources can be accessed through any standard browser and does not require any additional installation or tools. The forum can be browsed freely without an account (which is useful for accessing resources) but you must create an account (which is free) to be able to fully engage with the forum (e.g post and respond to threads).

The unilang live chat tool is IRC-based, which means that it can be connected to through a number of different programs. Unilang recommends a number of chat software programmes that can be used to connect to unilang chat at <https://unilang.org/chat.php?sid=3d284ce87f77a3e22ca4eb1ad88b8b76>

5. Language of the tool

The main unilang forum is in English, but the subforums for language learning of specific languages are numerous (100+)

A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2

6. What competences from DigCompEdu Framework does the tool develop?

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Professional engagement | 1.1 organisational communication
1.2 professional collaboration
1.3 reflective practice
1.4 digital continuous professional development |
| 2. Digital resources | 2.1 Selecting digital resources
2.2 Creating and modifying digital resources
2.3 Managing protecting and sharing digital resources |
| 3. Teaching and learning | 3.1 Teaching
3.2 Guidance
3.3 Collaborative learning
3.4 Self-regulated learning |
| 5. Empowering learners | 5.1 Accessibility and inclusion
5.2 Differentiation and personalisation
5.3 Actively engaging learners |

7. How can the tool be used by teachers/learners?

The tool can be used primarily by learners for independent language learning. The forums provide a means for students to engage with others or undertake independent learning - e.g.

- These forums are a meeting place for learners and speakers of a specific language. The topics can include any doubts or problems that arise in studying a language. This is also the place where learners can practice their language skills or ask for grammar or translation assistance.



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- Forums also provide very specific subforums for particular language learning elements such as Grammar, Pronunciation & Script, Vocabulary, etc.
- The forums also provide specific sections for additional resources, such as free online language courses for a wide variety of languages. The courses are generally made up of a few lessons, in which there will be grammar and vocabulary, and often also some exercises. Most of the courses are intended for beginners.
- In addition to courses, the forums also provide specific forums dedicated to offering resources related to language learning, including articles, video and audio resources, dictionaries, etc.
- The live chat is especially useful for practising languages with native speakers and/ or other language learners, and in addition to a multilingual main channel, there are several channels dedicated to specific languages.

From a teacher perspective, the website could be used to gather useful language teaching resources which could be implemented with students.

Case study – example

1. Sign up for an account at <https://forum.unilang.org/>



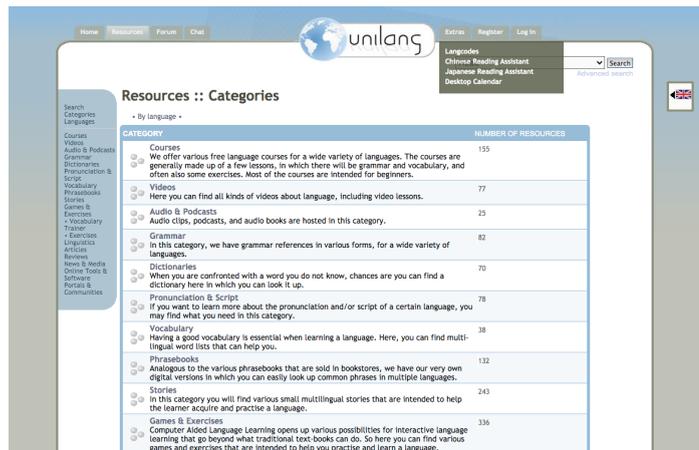
2. Access the specific sub-forum (language) which you are interested in learning by simply clicking into it, this will provide you with the discussions available in this forum space. You can create a new thread by clicking on the “New Topic” button



3. To engage in a discussion thread, simply click into the thread. You can respond or join in on the discussion by clicking on the “Post Reply” button



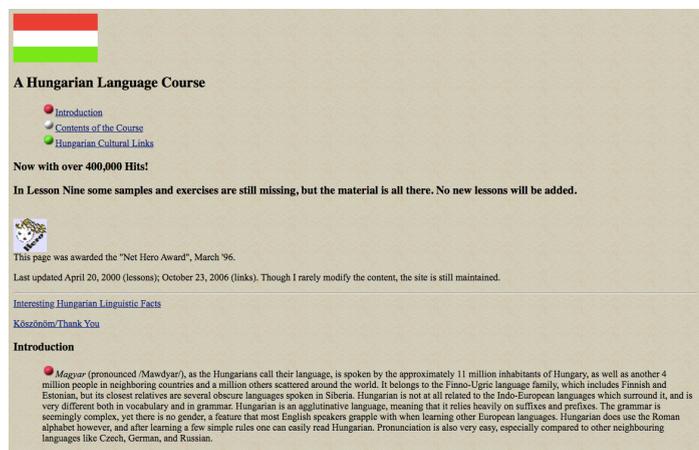
4. If you click on the “Resources” tab at the top of the screen, you can view the available unilang resources



5. One area of interest for self-directed learning is the Courses area, which allows you to access a range of user-created online courses

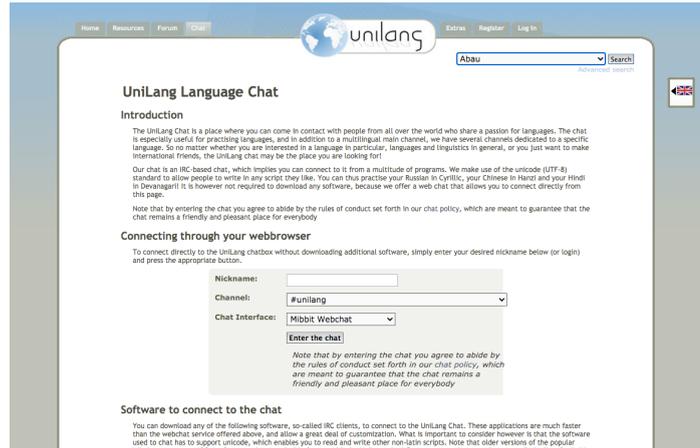


6. To access a course, simply click on the relevant link. Please note that these courses are hosted outside of unilang





7. You can click on the “Chat” tab at the top of the screen to access the chat feature. You can use the browser-based chat provided, or tools to allow you to connect to unilang chat are also listed lower down on this page



10. Things you have to bear in mind when using the tool

UniLang is a non-profit organisation dedicated to languages and language learning which anyone can freely join or contribute to. The benefit to this is that there is a huge library of language learning assets and resources available to you and your students regardless of level, language being taught, etc. However, it is worth noting that the downside to this is that there is little in the way of quality control and that not all of the resources available on the site will be beneficial or useful to students. It should also be noted that students should exercise consideration and be careful if using this for independent learning, so as to avoid unpleasant online experiences with others.

11. Similar tools

Similar additional tools include other community-driven language learning spaces such as English baby.

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<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1170640.pdf>