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# Romani in pictures



Audio-visual Romani-Polish dictionary  
for Romani children of Romanian origin



Romani in pictures is an audiovisual dictionary facilitating the understanding of Polish and the school environment to Romani children of Romanian origin. It has been prepared for Romani pupils and their assistants. In the extended version it comes in the form of a mobile case containing a tablet with a preloaded app and a set of cards, plus personalised booklets to exercise and consolidate the knowledge.

Materials – a tablet and phone app containing an audiovisual dictionary, cards to print, and a video manual – are also available for free on [www.romskiwobrazkach.pl](http://www.romskiwobrazkach.pl).

## Who is the innovation is targeted at?

For Romani children of Romanian origin, attending Polish schools, with no or poor knowledge of Polish.

## Who can implement the innovation?

The dictionary is helpful in running school and out-of-school classes by:

- Romani education assistants,
- inclusive education form teachers,
- teachers,
- daycare centre staff,
- other school personnel,
- animators, voluntaries, employees of organisations and institutions supporting the development of Romani children of Romanian origin.





## What problems does the innovation address?

Romani children of Romanian origin have only recently started attending Polish schools. Their assistants are mostly individuals representing the majority group (i.e., Poles), not knowing either Romani or Romanian language. At the same time, children of Romani origin coming from Romania know no or little Polish. It is the second or even third language that they learn. No knowledge of Polish makes education and communication in Polish schools either difficult or impossible to them, which leads to inequalities and exclusion.

Most of these children did not attend kindergartens, while their parents are illiterate. Their situation is additionally hindered by poor economic conditions, social isolation and negative stereotypes held by the majority group. No familiarity with the school structure and educational processes, as well as the sense of alienation cause the sense of confusion among such children.

Teachers often get discouraged from working with Romani pupils because they cannot communicate with them, while assistants complain about the lack of work tools.

## How was the innovation created?

An essential element of work on the innovation was to involve Romani mothers and children in the process of developing the tool.

Innovators together with Romani education assistants and a school pedagogue started from the identification of language needs among Romani pupils. Based on the outcomes, they prepared claims broken down into five thematic categories.

Then the claims were translated by Romani women living in Poznań and by a Romani philologist into a selected dialect of the Romani language used in Romania. After that, the claims were verified with Romani children in terms of their comprehension and were recorded and sound-processed.

With the help of an expert and assistants, Romani children selected the graphic style to illustrate dictionary entries. Finally, after a consultation with Romani children and their assistants, 45 pictograms illustrating the entries were prepared.

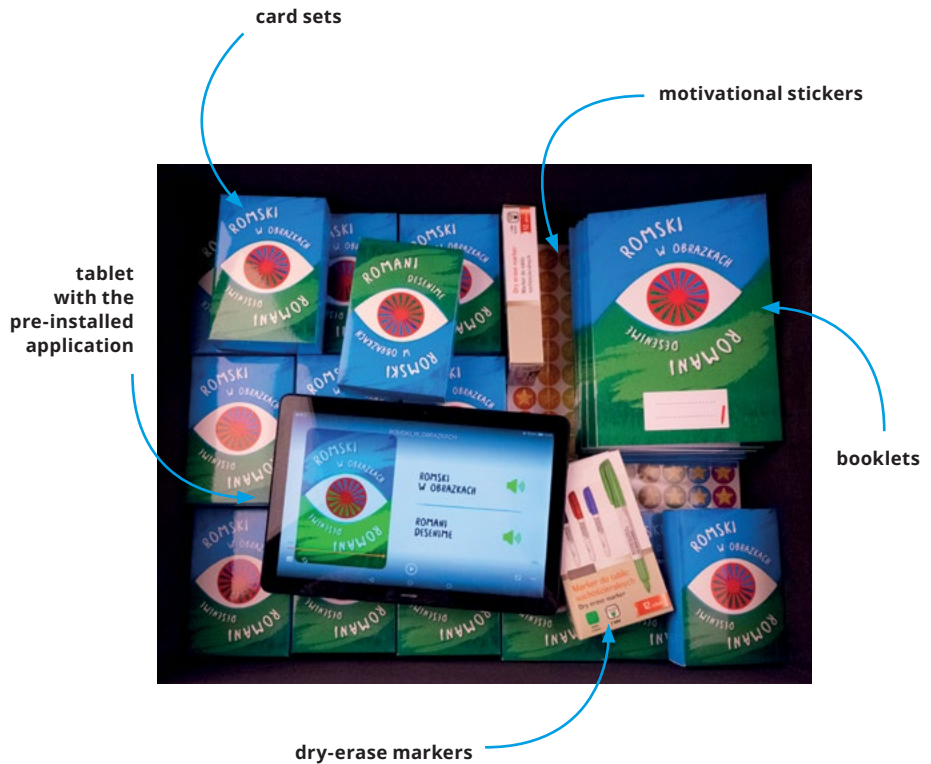
Based on that:

- motivational booklets featuring individual tasks for children were prepared,
- tablets, mobile cases, stickers and erasable markers were purchased,
- cards and motivational booklets were printed,
- an Android app for a tablet and smartphone was prepared and uploaded to tablets.

Mobile cases with card sets, booklets, and stickers were distributed at two primary schools – one in Poznań and one in Gdańsk, where Romani educational assistants checked their functionality with Romani pupils, based on pre-designed class scenarios featuring numerous games and interactive tasks.

Each child was provided with a set of cards and personalised motivational booklets. Motivational stickers, games and fun activities stimulating children to learn were also utilised.

## MOBILE CASE CONTAINS:



# How to implement the innovation at your end, step by step?

Romani in pictures in the original version is a mobile case that contains:

- a set of cards with entries from the Romani-Polish dictionary,
- booklets and exercise notebooks,
- a tablet with a preloaded app containing the dictionary,
- motivational stickers,
- erasable markers.

The Romani-Polish dictionary is made of 45 entries, recorded in Polish and Romani (in one of dialects used in Romania). They are divided into five categories: school building, in the classroom, emotions, objects, and expressions.

The dictionary is accompanied by:

- motivational cards on which pupils collect stickers for each word they learn; moreover, they put stickers on a special champion card – as a reward for mastering a given category;
- cards for drawing – erasable markers included in the set can be used for adding own entries in the form of a word or a drawing.

The dictionary can be used during classes. Here is an **example of a class scenario** utilising it.

**Topic:** School space

**Main goal:**

- to learn words related to school spaces in Polish, to support navigation within the school building,
- to master the ability of an aggregable and safe group play.







### **Operational goals:**

A pupil:

- can cooperate with a classmate,
- can listen to others,
- integrates with the rest of the group,
- knows Polish words from a given category,
- knows the school building layout,
- knows how to call particular rooms in Polish,
- knows how to use words learned and ask the teacher to go to the toilet, library, nurse's office, etc.
- knows how to ask for directions or explain where they are going.

### **Methods:**

- activating and creative (pupils' utterances, motor play activity, group work),
- visual (presentation, observation),
- verbal (conversation, discussion, instruction).

### **Forms of work:**

- individual,
- collective,
- group.

### **Tools:**

- tablets with a preloaded app,
- cards from the Romani-Polish dictionary,
- motivational booklets.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Location:** classroom, the entire school, including the sports field.

## PREPARATION FOR CLASSES:<sup>1</sup>

Explicit group work principles must be defined before the class starts.

1. We help one another.
2. Each idea counts.
3. We avoid criticising others.
4. We listen and respect one another.

It is crucial to discuss each point with pupils. They should be asked what each principle means to them, how they understand it.

## CLASS FLOW:

### I. Introduction

1. Greeting class participants.
2. Introduction and distribution of the set of cards and motivational booklet among all children.
3. The facilitator announces the goal of the class, explaining that we will try to learn expressions related to the school space in Polish. The class will be conducted in the form of games and play activities.

### II. Topic execution

1. Children are to write their names on card sets and booklets they have been provided with.
2. Game.

**Variant A:** A trip to all key rooms with hidden stickers that children are to put in their booklets. Looking for the right cards from the pack – those who find the right one are rewarded with a sticker.

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<sup>1</sup> Scenariusz przygotowany przez asystentki edukacji romskiej Ewelinę Frączkowską, Paulinę Krzysik i Paulinę Piórkowską.

**Variation B:** Children select cards randomly. One of them is to play the role of a tour guide. Others, including the facilitator, follow the child that is to take them to the selected location. If the child does not know the name of the selected venue, their additional task is to ask people found there about its name (for instance, at the daycare room they ask the carer, 'Excuse me, WHAT DO YOU CALL this place?').

3. Blind game – the facilitator lays out cards on the table face down. Children flip them over one by one and say what they can see there. (This activity is to find out which words are known to children).
4. Language memo – the facilitator lays out 20 cards on the table (10 pairs). Pupils are to familiarise themselves with cards, images, captions. The facilitator checks which notions are known to them. Then cards are shuffled and laid out in rows face down. Children flip over pairs of cards upside down and say what can be found on them. If they select two identical cards, they collect them, and if cards are different – they should be put back to their original location.
5. Audio drama – the facility lays out cards representing a given topic in front of pupils and plays sounds from the app on the tablet. Pupils are to guess which cards they correspond to. They get a point for each correct answer.
6. Pupils fill in their worksheets in booklets.

### III. **Ending**

Once the play activity is over, the facilitator thanks children for their participation in classes, awarding them with stickers.

### IV. **Feedback information**

It is highly useful to gather insight from participants on classes, their topic, usefulness of exercises, or the class facilitation method. It can be done by means of a 'round' in a circle.



## Does it work? How does the innovation help its beneficiaries?

The innovation test contributed to positive changes among Romani pupils of Romanian origin, teaching assistants, and other school environment stakeholders.

- Teaching assistants and teachers were provided with a functional, profiled tool to work with Romani pupils, which made their work easier, ensuring better educational outcomes.
- Pupils improved their language competencies – now they know more words. They were also more eager to communicate with teachers, to signalise their needs such as going to the toilet.
- Romani children got accustomed to the school environment in Poland and principles of functioning within this system – thanks to educational games, they found out what classes looked like (these are elements that are not obvious in the Romani culture, such as sitting at a desk, individual work on tasks, group work, communication with teachers, finishing tasks that have been started), and the school space and its different functions (reception desk, library, canteen), perceiving the school building as 'theirs' and accessible.

Another significant outcome of the innovation was the empowerment of Romani children.

- Pupils were provided with the sense of agency at the stage of consulting the content and appearance of the dictionary.
- Romani children had a feeling that their language was equally important and valuable in Polish schools. They were proud that their culture was acknowledged, and that they and their loved ones took part in consultations and recordings.
- When completing tasks with the dictionary correctly, children enjoyed their success and were proud of their achievements.

Assistants and other teachers noticed an increase of engagement in school activities among Romani children.

- Pupils were eager to take part in new tasks and actively co-created their content. They showed their own initiative and creativity in inventing new games.
- Pupils' attitude showed that their motivation to learn was high.
- Visiting teacher noticed the potential among Romani children – they saw that when the language barrier was eliminated, pupils were eager and willing to cooperate with them.

## How much does it cost?

The innovation can basically function costlessly. All it takes is just to download an app for the Android system or video clips to any device and print cards on a home or school printer.

In the premium version, card and booklet printing must be considered. Files for printing are available on [www.romskiwobrazkach.pl](http://www.romskiwobrazkach.pl). The cost of card printing at a print shop is determined by the number of copies, quality of paper, and current prices. At the same time, their further use is costless – the dictionary and cards can be used to work with various groups of Romani children, when implementing subsequent class scenarios.



## Who are the authors of the innovation?

Introducing authors of the innovation:



**Izabela Kolka** – Academy of Fine Arts and the Poznań Collegium Da Vinci graduate. Scenographer, costume designer, visual artist, art educator. Engaged in social and cultural projects. She designs museum exhibitions, makes her own movies. Originator and co-author of the Onco-Joga social innovation. Laureate of the 'Kultura w sieci' scholarship.



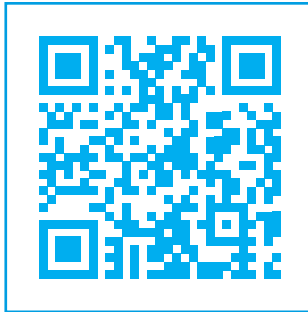
**Barbara Prądyńska** – graduate of the Polish philology and theatre studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, theatre pedagogue at the Institute of Polish Culture at the University of Warsaw, and culture manager at the Economy University in Poznań. Actress, director, theatre pedagogue, culture animator. She runs proprietary art, cultural, and social activities among groups at risk of exclusion, including the Romani community in Poland and abroad. She runs the Art Junction Foundation, operating in the area of social theatre and cultural animation. Holder of a grant from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in Poznań.

## More information

*Romani in pictures* can be downloaded for free from:  
[www.romskiwobrazkach.pl](http://www.romskiwobrazkach.pl) or [Facebook – Romski w obrazkach](#).

Downloadable materials:

- Tablet app – for the Android system,
- Smartphone app – for the Android system,
- Files for printing on a home printer (A4 format),
- A device-agnostic tutorial.





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