

SESSION 11
(Educational Sciences- Didactics of languages and literature)

EXPLOITING INFOGRAPHICS FOR ELT

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Abstract

An Infographic is information represented in visual form using graphics and text. Infographics integrate text, images and design features in a way that is concise, accessible and memorable. The present data and ideas to diverse audience on different platforms as part of knowledge transfer and can serve as authentic resources that meet the needs of English language learners. Infographics as a great source of visually rich content keep students motivated while learning English language as a foreign language and are useful in helping students to describe processes, reflect on progress, analyze and evaluate data. Despite their relatively low word count, infographics have been shown to enhance language skills. They help English language student to think critically about a subject, data set or complex idea and improve research skills and find trustworthy information sources, organize information logically, enhance their creativity and develop multi-perspective thinking. The aim of the paper is to share a wealth of ideas and activities for developing tasks and complete English language lessons around authentic infographics as well as suggestions for tasks that teachers can use with students to get them creating their own infographics and developing their critical thinking, digital literacy and language skills.

Key words: *English language, Infographics, language skills, students*

Introduction

There has been a lot of concern about how students learn things, as opposed to just what they learn (Boulton & Lucas, 2011). This is especially crucial due to the significant changes in 21st-century pedagogies, which rely on the effectiveness and efficiency offered by information and communication technologies (ICT) tools like Web 2.0, smartphones, digital technologies, and other tools in education (Mynbayeva, Sadvakassova & Akshalova, 2018; Myamesheva, & Anarbek, 2015). Numerous contemporary methods have been developed as a result of the significant changes in 21st-century pedagogies, including, but not limited to project-based, problem-based,

flipped classroom, project-based learning, thinking-based, gamification, design thinking, learning, and competency-based learning approaches. These approaches demonstrate how substantially 21st-century instructional methods have changed from traditional approaches to modern approaches. These contemporary methods are particularly significant because they put students at the center of their learning and give them the chance for active participation. Additionally, they enable students to take responsibility for their learning, make defensible choices about the components of their learning process, and practice self-regulation. In this way, teachers help students learn. Modern approaches also enable the smooth integration of ICT tools and other digital technology, which increases their efficacy in enhancing student outcomes (Ogunsola, Adelana, & Adewale, 2021). Infographics tools are one type of digital technology that has been shown to be useful for improving pedagogies and easing teacher workload while further simplifying learning for students by moving it from abstraction to concreteness (Lavin, Korte, & Davies, 2010).

Therefore, the aim of the paper is to share creation tools that help teachers make their own infographics and activities for developing English language lessons around authentic infographics proposed by Nik Peachey in his webinar recording called “Exploiting Infographics for ELT”.

Infographics in the EFL setting

Infographics are modern, fashionable design and visualization tools that are used in educational settings to present information in an attractive, engaging way. The use of infographics is one popular technique for conveying complicated information to students in a learning setting (Abilock and William, 2014). Infographics have been defined in a variety of ways. It is a type of data visualization that aims to make complex information more understandable (Smiciklas, 2012); it combines text and graphics to quickly communicate qualitative and quantitative data to students (Toth, 2013); it is a way to communicate properly organized, and systematically designed visual contents to students (Lapum & St-Amant, 2016); it is a way to visually present instructional contents to students through text images, videos, diagrams, and charts, for faster comprehension of contents (Al-

Mohammadi, 2017) and it is an information represented in visual form using graphics and text (Pichey,2023).This further indicates that infographics can quickly and effectively convey information to students visually in the English language classroom (Smiciklas, 2012; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2016). Infographics typically include three different sorts of elements: visual (graphics, colors, icons, and signs), content (texts, facts, and data), and knowledge (Siricharoen & Siricharoen, 2015). Infographic designs can be as simple as a layout of illustrations or as complicated as interactive animations. They have the ability to serve as communication tools, enabling comprehension of all relevant information without further source research (Toth, 2013). Additionally, infographics help learners avoid cognitive overload by removing extraneous knowledge and information. They also ensure speedier information transmission and comprehension in the quick-paced world of today. Because of this, infographics are now a fairly common type of contemporary communication. The usage of infographics in the ELT classroom has numerous potential advantages. Teachers concur that students are quite happy with the assignments of evaluating and producing infographics (Siricharoen & Siricharoen, 2015). Students learn and retain information more readily when it is given in the form of infographics (Ozdamli,2016). Infographics may help students acquire subject-related material and build a variety of practical skills and talents (Kibar& Akkoyunlu, 2017). Learning from both pre-made infographics and the processes used to create them can improve visual thinking and the capacity to learn through visuals. It can also teach students how to find and select the right visuals, as well as how to customize them for particular purposes, increasing their communication influence. These studies investigated the extent to which L2 learners generally learned through infographics. Pisarenko and Bondarev (2016) examined the impact of using infographics as a teaching and learning aid in the context of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes. There were two groups involved in the experimental study. In contrast to the control group, which exclusively used conventional materials, the experimental group incorporated infographics in their instruction. The findings showed that infographics have a positive impact on foreign language instruction because their use ensures that students actively acquire knowledge and raises their level of communicative proficiency in a foreign language. Additionally

Alrwele (2017) is the only study carried out in Saudi Arabia that looked at how infographics affected EFL students' academic performance and how the students perceived such effects. Two distinct areas of education were created, one utilizing infographics and the other using more conventional teaching techniques. Surveys and achievement tests were used to gather the data. The outcomes showed that the experimental group greatly outperformed the control group in terms of achievement. Additionally, the majority of experimental group participants (almost 90%) preferred infographics to conventional text-based materials. According to them, the infographics had a positive impact on both their intellectual and emotional growth (Alrwele, 2017). Furthermore, Bicen and Beheshti (2019) used flipped classroom instructional infographics to conduct research to measure the perceptions and evaluate the accomplishments of ESL preintermediate English language level students. They conducted a case study in which they used both a qualitative and a quantitative research approach to investigate the students' attitudes and academic success levels. According to the students' perceptions, infographics inspired them to learn and recall difficult material more quickly. The use of infographics in the classroom had a similar positive impact on students' learning and development of language comprehension skills. "Flipped Classroom Instructional Infographics" is the name of a study that Huseyin B., Mobina B., et al. did in 2019 regarding the use of infographics in a flipped classroom learning setting. The purpose of the study is to analyze the views and progress of ESL students in learning English through infographics used in flipped classroom training. According to the study's findings, the engaging and thorough nature of flipped classroom instructional infographics is more likely to stimulate students' motivations in the experimental group compared to the controlled group, which could make it easier for them to understand concepts, help them memorize information more quickly, and boost their confidence in the learning process. Finally, the effectiveness of infographics in teaching writing skills in the EFL setting of Saudi institutions was also studied by Hameed and Jabeen in 2022. Saudi EFL undergraduate students were participants of their study. Through the pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire, the researchers collected data. The research results showed that infographics improved students' creative writing abilities. Additionally, students' perceptions were

excellent since they thought infographics were an eye-catching way to evaluate novel concepts.

However, researchers agree that a review of EFL teaching literature reveals sparse information about the implementation of infographics in EFL classrooms. Scholars note that teachers are not well-trained regarding infographic making tools and lack educational ideas of how to deploy them in the context of ELT classroom. This led to the requirement for research into the information and readiness of trainee teachers to use infographics tools for teaching and learning when they become in-service teachers.

Infographic sources

Teachers should use infographics into their English teaching and learning strategy for a variety of reasons. Perhaps one of the most fundamental reasons is – because they have become a predominant part of the way people choose to communicate information online and as such teachers need to help their students understand this genre of communication and work with it effectively. Infographics are, however, a very effective means of conveying the information in a much more visual way that is less dependent on explanatory text. According to Peachey (2023) the easiest way to find infographics for a specific topic is to use Google-keyword+Infographic such as:

e-Learning Infographics-Educational infographics

Daily Infographics- Get a new infographic in your inbox each day

Cool Infographics -Lots of information about data visualization and infographics

Pinterest-Find and save infographics and get suggestions for similar ones

The following creation tools presented in the paper will help teachers make their own infographics and dynamic material, or they can teach their students how to use them to make visuals (Peachey, 2023).

Creation tools

Draw.io

This is a great free tool for creating small graphics, flowcharts and diagrams. Download it and use it on your desktop.

● **Genial.ly**

A great freemium tool for creating dynamic infographics, games, posters and presentations.

- **Visme**

Another great freemium tool that also includes templates for interactive digital books.

- **Canva**

A great freemium tool for creating dynamic infographics, games, posters and presentations.

These steps indicate how to make an infographic:

Step 1: Outline your goals for creating your infographic.

Step 2: Collect data for your infographic.

Step 3: Make data visualizations for your infographic.

Step 4: Create your layout using an infographic template.

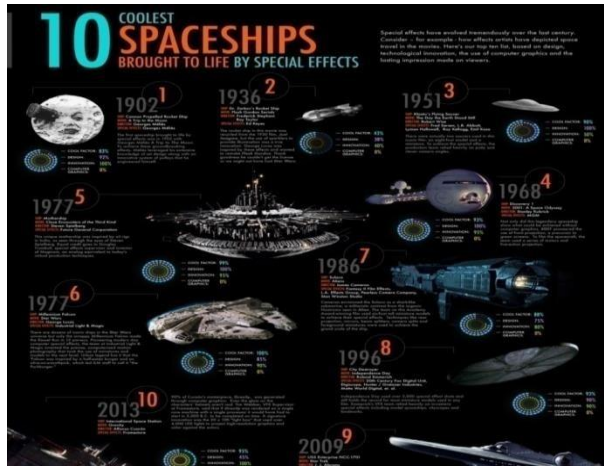
Step 5: Add style to your infographic design

English language lesson plans

English language lesson plans below based around infographics will enhance students' critical thinking, digital literacy, language and communication skills during the learning process (Peachey,2023). These lesson plans could be used as a collection of a ready-to-use materials as well as generic ideas that teachers can use to create their own tasks for exploiting infographics.

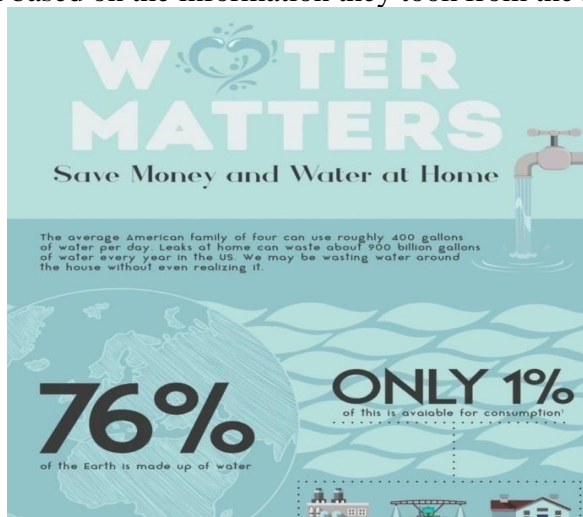
CREATED QUIZZ

Give your students an infographic and get them to create a quizz based around it. Once the students have created their quizz they can use it to check the comprehension or knowledge of other students in their class. You can make this competitive and have teams to quizz each other.



WATER MATTERS

Make a presentation! You can ask your students to prepare an oral presentation based on the information they took from the infographic.



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Ask your students to take notes about the most important information in the infographic and then use the notes to write a summary. The summary could have some form of publication as a motivation, such as a newspaper report website publication.



To sum up, the proposed creation tools and English lessons plans are a great source of visually rich content for teachers to keep their students motivated whether they are in the physical or online classroom. Students can utilize infographics as creative learning exercises as well as information sources that influence their cognitive styles. The assignments that go with the infographics are meant to inspire students to question the origins of the information they come across online and to think more critically about the material they are exposed to.

Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to share a wealth of ideas and activities for developing tasks and complete English language lessons around authentic infographics as well as suggestions for tasks that teachers can use with students to get them creating their own infographics and developing their critical thinking, digital literacy and language skills. The paper has shown that the utilization of infographic are cognitive tools that assist students to learn with, analyze problems, reflect on their progress, describe methods, and assess data. What emerges as a conclusion and recommendation regarding the use of infographics and such lesson plans is that they contribute not only to the development of language skills but at the same time to

organize information logically, think critically about a topic, data set, or complex notion in English language education. Students also become more creative and develop multi-perspective thinking in a visually engaging style. All arguments presented in this paper could help language syllabus teachers to create books based on infographics. It should be emphasized that if teachers are not prepared to create and use infographics in the classroom to promote effective learning and enhance student learning outcomes, then infographics will not be used effectively in the educational setting.

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