

THE LITTLE HANDBOOK OF UNIQUE WORDS

“Spread the Word, Feel the World”

Youth Exchange, Edessa, Greece

22.04.2014 – 29.04.2014

Acknowledgements

This handbook is the outcome of a Youth in Action program held in Edessa aiming at the cultural exchange of young people from six different countries. The core of the cultural exchange was focused on language. According to the suggested concept, the participating countries were encouraged to present words that are believed to be untranslatable or unique and cannot be conveyed to other languages, because of the specific cultural conditions their creation and use implies.

The present record is not the upshot of any scientific conference on language and, subsequently, raises no scientific claims. The handbook was created on the basis of non-formal learning, group co-operation and teamwork activities. The teams participating did not consist of linguists, but young Europeans, since the only prerequisites were linguistic data of their communicative experience. The conclusions drawn were based on the contemporary observation of language systems in their modern form and actual use. Issues of historical origin of the words illustrated on the present record have not been considered. Conclusions derive from a descriptive condition, whilst evaluative judgments on languages are being reproved from this project, as are being excluded ideology and nationalistic issues.

Introduction

It is commonly known that the language we speak represents our horizons as humans. It defines us and teaches us about the world around us, while also helping us to communicate with each other in a mostly efficient way. There are no higher or underdeveloped languages; there are no languages that are 'better' than other languages. All languages are created equal, as pretty much everything else on this planet we call home. However, it's humanity that comes up with discriminations against things it doesn't understand; which also leads to fear.

Since all languages are equal, all languages are perfect; of course they are only perfect for the people who speak them. A foreign language, when put in a different country than its origin, is pretty useless, because no one speaks that foreign language; so it kind of defeats the purpose, which is to communicate. Languages were created by humans so we could communicate with each other and express our needs, longings and feelings. There is no other use for language besides that.

Languages try to describe reality. Do they succeed in that endeavor?

No, they don't.

In fact, if languages successfully described reality, then there would be only one language. 'Reality' is nothing more than the things you see around you and the things you experience. Reality is something very subjective and, since language is created to aid humans, language is subjective as well. The languages describe what they see in the country in which they were created. For example, the Eskimos have about a 100 different words for 'snow', but the Greek language has only one (χιόνι /chi'oni/). Now, why might that be? Eskimos are surrounded by snow; snow is their view of reality and because they see and use it every day, they have found many words to describe it. Greece, on the other hand, is a southern and warm place with few to no snowfalls every winter. As such, there was no need to have 100 different words for 'snow' so they only created as many as they needed in order to communicate amongst themselves the idea of that white, cold and watery thing that sometimes falls during the winter... especially on the mountains....χιόνι.

But the secret lies in the word 'try'. Languages try to describe reality, and that is a good thing. Through the process of trying to describe reality in order to communicate, languages were created and even to this day new words are added to most vocabularies. For example, English has the greatest influx of foreign words, mainly because so many people from different countries speak it. As a result, the reality of a native English speaker has expanded dramatically over the years as words were added. This is the reason to learn a new language; to expand one's horizons. Languages allow us to explore and view the world through a different lens, creating a better understanding and tolerance for foreign cultures and habits. Languages are a gateway to new worlds; through them, we learn how other people in other countries think, feel and behave. They provide us with new experiences and new lives, for

through languages we are able to dive into new nations and adopt parts of their cultures making them our own, and thus, becoming a part of those cultures ourselves. Languages shape our personalities and mindsets, allowing us to break free from the borders of our own country to become citizens of the world.

Languages do not discriminate, or hate; they only serve our communication. It is up to us to use them as tools to create a better and unified world.

“Spread the word, feel the world” is a unique Youth Exchange, consisting of 32 people from 6 European countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Spain and Greece) who came together on the 22nd of April in Edessa (Greece) to discuss about the untranslatable and unique words of their languages. For one week the participants worked together, joining their diverse cultural backgrounds to create a better understanding of the world around them, reforming their perception of it. The result of this collaboration can be viewed in this *Little Handbook of Unique Words*, which illustrates words that are unique in their own right because of the varied historical and cultural events that created them.

April, 2014

Index

B

Bulgaria

E

Estonia

G

Greece

I

Italy

P

Poland

S

Spain

Bulgaria

Кукер /'k u k e r/ (noun)

Bulgarian carnival figures - men dressed as animals or typical characters (grandparents, king), always with masks on their heads, often with bells on their belts. Usage: "Next year I want to be a *kuker* and I will go to the festival in Pernik."



Usage: www.dreambulgaria.ru

Чалга /'c h a l g a/ (noun)

Chalga is a Bulgarian music genre, often referred to as Pop-folk. Chalga is essentially a folk-inspired dance music genre, with a blend of Bulgarian music and also primary influences from Greek, Turkish, Arabic, Serbian and Russian music.

Usage: "Last night I attended an amazing *chalga* party and got wasted."



Калесвам /'k a l e s v a m/ (*verb*)

Inviting people to a wedding by going to their homes and giving them wine or rakia, served in a specific bottle.

Usage: "Tomorrow I will go to our neighbours and I will *kalesam* them for our wedding."

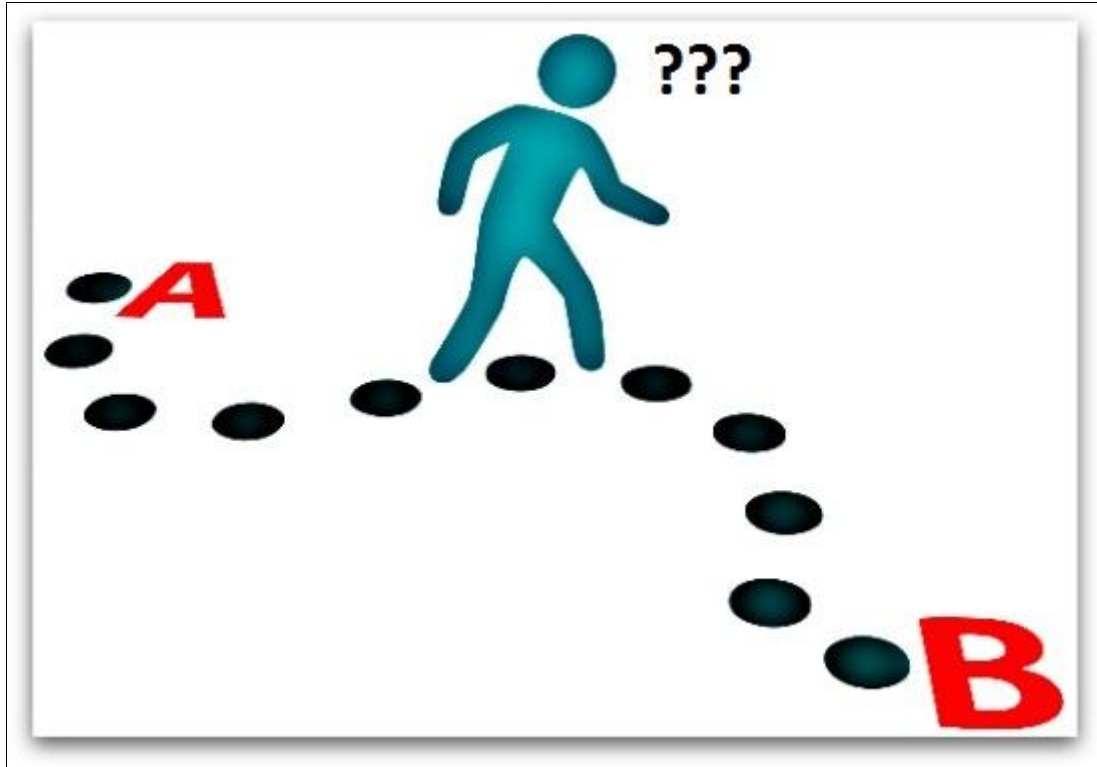


Source: <http://i1.ytimg.com/vi/OK71sl2l2Zl/hqdefault.jpg>

Мандахерцам /'m a n d a h e r t s a m/ (*verb*)

Wandering around without a direction or goal.

Usage: "Yesterday I had a day-off and I was *mandahertsing* for a couple of hours."



Source: <http://www.copyediting.com/>

Понуда /'p o n u d a/ (*noun*)

Food and drinks, which are given to a lying-in woman or a sick person.

Usage: "My grandfather is at the hospital, so I brought him some apples, bread and a bottle of wine as a *ponuda*."



Source: <http://www.cateringprivet.com/pics/2401.jpg>

Кифла /'k i f l a/ (noun)

A type of a buttery flaky pastry, similar to the croissant, which can be filled with chocolate, marmalade and a jam. It is also a girl who dresses in a fancy, provocative way and takes photos in front of the mirror.

Usage: "Last week I went to the shopping mall and I saw a *kifla* taking selfies at the toilet."



Source: <http://spisanievip.com>

Estonia

Äksi täis /'e k s i 't e i s/ (*adjective*)

To become overly enthusiastic about something in a moment; a sudden spur of energy; could happen in a situation of any kind.

Usage: Mari and Ann are sitting in the room and feeling bored. Jaan comes in and makes a suggestion to watch Harry Potter. Everybody becomes *Äksi täis*.



Source: <http://www.exuberantanimal.com/web/speakers/index.html>

Kohuke /'k o h u k e/ (*noun*)

A small cheesecake snack you can eat anytime. It has typically jam or curd inside and has a chocolate covering.

Usage: Madis ate a *kohuke* for a small snack after lunch.



Source: <http://www.nupi.ee/pic.php?file=/files/product/3159.jpg&w=400>

Muhe /'m u h e/ (*adjective*)

Something between cool, funny and cozy or comfortable. Includes all words like enjoyable, pleasurable, gratifying, pleasant, grateful; rarely also mellow. *Muhe* can be used to describe a place, look, face, smile, humour or song.

Usage of *muhe* as a verb: *Muhelema* out of joy into one's beard. This would be a sort of small, barely visible smile of irony that is not really publicly displayed, but rather enjoyed on one's own. A person who has a warm sense of humour that is full of implications, can also be called *muhe*.

Vanapagan /'v a n a p a g a n/ (noun)

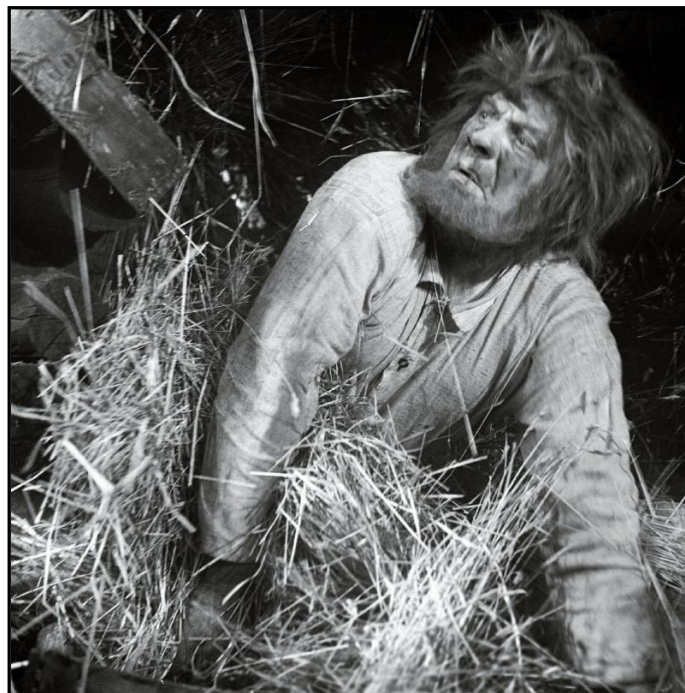
It's a character in Estonian folk tales, who has become something of a characteristic of some personality types. The original meaning of it is something of an amalgamation of the international word *pagan*, which in Estonian also means *devil*, and different characters in older folk tales. He is not the omniscient evil spirit of the Christian tradition, but rather a somewhat sorrowful character, who tries to get people into his list of souls, but simply can't manage, because he is always tricked by different characters, most often by a nosy peasant called Sneaky-Ants. *Vanapagan* is afraid of wolves and thunder, and has a hag of a wife that he can't get along with, and many other human characteristics. There can even be several of *Vanapagans*, and they often live in caves, or deep in the woods, or in marshes. As he is a character of folk tales, he can be of both regular human size, or of giant proportions.

The origin for the term is said to be of the old Estonians who did not adopt Christianity when it was forced onto them, but instead fled to remote places, and the people started calling them Old Pagans (the word *Vana* actually means old).

The adjective *vanapaganlik* can today, too, mean a backwards person, a man of the forests, but is not a negative term. *Vanapagan* is not so much someone who's feared, but rather someone you just have to know how to deal with. These days, the term is seeing more and more use in the positive light, meaning people who know the old ways of the forest.

Usage: That guy living in the woods is a real *vanapagan*.

Or: Be careful of that guy, he's a real *vanapagan*, and he might trick you into doing something you don't want to do.



Viitsima /'v i t s i m a/ (verb)

Not to bother doing something, with no negative or positive connotations. *Viitsima* is often used to postpone an action.

Usage: "I didn't *viitsi* to make a proper meal, so I just had fried dumplings."

It can also be used as a noun to describe an element of feeling like doing something.

Usage: "Yeah I didn't do my homework, I simply didn't have any *viitsimist*."

Different from the English phrases "to be bothered", or "not feel like doing something", *viitsima* carries no negative, or positive connotations. For example, if your parents tell you to clean your room, you can just say "I don't *viitsi* right now, but I'll do it later," which will be no problem, it'll mean that you'll include it in your itinerary and do it later.

In English an analogy would be "meh", as in:

"Hey, you wanna go for a jog?"

"Meh, not now."

Vihitlema /'v i c h t l e m a/ (*verb*)

To hit oneself in sauna with bunches of tree branches. This is done as part of a sauna ritual for health.

Usage: Mai and Elen *vihtlesid* each other in sauna.



Source: <http://meeldib.ee/2012/02/vanaeit-vihtleb-saunas-tutti/>

Greece

Kserofiri / k s e r o ' s f i r i / (Ξεροσφύρι, *adverb*)

Drinking without eating.

Usage: "Waiter, please bring us some meze. We can't drink our drinks *kserofiri*."



Kelepuri /c e l e ' p u r i/ (Κελεπούρι, *noun*)

Someone who combines all the necessary characteristics to be considered relationship material.

Usage: "You should marry this lawyer, dear! He is a *kelepouri*! He is financially stable, of a social status and very handsome too!"



Source: <http://www.datingadviceandsecrets.com/dating-secrets-2/dating-secrets-3-secrets-to-dating-rich-men/>

Meraki /m e 'r a c i/ (Μεράκι, *noun*)

The love and commitment you put into your work.

Usage: "Lunch was great, Granny! You put a lot of *meraki* into it."



Source: <http://spsmw.org/2013/08/22/making-bread-retreat-at-saint-mary-of-the-woods/>

Palikari /p a l i 'k a r i/ (Παληκάρι, *noun*)

A man who can be defined by his bravery, courage and good looks. He is also considered to be a gentleman.

Usage: “Look at this *palikari*, with his handsome face and polite ways! He is definitely my type!”



Source: <http://photothessaloniki.ning.com/>

Filotimo or Philotimo /f i ' l o t i m o/ (Φιλότιμο, *noun*)

Putting others first and tending to their needs over your own, without expecting anything in return. It also means that you're happy to do that for them.
Usage: "Thanks for everything you have done for me! It's a sign you have *filotimo!*"



Source: <http://www.teenink.com/art/pastels/53342/Giving-you-my-heart>

Charmolipi /x a r m o ' l i p i/ (Χαρμολύπη, *noun*)

The combination of sadness and happiness.

Usage: "I am so happy! I got accepted into university! Ohh...but...I'll have to leave my family behind!"



Source: <http://wfortuna.wikispaces.com/Journal+6>

Italy

Befana /b e ' f a n a/ (noun, f.)

A “Befana” is an old (and also ugly) woman who looks like a good witch. On Epiphany’s night (6th January) she gives a gift to all the good children and to the bad ones coal and ashes instead. Nowadays we use this word also to describe a girl that is not pretty. Usage: “Look at this girl! She is like a *befana*.”

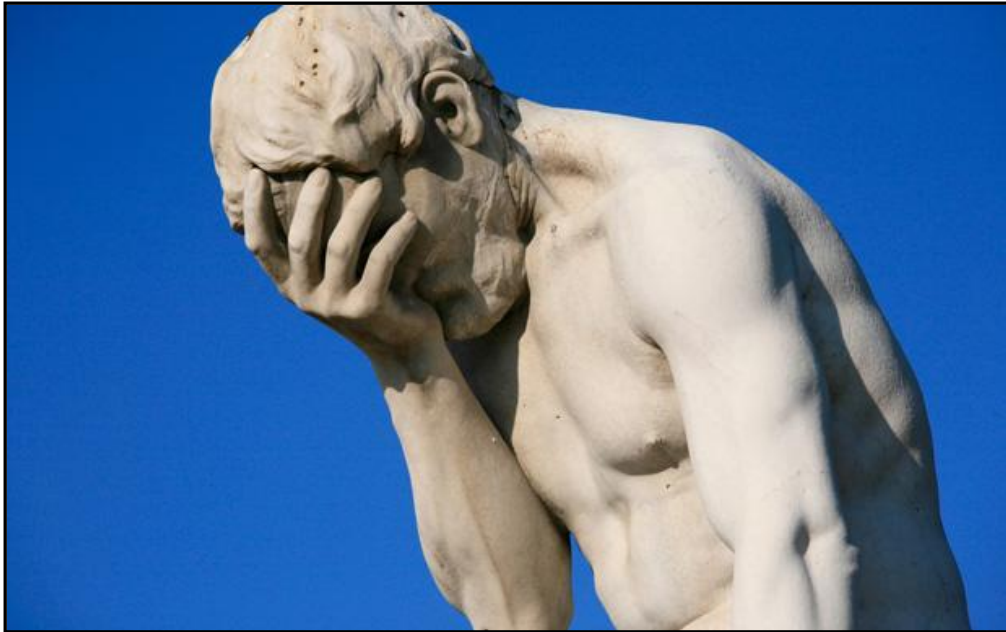


Source: <http://www.italianclubdallas.org/default.asp?pg=befana>

Frana /'f r a n a/ (*noun*)

Literally: “landslipt”, but it can also be used as a word to describe someone who is hopeless, incapable of doing anything! Have you ever met this kind of person? Yep.. Now you have the exact word to call him/her.

Usage: “That guy is a *frana* with girls.”



Source: <http://internet.gadzetomania.pl/2012/02/22/universal-musial-wycofac-plyte-ze-sklepow-byly-na-niej-nielegalne-tresci>

Lampara /l a m ' p a r a/ (noun)

It's a particular kind of lamp used for fishing in the Mediterranean Sea.
Usage: "The fisher uses the *lampara* because it's easier to fish with its light."



Source: <http://www.lalamparamonza.it/>

Pignatta /p i ɲ' ɲ a t t a/ (noun, m.)

A particular terra-cotta amphora that is used for cooking legumes.
Usage: "In the South of Italy, people use to cook beans with a *pignatta*."



Ponte /'p o n t e/ (*noun*)

No...We are not talking about a bridge. It has also this meaning, but we use this word also in a different context. So we make a *ponte* (literally: to make a bridge... Not build it!) when we drag on our days off.

Usage: "We can travel somewhere because the Labour-Day is on Wednesday, so next weekend we will have a *ponte*!"



Source: <https://cliparto.com/serie/326-calendar/>

Ti voglio bene /t i 'v o ʎ o 'b e n e/ (*phrase*)

This is a common expression that you can say to your friend, your parents or someone else that you...”love“. When we love someone, for example a husband, we say “ti amo”; if we say “ti voglio bene!” to a friend or somebody else, it’s an affection.

Usage: “The child hugs her mother saying: *Ti voglio bene*, while the husband kissed her and tells her “ti amo”.



Source: amoreealtrefregnacce.wordpress.com

Poland

Dres /d r ɛ s/ (noun)

A representative of a specific subculture or class of young males. Dres stereotypically lives in urban tower blocks or tenement houses. He is usually portrayed as undereducated, unemployed, anti-social and aggressive. The term refers to the tracksuit, which is his everyday outfit (with sport shoes and white socks). Dres should not be confused with a hooligan.

Usage: While I was going to school I noticed a group of *dres* wandering around aimlessly.



source: <http://www.kozaczek.pl/plotka.php?id=9209>

Bar Mleczny /'b a r 'm l ɛ ʃ n i/ (*noun*)

(Literally "milk bar") Typically a cheap polish restaurant where you can be served quickly. Milk products are the foundation of the menu but the place offers also traditional polish cuisine.

Usage: "Where are we going for lunch?"

"Well, I don't have much money and I'm hurry, so let's go to the *bar mleczny*."



Source: <http://www.thenews.pl/1/6/Artykul/151002,POLSKI-FUSION-Return-of-the-milk-bar>

Jasiek /'j ä ε k/ (*noun*)

A small pillow which you put under your head during the nap.

Usage: I can't go for a sleep without *jasiek*.



Source: <http://www.dogomania.pl/forum/threads/240677-Rozliczam-Autka-worek-do-przedszkola-podusie-gry-PC-dla-SBM-z-%C5%BBywca>

Załatwić /z a 'w a t f i ɛ/ (verb)

This term has many different meanings in Polish but the most popular one is to succeed in doing or accomplishing something; to acquire something for yourself or for someone. *Załatwić* is usually the use of friends, bribes, personal charm or connections to get something done. This was particularly useful in the days of communism, as it was easier to gain something you wanted through guile as opposed to official means.

Usage: "I've heard that all the tickets for the concert have been sold out, it's impossible to get them anywhere."

"Don't worry, I will manage to *załatwić* them for you somehow."

Popita/Zagrycha /'p o p i t a, z a ' g r i x a/ (noun)

The term used for something to drink or eat right after having a shot of vodka.

Usage: "We need to buy pickles because I don't want to drink vodka without any *zagrycha*."



Source:http://zapytaj.onet.pl/Category/002,015/2,24383832,Czy_zagrycha_w_postaci_ogorkow_kiszonych_w_trakcie_picia_w_odki_cokolwiek_dajewplywa_jakos_na_organizm_.html

Działka /'ɔ a w k a/ (noun)

Small piece of land in the city or outside the city used to rest, grow vegetables, fruits and flowers. It's suitable for agriculture or development. Unlike Russian *dacha*, it doesn't have to include the house; usually there is only a shed and greenhouse. Usage: "This Sunday I'm going with my grandparents to their *działka* to help them plant the flowers."



Source: <http://niezalezna.pl/44526-ogrodki-dzialkowe-nie-dla-wszystkich>

Spain

Carajillo/k a r a x i j o/ (noun)

Carajillo is a drink consisting of coffee and an alcoholic drink, usually rum, brandy or aguardiente de orujo (Spanish liquor). The word comes from the time of the Cuban wars (at the end of the 19th century) from an expression used by the soldiers which was: “coger corajillo”, which means literally “to get bravery”.

Usage: “We will order two beers and one *carajillo* tonight at the rock bar.”



Castell /k a s t e l/ (*noun*)

This is the name given to a traditional *human tower* typical from Catalunya. This word in Catalán means *castle* and was named after it, because the structure of the tower is *castle shaped*.

Usage: "We saw a very nice *castell* last summer in Tarragona. They are very brave!"



Dominguero /d o m ĩ n ʎ e r o/ (*adjective*)

This word is used to describe someone who sometimes spends a weekend outside his city/town, usually going to the beach; they look like they don't belong there, and yet fit perfectly into the scene. The word comes from the Spanish word *Domingo*, which means Sunday in English.

Usage: "They must be *domingueros* because they have all the stuff (chairs, tables, food, towels...) to spend a day at the beach."



Duende /d w e ɲ d e/ (noun)

A charming and mysterious feeling related in Spain to Flamenco and other Spanish ways of art; magical atmosphere surrounding the place where this art is expressed. In the words of Federico García Lorca in his conference “Theory and game of *duende*”, he explains the concept as *a mysterious power that everyone can feel but no philosopher can explain; duende goes beyond techniques and inspiration. It is used in expressions as: “to have duende” or “playing, singing or dancing with duende”.*

Usage: “She really has *duende* when dancing”.



Source: <http://fromthesolesofthefeet.wordpress.com/>

Maruja /m a r u x a/ (adjective)

This word is commonly used to describe an old woman living in villages or towns who spends almost the entire day gossiping, and is sticking her nose where it doesn't belong. This word comes from the Spanish name *María* and it's usually used in the south half of Spain. Usage: "María is a real *maruja*, she knows the private life of everyone in the village. She found out that Orlando cheated on Beatrice before everyone else!"



Source: www.telecinco.es

Pagafantas /p a ʧ a f a ŋ t a s/ (*adjective*)

The term normally refers to a man who pays drinks to women and listens to them, in order to achieve something more, but actually doesn't succeed at his purpose, and tends to be considered as a friend in the end. The word comes from *paga*, which means *to pay* in Spanish, and from *Fanta*, a bubbled orange drink which is commonly used in cocktails in Spain.

Usage: "Jan bought the girl at least five drinks and she didn't even kiss him! He's a *pagafantas*."



Thirty-six unique words later, the participants decided to come up with translations of some of them into English.

Kifla (*Bulgarian*): Babe mirror, from the habit of the Kifla to take provocative photographs of herself in front of mirrors.

Mandahertzam (*Bulgarian*): (to) Yonch, actually taken from a participant's name (Yoncho Yonchev).

Äksi-täis (*Estonian*): Aksiful, from the suffix *-ful* and the beginning of the word *Äksi*.

Viitsima (*Estonian*): Kemple

Charmolipi (*Greek*): Sadpiness, a combination of the words *sadness* and *happiness*.

Kserosfiri (*Greek*): Drungry, a combination of the words *drunk* and *hungry*.

Filotimo (*Greek*): Gentism, from the word *gentle* and the suffix *-ism*, which describes the act, practice, or process of doing something.

Lampara (*Italian*): Sealantern, a combination of the words *sea* and *lantern*.

Ponte (*Italian*): Bridgeday, a combination of the words *bridge* and *day*.

Dres (*Polish*): Agboy, a merging of the words *aggressive* and *boy*.

Jasiek (*Polish*): Pilly, a combination of the words *pillow* and the letter *-y* to indicate its smallness.

Popita (*Polish*): Extinguisher.

Dominguero (*Spanish*): Sunday-wanderer.

Maruja (*Spanish*): Haggip, a combination of the words *hag* and *gossip*.

Pagafantas (*Spanish*): Pussyslave.

Contributors

The countries and the participants of each country who made this Handbook possible are listed below.

To follow the course of the week, visit the project's blog: spread-the-word-2014.blogspot.gr

Bulgaria

- Georgi Nonchev
- Hristo Mladenov
- Petya Georgieva
- Tihomir Mihaylov
- Yoncho Yonchev

Italy

- Emanuele Carnevale
- Ewa Zapal
- Gustavo Di Santo
- Orlando Carnevale
- Veronica Sirianni

Estonia

- Elen Tammet
- Heleri Alles
- Kaur Maran
- Lennart Maala
- Mai-Liis Mutso

Poland

- Emilia Lipiec
- Katarzyna Glapska
- Katarzyna Grodzka
- Marta Chmielecka
- Piotr Podsiadly

Greece

- Alexandra Kiourtsi
- Aliko Oikonomoula
- Anastasia Oikonomoula
- Beatrice Demertzidou
- Christos Papas
- Chrysa Kefallinou
- Despina Karadimou
- Evangelos Zampoukas
- Georgia Maniati
- Kostas Simitopoulos
- Maria Kousoula
- Vasilis Giorgis

Spain

- Alejandro Garcia Barba
- Antonio Enciso
- Jan Bosch de Doria
- Pablo Garcia Herrero
- Pedro Lima Ruz

During the exchange, the team was joined by Eirini Vavoulidou, a French teacher with MSc in Literature and Education, and presented some unique French words.

Badder /b a d d e r/ (*verb*)

To feel unease.

Chantepleurer /c h a n t e p l e u r e r/ (*verb*)

Singing and crying at the same time.

Chomer /c h o 'm e r/ (*verb*)

Being unemployed

Mitonner /m I t o n e/ (*verb*)

To spend some time preparing a dish, trying to satisfy your guests.

Se defenestrer /s ə d e f e n e s t r e r/ (*verb*)

To jump out of the window.

Yaourter /y a o u r t e r/ (*verb*)

Trying to sing in a foreign language and getting the words wrong or filling them with tra-la-la sounds.





Πρόγραμμα Νέα Γενιά σε Δράση



Το σχέδιο αυτό χρηματοδοτήθηκε με την υποστήριξη της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής. Το εγχειρίδιο αυτό δεσμεύει μόνο τους συντάκτες του και η Επιτροπή δεν ευθύνεται για τυχόν χρήση των πληροφοριών που περιέχονται σε αυτήν.