



Enhancing language education in cross-border vocational education

# Practical Example Germanic language family: EuroComGerm

## About EuroComGerm

EuroComGerm systematically bundles the similarities within the Germanic language family. Seven areas, the so-called "Seven Sieves", summarize where the comparison of the Germanic languages is particularly worthwhile in a structured way — they share many common linguistic features that can be used in a learning-economical way to open up (supposedly) unknown languages. With these tools, a linguistic foundation is laid for reading comprehension in the entire language family.

To start, it is important to have advanced language skills in one Germanic language, e.g. German, English, Swedish or Dutch. On this basis and by the help of the "Seven Sieves", texts in other Germanic languages can be easily understood.

### The Seven Sieves at a glance:

1. Cognates
2. Sound Correspondences
3. Spelling and Pronunciation
4. Word formation
5. Function words
6. Morphosyntax
7. Eurofixes (prefixes, suffixes,...)

### We will not go into detail in our module, so for further reading:

- Hufeisen B. and Marx N. (2014), *EuroComGerm – Die sieben Siebe. Germanische Sprachen lesen lernen*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Shaker, Aachen. (only available in German)

## Let's start with a first example

When people face another language, they have to make a lot of guesses. Read the following short mystery texts. Keep an open mind, for sure, you are able to answer the question at the end. You may read the text several times until you solve the mystery. Don't get frustrated, you will get there in the end!



Calusians wingle.  
Wango is Calusian.  
Anyone who wingles semantles.  
**Does Wango semantle?**

or

Kalusen watunteln.  
Wilusch ist Kaluse.  
Wer watuntelt, der semantelt.  
**Semantelt Wilusch?**

### Reflection:

- Did you manage to answer the question? Try to describe the steps that you made.
- Was it easy, difficult or frustrating? Why?
- Can you find elements in the texts from a language you know? Which one(s)?
- Which of your language skills helped you to get to the answer?

### Why was this example used?

The example shows that it is possible to answer the question without understanding the whole context or every word, simply referring to the logical structures. All language skills can help you to find words or segments that are familiar to you, e.g. 'is' is from English or 'une' is French. On that basis and with the help of hypotheses, the question can be answered. Hence, there are always language competences that you can build on and you have already more language skills than you may think.

In the following, you will make (first) experiences with how intercomprehension works and how the "Seven Sieves" of EuroComGerm can help understand a text.

## Practical example: Let's try to understand a text

### Text understanding Part I

Please read the following headline. In which language is it written?

*Försämrad turismprognos i Europa.*

- Romanian
- Dutch
- Swedish
- Italian

Correct answer:

The correct answer is Swedish

### Text understanding Part II – Getting more into detail

What is the headline about?

- The current job situation in the tourism sector, especially in the EU.
- New tourism trends that rise.
- A prognosis for tourism in Europe.

Correct answer:

Number three

### Text understanding Part III – Similar nouns

Try to transfer the following word from the headline in at least one Germanic language and English: *turismprognos, i, Europa*. Take notes on a blank sheet.

### Text understanding Part IV – Further similarities

Try to find out what '*Försämrad*' means. Take notes on a blank sheet. When you are finished, look up if your transfer is correct, e.g. in a dictionary.

#### Reflection

- Take a look at the headline and your notes again. Write a short reflection and ask yourself:
- 1) Which language(s) helped me to understand the headline?
  - 2) Was it easy or difficult for me to understand the headline? Why?
  - 3) Which similarities have I discovered?

## Text understanding Part V – Let's discover more of the text in Spanish or Portuguese

After having understood the headline of the article, it's time to discover more about the topic. Please read the text and try to understand as much as possible.

### Strategies that may help you:

- Write down all the words that you can understand.
- Try to write your own 'translation' of the text - this text may be in different languages depending on the languages you use for understanding.
- Consider the context of the text.
- ...

*Kriget i Ukraina gör att utsikterna för turismen i Europa även nästa år ser sämre ut än väntat, enligt en färsk prognos. Högre bränslekostnader, ökad oro och färre turister slår mot sektorn.*

Source: <https://www.aftonbladet.se/minekonomi/a/rER6gA/forsamrad-turismprognos-i-europa>

### Reflection

Have a look at the text that you have written. Write a short reflection and ask yourself:

- 1) Which languages helped me to understand the text?
- 2) What was easy/difficult? This may be words, sentences, ...
- 3) Which steps have I taken to understand and 'translate' the text?...