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Ritva Kantelinen, Eija Liisa Sokka-Meaney & Victoria
Pogosian (Eds.)

**SEMINAR PAPERS ON
EARLY FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

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training, cross-border co-operation.

FOREWORD

Given the considerable evidence of the benefits of an early start in foreign language learning, many teachers and teacher educators (in Finland) feel that much more attention should be paid to foreign language teaching in the early stages of the school system. In their pedagogical training, both foreign language teacher students and class teacher students would benefit greatly from doing teaching practice with young learners and learning about methods and materials appropriate for this group. There is also a need for in-service training of primary school teachers of foreign languages, especially since, in the present financial climate, much of this work is being done by class teachers who feel that they need to know more about language teaching.

For the past two years the Faculty of Education at the University of Joensuu has been engaged in cross-border co-operation with Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia in St Petersburg on the theme of language teaching and the young learner. This has meant establishing joint research projects involving researchers, teacher educators and teacher students, with the aim of developing teacher education and methods of foreign language teaching and learning in the primary school. Another area of co-operation is the creation of teaching material, such as web-based courses and resources.

Yet another possibility would be the creation of a study module in foreign language pedagogy aimed at class teacher students, teachers doing in-service training and, perhaps, international students. If such a module were to be taught in English it would enable the formation of mixed groups of students from both universities and thus encourage an international outlook on the part of the participants.

The articles in this publication reflect the variety of themes discussed at a seminar held at Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia in December 2007. The first group of articles provides overviews of the educational systems, the teaching of foreign languages and the organisation of teacher education of Finland, Russia and Estonia; the second group cover various aspects of foreign language teaching and the

third group gives examples of foreign language teaching in practice in Finland and Russia.

We hope that this publication will foster co-operation between two institutions, at both the official and grass-roots levels and that readers will find it interesting and stimulating.

Ritva Kantelinen
Eija Liisa Sokka-Meaney
Victoria Pogolian

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Part I

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL IN FINLAND

Ritva Kantelinen & Pirkko Pollari

Abstract

This article concentrates on presenting foreign language studies in primary school as a part of the Finnish educational system. The educational system is described briefly, but the main focus is on basic education in Finland and especially on primary foreign language education, its curriculum and aims. European cooperation through the adoption of the CEF (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is also touched on. This framework, providing common guidelines for language learning, teaching and assessment, is of particular significance since the national core curriculum on foreign language teaching is based on the recommendations of the CEF. To conclude the article Finnish teacher education issues such as qualifications and degrees are briefly discussed.

Finland's educational system as a framework for FL education at the primary level

The Finnish educational system is composed of different levels: pre-primary, basic, upper secondary (general and vocational) and higher education (universities and polytechnics). Learning foreign languages is a compulsory part of education at each level of the framework. One of the languages has to be either Swedish or Finnish (the national languages in Finland) plus at least one other foreign language. These studies begin at the latest in the third grade at the age of nine. Optional foreign language studies are available at each level. The educational system can be seen in figure 1.

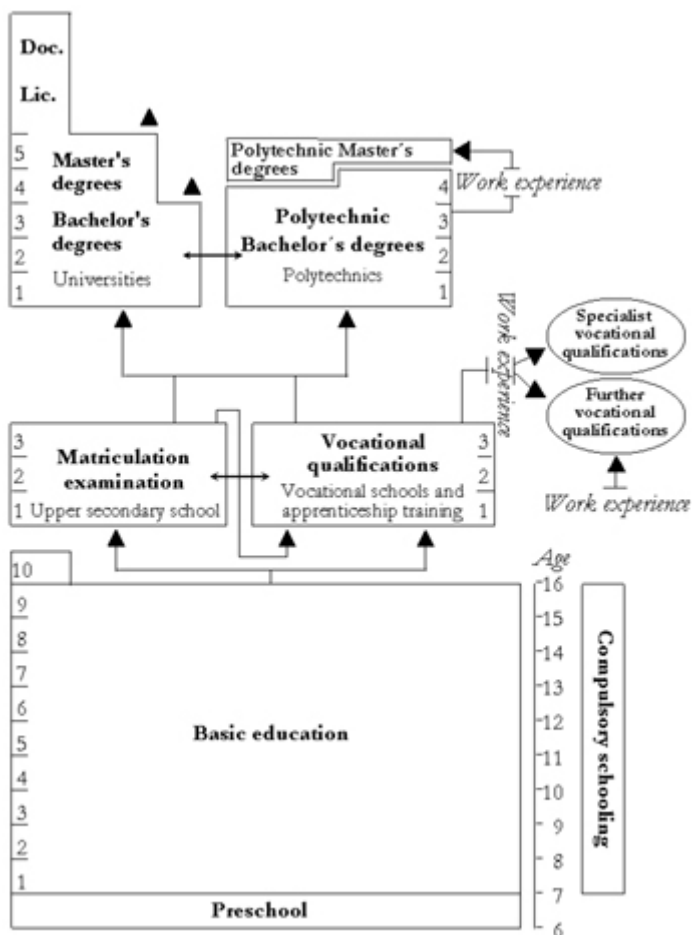


Figure 1. The framework of the Finnish educational system. (Source: www.oph.fi/english)

Preschool education is directed for six-year-old children and is provided in day-care centres and in preschool classes which operate in connection with comprehensive schools. Even though participation is voluntary, as many as 96% of this age group attended pre-school education in 2004 (see website www.sukol.fi).

Nine-year basic education is compulsory and is for pupils between the ages of (approximately) seven to sixteen. Primary schools are a part of basic education and they comprise of grades 1 – 6. The strict division of basic education into lower (grades 1-6) and upper levels (grades 7-9) has actually been abandoned and can now be seen as an integrated system. This educational reform took place at the end of 1990's.

Basic education is mainly organized in public schools, but there are also some private schools. Another feature of the Finnish school system is that there are no school fees. School meals, as well as books and other learning materials are also free of charge. Dropping out of school is rare and almost all children complete their basic education.

Having completed comprehensive school, pupils can continue their studies either in upper secondary schools or in vocational schools and apprenticeship training. Students with a matriculation examination or a vocational qualification can apply for higher education. Universities and polytechnics have varying admission systems and selection criteria. They may also admit students who are generally ineligible for higher education, i.e. emphasis is placed on the applicant's work experience or on other skills and knowledge. (For more about the Finnish educational system see website www.oph.fi/english.)

FL Studies in Primary School

Compared to many European countries, foreign language studies are introduced rather early in Finnish schools. As previously stated, foreign language learning has to be started at the latest in grade 3 at the age of 9. It is recommended that foreign language studies should start earlier, preferably in early education and preschool. For example this is recommended by the national project on Finnish Language Education Policies (KIEPO¹) in 2005–2007

¹ The aim of this national project was to examine the basics and goals of Finnish language education policies from the viewpoint of multilingualism and life-long learning (http://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/solki/tutkimus/projektit/kiapo/in_english)

(<http://www.jyu.fi/hum/laitokset/solki/tutkimus/projektit/kielo/keskeisetsuosituksset/suosituksset>).

In Finland the most often studied first foreign language is English. Early learning of English and other foreign languages is not yet very common, even though there is widespread interest in starting foreign language education already in grades 1-2. For example in 2006, only 8.5% of seven-year-olds (grade 1) and 13.6% of eight-year-olds (grade 2) started learning their first foreign language. This was most often English (5.6% in grade 1 and 10.3% in grade 2). In grade 3 91.0% of the pupils were learning English (see table 1). (Opetushallitus. WERA –webraportointipalvelu.) In principle, school children and their parents should have the possibility to choose which language the child starts to study. In practice, the only alternative is most often English. From the viewpoint of individual schools, the reason why the studies in several foreign languages other than English are not available, is usually the small number of children who would like to take them: small groups become expensive for the school. The municipalities and schools have the right to decide at the local level if and when studies in some other languages are started. Unfortunately, these decisions are often based on financial resources. On average, pupils in grades 3 – 6 have two 45-minute English (foreign language) lessons per week, which is based on the frame given in the national core curriculum (National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004, 302).

Table 1. Foreign languages studied as the first compulsory foreign language at grade 3 level (age 9) in 2006 (Source: Opetushallitus. WERA – webraportointipalvelu)

Language	% of the age group (N=59 516)
English	91.0
Finnish	5.2
German	1.1
Swedish	1.1
French	0.7
Russian	0.2

In grade 5 (or sometimes in grade 4) pupils can start learning a foreign language as an optional subject (see table 2). In 2006 the most studied optional foreign languages were English (8.2%), Swedish (7.9%) and German (7.2 %) followed by French (2.7 %) and Russian (0.3%). The second national language² (Finnish for the Swedish-speaking children and Swedish for the Finnish-speaking children) is compulsory and is first introduced in grade 7 after the primary level. However, it can be started even earlier at primary level, if schools offer it in their syllabuses.

Table 2. Foreign languages studied as an optional foreign language at grade 5 level (age 11) in 2006 (Source: Opetushallitus. WERA –web-raportointipalvelu)

Language	% of the age group (N= 63 477)
English	8.2
Swedish	7.9
German	7.2
French	2.7
Finnish	0.8
Russian	0.3

Because the demands for foreign language proficiency and on the other hand the small amount of language studies in formal school education, it has become quite common for schools to try to provide more time for language learning within the school context by CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). This means that all or some part of the school subjects are taught using a foreign language (most often Swedish or English). In addition to this, individual teachers – class teachers and subject teachers – can apply the ideas and principles of CLIL in their teaching to suit the needs of their primary school groups and increase the time pupils spend learning foreign languages. (See more about teaching in a foreign language in Finland in <http://www.opeko.fi/clilnetwork/>)

² According to the Finnish constitution there are two national languages in Finland, Finnish and Swedish (see more in <http://www.folktinget.fi/en/index.html>)

Over the years English as a foreign language has become a very popular in Finland and this can be seen in the decreasing numbers of pupils learning other foreign languages. Another reason for this - besides the dominance of English - is the weakened financial situation of many local authorities and their lack of interest in directing otherwise inadequate resources to optional foreign languages studies at schools. Language educators are increasingly concerned about this imbalance in foreign language studies and this matter is bound to heat up Finnish educational debate. As a matter of fact, one of the current problems of language education in Finland is that both language studies and language proficiency concentrate too strongly on English.

Curriculum for Language Education

Finnish primary school language education is based on the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education. The core curriculum is provided by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) and the latest version was issued in 2004. The core curriculum is a normative guideline for teaching and educational work and it provides the goals and main content of the various subjects. The primary school language studies form the ground future lifelong language learning – formal and informal.

Besides this national level curriculum, schools and local authorities are obliged to make their own versions of the curriculum. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the curriculum process. These school or local level curricula are also very general in nature and teachers can modify the curriculum appropriately, i.e. they have a lot of freedom to choose their methods, approaches and teaching materials. As to foreign language teaching approaches, the communicative approach has been the most widely used in recent years.

The Main Aims of the Core Curriculum for FL Education

The core curriculum provides the main objectives and core contents for primary foreign language learning. In foreign-language instruction a language is seen not only as a skill subject and a means of communication, but also as a cultural subject. In the core curriculum the aims and evaluation criteria concerning language teaching are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF). These pan-European recommendations have been modified to suit the Finnish context (see the Finnish version of CEF: Eurooppalainen viitekehys 2003).

According to the core curriculum (FNBE 2004) for grades 1 – 2 listening, understanding and speaking skills are emphasised whereas writing is introduced gradually. A further aim is to encourage the pupils to use the language in a functional and creative way (plays, games, nursery rhymes, songs etc.). Emphasis is not only placed on language use, but also on creating a basis for language study skills and taking an interest in foreign language learning. The core contents are related to the pupils' interests and everyday life such as home and school. In addition, pupils are introduced to the target language's culture.

In grades 3 – 6, the objectives and core contents for foreign language education are more specified than in grades 1 – 2. The objectives include language proficiency, cultural skills and learning strategies. The general objective of foreign language instruction is that pupils learn to communicate in the target language in simple speaking situations. Writing is increased gradually and emphasis is put on everyday life needs such as short messages. A further objective is that the pupils - besides getting to know the culture of the target language - realize that there are differences in cultures and languages and despite these they are equal in value. Another objective of the instruction is that pupils develop good language study habits such as recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses as a language learner. (FNBE 2004.)

The core contents for grades 3 - 6 are divided into three areas: situations and subject areas form the perspective of the language regions of the pupils' language and language being studied, structures, and communication strategies. The situations and subject areas are, to some

extent, similar to those in the first and second grades: everyday life, the immediate environment and general knowledge of the target language culture. New subject areas are, for example, doing business in various situations and knowledge of one's own culture. For the introduction of structures, main grammatical principles are selected and preferably from the standpoint related to communication. When presenting communication strategies, attention is given to basic strategies such as non-verbal communication and finding the main ideas in speech or in the written text. (FNBE 2004.)

To support this aim and the evaluation of language studies, a description of the level of good performance³ at the end of primary school (grade 6) is explained in the curriculum. Good performance is described separately for each area of language proficiency - listening comprehension, speech, text comprehension and writing - using the proficiency scale of CEF⁴ as the basis for the Finnish application (see table 3). The aim of primary school foreign language studies is to reach the level of the basic user, A1 and A2. In the Finnish application the levels A1 and A2 are divided further into more specified levels A1.1, A1.2, A1.3 and A2.1, A2.2. These descriptions are specified in Appendix 2 of the National Core Curriculum. (FNBE 2004, Appendix 2.)

³ Description of good performance determines the level for a grade of eight (8) on the scale 4-10 when numerical grading is used

⁴ CEF The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching and assessment
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

Table 3. "Good performance" of language proficiency in English as described at the end of grade 6 (primary school). (Source: FNBE 2004, page 140 <http://www.oph.fi/english/page.asp?path=447,27598,37840,72101,72106>)

Listening comprehension	Speech	Text comprehension	Writing
A2.1 Initial phase of basic language proficiency	A1.3 Functional elementary language proficiency	A2.1 Initial phase of basic language proficiency	A1.3 Functional elementary language proficiency

As can be seen in table 4, the aims of primary school foreign language education are based on action activities and related to children's everyday life. Good performance in English language proficiency at the end of grade 6 aims at level A1 for speech and writing (production) and A2 for listening comprehension and text comprehension (reception). (FNBE 2004.)

Table 4. Descriptions of proficiency levels. (Source: FNBE 2004, Appendix 2, <http://www.oph.fi/english/page.asp?path=447,27598,37840,72101,72106>)

A1 – Limited communication in the most familiar situations	
SPEECH A1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can briefly describe him/herself and his/her immediate circle. Can manage in the most straightforward dialogues and service situations. Sometimes requires help from the conversational partner. • Can express him/herself fluently in the most familiar sequences, but pauses and breaks are very evident in other sections of speech. • Pronunciation may sometimes cause misunderstandings. • Can use a limited number of short memorised expressions, the most essential vocabulary and basic sentence structures. • Plenty of basic grammatical errors occur frequently even in elementary speech.
WRITING A1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can manage to write in the most familiar, easily predictable situations related to everyday needs and experiences. • Can write simple messages (simple postcards, personal details, simple dictation). • Can use the most common words and expressions related to personal life or concrete needs. Can write a few sentences consisting of single clauses. • Prone to a variety of errors even in elementary free writing.
A2 – Basic needs for immediate social interaction and brief narration	
LISTENING COMPREHENSION A2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand simple speech or follow discussions about topics of immediate personal relevance. • Can understand the main content of brief and simple discussions and messages of personal interest (instructions, announcements) and follow changes of topic on the TV news. • Can only understand even simple messages if delivered at normal speed in clear standard dialect, and may often have to ask for repetition.

TEXT COMPREHEN SION A2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand simple texts containing the most common vocabulary (personal letters, brief news items, everyday user instructions) • Can understand the main points and some details of a few paragraphs of text. Can locate and compare specific information and can draw very simple inferences based on context. • Reading and understanding of even brief passages of text is slow.
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Teacher Qualification Demanded

Finland is still a novice in educating primary school foreign language teachers and there is no unified path how to become an appropriately trained primary FL teacher. According to the Basic Education Decree, children in grades 1-6 are taught primarily by class teachers and grades 7-9 by subject teachers. This means that at primary level (grades 1-6) foreign language(s) can also be taught by class teachers who may or may not have specialized in foreign language teaching. However, it is recommended by the Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland (SUKOL⁵) that foreign languages are to be taught by subject teachers in grades 1-6 as well⁶. Even so, this does not guarantee that the subject teacher has specialized in teaching foreign languages to young learners.

The subject teacher's qualification consists of a Master's degree (altogether 300 ECTS), teacher's pedagogical studies (60 ECTS, included or excluded in the Master's degree) and a certain amount of studies in the subject to be taught. The required amount of subject studies for teacher qualification depends on the school level at which she/he will be teaching. For example foreign language teachers must have at least 60 ECTS of university studies in each language they teach. This qualifies them for teaching jobs in basic education in grades 7-9.

⁵ Pedagogic organization whose aim is to promote the instruction and study of foreign languages in Finland

⁶ 25.4.1998, <http://www.sukol.fi/index.phtml?s=119>

Qualification to teach at the secondary level demands 120 ECTS at least in one of the teaching subjects and at least 60 ECTS in other subjects.

Some class teacher students study a foreign language (most often English) as their minor subject to improve their qualification for possible future FL teaching jobs. The class teacher's degree (Master's degree of 300 ECTS with pedagogy as the major subject) and foreign language studies of at least 60 ECTS gives the so called "double qualification". This means he/she can work as a class teacher and as a language teacher (in the language studied) in grades 7-9. However, there are no special requirements for foreign language teachers at the primary level. In practice, specialization for especially primary school language teacher's job is in most cases acquired during in-service education.

Conclusions

To sum up, the objectives of primary school foreign language education in Finland, are diverse: both language competencies as well as the awareness of foreign languages and culture are promoted and developed from an early stage. Appropriately planned and implemented, primary FL learning forms a good basis for language studies at different educational levels and it is a cornerstone for lifelong language learning. Since Finland is still a "beginner" in primary language education, there are many areas to be developed such as strengthening foreign language teacher education - and also research - at the pre-service level. These challenges are parallel to the KIEPO -project's recommendations for language education in Finland. These recommendations state that foreign language education should be introduced as early as possible. The European Language Portfolio (ELP), which aims at promoting continuity and consistency between pre-primary and basic education, grades 1-9, could be one of the possible solutions for developing foreign language learning at the primary level. (Mård-Miettinen & Björklund 2007).

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TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Natalia Malkina

Abstract

The articles will give an overview of issues related to teaching foreign languages to pre-school and primary school children in the Russian Federation today. The author will explore various important issues in foreign language education for young children: among them are the choice of languages, National Standard requirements, goals, methods, teacher education and other issues.

1. Background

Russia has a long tradition of teaching foreign languages to young children aged from four to twelve. This was most evident in the 19th century when French and German languages were enjoying the greatest popularity among children of the Russian aristocracy who were taught by their foreign-born nannies. It was not until 1864 that these languages became part of public schooling, at the same time ancient languages like old Greek and Latin were considered more valuable and as such got more attention. This policy resulted in decline of modern languages in schools by 1914.

Preschool education didn't offer any foreign language learning at that time either. It was not until the 1950-s of the last century that foreign language teaching could be found in a preschool and primary school setting. This situation was not common though.

The 60-s of the last century saw the rise of interest in teaching foreign languages to pre-school and primary school children. English was

experimentally introduced into preschool education in the main cities of the Soviet Union like Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk, Kiev and others. The enthusiasm for kindergarten foreign language programs was supported by numerous publications and research papers.

In 1961 a new type of school was set up, the so called schools with an intensive study of a foreign language (it could be French, English or any other language).

These schools offered foreign language instruction in the primary school from the second year. To get into these schools children had to sit for interviews or tests. Those were elitist schools drawing on the best resources for their programs – teachers, textbooks, and teaching materials. These schools were prestigious and the competition to get into them was intense, especially in the 90s. They offered early foreign language instruction, ranging from 2 to 4 classes a week (each class for 45 minutes) depending on the school year and yielded very good results compared to the general schooling. It was proved that early foreign language learning is beneficial for the child's linguistic and psychological development.

We can assume that the experience gained from the schools with intensive foreign language learning later formed the basis for the introduction of early foreign language programs into primary school in all Russian schools in 2004.

The advent of perestroika and the eventual fall of the Iron Curtain made foreign languages not only an educational but also an economic value. The demand for people with good knowledge of foreign languages was high and has been growing ever since.

In 1988-1990 an experiment of scale was launched in several Soviet republics, among them the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Belarus. The experiment dealt with the introduction of foreign languages into preschool education.

The languages taught were French, English, German and Spanish. The experimental teaching involved children aged from four to seven years. The children had 2-4 classes a week. The teaching materials and curricula were developed and the teachers were supported by training, seminars and consultation. The experiment lasted for 2 years and the results were highly encouraging.

The experiment led to the agreement that early introduction to foreign languages was beneficial for children and had an evident developmental effect on the growing child. The necessary prerequisites for the success were named. And among them were the skill and qualification of the teacher and appropriate teaching methods and techniques. Play, games, dramatizations, songs and rhymes were acknowledged as the best teaching and learning tools for that age group.

It was noted, however, that learning a foreign language should be planned as a game-like activity and that engaging children in a game can make any language unit communicative. Among the most interesting research of this type were the publications by the psychologist Elena Negnevitskaya. The methodology used in the experiment suggested that special attention should be paid to grammar concept formation in young children. Developing grammar awareness was recommended through game-like activities which challenged children to see the value of certain grammar facts in their mother tongue and then make comparisons between their mother tongue and the foreign language. The principles of structuring games for language learning (for example, vocabulary) were developed and game- and play-like activities were manifested as the main teaching method with preschool children.

The experiment also highlighted specific problems related to early foreign language introduction. They included the lack of teaching resources and materials developed specifically for preschool children and the break in continuity in foreign language instruction between preschool institutions and school. One of the most important factors named was the need for trained teachers capable of working with very young children. It was stressed that school teachers of foreign languages couldn't teach kindergarten children because methods and approaches of school teaching were not applicable to the pre-school situation.

Despite the overall positive results of the experiment, foreign languages in kindergarten never became part of the Core Curriculum for Preschool Education in the Russian Federation.

Nevertheless, the popularity of preschool English language teaching is growing and the demand from parents is high. Both parents and kindergarten administrators consider the early start beneficial and

fundamentally important for the further successful language learning and socialisation.

In 2004 English was introduced into the Core Curriculum of primary grades and became an obligatory subject. According to the new regulations all children have to learn English as a foreign language from the 2nd year of school. Earlier it was taught from grade 5 till the end of the school.

This decision demonstrated that the Russian state has finally acknowledged that learning and teaching languages is a priority area. Since then primary EFL education has been enjoying special attention and has been the focus of research, innovation and practical considerations.

2. Languages Taught

Until recently parents had the right to choose which foreign language a child will take as a school subject. However, the real life situation was far from being so ideal. Parents chose English and neglected other languages like French, German, Italian and others one of which was the option only if the school failed to provide an English language teacher.

The reasons for English as a first foreign language are evident. In public eyes English enjoys a higher social-economic status as the language of international communication in politics, business and education and is seen as a must for the future successful socialisation of the child and the career build up.

The statistics for the years 1999-2000 shows that the percentage of school classes where English was studied as the first foreign language of choice had grown by 50-70% at that time. The data was collected by the British Council in 12 Russian regions ranging from St Petersburg in the North West to Sakhalin in the Far East (Modernisation strategy for the curriculum of general education/ Strategia modernizatsii soderzhania obschego obrazovania, 2001, p.55.). Though more recent data is not available we can still theorise that the percentage of children studying English as their first foreign language

has grown since 2004 when the study of English became obligatory for every primary school child in the Russian Federation.

In primary foreign language education today there is no other choice but English. Children start learning English in the second year of school and continue their studies through the following school years.

Yet, a remarkable trend has become noticeable quite recently. In main Russian cities like St Petersburg and Moscow more and more schools introduce a second foreign language, and the situation when children learn two foreign languages in the primary school is not quite uncommon.

The survey was conducted by the author of the article in 2006-2007 in one of the schools in St Petersburg revealed the growing interest of parents to the introduction of two foreign languages in the primary school (Malkina, 2007). When asked for the reasons why they want their children to study both English and Spanish the answers were various. Some adults stressed the pragmatic value of foreign languages in the modern world and the sensitivity that little children have for languages. They thought it wise to use the sensitivity of the age for comfortable language learning. Other parents paid more attention to the general beneficial impact language learning had on a growing child.

The second foreign language is introduced in some Russian schools both in primary and secondary schools. The modes of integration differ from school to school as well as the languages offered. French, German, Italian, Spanish, Finnish, Chinese, Japanese and other languages are taught. The decision which language to choose is made by each school individually depending on specific regional situation, teacher supply and parents' wishes. For example, in St Petersburg the Finnish language can be found both in primary school, kindergartens and secondary schools and there is marked interest to the Finnish language and culture in St Petersburg and the North-West of Russia. No official statistics is available however.

The second language is often offered as an optional school subject in which case parents have to pay a fee and classes are provided after the main school activities. Some schools choose it as a school component for the curriculum which is the choice of school administration. In this situation language classes are offered for free and

are incorporated into the school syllabus. Yet, in most situations we find the combination of free of charge and fee-paid language classes.

Unfortunately, no official statistics is available about the number of schools that choose a particular language besides English and the popularity of certain languages is not quite clear. However, there is no doubt that the tendency for two foreign languages in schools is on the rise in main cities in Russia. This situation broadens the spectrum of language choice and brings back the formerly neglected languages.

3. System of Education

The education system in the Russian Federation is divided into the following sectors:

- pre-school (for children aged 3 to 6)
- primary school (for students aged 6-11)
- lower secondary school (for students aged 12-16)
- upper secondary (for students aged 17-18)
- special schools (for children with special needs)
- out-of school educational institutions
- professional educational institutions (colleges and higher educational institutions including universities)

All educational institutions are either a part of the state educational system or private institutions. Private institutions are not many, the majority of children go to state schools. Foreign languages are compulsory for all educational institutions except for pre-school institutions where languages (mainly English) are usually offered on parents' demand.

3.1. Pre-school Education

Kindergartens accept children from age 3. Kindergartens offer different activities and development programmes for children. General kindergarten programmes prescribed by the Federal Standard are free of charge whereas foreign languages are provided on a fee-paying basis. Yet

there is a growing demand for English language programmes for kindergarten children. Usually children have 2 classes a week, each class lasts from 15 (for 3 -4 year olds), to 25-30 minutes for 6-7 year olds. Some private institutions may offer more classes a week integrating, for example, language learning and drawing. There are no Federal Standards regulating FL teaching and learning in a pre-school setting.

3.2. Primary and Lower Secondary Education

Primary and secondary education is compulsory for every child. In primary school children receive the grounding in general subjects – the Russian language, mother tongue other than Russian (for regions of the Russian Federation), Physical and aesthetic Education.

English as a Foreign Language is compulsory from grade 2. The number of hours is different for every grade. The minimum 2 hours a week is the Federal Standard requirement. In primary school there is usually one teacher for all subjects, but more than often there is a specialist teacher of English.

In secondary school a different teacher teaches each subject. The number of hours for a foreign language as prescribed by the Federal Standard varies depending on the school year. On finishing lower secondary school pupils are tested by oral and written examinations. Afterwards students may choose further study at colleges for vocational training or upper secondary school.

3.3. Upper Secondary Education

The upper secondary school prepares students either for various occupations or for further study at colleges, universities or other educational institutions. Foreign language learning continues and ends with the unified and formalized state- administered examination called EGE (the abbreviation for Edinyi Gosudarstvennyi Egzamen).

4. The Federal Standard and the National Curriculum

The foreign language education in the Russian Federation is undergoing the process of change. The developments taking place are characterised by the re-evaluation of objectives for school and university education, foreign language education is not an exception.

The general shift in the educational paradigm is the move from knowledge- oriented to the competence oriented education model. In this situation school subjects that foster development of communicative skills and interaction are becoming very important. In this context the pragmatic value of foreign language learning is becoming crucial. The focus in foreign language learning and teaching is being placed now on developing communicative competence rather than language knowledge or knowledge about the language.

The primary document for education is the Federal Standard of General education (Federalnyi komponent gosudarstvennogo standarta obshchego obrazovaniya, 2004) which defines strategic goals and objectives and the minimum curricula requirements.

According to the Federal Standard the first and foremost role of foreign language learning in a primary school is to lay down the foundation for further development of the communicative competence in a foreign language in secondary school. Primary school is acknowledged as the first and important step in foreign language learning. The national standard for the primary school is issued by the Ministry of Education and it provides general guidelines for foreign language teaching in the primary school and sets objectives, topics, grammar and vocabulary to be learnt. The Federal Standard also describes the levels of competence development in a foreign language. The fundamental objectives for learning a foreign language in primary school are the following:

- To develop skills to use a foreign language for communication with the account of language abilities and needs of primary school children;
- To develop elementary communicative skills in listening, speaking, writing and reading;

- To develop child's personality, his/her linguistic skills and psychic functions like memory, imagination etc; to develop motivation for further foreign language learning;
- to provide for further communicative-psychological adaptation to the new language and culture and to develop the ability
- to overcome barriers when using a language for communication
- to provide knowledge of elementary linguistic phenomena, that are cognitively relevant to primary school children and are necessary for the acquisition of written and oral speech in a foreign language;
- to develop communication, cognitive and intellectual abilities with a young child and "learning to learn" skill;

To develop interest to other languages and cultures and to motivate children to learn other languages (Federalnyi komponent gosudarstvennogo standarta obshchego obrazovaniya, 2004).

Special attention is paid to the early introduction into the world of target culture, especially the children's culture like folklore, games, stories, tales and rhymes.

The National Standard describes the federal component of the National Curriculum which forms the core of every foreign language programme in a primary school. However, it is left to regional authorities and schools themselves to develop regional and school curriculum components of the particular foreign language programme (syllabi). In this way the National Standard provides both stability and variety of language programmes across the country and accounts for regional and school specifics.

The syllabi is structured in the following way: the federal component takes up to 75 % of the total number of subject hours, another 25 % are divided between regional and school components.

5. Programmes, textbooks and methods

All state-funded schools in the country must carry out language learning programmes which correspond with the national curriculum and focus on introduction of at least one foreign language (English) with the weekly exposure of 40-45 minutes with two classes a week in

primary school. The individual school can introduce one or two more hours a week as a school component. The starting school age is either 6 or sometimes 7 which depends on the parents's choice. All children start learning a foreign language in the 2nd form which is English. Additional languages are optional and are offered by schools individually according to demand and possibility. So far different schools and teachers in different regions in the country can choose among various foreign language learning programmes developed.

Variability is a marked trend in the foreign language education today. The situation is true not only for the programmes but also for textbooks. Conceptual changes in education have led to the appearance of a new generation of foreign language textbooks in the country. The approved list of textbooks for teaching foreign languages in state schools is defined by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and can be accessed on the Ministry's web site ⁷. Thus the school and the teacher are given a choice to use a particular book.

School teaching can also be enriched with textbooks and supplementary materials developed by international publishers like Macmillan, Longman, Express Publishing and others.

At present there is a tendency to adapt specifically for the Russian market internationally produced English language teaching materials. The adapted textbook versions are geared towards aims, teaching traditions, methods and techniques used in schools in the Russian Federation. These textbooks and teaching materials are also included in the list of recommended publications for classroom use.

Methods commonly applied in a foreign language classroom reflect the shift from teaching grammar rules and reading to teaching a foreign language as a sociocultural phenomenon and a communicative tool. A foreign language classroom is supposed to be communicative and learner-centered, the latter means that it should be sensitive to the learner's personal, communicative and cognitive needs and interests.

⁷ <http://www.mon.gov.ru/work/obr/dok/obs/4371/>

6. Topical Issues in Teacher Education

In order to be qualified to teach English as a foreign language at primary school teachers have to attend teachers' colleges (pedagogicheskie uchilisha) or complete their university studies. Teachers of foreign languages receive their initial training at pedagogical universities.

Since 1980s there has been a growing demand for teachers of English for young learners, both for pre-school and primary school sector. Because the pedagogical experiments of the late 1980s demonstrated that teachers for young learners need specific skills and methodologies some universities set up departments whose job was to provide pre-service training for foreign language teachers for pre-school and primary school teaching. Since 1989 these departments have thrived all over the country, the department for teaching foreign languages to young learners at Hertzen State Pedagogical University (St Petersburg) was one of the first to appear in 1989.

Despite the fact that such departments are numerous all over the country the primary schools and kindergartens face a great shortage of qualified foreign language teachers. Qualified foreign language teachers especially teachers of English are in high demand elsewhere where they are better paid and have good career prospects. As a result low qualifications and unprofessionalism aren't uncommon in primary and pre-school teaching especially in the state school sector. Topical is the issue of foreign language methodology textbooks specifically designed for this group of teachers. Despite the fact that the Russian methodology has accumulated rich practical experience and developed sound theory behind it there is still an evident lack of university textbooks for pre-service and in-service teachers for young learners.

Further teacher development is provided by regional teacher development institutions funded by federal and regional authorities. There teachers are offered methodology and language support. To attend the courses to upgrade teaching qualifications is a must for every teacher. This system, however, doesn't provide any specific training for preschool teachers of foreign languages.

Unlike their European and secondary school colleagues pre-school and primary language teachers have practically no opportunities for educational visits to the target language countries because vast majority of exchange and educational programmes both international and regional are aimed especially at secondary school foreign language teachers.

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL IN ESTONIA

Nina Raud

Abstract

This article explores a variety of issues related to the topic of teaching foreign languages at the primary level in Estonia in the view of the experience of Narva College of the University of Tartu in the field of teacher training. Due to its location in the area where Russian speakers constitute the majority of the population Narva College presents a unique case study in terms of preparing teachers of foreign languages to teach English to young learners - children who form classes of mixed Estonian and Russian language ability and are taught a second foreign language which is in most cases English. The general theme of the article concerns the description of the college curricula aimed at training students for their work in multilingual pre-school and primary school educational environment and mapping problems related to their teaching. The focus of the paper is on the characteristics of the study process which enables Narva College graduates to work successfully in kindergartens and schools; the article is also aimed at revealing topical issues which require immediate action and attention of educators and teachers.

Introduction

The issue of teaching foreign languages to young learners has always been in the focus of researchers. This interest is explained by concerns of educators and teachers (e.g. McLaughlin, 1992; Curtain, 1993; Lightbown & Spada, 2007) with how to provide the best teaching environment for the development of second language skills in children. Children are generally believed to be unique in their potential to

acquire both native and foreign languages at the earliest stages of their development. This belief is taken for granted by specialists who are involved in teacher training and designing of second language syllabi for pre-schools and primary schools. However, peculiarities of a particular learning environment with regard to social, cultural and linguistic characteristics of a group of learners have always played an important role in the above processes. Narva College of the University of Tartu represents in this respect an interesting example of how to adjust teacher training to meet the requirements of the multilingual Europe and prepare specialists who are ready to accept the challenge of teaching more than one foreign language to young learners at the stage of primary education.

The main peculiarity of foreign language teaching at the primary level in Estonia can be briefly described in terms of the usage of Estonian or Russian as the languages of primary school instruction. Officially, the Estonian language is the language of instruction at all levels of education. However, historically, the Russian population of Estonia is quite big, and at present it constitutes about 26% (Narva College of the University of Tartu, 2008, para. 2) of the total population of Estonia. Quite naturally, there are schools in Estonia which provide primary and secondary education to children whose native language is Russian.

2. Primary School Teacher Training

2.1. Narva College and its Teacher Training Curricula

Narva College of the University of Tartu enjoys a unique position as it is the only Estonian state tertiary educational institution which offers teacher training curricula in three languages - Estonian, Russian and English – and specializes in preparing teachers for schools with Russian as the language of instruction. This prominent position and the role of Narva College can be explained by its location in the border city of Narva where the majority of the population (about 96% (Ibid.)) are people whose mother tongue is Russian. Moreover, Narva is situated in

the area – the county of Ida-Virumaa – which is also predominantly Russian (about 76% (Ibid.)). The residents of this area are in most cases bilingual/ multilingual people whose languages of everyday communication are either Estonian or Russian, and whose functional language has to be Estonian as the Estonian language is the language of official communication, education, etc. To meet the requirements of the region Narva College besides the teacher training curricula (*Early Years Teacher (Russian as the Language of Instruction)* – Bachelor's Degree; *Humanities in Basic School with Russian as the Language of Instruction* – Bachelor's Degree; *Primary School Teacher (Russian as the Language of Instruction)* – the curriculum integrated with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees; *Humanities in Basic School with Russian as the Language of Instruction* – Master's Degree, *Early Years Teacher (Russian as the Language of Instruction)* – Master's Degree) has also introduced two new study programmes of *Youth Works* and *Local Government's Administration* at the level of applied higher education. However, the teacher training field of activity has remained its basic one.

Within the frame of the *Humanities* curricula there are offered minor specialities of *Teacher of English in Primary School* and *Teacher of English in Pre-school* to students who major in the speciality of *Primary School Teacher* and *Early Years Teacher* correspondingly. These specialities can be chosen as additional qualifications by students who have successfully passed their exam in General English (at the level of Preliminary English Test /PET with at least 80% of the total grade) which is one of the core subjects of their curricula. Considering the level at which students have to teach English in kindergartens and primary schools they have to fulfil a number of language requirements set forth by the *Humanities* curricula. Among these requirements are positive results of their final exam in General English at the end of their first year of studies in Narva College - an entry test for the programme admission – and to complete the corresponding syllabus in English with positive grades.

2.2. The *Teacher of English in Primary School* Module: Language Requirements

The module of *Teacher of English in Primary School* consists of thirty credit points, each of which amounts to forty hours of in class and individual work. If to consider the content of the module, it can be clearly seen that the focus is placed on practical aspects of teaching English as well as linguistic, cultural and literary issues which all together contribute to the effective training of prospective teachers of English in primary schools. Thus, the module includes such courses as *Practical Phonetics*, *Lexicology*, *Morphology*, *Syntax of the English Language*, *Conversational English (Oral Communication I (First Certificate in English))* and *Oral Communication II (Advanced Certificate in English)*), *Academic Writing*, *Theory and Practice of Translation*, *Practical English* and *Methodology of Teaching English I and II*.

The courses of the module are delivered to the students of the speciality in mixed groups where these subjects are also taught to students of the speciality *Teacher of English in Basic (compulsory) School*. This experience of teaching mixed speciality and language ability classes is considered to be one of the advantages of the syllabus as it places students with a lower level of English in the study environment of a potentially higher level of English language mastery. Moreover, the structure of all theoretical as well as practical courses is based on the principle of learner-centeredness and the usage of active methods of teaching/ learning. Among these principles is learning by doing which places the main accent on individual creative forms of learning. As a result of it the number of in-class activities is fewer than hours spent on individual research and analysis.

2.3. The *Teacher of English in Primary School* Module: Practice in the Speciality

Practice in the speciality (*Teacher of English in Primary School*) constitutes an integral part of teacher training and follows Narva College's practical approaches to teacher training. Practice makes a specialist ready to apply the received knowledge in order to acquire

necessary skills and competences for teaching English. Multicultural educational institutions - language immersion schools and kindergartens, primary schools with Russian as the language of instruction - have become the best places to test our students' skills and to see what they have learned and what they still need to do to improve their professional level.

The structure of teacher training is clear and very logical to follow. The first stage of the practice introduces students into the organization of the study process in primary school, gives students a chance to observe their mentor's lessons and to analyse them together with the mentor. During this stage students have to develop the abilities of critical analysis and self-reflection which are cornerstones of life-long learning and self-improvement. The main part of the practice in the speciality is teaching as such. Students have to conduct a certain number of lessons (about 15) and to analyze them together with their mentors and classmates. Lesson observations by a college methodologist and the lecturers of the Division of Foreign languages of Narva College contribute to the evaluation and assessment of student's teaching practice results.

The final stage of the school training is the school practice portfolio. This final stage helps students acquire organizational skills which are also very important for successful teaching of English in primary school: the portfolio includes lesson outlines with corresponding self-analysis reports and didactic materials. So, it can be assumed that in spite of the fact that there is no major curriculum to train teachers of English for primary schools (as well as for pre-schools) at the level of Bachelor's/ Master's studies in Narva College as well as in other teacher training colleges in Estonia, the presence of a minor speciality curriculum within the existing curricula allows to prepare teachers of English for primary schools.

3. Primary Education in Estonia and Foreign Language Classes

Primary schools within the educational system of Estonia belong to the so-called 'basic' (compulsory) school education which follows pre-school education. The 9-year *compulsory school* comprises three stages: the 1st stage (7-9/10 years), the 2nd stage (10-12/13 years) and the 3rd stage (13-15/16). The first two stages (Grades 1-6) are often referred to as *primary school*. (Vaht *et al*, 2001, p.10)). There are also two types of primary schools depending on the language of instruction – Estonian or Russian. The place of foreign languages in these two types of schools is different. In primary schools with Estonian as the language of instruction English is taught from the 2d grade as an A language (the first foreign language). It means that there are 2-3 academic hours a week with the focus on the development of all language skills (105 hours a year) in primary school. Second foreign languages – B languages - (German, French, Russian) can be taught as optional subjects starting from grade 5. The availability of the teacher, the preferences of children and their parents are the key factors to take into account while making a choice which of these languages to teach in primary school with Estonian as the language of instruction.

In Estonian schools with Russian as the language of instruction English is taught from grade 2 as an optional subject – to give enough hours to children to cope with the Syllabus and to be competitive with students from Estonian schools with Estonian as the language of instruction. However, officially English as the second foreign language – a B language - is taught as a compulsory subject starting only from grade 5. It is actually the decision of the school board which allows a school principal to introduce hours of English studies into the school curriculum. It is worth mentioning here that school principals of 'Russian' schools are trying to motivate both students and parents for the earliest possible introduction of English lessons. The reason behind it is the influence of the European multilingual/multicultural context which brings English into the group of everyday/functional languages in Estonia. The use of English as the medium of international communication, the freedom of movement within the European Union

area and opportunities to study abroad have already motivated many people in Estonia for intensive studies of English.

Such languages as French, German and Spanish (languages C) are taught in 'Russian' schools as optional subjects starting from grade 5. Estonian, being the state language, is a compulsory subject for all pre-schools and primary schools with Russian as the language of instruction; in 'Russian' primary school it has the status of the first foreign language (an A language) and it takes the first place in the hierarchy of foreign languages.

4. Conclusions and Implications

In view of the above described situation with teaching of foreign languages in Estonian primary schools with Russian as the language of instruction, it is possible to single out some issues by considering of which the situation with second language studies can be dramatically improved. As a language B English in 'Russian' schools never gets the same number of hours and support as compared with English as a language A in 'Estonian' schools, it seems reasonable to support school principals' initiative and to allocate enough hours for English language studies in primary school in grades 2, 3 and 4. This will make it possible to prepare children for their studies in grade 5 when English is officially introduced into their curriculum as a compulsory subject (a B language).

We also need new researches and methods of how to teach in the described situation with regard to the Educational Reform which is now being implemented in Estonia. The Reform is aimed at transition to Estonian medium studies which will eventually give equal opportunities for learning foreign languages in all primary schools in Estonia. However, the question of how much time it will take to realize the reform in full volume and to place all primary schools in equal positions regarding foreign language studies remains open.

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THE RUSSIAN SYSTEM OF TRAINING TEACHERS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS: HISTORY AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Victoria Pogosian

Abstract

The article will dwell upon the issue of training teachers of foreign languages for young learners in Russia. It will describe the system of training with the reference to how it emerged, and it will summarize the current discussions of the issues related to the professional competences of the teacher which are of relevance due to the introduction of new Standard of Higher Professional Education. The article will offer suggestions for the competences of the teachers of foreign languages for young learners and relating modules. The suggestions are open for discussions for reaching a joint approach.

Introduction

After a very long period of stability, the system of higher education in Russia has been going through a series of serious modifications. As any modifications, they have been motivated by the strife for improvement, although the most recent changes started by the Bologna process are not considered by everyone as improvements, moreover, they are regarded by many as an attempt to ruin the remnants of the former system of education. A survey of the transformations of the system of training teachers of foreign languages will set an example of the modifications which the whole system of higher education in Russia is going through and reveal the main issues of concern in the search of improvements.

1. The Traditional System of Training Teachers in Russia

Teachers of foreign languages were traditionally trained in Russia at Pedagogical Institutes, at Faculties of Modern Languages. The training took 5 years, and the students learnt 2 modern languages, with a profound study of Linguistics and with courses in Psychology, Pedagogy, Methods of Teaching. The graduates were awarded not a degree, but the so-called “specialty” in foreign languages and a qualification of a teacher of two foreign languages (for example, English and German) at a secondary school level. They were not qualified for teaching in primary schools and kindergartens, as they were not trained in this field, and there was no need in it, as at schools foreign languages programmes started at grade 5 (and later at grade 4), when children were 10 years of age. There were, though, very few and very prestigious schools, the so-called schools specialising in English, where training in English started at primary school level.

It should be admitted, though, that in the 1960s there was a trend to start teaching foreign languages to preschoolers, and there appeared even TV programmes with English classes, textbooks for children were published and syllabi for teaching suggested. But gradually this trend vanished. This seems to be natural, given that in the Soviet Union, isolated from the outside world, there was practically no communication with other nations, or if it existed, it was too limited. In fact, in the 1970s and early 1980s it was a hard task to motivate people to learn foreign languages at all.

And it was also quite natural that the political and social changes of the late 1980s influenced tremendously motivation for learning languages, it was the time that training teachers of English for preschoolers and for primary school students started. It was done to meet the demand of parents who became aware of the fact that the future success of their children with the opportunities granted by freedom will be impossible without proficiency in foreign languages.

2. The Current System of Training Teachers of Foreign Languages for Young Learners

The training of teachers for young learners, when it just started, was based on the 5 year curriculum which combined courses in English and Children's Psychology and Pedagogy.

With the adoption of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, in the late 1990s, the curricula changed, and a 4-year Bachelor degree programme was introduced. The courses offered may be described through modules which are Foreign Language, Linguistics, Methods of Teaching Children.

The Linguistics module includes courses in General Linguistics, History of the Foreign Language, Theory of Phonetics, Theory of Grammar, Lexicology, Stylistics. The courses in the Foreign Language include besides the 4 language skills, the so-called "Country studies" incorporating Geography, history, literature, children's literature, culture of the country where the language is spoken. Methodology includes general Methodology of teaching foreign languages, i.e. irrespectively of the age of learners, and Methods of teaching children and field experience and student teaching. There is one very special course called Children' Country Study aiming to make students acquainted not just with the country and the culture related to the language they study, but also with the life of its children: what games they play, what books they read, their interests and values.

After getting Bachelor degrees, the graduates can start working, but in fact they are not supposed to. They are supposed to continue their education, and two options are offered for them. One option is to pursue a master degree course. This is a 2-year programme with 14 hours of face-to-face sessions per week. The students are supposed to write a dissertation of up to 75 pages which is a serious research of issues related either with teaching young learners or with training pre-service teachers of foreign languages. The courses they are offered focus on higher education, cross-cultural communication, intensive methods of teaching languages, research methods. They also can take a special 1-year course qualifying them as university lecturers.

Another opportunity offered to bachelor's degree holders is a one-year course leading to the qualifications either for teaching in vocational teachers' training colleges, or in primary schools. This programme mainly involves student teaching and writing a graduation paper of up to 50 pages.

The system described has been established in the late 1990s. After a decade since it has been introduced it is possible to claim that the students who took it are really well trained for teaching children: they know what is very relevant for teaching children, they are aware of the child's cognitive and physiological development, of psycholinguistic peculiarities of language acquisition, that is, they know how to teach foreign languages to children and they really do it efficiently.

But although the programme is fairly new, now it faces changes due to several factors. One of them seems to be entailing modifications in European higher education in general, as this factor is the Bologna process aiming at harmonizing various educational systems of training. The second factor also results from the Bologna process that launched attempts to search for competences of university graduates. As a result, a new concept of higher education is being developed in Russia and it is assumed that the new programmes based on this concept will be offered since 2009.

3. In Search for Competences of a Foreign Language Teacher

The main idea of the new concept of training teachers is based on the competence approach, implementing this approach entails a new procedure of designing curricula: from identifying professional competences of the in-service teacher to identifying the courses that would allow the pre-service teachers acquire those competences. As a result there is expected congruence between the competences to be gained and the training. This procedure seems to be quite reasonable, and that is exactly the way it should be: if this congruence does not exist, it is not clear what the universities are for. At the same time it should be admitted that most of current Russian programmes are rather

knowledge oriented than competence oriented. This knowledge orientation is quite obvious if tests and exams are taken into consideration, as they usually are targeted at finding out what the student knows and what he/she does not know which is the main criterion of the academic success, but which does not allow to assess the prospective performance of the graduate. The competence based approach is targeted at training for professional competences, for the ability to perform the duties of the teacher, in this respect the approach is focused on the abilities rather than knowledge, and this implies that all the aspects of training teachers should be reconsidered: its goals, content, curricula, syllabi, etc.

The concept of professional competencies has been widely discussed and developed by educators and several suggestions have been made. But, although the main idea seems to be new, something of the kind existed in the former days. Professional requirements for teachers of foreign languages published in 1985 (Shatilov, Salomatov, 1985) identified not only the skills of in-service teachers of foreign languages, but also set the goals of pre-service training. These requirements were based on the functional approach to the professional activities of the teacher, i.e. content of training pre-service teachers was determined by the content, the sphere, and the conditions of the activities of in-service teachers.

- According to S. Shatilov and K. Salomatov (1985), the goal of training teachers was to develop the following competences:
 - language (linguistic) competence regarded as the knowledge of the system of the foreign language and the rules of using it in communication;
 - linguistic-cultural competence regarded as the awareness of interrelationship language and culture of the countries speaking the foreign language, the acquisition of cultural semantics, and the cultural function of the foreign language;
 - communicative competence regarded as the ability to produce and understand utterances in the foreign language adequate to the conditions and factors of communication, as the adequate proficiency in the foreign language which for

the teacher is a means of communication, of teaching, and of self-education.

S. Shatilov and K. Salomatov described the professional objective of the course of training of pre-service teachers as developing communicative-methodological competence which consists of professional-adaptive skills, gnostic skills (the ability to compare and analyse language units, monologues, dialogues, etc.), constructive skills (the ability to adapt texts for teaching various language skills, etc.), organizing skills (Berdichevsky, 1989).

During the recent period of transformations and search for competences, these requirements have not been completely discarded, they have been analysed, reestimated, developed by various scholars, they are usually referred to in the major publications, though mostly by those scholars who write on the competences of foreign language teachers, while they are practically never mentioned by those who develop the general concept of higher education. This general concept has been widely discussed, various proposals have been made suggesting different names for competences, different definitions of competences, allocating different relevance to certain competences, but it seems that there is no contradiction to trace. Let us examine some of the proposals. In 2003 the project of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation titled "Development of recommendations and instructional materials for training specialists in the field of education for the strategic goals of school renewal" described the professional competence of the teacher as an integral ability to solve typical professional problems arising in real situations of professional pedagogical activities, this ability is based on knowledge, professional and life experiences, values, inclinations.

In most publications professional competence is regarded as an integral indicator of quality of university education and is described as the ability to solve typical professional problems. Professional pedagogical competence is usually described as consisting of two basic components: competence in teaching certain subjects, and competence in developing and upbringing students, the second component being regarded as an invariable component of educators' competence

regardless of the subject they teach (Kolesnikova, Tamashevich, 2007, 77).

The Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation has recently suggested a new model of the Federal Standard of Higher Education. The framework of this model is also based on two components, the former is described as universal, and the latter is a variable one. Thus, according to the suggested model, a university graduate should have the following competences:

- a) universal competences including, for example,
 - competences in science, such as the ability to apply the knowledge of the basic laws of natural sciences in the professional activities, to apply mathematical analysis methods and models, theoretical and experimental research in physics, chemistry, ecology; the ability to identify the essence of natural sciences in the problems arising in the professional activities and to employ the required tools and instrument of physics and mathematics for solving the problems;
 - instrumental competences, such as the computer skills, the ability to use the state language in written and oral communication, as well as proficiency in a foreign language; the ability to manage small teams; the ability to work with information coming from various sources;
 - social and cultural competences resulting from learning humanities, economics, for example; the ability to organize communities of learners, the ability to cooperate with social partners.
- b) professional competences related to the field of qualification.

The two approaches to the issue of professional pedagogical competences described above demonstrate that they do not contradict each other. On the other hand, the variety of the uncontradictory classifications is fairly confusing. While Russian educators are making attempts to come to agreement with each other in terms of these classifications, it might be more helpful to work with European educators and develop a joint approach, as the Bologna process will in any way unite the efforts made at national levels and as a result most of

the concepts proposed now will have to be reconsidered. But in any case, the above deliberations touched upon the issue of general understanding of professional pedagogical competences without going into details of competences of teachers of foreign languages.

E. Solovova, V. Safonova, and K. Makhmurian (2004), the authors of the publication of “Attestation of foreign language teachers of educational establishments” identify 3 main competences of the foreign language teacher: communicative, general pedagogical competence (psycho-pedagogical and methodological), and cultural and philological. They interpret the communicative competence in the conventional way, as the ability to communicate in a foreign language. Psycho-pedagogical competence is described as a wide scope of knowledge in the field of psychology and pedagogy and the ability to apply this knowledge in designing lesson plans and in teaching as well as in various extracurricular activities and in communicating with students and their parents and with colleagues.

The cultural competence is understood as the general level of culture and education, and the philological competence implies a high level of proficiency in the native language. Another aspect of philological competence is related to the foreign language proficiency, that is why, as Kolesnikova and Tamashevich suggest, it should be regarded as a part of communicative competence (2007, 79). Methodological competence is described as the ability to teach a foreign language in accordance with the goals and conditions of instruction as well as with the age, the level of language proficiency, and individual needs of students.

This interpretation of competences of the foreign language teacher on the one hand is in line with the current views on competences in Russian education, on the other hand, it does not contradict the above mentioned views of Shatilov and Salomatina expressed in 1985 which still remain the most cited in the deliberations of scholars designing the set of competences of the foreign languages teachers.

4. Competences of Teachers of the Foreign Languages for Young Learners

Below is given an attempt of specifying the competencies of a teacher of foreign languages specializing in teaching young learners:

- communicative competence in the foreign language (professional communicative proficiency involving besides the general foreign language proficiency the ability to communicate with young learners in a comprehensible way which implies adapting the utterances and texts appropriately to the cognitive development of learners)
- linguistic competence (the ability to apply in teaching the knowledge of the system of the language taught, the ability to compare the native and the foreign language and thus to predict the common mistakes the learners will tend to make based on the interference of the native language)
- linguistic-cultural competence (the awareness of the relationship between language and culture, the knowledge about the culture of the country where the foreign language is spoken, its history, everyday life of its people, traditions, customs, values, attitudes, popular books, films, cartoons, games, songs, interests of the children, etc. and the ability to apply this knowledge in teaching children)
- didactic competence (the knowledge of psychological, physiological, mental, cognitive development of young learners, the awareness of native and foreign language acquisition processes inherent to the age of the learners, the wide knowledge of various approaches, techniques of teaching foreign languages to young learners and the ability to apply this knowledge in designing, analyzing and critical evaluating the instruction and its outcomes)

The curriculum for developing these competences should include, besides general education courses training for universal competences, the following modules:

- Foreign language and culture

- Linguistics
- Methodology of teaching foreign languages
- Children Psychology and Pedagogy

Summarizing the current trends in Russian pedagogy, the suggested competences are open for discussions for reaching a joint approach in the framework of Bologna process.

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Part II

**SPECIAL THEMES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE
TEACHING**

TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACTIVITIES

Irina Vronskaya

Abstract

This article will explore a variety of issues related to integrating different kinds of children's activities in the process of teaching foreign languages. The general theme will be investigating the significance of children's activity as the most appropriate way of creating a context for foreign language acquisition and developing children's capability of performing according to the requirements of the particular situation.

Children's activities combined in a system with some other techniques can create a proper basis for a foreign language course developed for young learners. Teachers may also find here a new approach to the way of creating a meaningful interaction in a foreign language classroom.

Research on Teaching Young Learners through Activities

Creating an effective system of teaching a foreign language has been a challenge for foreign language teachers and researchers for years. Certain results of their efforts can be clearly seen nowadays. Many articles and books on teaching published every day cover different areas and aspects of teaching, and many materials are really useful for pre-service teachers and for the specialists.

The question of how best to teach English as a foreign language to young learners also has been in the focus of attention. But there is not enough literature on the subject: most of the literary sources either give only theoretical background to the methodology for early English language teaching and thus contain no practical implementation or

consist of a set of certain games, songs or other techniques that are not integrated into the syllabus. The main idea of the research that was carried out in 1999 was to work out a system of lessons that could serve as a kind of a reference point for teachers (Vronskaya, 1999.)

The book “105 English Lessons for Kids” (Vronskaya, 2006.) was published as the result of the research on teaching young learners through activities. It gives some helpful ideas on how to make the process of language acquisition more motivating for children. It also aims to make the teacher’s job easier by conducting a system of lessons gradually leading to the development of foreign language skills.

The course in question is based on the methodology of Communicative Language Teaching and on integrating in the process of teaching different kinds of children’s activities such as drawing, modeling, building with blocks, crafts and appliqué work. The variety of children’s activities are carefully selected in accordance with the syllabus and the stages of language skills development which helps the teacher to assess the progress of young learners. It is now generally accepted that teaching a foreign language should develop the child’s ability to use this language for communication. In other words, we teach children to convey their thoughts and intentions in a foreign language appropriately in a certain communicative situation. The ability to express the ideas, to use the foreign language for the purposes of communication is defined by the concept of communicative competence.

Communicative Competence

Communicative competence to be gained in the process of teaching is generally considered to have two integrated aspects: grammatical and interactional. According to Cazden (1972), “communicative competence includes both knowledge of language and knowledge of the social world and of rules for using language in that world so that the speech is appropriate as well as grammatical and creative within both linguistic and sociolinguistic rules. Together, these aspects of communicative competence are realized in the child’s actual speech

behavior or performance. This performance includes both speaking and comprehending” (p.3).

In other words the ability to communicate is possible not only because of the child’s knowledge of some specific language items but also owing to his capability of interpreting the social environment and of performing according to the requirements of the particular situation. When speech is included in a context of shared activity, the child cultivates situational competence which is defined as “the full set of linguistic, interpersonal, and social knowledge skills required by the demands of communication in a specific context such as dinner times, trips to the grocery store, and others” (Borman, 1979, p.82).

Thus, one of the basic purposes of every course should be to provide children with practice of communication in contexts of shared activity which follows natural ways of language acquisition and teaches the child to use the language according to the situation. These contexts may be useful if they are structured and organized within the general system of the course.

A complex of lessons comprises a system if only it has a unifying concept as the basis. The child’s activity is both the basis and the source of intellectual and communicative development of a child (Vronskaya, 1999).

Integrating Children’s Activities in the Process of Teaching English

Different kinds of activities constitute a natural context in which children are motivated to acquire new words and phrases easily and naturally. Learners’ motivation and needs have always been regarded as a key point in theories of foreign language acquisition. Most children who start a foreign language do not have autonomous motivation for learning, while young learners who are highly involved in the process and interested in the subject are very likely to be successful. Explanations of the role played by motivation have been provided by most of researchers who developed approaches to second language acquisition. They propose that the learner’s conscious or unconscious

motives, needs, attitudes or emotional states provide a certain degree of his or her readiness to accept new knowledge and develop skills. Although older learners are much less dependent on their present emotional state and are able to concentrate on their own general purpose of learning the language.

The difference between the young child and the adult is quite obvious: if the young learner does not have a strong need to learn the language and therefore 'closed' for the input he may stop learning. Besides, adults can learn a foreign language as a formal system by consciously studying linguistic rules. For younger children, language is a tool for expressing meaning. Taking into account different orientations to language learning of children and older learners, it becomes possible to support the idea that there must be a meaningful context for children to use this tool and gain proficiency in using it.

While planning their activities, discussing the steps for their accomplishment, sharing the outcome with other children and the teacher or a toy, children acquire certain language forms and ability to use them in an appropriate context or situation. And, what is more important, the situation of the activity is not an imaginary one but a real-life situation which clearly demonstrates the functional aspect of the language. When using typical sentences in appropriate situations we provide both comprehensible input and oral practice. Besides, children are usually fond of sharing and discussing the things they have just done. This feature encourages them to use a foreign language and makes speech production easier and more accurate. And when language learning is motivated by powerful communicative intention, it develops best. That is why the teacher should provide different kinds of activities for the meaningful interaction of children in natural contexts of communication.

It seems natural that a school environment favorable to foreign language learning should provide help in building up the skills that children need to acquire. Involving different kinds of children's activities and their constant changing can make the process of learning surprising and exciting and support children's interest during the lesson.

Kindergartens provide a lot of possibilities for using attractive colorful toys and different aids. Besides, there is much space in pre-school children's rooms in comparison with classes in schools. It makes the work of the teacher easier as it is possible to use different zones, furniture and other objects of the room to teach new material, to play with children and help them to be active and initiative.

It is well known that the more a learner is active in using language to communicate, the better he/she communicates. As for children, they need constant changes of activities. Being involved in something active is vital for them. So different kinds of activities have the advantage of involving physical actions that encourage children to be mentally active.

The techniques and materials presented in "105 English Lessons for Kids" (Vronskaya, 2006) are designed to give children practice in specific items and areas of language. These activities can easily demonstrate the meaning or use of the new language as the context, different visual aids and materials make clear the meaning of words naming objects, actions and movements, questions or intentions.

For example, different kinds of activities provide a rich context for

- using numbers;
- the words denoting colors: *yellow, blue, orange, pink, red*;
- names of different objects and their parts, their characteristics:
 - o plants: *trees, flowers, grass, mushrooms; stem, leaf, root*;
 - o animals and their parts of body: *a squirrel, a hedgehog, a frog, a rat, a tail, paws, whiskers*;
 - o fruit and vegetables, food, clothes, seasons and weather;
- specific actions and shapes: *to draw, to model, to cut out a triangle, a square, to fold, to smear with glue*;
- words and phrases to express children's attitude: *I think, I want to, I like/ I don't like*;
- morning exercises in English help to train verbs (*run, jump, walk on tiptoes, on heels, quickly, slowly with your hands on your shoulders/hips, bend left/right, bounce, squat*), sports

inventory (*balls, flags, jump ropes, hula hoops*) and different prepositions (*up, down, between, in front of, behind, around*).

Activities Based Course Description

This course includes 105 lessons for 6-year-old children, 10 units of morning exercises, 38 games and also provides a range of strategies for using the language in the daily routine in kindergarten. This course can last from October till May with 4 lessons a week during one year or it may last longer if the teacher wishes to give 2 lessons a week.

The 1st month starts with the Silent Period. During the 1st month children are supposed not to speak but to listen and to respond physically. The theoretical background of this approach is based on observations of the process by which children master their first language. Production is naturally delayed until the child's listening comprehension has been developed and the child is ready to speak. It is also recommended that "the students, too, remain silent until they are ready to speak, usually after about 10 hours of instruction" (Richard-Amato, 1990, 72). To lead the children into the atmosphere of foreign language without imposing on them rules of speaking we use the Total Physical Response activity (TPR), rhymes, songs and poems.

TPR is the method that involves the giving of commands to which children react. These commands are given in a logical way at first to help children to memorize the new language.

Gradually some more commands are added. At the same time words denoting parts of face, parts of body, furniture and some objects in the room, such as windows, closets, tables, boards, and the door are taught. TPR is also used for teaching children different colours.

Example 1.

Title: Colour Table

Purpose: to develop listening skills and practice colour recognition and following directions.

Materials: paper table, paints, brushes, a glass with water.

Mixed colours	red	blue	blue
	yellow	yellow	pink
Final colour	orange	green	purple

1. Make a master card containing a grid with no words in. Above the words are given for the teacher to know what paints are to be taken to colour the parts of the table.

2. Prepare paints of the necessary colours: red, blue, yellow and pink. Pour some water into the glass.

Presentation and a sample conversation:

1) A toy guest, Bunny, comes to the children and takes part in the lesson. The teacher tells the children and Bunny that today they are going to learn how to get one new colour from other two colours.

Then the children follow the teacher's instructions:

Sveta, come here and take the brush. Point to the red paint. Take the brush. Dip the brush into the red paint. Dip the brush into the water. Make the water red. Colour the first part of the table red.

Tanya, come here and take the brush. Point to the yellow paint. Take the brush. Dip the brush into the yellow paint. Dip the brush into the water. Make the water yellow. Colour this part of the table yellow.

Teacher: *Now, children, look! Is the water yellow?* (the children react nonverbally) *No, it is not. Is it red?* (pointing to the previous paint) *No, it is not. This is a new colour. It is orange.* (repeats this new word several times emphasizing its pronunciation) *Now let's colour this part of the table orange.*

After the first column of the table is completed the teacher asks questions to children so that they may remember the new word better. The teacher also pronounces the answers: (pointing to the table or

paints) *Is it red? Right, Sveta. It is red! Is it yellow? No, it is not. Is it orange? Yes, it is orange., etc.*

2) Then the teacher and the children follow the same procedure to get green and purple colours. During these experiments the teacher also addresses Bunny. Bunny “gives” wrong answers, “has” some difficulties in understanding which also motivates children to help him.

As the experience shows at the end of the month (8 hours of instruction) children can pronounce some words and phrases without any difficulty, as they are not forced to speak from the beginning but allowed to get used to the new vocabulary. After the first month, children gradually start taking part in planning their activities, answering the teacher’s questions while making something and discussing the results afterwards.

Example 2.

Title: Craft project “The Rat”

Purpose: to develop listening skills by following the directions, teach new words (a rat, a pocket, a paw – paws, whiskers), and practice words for the animals (a dog, a bird, a cat, a fish, a horse) and colours. To make a paper rat for its use in some drama-based activities.

Materials: 9 cm paper plates of different colours for each child (that they may have

a choice what colour of the rat’s dress to make), 4.5x4.5 and 4x1.5 cm pieces of grey paper (for the rat’s head and paws) and 3x3 cm pieces of paper of different colours (for the rat’s pocket); pencils (to connect the rat’s head and dress) scissors, black crayons, and glue (or a stapler).

Make one rat in advance to show it to children.



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Presentation and sample conversations:

1. Have children observe the rat.

The teacher: *Look at my rat. This is a rat.* (to teach this new word pronounce it expressively and let each child try to pronounce it at least twice) Addressing different children:

Is this a bird? (No, it isn't. It is not a bird.)

Is this a fish? (No, it isn't. It is not a fish.)

Is this a rat or a cat?

Is this a rat or a dog? etc.

Right, it is a rat.

2. Show the children paper plates and explain that they are going to learn to make cones out of these paper plates. These cones will serve as their rats' dresses.

1) *Take your paper plates. Look! They are round. It is round.* (explain this word by demonstrating the shape to the children).

Take your scissors and make two cuts to about the centre of the circle.

Cut out this triangle part of the circle.

Now fold it like this to make a cone.

This is the rat's dress.

2) Discuss the dress with the children asking questions about their rats:

Is this a sweater? (No, it isn't. It is not a sweater.)

Is this a skirt? (No, it isn't. It is not a skirt.)

Is this a dress or a coat?

Is this a dress or a cap? etc.

Is this dress blue?

Is this dress green?

Is this dress yellow or red?

*Ask more questions of different types depending on the children's language level.

3) Follow the same procedure to make the rat's head, ears and paws. After making a cone for the rat's head cut out small round ears and stick them to its head. Cut paws out of the paper and stick them to the sides of the dress.

Take your black crayons and draw a nose, eyes, and whiskers.

Show me the whiskers of your rats.

*Show me the paws of your rats.
 Are these whiskers or paws (eyes, hands, ears, etc.)?
 Are the whiskers green? Are they red?
 Are they black or white?
 Is this a paw or a tail? What is this?
 What colour is the paw? etc.*

4) Make a pocket.

*Take this small square piece of paper. Let's cut out a circle.
 Cut the circle out of this square.
 Cut it in two parts.
 This is a pocket for your rat's dress. It is red (blue, yellow, etc.)*

5) Discuss it with the children:

*Is it a pocket or a dress?
 Is your pocket green? Is your pocket white?
 What colour is your pocket?
 What colour is the dress?
 Do you like it?*

6) The teacher: *Let's glue the pocket to your rat's dress.*

Take the glue. Smear this side with the glue and stick them together.

Hold it for a while.

7) At the end of the lesson the teacher discusses the crafts with the children:

*Please, show me the rat. Do you like your rat? I like your rat too!
 Show me your rat's dress. Is this a pocket or a dress? What colour is it?
 Is this a pocket? Is it red or green? What is this? Is the nose black or white? Is it a tail or a face? What colour is it? etc.*

The book includes outdoor games that encourage children to use the English language and, thus, get more practice. The selection of an outdoor game will depend not only on the items studied but also on the children's mood and wishes. This kind of activity has a strong emphasis on using the target language as it helps to create a warm and accepting atmosphere, lowers the level of anxiety and bring children closer together.

Example 3.**"The Fox and the Ducks".**

Mark one side of the playground – this is the “home base” for ‘the ducks’. One child – “the Goose” – stands on the opposite side of the playground. On the left or right side of the playground there is a “house” where “the fox” lives. The ducks start to walk or fly. The Goose says:

Goose: Hi, ducks!

Ducks: Quack! Quack! Quack!

Goose: Do you want go home?

Ducks: Yes, yes, yes.

Goose: Then you go!

Ducks: Ducks: We are very much afraid.

We don't want to be so late.

But the old and cunning fox

Is sitting here - at the rocks.

Goose: I know that - but you fly here

For I want you to be near.

The ducks fly to the goose and the fox tries to catch them.

Repeat the game several times with the same fox and count the ducks he has caught.

Example 4.**"A Big Bad Wolf".**

There are two “home bases” on the opposite sides of the playground. One of it is “the cave” to hide in. “It” - A Big Bad Wolf - stands in the centre of the playground and says to other children:

I am a big bad wolf!

Who of you is not afraid

To go far and far away?

The children answer:

We are not afraid at all!

You - Big Bad Wolf - are too small.

We are very fast and brave!

We will run into the cave!

If the wolf tags a child before he reaches the cave on the opposite side he stays in the center of the playground till the end of the game. Count how many children the wolf was able to catch.

Conclusions

These are just few examples of the activities provided in the book. It is important to emphasize that children's activities combined in a system with some other techniques can create a proper basis for a foreign language course developed for young learners. Teachers may also find here a new approach to the way of creating meaningful interaction in foreign language teaching.

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SONGS, RHYMES AND YOUNG LEARNERS

Early Foreign Language Learning at Joensuu University Teacher Training School and Songs and Rhymes Used in Teaching English

Eija Liisa Sokka-Meaney

Abstract

This article gives a brief description of the early foreign language learning project at the Joensuu University Teacher Training School and subsequent developments and then describes the place of songs, rhymes and games in teaching and learning English at this stage.

1. Background to early language learning at Joensuu University Teacher Training School

Finnish children start school in the year they have their 7th birthday, which means that there can be almost a year's age difference between the youngest and the oldest children in the class. In regular comprehensive schools they usually start their first foreign language in the third year, when they are 9-10 years old.

1.1. Early Foreign Language Learning Project

In 1992 the Joensuu University Teacher Training School initiated a development project for the early school years (i.e. the first and the second grade). It had three main areas:

- *the development of reading, writing and mother tongue skills,*
- *developing science teaching and learning*

- *starting early foreign language learning, English.*

This project lasted three years 1992-1995, but it has continued to influence work at the school. I shall concentrate in describing some features of the foreign language project.

At that time the annual intake of pupils into the first grade was about sixty. Parents were offered the option of having their child in a class which started English in the first school year and about 20 children started the programme each year and the influence of the project continued after it was over until 2003 and even later.

The pupils had 21 lesson hours a week in different school subjects including two lesson hours of English. They were also taught some other lessons or parts of lessons in English. The subjects varied; mostly they were music, crafts and science but sometimes other subjects were involved, too. English lessons involved not only learning from a book in a traditional way, but also songs, rhymes, games, pictures, stories, miming, making things etc.

Learning subject content in a foreign language or studying multilingually is not a new phenomenon; it dates back to Roman times and it was the norm for Finnish speakers during the centuries when Swedish was the language of culture and education in Finland. In the Middle Ages many Finnish scholars went to study in Central Europe. (Takala 1994, 73-74).

Today teaching a school subject such as music, science, or crafts in a foreign language is called CLIL-teaching, Content and Language Integrated Learning. It is a method used in several European countries for teaching young pupils as well as older students (Marsh, 1998). One of its aims is to give children some degree of bilingualism and thus strengthen their foreign language skills (Järvinen, 1999, 13-14, 23-24). The amount of teaching can vary from a few hours weekly or monthly to nearly 90% of all tuition. The percentage at our school varied a little from year to year and from class to class but mostly it was between 15-25% a week (Sokka-Meaney, 1995). There was some informal follow-up, which involved asking foreign language teachers at later stages for feedback, and it looks like pupils benefited to some extent from an early start in English learning.

1.2. The role of the curriculum in the project

When the early English project started, the class teachers and the teachers of English wrote an attachment to the curriculum drawing up the main lines for teaching. This gave the teachers guidelines, but it also left a lot of room for them to develop their own methods and materials. In Finnish schools, teachers have the freedom to choose teaching materials and thus the teachers could choose their own materials for use in the project. The first book used was Chatterbox 1, Pupil's Book and Activity book (1991).

In 1999 these guidelines were incorporated into the curriculum. At that time children could start the first foreign language either in the first school year or in the third school year. Those who started in the first year had a choice of English or Russian; those who started in the third year, had a choice of English, Russian or German. The choice in the first year was usually English, and there was a Russian club for the pupils of grades 1-2. (Joensuu normaalikoulun perusasteen opetussuunnitelma, 1999)

1.3. Starting the first foreign language today

In 2004 schools got a new National Core Curricula for Basic Education 2004 (NCCBE), the first of its kind for thirty years. Subsequently, local school boards or individual schools developed their own curricula within the framework set by the NCCBE. In doing this our school took the opportunity to restructure the foreign language learning programme and widen the choice of languages.

Today pupils at the Teacher Training School start their first foreign language (called the A1 language) in January of their first school year, and they have one lesson hour a week. The second year is the same: one lesson hour a week. In the third year pupils have two lesson hours a week.

Pupils have a choice from English, German or Russian, which is a wider selection than at any other school in Joensuu or in North-Karelia. At the moment there are groups in all these languages and there is a

Russian club once a week for pupils who want to learn Russian as a hobby. Participants in the club come from grades 1-3.

(<http://jnor.joensuu.fi/index.php?978>)

The objectives in the foreign language curriculum for grades 1-2 are

- *become conscious of language and its meaning*
- *feel encouraged to speak at the word and phrase level by listening and understanding the language*
- *acquire a foundation for language study skills and subsequent language studies*
- *take an interest in learning language, and in life in various cultures*

The core contents in the foreign language curriculum for grades 1-2 are

- *everyday life and immediate environment, home and school*
- *age-appropriate songs, rhymes and games*
- *key general information on the target language's culture and language region*

(<http://jnor.joensuu.fi/index.php?1042>)

As the curriculum shows songs, rhymes, games play an important role in foreign language learning in the first two school years.

2. Songs, rhymes and poems in the project and later

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) encourages the use of different teaching and learning methods in foreign language learning. One way of doing this is to use songs, rhymes, poems and games.

When children are in the first and second class, they still like to play and their ability to learn by heart is very good: if you learn something by heart it is your “property” for the rest of your life. Learning new songs and rhymes develops several skills that are necessary for the successful learning process of foreign languages such as the ability to concentrate and memorise. The pupils have to concentrate

hard enough to listen to the sounds and words of the songs and rhymes, and they have to memorize and repeat first small parts of the words and finally the whole text of the song. Understanding follows either simultaneously or later. Pupils enjoy songs and games and, as some of them say, themselves they learn by singing. (Interviews⁸ in class 2A in spring 2008.)

In the classroom songs also have an influence on the socialization of the group and group dynamics. Pupils gradually learn the songs by heart and may even feel that “this is our song”. In 2007-2008 I taught pupils in the second year group, and one regular activities was to sing and play a song at the end of each lesson. This song was “*If you are happy and you know it clap your hands etc.*” which is internationally known and familiar to some pupils in its Finnish version. The pupils gradually learnt the song and the movements that go with it, and by the time they knew it rather well they did not want to change it, although it had been my intention to do that. Thus for the group the song had become a socially uniting and ritualistic way of ending the weekly English lesson. Rituals and habit give young learners a feeling of continuity and security, and thus helps to provide the structure that children of 7-9 years old need in their daily rhythm. At the same time they are creating their inner structures of time, order and various other features of age-related development.

The songs and rhymes used in the foreign language classroom are repeated frequently. It is a general learning principle that repetition helps pupils to remember the learning material (Bialystok, 1994, 137). Gradually pupils start producing the songs and rhymes themselves and thus the learning processes develop from receptive skills to productive skills.

Imitation skills are linked to pupils’ age. In the early school years children like to imitate sounds and words and the teacher can use this to build a basis for good pronunciation and intonation. There is some evidence that young foreign language learners benefit from learning the phonological system of a foreign language at an early age before puberty (Bialystok 1994, 122-123, 135). In some studies early age is seen as a

⁸ All pupils in grades 1-2 were interviewed during January-April 2008. The writer interviewed 2A, the group she taught.

critical period for learning phonology and this is one of the supposed advantages of starting foreign language teaching in the first school year as we do.

Another argument for using songs, rhymes and games is that children learn something about the culture of the target language. One could even say that they learn the real culture. When the teacher chooses to use songs and rhymes which native speaking children learn in their own environment, this teaching material can enable children to interact in some multicultural situations, because these songs and games are widely used in language teaching in different countries. Many young pupils travel with their families abroad and meet children from different cultures⁹.

1.2 Language and culture in songs and rhymes

Every time the teacher teaches a new song or a rhyme it extends the child's awareness of the target culture. The new songs and rhymes are always connected to the English speaking culture.

The teacher should know something about the historical background of the songs and rhymes she uses and it may be useful to tell something of this to the pupils, so that they learn more about the target culture and its traditions. If the foreign language skills are not up to understanding the story of the song in English, the teacher can use the pupil's native language.

In researching the history of rhymes and songs the teacher should be aware at least to some extent of possible errors and misconceptions. A good example is the rhyme *Ring a ring of roses*.

*Ring a ring of roses,
a pocket full of posies,
Atishoo, atishoo,
We all fall down.*
(Vale, 1990)

⁹ Interviews.

This song is often linked to the history of England in the 17th century and the Great Plague of 1665-66, which killed large numbers of people. The sneezing is said to refer to the symptoms and the falling down to the death of the victims. This is an interesting and exciting story for pupils to hear and several English books and teacher's books give this version (e.g. Early Bird, Teacher's Book 1990, 109) However, Opie (1971, 221-223) points out that this interpretation does not appear in the records of the 17th century: it is relatively new and appears in the late 19th century and early 20th century. This song, like many other songs and rhymes, also have different variations in different parts of the country and time also has influence on the wording of the texts. There are also variants of this song in German and French speaking areas of Europe.

Another activity that pupils enjoy is colouring a picture of the contents of a song or drawing their own picture. Special days and special holidays such as Valentine's Day or Christmas and Easter are useful for this activity. Holiday which are less well-known (at least in Finland) provide particularly good opportunities for using this method. Thanksgiving, for example, inspires drawing of turkeys, pumpkins and pies – and possibly even some baking.

Nowadays the internet is a good source for finding songs and rhymes. Sometimes it can be difficult to get the notes of the song, but they may be available as a sound file. There is a good selection of children's song books available and if the class teacher can play the piano or the guitar, there is a good opportunity for combining foreign language learning and music. Of course recordings help a lot by giving a model for intonation and pronunciation as well as the words and the tune.

An example of what can be found on the internet is this little song on the *Thanksgiving* theme.

*"Thanks to Melody for sending this in!"
 "Nice little song for Thanksgiving, teaches history of the holiday. Find a comfortable tune!! ...Melody"*

First Thanksgiving

*Upon the Mayflower pilgrims sailed
 Until America's Plymouth was hailed.
 They anchored there in 1620
 Food nearly gone, and hardships aplenty.
 Indians shared their seeds, meat, and corn
 That's how the First Thanksgiving was born!!*

http://www.dltk-holidays.com/thanksgiving/first_thanksgiving.html

This example is from *DLTK's Sites Growing Together*, which contain educational activities for the use of teachers and parents. (DLTK, Dynamic Languages Toolkit, <http://www.eclipse.org/dltk/>). Websites such as this often contain contributions from teachers and they are meant for instruction in English as a native language but EFL teachers can benefit from them too.

Sometimes an internet site may contain a different version of a song printed in a song book. Another version can be found on the internet site *Preschool Education.com* which is aimed at teachers. This enables the teacher to compare the different versions and choose the most suitable.

Wee Sing: Children's Songs and Fingerplays contains the following Thanksgiving song:

Over the River and Through the Woods

*Over the river and through the woods,
 To Grandmother's house we go;
 The horse knows the way
 To carry the sleigh
 Through white and drifted snow.
 Over the river and through the woods,
 Oh, how the wind does blow,
 It stings the toes and bites the nose,
 As over the ground we go.*

*Over the river and through the woods,
 Trot fast my dapple gray.
 Spring over the ground like a hunting hound
 For this is Thanksgiving Day.
 Over the river and through the woods,
 Now Grandmother's face I spy.
 Hurrah for the fun, is the pudding done?
 Hurrah for the pumpkin pie.*

(Conn & Hagen, 1977, 74)

Here are the 2nd and 3rd verses of the same song. The first verse is almost identical. Evidently this is a traditional song where the writer of the words and the writer of music are unknown.

*Over the river and through the woods
 To have a first-rate play.
 Hear the bells ring, Ting-a-ling-ling!
 Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!
 Over the river and through the wood,
 Trot fast, my dapple gray!
 Spring over the ground, Like a hunting hound,
 For this is Thanksgiving Day.*

*Over the river and through the wood,
 And straight through the barnyard gate.
 We seem to go, Extremely slow
 It is so hard to wait!
 Over the river and through the wood
 Now Grandmother's cap I spy!
 Hurrah for fun!
 Is the pudding done?
 Hurray for the pumpkin pie!*

<http://www.preschooleducation.com/sthanksgiving.shtml>

Many riddles, songs, rhymes, stories and games are international. They may differ slightly from language to language but they clearly have a common origin. For example, the skipping rope rhyme, *Teddy*

Bear has a Finnish equivalent *Nallekarhu*, *Nallekarhu*. which I have heard children singing in the school yard.

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
turn around,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
touch the ground.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear
show your shoes, etc

Nallekarhu, Nallekarhu
pyöri ympäri
Nallekarhu, nallekarhu,
koske käsi maahan,
jne.

(<http://literacyconnections.com/ASTeddyBear.html>)

Comparing versions enables the teacher to use both languages and point out to the children that the two countries have common features and not just differences. A lot of other songs and rhymes can be used in the same way.

The physical responses to rhymes and songs reinforce the connection between the meaning of a word and the action it refers to. Memorizing rhymes and actions helps pupils to learn not only vocabulary but also pronunciation and rhythm as well as social skills and rules. This way of using songs and rhymes is not limited to lower grades; it can also be used in later years, for example in teaching history or learning text analysis. It enriches foreign language teaching and learning.

Many teachers use songs in the target language in music lessons as well as in FL lessons. For older students there are specially written books like e.g. *Jazz Chants!* (Graham, 1978), which aim at teaching various language skills. Jazz chants are poems that use jazz rhythms to illustrate the natural stress and intonation patterns of conversational American English. They help the students to learn pronunciation, speech rhythm, grammar structures etc. Learning the speech patterns by heart helps students to activate and improve their language skills. Here are examples;

How's His English

*His English is wonderful,
he speaks very well.
His accent is perfect.
You really can't tell
that he isn't a native
of the U.S.A.
There's only one problem,
he has nothing to say.*

More Bad Luck

*The bread was stale,
it was four days old.
The milk was sour.
The coffee was cold.
The butter was rancid.
The steak was tough.
The service was dreadful.
The waiter was rough.
My bill was huge.
His tip was small.
I'm sorry I went to that place at all.*

(Carolyn Graham, 1978)

Some teachers also write jazz chants themselves for teaching purposes. Sometimes they teach their pupils to make their own jazz chants¹⁰ by modifying the basic models. (Carolyn Graham has since written a jazz chant book for young learners.)

Or why not use raps for the same purposes? - older pupils might be interested in writing raps themselves.

1.3 Rhymes, music and movement

Many songs and rhymes involve movements, which is a phenomena and an old tradition in practically all nations. Using these songs and movements in the classroom helps pupils to remember e.g. the meanings of words better. A good, perhaps classic, example is the song “*Head, shoulders, knees and toes...*”, where you touch the parts of the body that you are singing about.

Some rhymes also have a strong interactive element, which promotes working in pairs in exchanging the active partner's role and thus these rhymes enhance children's social skills. In Britain the following rhyme is usually played with very young children, under school age, but it is possible to use it in the EFL classroom with older children. Pupils in the first and second grade usually like it very much.

¹⁰ http://members.tripod.com/jrmeads_515/tips.htm

*Round and round the garden like a Teddy Bear,
One step, two step, tickle you under there.*

(This Little Puffin, 1991)

It is a finger play or a tickly rhyme, in which children use only their hands and fingers for the rhyme and play.

There is a number of songs and plays in which children move around in accordance with the words and tune. A good traditional example is *“If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands”*, which is suitable for rather small children because even, if it takes a long time to learn the words, they can still learn the gestures. We used it as “our song”, in class 2A, which I taught in 2007-2008. The pupils gradually learnt it by heart and expected it to be sung at the end of each lesson as I have mentioned earlier.

Another example is *“Brown bear’s snoring, brown bear’s snoring, in his winter sleep”*. This is a musical game in which children go round and one child is in the middle being the bear asleep. Suddenly during the course of the song s/he wakes up, points at one of the children in the circle and this child gets to be in the middle. Songs like this are often sung to a simple, familiar tune so the pupils can concentrate on the words and the game.

During the development project described in paragraph 1.1. the pupils in the language programme regularly performed their Christmas and spring party programmes in English. The ideas, songs and programmes varied: Christmas carols, the Christmas Bible story in English, small poems and musical plays. In 1998, for example, we did *“The Sleeping Beauty”* using traditional Finnish tunes with English words and traditional English songs such as *“Country Gardens”*. Preparing the programmes required a lot of work but pupils acquired not only language skills but also performing, social and musical skills.

Poems, songs, games, and riddles enable pupils to develop many linguistic, cultural and other necessary skills in the language classroom. The teacher needs a good knowledge of this material and sources of new material. Again, the internet is good for finding useful materials, but if the teacher wants to learn how children play these games and songs in

the target culture, it is a good idea to visit an English speaking country and/or go on a course and learn how to perform the necessary movements, to move your hands and fingers or how to play around in a circle. Books may well give good instructions how to play games, but if the teacher learns them at first hand it is all the easier to pass them on to the pupils.

3. Some projects using songs, rhymes and games

In full **immersion** programmes children start learning a foreign language before starting school. In these cases the input of the new language is 100%. Given the age of the children it is only natural to use games, songs and rhymes as a way of teaching new language and other skills.

CLIL – content and language integrated learning – uses songs, rhymes and games in teaching both foreign languages and other school subjects such as music, mathematics or physical education taught in the foreign language. Other possibilities are limited only by the teacher's imagination.

Traditional songs, rhymes, games and poems are used in **language nest** projects, which aim at reviving small, endangered minority languages. For example, some communities in Lapland have started projects to revitalize local and endangered varieties of the Sami language and thus encourage children and parents to learn and use (Pasanen, 2003, 29-30) the traditional language of their community and area.

In Inari the municipality has initiated language nest activity in a day care centre which aims at learning and revitalizing Inari Sami, a minority language, to children under school age. The method resembles that of immersion programmes but the ideology is different – the aim is to keep the endangered languages alive and the language that children are learning, is related to the environment and culture of their family, traditions and population group. Similar projects have been set up in Russian Karelia to revitalize some varieties of Karelian. In both cases the transmission of the traditional language has been disturbed and there is

a danger of a linguistic genocide (Pasanen, 2003, 4-5; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). In these projects songs and rhymes play an important role in transmitting the oral traditions and cultural heritage of the local language.

These projects are examples of the ways songs, rhymes and games can be used in supporting and motivating foreign language learning. EFL books used in Finland and elsewhere often have a section for songs and rhymes or they may be integrated into the chapters or lessons. However, the utilization of this material is left up to the teacher to choose and in my experience many teachers do not use it to its full extent, perhaps because they don't see its value.

4. Conclusions

Songs, rhymes, poems, and plays can be used in many ways in early foreign language learning. Here are some mentioned in the article and teachers can use their imagination for more.

- to motivate the pupils to learn foreign languages
- to encourage active use of the languages and develop productive skills
- to improve pronunciation, speech rhythm and intonation
- to improve concentration
- to improve social skills, increasing class cohesion and understanding of rules
- to develop co-operation skills
- to transmit culture and traditions
- to develop intercultural skills and understanding
- to encourage performing skills
- to use as teaching material in CLIL
- to bring joy to the FL classroom
- and last but not least to involve student teachers in all these activities.

It is particularly important to involve student teachers in all these activities. At a teacher training school they have the opportunity to experiment with different ideas and methods, which they can then as young teachers bring to their schools. If they learn to use songs and rhymes in their teaching practice then it is more likely that they will do so in their subsequent work and spread the idea to other teachers.

I would like to finish with a rhyme which combines words and movements and which young foreign language learners have liked a lot.

An elephant goes like this and that,

Pat knees

He's terribly big,

Hands high.

And he's terribly fat;

Hands wide.

He has no fingers,

Wriggle fingers.

And he has not toes,

Touch toes.

But goodness gracious,

What a long nose

Curl hand away from nose.

(This Little Puffin, 1991, 279)

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CHILD POLICY ISSUES AT ENGLISH CLASS IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Abstract

Teaching Child Policy issues, as to the question of children's rights has become the most significant one, is gaining attention in the world today. The reason to it is the active position of the United Nations organization in its policy towards children. Many educators are working on integrating Child Policy issues into university curricula. English class seems to be a perfect environment to introduce the policy aspects due to the points of intersection of the aims of the communication-oriented approach in teaching foreign languages with the social-oriented aims of Child Policy. This article seeks to find opportunities of teaching Child Policy issues, primarily children's rights, in the English class within the curriculum of pre-service teachers' education.

Introduction

The objectives of training pre-service teachers tend to change responding to the social needs. Today a teacher is a person who bears all kinds of responsibilities for a child. A teacher became responsible for both the child's physical health and protection from any danger threats from the family, street and other surrounding and for the child's personal and social development enabling the child live in the multicultural world. How to prepare a teacher capable to face the reality of today is a baffling question for educators. In this respect Child Policy is the key to the question. Obviously, Child Policy reveals the idea of the mechanisms of children's protection. Concentrating on this idea

might be considered as a significant point for constructing a pedagogical scheme of teaching.

In spite of attempts to provide pedagogical technologies of teaching Child Policy issues, there is no well-elaborated program for pre-service teachers that could be integrated into the curriculum. Therefore, this article seeks to analyze the value of the Child Policy issues for pre-service teachers and suggests a pedagogical technology of its implementation into the curriculum.

As the term “Child Policy” has not been defined, firstly it is necessary to make an attempt to explain the essence of it. The further discussion will be focused on the question: Why is the awareness of Child Policy indispensable for pre-service-teachers. While the field is broad, further we shall focus our attention on the main issue – Child’s rights as a part of Human Rights.

What is Child Policy?

Although 'Child Policy' lacks definition today, it is commonly used among specialists dealing with children's issues on the governmental level in Russia. We assume that Child Policy (CP) is a system of measures advocated at international and national levels. CP takes its origin from the initiatives made by the UN directed to resolve the problems concerning children in the world. What are those initiatives?

The first declaration, known as Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, was adopted by The League of Nations organization in Geneva in 1924. This Declaration consisted of only 5 articles; each of them mainly started with the words: “the child must be.¹¹, arising the question of responsibility for a child”. The article embraced the general aspects of child’s care, such as food, medical care, freedom of talents, prevention of exploitation and other. This declaration did not encounter enough interest and had a lack of action to be realized in practice¹² but had an impact for future steps.

¹¹ Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1924

¹² Marshall, D http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/hist/coldwar_section07-en.asp

The first effort of the UN, the successor of The League of Nations, in terms of regulations of children's issues was made in 1948 when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was issued. Article 25(2) stated that "*Motherhood and Childhood are entitled to special care and assistance*"¹³. The end of the Second World War revealed the necessity to provide assistance to children who remained without parental care. Therefore, realizing that the widespread urgent measures should be taken for the post-war children, the United Nations set up the International Children's Emergency Fund, UNICEF, in 1946. Later in 1956 the UN's **Convention on the recovery of the alimony abroad** saw the light of the day as another private initiative of the organization to take post-war family issues under control.

The third drastic step was taken by the UN in 1959 when it included elaboration of Declaration of the rights of the child, a non-binding resolution to the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights of 1948, particularly referring to the article 25 (2) mentioned above. The Declaration of the Rights of the Child consisted of preamble and 10 main principles: a right for education, protection, respect and assistance from the state, etc.

The Convention on the Right of the Child (CROC) adopted later, in 1989, became the apogee of the development of the child policy. It consisted of 54 articles and eventually was ratified nearly by the whole world. Since that time the issues of the children's rights have gained an extended significance. Children's Rights can be regarded as the single aspect of CP. The latter presents a wide field of political and social significance which includes overall processes and subprocesses both on the international and national levels, embracing the UN's action alongside the actions of a state with its parliament and independent non-governmental organizations (NGO).

Clearly, it makes sense to speak about subdivision of CP into International and National (see table 1). Both levels of policy are mutually subordinated. For example, monitoring of any normative act realization entails de facto the inversed connection between the UN and

¹³ UDHR 1948, art 25

a particular state in the form of, say, reports of the state considered later by the UN agencies.

Table 1: Levels of Child Policy

International / UN level:	National /State level:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ development of normative acts ■ act of ratification; ■ monitoring of fulfillment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ preparation for ratification process ■ development of local normative bases for the international law fulfillment ■ monitoring and control ■ institutionalization of the CP ■ reporting by the state ■ reporting by independent NGOs

Though at the International level, the policy demonstrates a certain power in development of International Law and demands its fulfillment (see Table 1); the national level policy constructs complicated practical mechanisms of implementation of the UN's initiatives. All in all, the formation of CP is not possible without those two levels.

Child Policy Issues within Human Rights Education

After three years of the ratification of CROC, "in 1993 World Conference on Human Rights also reaffirmed the importance of education, training and public information"¹⁴. Responding, to that, in 1994 "the General Assembly proclaimed the period from 1995 to 2004 the *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education*"¹⁵. During this

¹⁴ ABC: Teaching Human Rights 2003, p.6

¹⁵ Ibid,

period a special group of experts within the UN were working on the development of a practical guide for teachers on how to teach human rights to children of primary and secondary schools (ABC: Teaching Human Rights). The major principles to that guide became the ones declared in the UN¹⁶:

- a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
- c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;
- d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society;
- e) The furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

These principles can be transformed into single goals for teacher to achieve when studying human rights. After the goals have been set, the next stage is to define the sphere of action. For this, an educator can choose among the following options:

- The incorporation of human rights education in national legislation regulating education in schools;
- The revision of curricula and textbooks;
- Pre-service and in-service training for teachers to include training on human rights and human rights education methodologies;
- The organization of extracurricular activities, both based on schools and reaching out to the family and the community;
- The development of educational materials;
- The establishment of support networks of teachers and other professionals (from human rights groups, teachers' unions, non-governmental organizations or professional associations) and so on¹⁷.

¹⁶ United Nations document A/51/506/Add.1, appendix, para. 2

¹⁷ ABC: Teaching Human Rights 2003, p. 7

The authors of the UN book “*ABC: Teaching Human Rights*” state that the ways of teaching human rights will hinge upon the countries, local systems of education, and teachers’ personalities. But teaching human rights can be naturally weaved into the fabric of any school curriculum:

Opportunities to do this may vary: human rights themes may be infused into existing school subjects, such as history, civics, literature, art, geography, languages¹⁸ and scientific subjects, or may have a specific course allocated to them; [...]¹⁹.

As it was mentioned above, children’s rights take their origin from human rights and demonstrate a private case with specification on children as human beings under 18. Among other issues, Rights of the child is the core subject within the CP. Human rights education should proceed being attended by the rights of the child. The target group to scrutinize children’s rights as well as other child- related issues is pre-service teachers. And here we can pose a question: why do pre-service teachers need CP issues in their curriculum?

Answering the question, we can find several reasons why CP issues should be included into curriculum of pedagogical universities. First, understanding of the UN’s processes in CP brings comprehension and estimation of the situation “here and now” in a particular society. If we see, that after a large number of steps taken by the UN, children still face ethnic discrimination, illegal trade, sexual harassment, excessive physical violence, pornography, overfilled orphanages we can state about a lack of responsibility of the government and society.

Consideration of the CP issues will assist to strive for improvement of the situation “here and now” not only theoretically but practically.

Primarily when talking about CP issues we imply the following:

1. Organization of the United Nations;
2. Declarations of Human Rights;
3. Convention of the rights of the child;
4. Social activity in promoting children’s rights;

¹⁸ Bold is my

¹⁹ ABC: Teaching Human Rights 2003, p.8.

5. NGOs and their response to the UN and other organizations.

This knowledge should be compulsory for teachers as they are mediators between social surrounding and a child. Let us cite an example.

The living environment has become increasingly multicultural. This is a result of the global political and economical changes. Migrants, immigrants and refugees are those who move from one place to another for a number of reasons. When they start living in another environment, they may not be accepted by their surroundings, primarily due to cultural distinctions. In this situation, a very sensitive group to assimilation are children who suddenly find an absolutely different world around them. So, a teacher is a person who is supposed to help those children to overcome social deprivation and grow among others. The knowledge of CP prompts to understand the social processes and take responsibility for treating all children equally in spite of their ethical, national or cultural divergence.

In most cases, the notion of children's rights as part of human rights has become the most significant aspect of CP which formation goes around the guiding principles of CROC (1989).

Pre-service teachers should know the rights of their students and be able to transmit the basic human rights awareness to them. For their part, children, will respond with tolerance, acceptance and respect towards other people. Pointing out all the substantiality of the CP for the pre-service teachers, further we shall answer the following question: How to provide the teaching of CP issues successfully in practice?

English Class as a Natural Environment for Teaching Child Policy Issues: Methodology and Technology

The university curriculum is not very flexible in Russia. The most sensible way to introduce a new subject, (CP, in the frameworks of our discussion) seems to be to integrate its parts into another subject. Teaching CP issues is possible, and, what is more, expedient, within the English class which, for its part, is the most natural environment for teaching human rights in comparison with any other subject.

It is a fact that nowadays teaching foreign languages is mainly targeted to developing communicative competence. Besides, students acquire other competences that allow them to use their language skills, understand foreign mentality, and be tolerant towards the representatives of foreign societies and their cultures. Having a good command of English, pre-service teachers are able to

- a) deal with an extensive layer of information given in a foreign language for personal and professional growth;
- b) teach young students by forming a number of skills to keep up with the constantly changing environment.

Globally, today teaching foreign languages is primarily based on communication-oriented approach. Communication implies understanding of a foreign culture alongside and of the place of one's own culture in the multicultural world. Therefore, teaching foreign languages implies psychological aspects of intercultural communication such as adaptation, tolerance, acceptance and integration²⁰. Clearly a foreign language class can be viewed as a natural setting for teaching human rights issues and understanding of diversity.

English, as commonly the first foreign language, studied far and wide in the world, can become a solid platform to introduce child policy issues. Besides, there are a lot of published or freely available materials in the Internet for the teachers to use. These materials may be divided into two groups. The first group requires a certain adaptation of the material to the English class and its linguistic goals, the second group is ready for using in the classroom. In both cases, there is a need to design a specific methodology that will certainly take into account the target group of students, i.e. their age and level of English proficiency.

The “*ABC: Teaching Human Rights*” guide-book, written and recommended by the UN, highlights how to teach human rights to children of primary and secondary schools. It also suggests a step-by-step-program for teachers (see table 2), while the approaches on how to teach pre-service teachers at the universities remain untouched. Nevertheless, the program for teachers in this book can serve as a **basis**

²⁰ Elizarova 2004, pp. 149-167

for development of a methodological approach for educating pre-service teachers.

Generally, the methodology of teaching of CP during English classes can be based on **three stages**.

The **first stage** implies introduction to the issues of CP and UN's activity. Specifically, at the first stage the students learn the "core content of human rights education"²¹, i.e. the UDHR and CROC.

"These documents – which have received universal recognition [...] – provide principles and ideas with which to assess experience and build a school culture that values human rights. The rights they embody are universal, meaning that all human beings are entitled to them, on an equal basis; [...]"²².

Familiarization of children with human rights concepts and a step-by-step approach is described in *Appendix 1*. It shows how all new concepts and activities are based on something learned earlier. Thus the teachers can build a clear structure during the school years.

The **second stage** of teaching university students implies using methods aimed to teach children in accordance with their age. However, prior to teaching university students human rights it is reasonable to begin with lectures on child policy issues (see Teaching Child Policy) as an introduction to the course. After the students acquire the necessary knowledge and understanding of human rights they become ready to be taught on the methods of teaching schoolchildren.

The first stage:

As it was previously mentioned the first stage is based on introduction of the two main documents for students as a part of the information about the field of CP. Besides the informational goal, the course has additional objectives related to the development of vocabulary, critical thinking, analytical and practical skills of using English language.

²¹ Ibid., p.11

²² Ibid., p.11

As the text of the documents presents the main material²³, it is important to teach pre-service teachers to understand the specific language of a formal text and to infer the idea that is implied. Further there are some examples of the assignments for students.

Vocabulary:

Task 1. *After reading the text of the Convention of the Right of the Child, explain in English how you understand the terms: state party, NGO, ratification, convention, normative acts, legal guardians, juvenile justice, judicial involvement, refugee, abused children.*

Task 2. *Consult the dictionary. Did you guess the meaning correctly?*

Task 3. *Find the terms that caused considerable difficulties in understanding for you and discuss them in the groups.*

Task 4. *Select and present a glossary of the terms related to the topic “Rights of the child”.*

Questions to consider:

- a) In the text of the convention, find definition of the word “child”. Why do you think it is used with the definite article “the”? Did the word “the child” receive a new sense?
- b) According to the Convention, who is responsible for the child?
- c) What protection and rights are especially needed by children?²⁴

Problem solutions:

Situation 1: *One of the children in the class seems to be especially intolerant towards children from the former Soviet Union. The child always fights with them and swears. What would you do to solve this problem?*

Situation 2: *Refugee parents do not want their child to have extra-curricular activities with other children at school or kindergarten. What would you do about that?*

²³ An additional material for the class with university students can serve clustering cards, role cards and responsibility cards
(http://www.unicef.org/teachers/protection/only_right.htm#clustering)

²⁴ First Steps – A Manual for Starting Human Rights Education, chapter 6

Practical skills:

Task 1. Prepare a seminar for parents on children's rights.

Task 2. Deliver a presentation on the rights of children adapting the terms of the Convention.

The second stage:

When teaching pre-service teachers, have them examine Appendix 1. It displays the particular principles of work with children of different age. The most important thing, for example, for pre-school educators is to follow the goals of the ages 3-7: to form respect for self, respect for parents and teachers and respect for others. So on the second stage, when constructing a pedagogical technology for pre-service teachers; we should keep in mind these goals.

The "*ABC: Teaching Human Rights*" suggests the following pedagogical strategies that either a professor can use for university students or a teacher can use when working with children:

- a) brain storming;
- b) case studies;
- c) creative expressions;
- d) discussions;
- e) field trips/community visits;
- f) interviews;
- g) research projects;
- h) role play / stimulations and
- i) visual aids.

They are all described and the tasks are presented in the book.

When working with university pre-service teachers, it is important not only to give the examples of already developed tasks, but also to have them develop their own instructional materials that they can use for interaction with children.

One of the examples of the material that can be used for pre-service teachers' class from methodological point of view is the clustering cards²⁵. They include a picture and an article from the CROC. There are different ways of using them. The cards can be

²⁵ Fountain 1993

spread among students in order to offer their ways on how to convey the ideas of the articles to a child. In class pre-service teachers may try to present in English the similar cards adopted for pre-school aged children. Such work during the English class will encourage student's analytical thinking, stimulate expressing themselves in the foreign language, improve their awareness of children's rights and enhance creativity for implementation of gained knowledge in their future profession.

The next example demonstrates another activity for students. Using the "*ABC-Teaching Human Rights*" book, students work with the tasks offered for children. For instance the activity, called "Wishing-circle"²⁶. All students should arrange in a circle and make the following wish²⁷:

- If I could be any animal, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a bird, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be an insect, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a flower, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a tree, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a piece of furniture, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a musical instrument, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a building, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a car, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a street, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a town/province/region, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a foreign country, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a game, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a record, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a TV show, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a movie, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be a food, I'd be ___ because ...*
- If I could be any color, I'd be ___ because*

²⁶26 ABC: Teaching Human Rights 2003, p.22

²⁷27 The tasks corresponds with UDHR article 19; CRC articles 13, 14

After this exercise, the students may be asked to think how they can improve and adapt the task for pre-school children, or even for early learners of the English language.

As we see the techniques of teaching students vary to a great extent. But the two described stages are the backbone of the pedagogical technology of teaching students.

Teaching Other Aspects of Child Policy

Teaching other aspects of CP implies the extension of knowledge of the political aspects on international and national levels to understand the mechanisms of the whole policy-making.

The pre-service teachers can regard and discuss all the UN documents that deal with children's issues or compare the situations in different countries and brainstorm the ways of improvement.

In addition, they can look through the normative acts adopted by the national government. One can argue that this kind of knowledge is not necessary for the pre-service teacher. However, at present a teacher is more than a teacher, he/she is primarily a person who knows how to act in today's society professionally and what outcomes his/her actions might bring.

Conclusions

Child Policy brings out a new understanding of the problem of responsibility for a child and should be studied at universities. Children's rights are one of the crucial aspects of Child Policy. All international and national initiatives are drawn from the belief of uniqueness of the childhood period that is needs protection. A child, who is aware of his/her own rights will be capable to live in the multicultural world in peace and treat others with respect. Developing such a personality is a complicated task for educators. First of all, it requires designing a programme for pre-service teachers. As the curriculum is not always flexible, the fragments of the CP can be

naturally integrated into a course of English, which presents a natural environment for introduction of the CP issues. This kind of integration allows attaining at least two goals: developing language skills and legal literacy. In any case, the students will acquire competence to see other ways on enhancing children's personality development according to the needs of today's society. Methodologically, the training of pre-service teachers can come out of two steps: the first one is to introduce theoretical issues and the second step is to supply a variety of practical tasks. The course aims at both educating the students and at providing methodological skills.

Ultimately, Child Policy in the curriculum of pre-service teachers is an inseparable element for training a professional who is capable of taking care of the child.

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LEVELS	GOALS	KEY CONCEPTS	PRACTICES	SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS	HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS, SYSTEMS AND INSTRUMENTS
Early childhood					
Pre-school and lower primary school Ages 3-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Respect for self *Respect for parents and teachers *Respect for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Self *Community *Personal responsibility *Duty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Fairness *Self-expression/listening *Cooperation/sharing *Small group work *Individual work *Understanding cause/effect *Empathy *Democracy *Conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Racism *Sexism *Unfairness *Hurting people (feelings, physically) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Classroom rules *Family life *Community standards *Universal Declaration of Human Rights *Convention on the Rights of the Child
Later Childhood	All the above plus:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Upper primary school *Ages 8-11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Social responsibility *Citizenship *Distinguishing wants from needs, from rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Individual rights *Group rights *Freedom *Equality *Justice *Rule of law *Government *Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Valuing diversity *Fairness *Distinguishing between fact and opinion *Performing school or community service *Civic participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Discrimination/prejudice *Poverty/hunger *Injustice *Ethnocentrism *Egocentrism *Passivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *History of human rights *Local, national legal systems *Local and national history in human rights terms *UNESCO, UNICEF *Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
Adolescence	All the above plus:				

Lower secondary school Ages 12-14	*Knowledge of specific human rights	*International law *World peace *World development *World political economy	*Understanding other points of view *Citing evidence in support of ideas	*Ignorance *Apathy *Cynicism *Political repression	*UN Covenants *Elimination of racism *Elimination of sexism *UN High Commissioner
Youth	All the above plus:				
*Upper secondary school *Ages 15-17	*Knowledge of human rights as universal standards *Integration of human rights into personal awareness and behavior	*Moral inclusion/exclusion *Moral responsibility/literacy	*Participation in civic organizations *Fulfilling civic responsibilities *Civic disobedience	*Genocide *Torture *War crimes etc.	*Geneva Conventions *Specialized conventions *Evolving human rights standards

AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN FINNISH PHONETICS

Elena Zavrashina

Abstract

The importance of learning Finnish in Saint Petersburg is clear: the time for worldwide contacts has come. Thus students must have a thorough command of the language, which includes mastering Finnish phonetics at a high level. Being non-Indo-European, Finnish has structural peculiarities different from Russian: the fourteen-case system of nouns, numerous verb-classes (clearly pronounced endings), prolonged vowels and consonants etc. The best means of mastering it has been experimentally proven: 1) sound-drills, 2) rhythmical phrase drills, 3) reading rhymes, 4) singing Finnish songs, 5) singing and dancing Finnish folk dances.

1. Importance of Teaching Finnish Phonetics

The topicality of the subject considered is determined by several factors at a time: the openness of present-day Russian society and, consequently, multilateral contacts with other countries; the necessity for specialists to have a command of not only the traditionally demanded English language; and perhaps the most important factor, the geographical position of Saint Petersburg which is “just a step away” from the nearest foreign capital, Helsinki.

All the aforementioned determines the ever-increasing need for studying the Finnish language in our city, as well as creating new centres for the professional training of specialists in this subject. For example, the Finnish language department of the Institute of Childhood at the Herzen Pedagogical University. In comparison, however, with longstanding, developed systems of teaching such

traditional foreign languages as English, German, French or Spanish, the system of teaching Finnish is just at the beginning of its development and, therefore, requires thorough developmental work.

One of the least developed aspects of teaching Finnish in general and at a pedagogical higher professional institution in particular, is a course of phonetics whose importance is often underestimated, it seems, for two reasons: 1) the difficulty and peculiarity of Finnish grammar - considerably different from the conventional system of Indo-European languages, the mastering of which takes most of the time of the language course; 2) the seeming similarity of Finnish phonetics to Russian and, respectively, its "easiness" for mastering by simple imitation of the instructor's speech. The practical result of this approach, however, is in most cases an abundance of phonological errors distorting the meaning of an utterance, which does not meet the requirement to produce quality specialists at a pedagogical university.

2. Main Points of Finnish Phonemic System

Here are the main points of the phonemic system of the Finnish language.

1) Finnish has a pattern called **vowel harmony** that restricts the distribution of vowels in a word. Due to vowel harmony, only certain vowels can appear in a given word, according to the vowel in the root of the word. The vowels *i* and *e* are considered neutral (they can appear anywhere), but the front vowels *y*, *ö* and *ä* never mix with the back vowels *u*, *o*, and *a* in a single word (except across compound limits). For example, *kynä* "pen" is permissible because it has only front vowels, but *kyna* is impossible, because it has both front and back vowels. Vowel harmony affects case suffixes and derivational suffixes, which often have two forms, one for use with front vowels, and the other with back vowels. For example: *talvella* ("in the winter", from *talvi* "winter") but *kesällä* ("in the summer"). This however does not hold true for compound words, for example: *vuorotyö* "shift work" (from *vuoro* "shift" and *työ* "work"). The suffixes of compound words are determined by the last part of the word: *vuorotyössä*. The same rule can

be applied to loan words. These words often violate vowel harmony, for example, *olympialaiset* ("Olympic games").

2) The Finnish language vowel system consists of **monophthongs** (one sound phonemes) and **diphthongs** (two sound phonemes). Each *monophthong* has a long counterpart which is always the same sound (never modified), but is simply longer, and is fully phonemic: *a – aa, o – oo, u – uu, e – ee, i – ii, ä – ää, ö – öö, y – yy*. *Diphthongs* contrast with long vowels, short vowels and with each other: *ai – äi, oi – öi, ui – yi, ei, au – äy, ou – öy, eu – ey, iu – iy, uo – yö, ie*. The sound of the first vowel gradually glides into the sound of the second one with full vocalisation lasting through the whole sound. They are not broken by a hiatus or stress pattern. The vowel harmony acts as a restricting principle disallowing combinations with both *a, o* or *u* and *ä, ö* or *y*. However, in compounds and certain other contexts, two adjacent vowels that properly belong to different syllables can be pronounced as diphthongs that can even break the vowel harmony(*henkilöauto* with an *öa diphthong*).

3) The Finnish language consonant system as well as vowel system consists of **short and long phonemes**. Some *short* voiceless consonant phonemes have voiced counterparts, but the distinction is not as marked as in Russian or English: *p – (b), k – (g), (f) – v, t – d, m, n, η, r, s, l, h, j, (ʃ)*. *Long* voiced and voiceless phonemes have short counterparts: *k – kk (pako-pakko), l – ll (palo-pallo), m – mm (suma-summa), n – nn (sana-Sanna), p – pp (nupi-nuppi), r – rr (varas-varras), s – ss (kisa-kissa), t – tt (kato-katto), η (+k) – η η (säinky-sängyllä)*. *Consonant gradation* is also one of the most specific features of the Finnish phonemic system. If the onset of the last syllable is a plosive, it is subject to consonant gradation, which appears as simplification in case of the geminates and as a change to an archiphonemic fricative for simple consonants. The phonetic environment controls which actual phoneme corresponds to the "fricative". Generally speaking, the uninflected form is the strong form, but there are exceptions. (Sometimes this is described as a result of syllable coda, but verbal imperatives typically have weak-grade open syllables, e.g. *pukea* "to dress" - *pue* "dress!"). Here is the list of strong - weak correspondences:

tt - t (tyttö - tytöt), *kk - k* (paikka - paikalla), *pp - p* (lippu - liput), *t - d* (lato - ladot), *k - hiatus* (ruoka - ruoassa), *p - v* (tapa - tavat), *mp - mm* (kampi - kammet), *nk - ng* (kenkä - kengät), *lt - ll* (kielto - kiellot), *rt - rr* (merta - merrat), *nt - nn* (lento - lennot). Personal first names do not gradate in quality in most cases (e.g. *Hilta - Hiltan, Hilla - Hillan*); though do sometimes in quantity (e.g. *Pekka - Pekan*), but surnames do. *Consonant clusters* are another specific feature of the Finnish consonant phonemic system. This is changing due to influence from other European languages. In older borrowings, initial consonant clusters have been simplified. For example *koulu* (for Swedish *skola* ('school')), *tuoli* - Swedish *stol* ('chair'). More recent borrowings have retained their clusters, e.g. *presidentti* - Swedish *president*. In the past decades it used to be common to hear these clusters simplified in speech (*resitentti*).

4) Finnish words have **primary and secondary stress**. The Finnish language always places the *primary stress* on the first syllable of a word, and is thus quantity-insensitive. *Secondary stress* normally falls on odd syllables. Contrary to primary stress, Finnish secondary stress is quantity sensitive. Thus, if secondary stress would fall on a light (C+V) syllable, with a heavy (C+V+V or C+V+C) syllable following, then the secondary stress is moved one syllable to the right, and the preceding foot (syllable group) will contain three syllables. Thus, *omenanani* "as my apple", contains light syllables only, and has primary stress on the first syllable and secondary on the third, as expected. In *omenanamme* "as our apple", on the other hand, the third syllable (*na*) is light and the fourth heavy (*nam*), thus secondary stress falls on the fourth syllable.

5) The range of the Finnish **intonation scale** is relatively low and often falls beyond the vocal pitch at the end of a sense group.

The phonetic peculiarities of the Finnish language which cannot be avoided when teaching Russian students are the following:

- 1) the presence of back vowels having analogies in Russian, and corresponding front vowels not having such analogies, often substituted by Russian learners with front vowels following soft consonants;
- 2) the absence of vowel harmony in Russian;

- 3) the presence of long and corresponding short vowels and consonants: this feature is absent in Russian too;
- 4) the absence of consonant gradation in Russian;
- 5) the absence of secondary stress in Russian words;
- 6) a relatively narrow range of intonation scale with an obligatory distinct syntagmatic rhythm and marking the final inflections – this feature is caused by a peculiarity of Finnish grammar: the 14-case system of the nouns etc., as well as a considerable number of classes of verbs and nouns etc. in an arbitrary word order in a syntagm.

One could mention examples of other peculiarities of the Finnish phonetic system, though they are not so relevant for the main function of the phoneme complex, the distinction of meaning.

2. Techniques for Teaching Finnish Phonetics

The aforesaid allows the following conclusion: teaching Finnish phonetics requires a special approach very different from the conventional one for Indo-European languages. Therefore, we used the following techniques at the initial stage of developing the introductory phonetic course. They have shown themselves to be efficient in an essentially practical course:

1. **The first stage is** to clearly characterize the system of Finnish back/front vowels (diphthongs and monophthongs), and long/short vowels and consonants, developing their articulation with training exercises. The first step to make is to point out that basically many Finnish *consonants* - *t*, (*d*), *l*, *n*, *s* are apical-alveolar whereas most of the Russian sounds are dental. If a student sticks to this tongue position, his/her speech sounds become more “Finnish”. There is not really much difference between voiced and voiceless consonants, so voiced consonants must not be “too voiced”. The sound *s* may sound slightly like (*ʃ*). There is another rule which brings a student closer to more correct articulation: active speech organs such as the tongue and the lips must not be “too active” (as compared to Russian) when speaking Finnish. The voice must be “deep inside the mouth”. One of the most

typical mistakes Russian students make is their ignoring *long consonants*. This prevents them both from understanding Finnish speech correctly and speaking understandable Finnish themselves. Comparing words that have only one pair of different sounds, and training word oppositions with long and short consonants is very important: kuka – kukka, rapu – rappu, opi – oppi, tuli – tulli, paran – parran. There is one more point of concern when teaching Finnish consonant system: *consonant gradation*. Learning it properly does not only affect positively the speech habits of a student, but also lays the foundation of his/her correct grammar usage, because it is consonant gradation that affects case/number paradigms of nouns and adjectives, and tense/person/number paradigms of different verbs: ranta- rannalla, tyttö – tytöt, lukea -luen. As for the *vowels*, much attention should be paid to differentiating not only *long* and *short* vowels, such as *a – aa, u – uu, o – oo, e – ee, i – ii, ä – ää, y – yy, ö – öö*, but also to the Finnish front vowels *ä, ö, y* combined with consonants: väli, tylli, löpö. The consonants should be “hard”, that is not palatalised. The problem is that in the Russian language there are similar sounds, but in contradistinction to Finnish ones they are always combined with “soft”, palatalised consonants: väli – вялый, tylli – тюль, löpö – лёгкий, and Russian students don’t hesitate to substitute correct Finnish “hard” sounds with wrong Russian “soft” ones. *Diphthongs* are also a very important issue. There being no such sounds in Russian, and there being a tendency to stress the second vowel of the two following one another in Russian words, students usually mispronounce Finnish diphthongs stressing the second element. Teaching the system of Finnish vowels one must also bear in mind that *vowel harmony* is one of the most phonologically important issues and one of the most difficult things to teach Russian students mainly because this phenomenon is absent from the Russian phonological system. This can be reached only through a set of training exercises no matter how boring they may seem. One should start from the words that contain only one sound opposition: suu – syy, koro – körö, tana – tänä, moving later to more variegated oppositions: luoda – lyödä, tuhma – tyhmä, sopotan – söpötän.

2. **The second stage** consists of working out rhythmic reading of elementary syntagms with an emphasis on correct and distinct pronunciation of inflexions. At this stage one must remember that teaching Finnish phonetics is much connected with teaching grammar. For instance, Finnish noun cases such as Inessiivi and Elatiivi (talossa – in a building, talosta - from a building) as well as Allatiivi, Adessiivi and Ablatiivi (pöydälle – onto the table, pöydällä – on the table, pöydältä – from the table) sound very similar to each other, but their meaning is very different. It is essential to work at the pronunciation of case inflection forms for understanding a text, and making oneself understood correctly. It is also important to learn Finnish word stress not to make sense groups sound “too Russian” paying attention to the *primary stress* being placed on the first syllable, and *secondary stress* falling on odd syllables. The problem is that there is no fixed stress in the Russian word, and students either tend to stress the first syllable and reduce all the remaining syllables the way they do when they speak their mother tongue, or put the stress wherever they like, the secondary stress being most often ignored. One must not avoid practicing the Finnish *intonation pattern* either. The contour of the Finnish intonation scale, plain as it may seem, is rather difficult to grasp. It seems so elusive because there are no distinct falls and rises to mark. Still it differs much from that of Russian with its “steps up and down” and rather definite final part at the end of a sense group. Finnish intonation slightly gliding down sometimes descends a little below the pitch of voice, so that at the end of a sense group we can hear speakers whisper. These “whisper ending” intonation patterns deserve attention as they can be heard from native speakers not only in private conversation, but also in formal speech.

3. **The third stage** represents reading rhymed lines of Finnish songs, which enables students to feel the special nature of the Finnish speech rhythm which is quite different from that of Russian. Students can also learn to read tongue-twisters to practice the sounds *e, i, o, u, y, ä, ö*, for example:

Alkaisimmeko maanantaiaamuna aikaisin.

Mene sen etevän veneenveistäjän veneveistämöö.

Kokoo kokoon koko kokko.

Kuumuus turrutti tunteet.

Tuuli tuli tuimemmaksi.

Hyytävä kylmyys hytisytti meitä.

Hän kääntyi vähääkään välittämättä väylällä kulkevista veneistä.

Höpö, höpö, se on ihan löpö, etc.

This rhythm is based on stressed and unstressed word syllables following each other in sense groups, initial sounds of words being the same in every line – this device called alliteration is rather common in Finnish folk songs and poems:

*kaunis oli koivu, ja kaunis oli kuusi, ja kaunis oli kukkiva tuomi; käki
kukkuu ja linnut laulaa, ja lehtimetsäkin humajaa.*

Reading excerpts from the Kalevala, the most wonderful collection of epic poems written in the Finnish language, can be useful at this early stage of language learning from the point of view of grasping the idea of the language music:

Siitä vanha Väinänöinen laulelevi, taitelevi:

lauloi kuusi kukkalatvan, kukkalatvan, kultalehvän;

latvan työnti taivahalle, puhki pilvien kohotti,

levvät ilmoille levitti, halki taivahan hajotti.

4. **The fourth stage** includes singing proper. The tunes of Finnish songs, whose primordial beauty and expressiveness were noted by Elias Lönnrot, are such that they “compel” one to articulate complex combinations of sounds correctly. Besides the students can combine something pleasant – singing - with something useful - mastering sounds, their combinations and rhythm. To teach singing does not mean to force those who have no musical ear and voice to do what they cannot do. They should read, follow the rhythm and music of the language and quietly join others. Those who have a musical ear can enjoy the language and sing. When being sung words are pronounced more slowly than while being spoken, the articulation is felt and realised by singers much better than by speakers because music often gives them more time. The lines are learned by heart and many speech patterns are remembered and can be used in everyday conversation.

5. **The fifth stage** deals with a combination of singing and dancing. Here the mastering of phonetics includes the maximum number of senses. Finnish dance in combination with singing perfectly promotes the development of a feeling for language rhythm, the consolidation of skills and abilities obtained in previous stages, and

enables the students to truly feel the spirit of language, whose great significance was noted by Wilhelm von Humboldt.

The development of this introductory course in the Finnish language will lead to further refinement of these techniques. The search for new and better techniques will continue.

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TEXT, MOTHER TONGUE AND LITERATURE IN THE FINNISH NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM FOR BASIC EDUCATION

Katri Savolainen

Abstract

This article is roughly divided into two separate parts: first I look at the concept 'text', secondly I concentrate on how the concept 'text' is described in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004). The study of linguistics plays a crucial role in analyzing the concept of 'text'. At school the concept analysis of text and meanings should form the basis for teaching grammar. Pupils learn to define the objectives of their texts and also to apply their own processes when creating different types of texts. This improves their skills of addressing their texts to different target groups, communication situations or communication means. The national core curriculum (2004) sets demanding challenges for teachers in teaching mother tongue.

Introduction

This article is divided in two parts: first I shall concentrate on the concept 'text', which is a approach in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004). Secondly I shall describe the curriculum concentrating mainly on the subject matter of mother tongue and literature, and especially the concept 'text'.

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004) describes "mother tongue and literature as an informational, artistic and skill subject that acquires its content from linguistics, the study of literature, and communication sciences. The subject's foundation is a

broad concept of text: texts can be spoken and written, imaginative and factual, verbal, figurative, vocal, or graphic- or combinations of these all.”

1. Defining the Concept ‘Text’

The research of texts is a fairly new trend in the field of linguistics: in Finland for example the first studies and papers on the field of text linguistics were published about 15 years ago (Shore & Mäntynen, 2006). But anyway I try to explain those aspects of texts which I consider to be in the basis of the curriculum.

According to Unsworth (2001) “The textual habitat, the textual environment which affects us and which we also affect, has experienced remarkable changes in the twentieth century and will continue to do so in the twenty-first century, as the students we teach right now, grow to adulthood” (p. 7).

The wide understanding about texts means that grammar is understood as a functional tool in reading and writing but also now necessarily entails explicit knowledge about how images and layout can be structured in different ways to make different kinds of meanings and how both text and image are used in electronic formats. Unsworth (2001, 8) has described this understanding of multiliteracy as the skills what every people should learn: “In order to become effective participants in emerging multiliteracies, students need to understand how the resources of language, image and digital rhetorics can be deployed independently and interactively to construct different kinds of meanings. This means developing knowledge about linguistic, visual and digital meaning-making systems.” (Unsworth, 2001, 8.)

The text is a place where a meaning comes true, but it does not come true until a person who will interpret the text comes to that place. Texts are produced in a certain way in certain social contexts and this has an effect on the interpretations of the receiver as well. In the situations where texts are produced a new context of the situation is produced.

The research of texts points out the meaning of the context and the situation of the communication. The meanings of the utterances can be interpreted only with regard to that context. All texts are also interpreted in relation to earlier texts of the same type. A text represents always its own genre and has its place in a larger flow of texts. According to Heikkinen (1999, 55), interpreting texts there are two possibilities: linguistic and socio-cultural analysis.

The producers and the receivers of texts take advantage of the intuitive knowledge they have gained about different genres. But in school it is important to become aware of the genres: what kind of genres there are and when analyzing texts, how to take into account the fact that texts belong to the certain genre.

Language lives in texts and in different kinds of uses of texts. A new point of view in the curriculum is the essential state of language awareness and literacy. The central aim of teaching mother tongue and literature is to help students to be socialized to cultural literacy.

The term 'literacy' is used throughout the curriculum. This term is used to unite the skills of reading and writing under one socially defined skill, that of possession of texts. This skill is not just one individual skill. It's a skill of possessing different social practices. Different texts are used for different purposes in the society and texts are always tied to the context they are produced in. A skillful reader and writer can make willful linguistic and textual decisions and interpret texts accordingly in different situations. The term 'literacy' does not refer to just one uniform or universal skill that can be transferred from one situation to another. However the contents and the objectives outlined in the curriculum, in a more traditional way, refer to separate skills. And because of this, in fact, the broader idea of literacy still stays in the background. (Luukka & Leiwo, 2004, 21.)

One could easily think that literacy is just a new name for old things. But one can also find new ways to examine and use language. One learns and gets to practice literacy in authentic situations of interaction.

The study of linguistics plays a crucial role here, because the study of linguistic resources is an essential part of text analysis. This

means that the text and meanings should form the basis for teaching grammar for teachers in basic school.

2. Mother Tongue and Literature in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCCBE)

So far I have picked out parts of the curriculum where the text is crucial. Yet, I have not forgotten literature, which is naturally a very important part of the subject matter as well.

The task of instruction in mother tongue and literature is to develop language-based study and interaction skills systematically.

The starting point in the curriculum is in the first and second grades. At that time the pupils are guided to listen, speak, read, and write various types of texts. In the upper grades the core task of instruction in mother tongue and literature is to broaden the pupil's text skills from those needed in the immediate environment towards the requirements of both the standard language and types of text new to the pupil. "The task of instruction in mother tongue and literature is to develop language-based study and interaction systematically." (NCCBE, 2004, 44)

The aim is for the pupils to become more conscious of both their objectives and themselves as users of language. The pupils improve as text analysts and critical interpreters and are able to produce the texts they need in different types of communication situations.

2.1 Objectives of mother tongue and literature

Some of the objectives mentioned in the curriculum directly say something about texts. The objectives are very common and also a little bit abstract. The pupils in the 3-5 grades "will learn to work with text environments in which words, illustrations, and sounds interact" (NCCBE, 2004, 47).

Besides the pupils' skills in interpreting and utilizing various texts will develop.

Here the objective concerns the reading and being familiar with different kinds of texts. The same objective is found both in 3 - 5 and 6 – 9 grades curriculums, but the contents are different. At first the pupils “learn how to read various texts fluently and they become accustomed to observing and evaluating themselves as readers” (NCCBE, p. 47). The pupils also learn how to choose what to read for different purposes; they become accustomed both considering and expressing ideas awakened by texts, and to connecting them with their own lives and environment. The pupils will also enhance their knowledge of different text types and genres “and become used to anticipating what kind of reading, listening or acquiring information that particular genre or the objective call for” (NCCBE, p. 51).

In the next objective the focus of teaching lies in production (writing) of texts. The pupils' skills of producing texts and utilizing them for different purposes develop. At first pupils learn how to create a variety of texts, both oral and written. And then in grades 6 – 9 the pupils “develop into versatile and independent creators of texts who know how, when speaking and writing, to make use of the language knowledge they have learned” (NCCBE, 51).

And finally in grades 6-9 the pupils' relationship with language, literature, and culture in general will deepen. The pupils “acquire a sense of power of the media and texts to produce images and shape world views of people” (NCCBE, 52). The core contents mentioned next are more concrete. In the different schools the teachers may act in very different ways.

2.2 The Core Contents of Mother Tongue and Literature

In the first two grades one of the core contents concerns naturally reading and writing, but as one can see, also the term text is mentioned. The idea is that pupils learn to see the interactive nature of reading and writing through for example “analyzing both printed and electronic texts in group discussions” (NCCBE, p. 45). The pupils also begin introduction to and application of strategies that improve their text comprehension. “Production of texts is based on the pupil's own

observations, everyday experiences, opinions, and imagination, with emphasis on content and the joy of creating texts” (NCCBE, 46).

For the grades 3-5 there is an objective in the curriculum that enables us to concentrate on the differences between spoken and written texts. By this objective also the concept of text will broaden. Pupils learn how to anticipate “the content and structure of texts on the basis of illustrations, headings, prior knowledge and reading experiences” (NCCBE, p. 48). They also learn how to compare texts with each other and how to prepare outlines and schematics of the major ideas of the texts they have read.

In grades 6-9 the focus of the curriculum lies more and more in texts. One of the core contents is text comprehension. In the sixth through ninth grades, the core task of instruction in mother tongue and literature “is to broaden the pupil’s text skills from those needed in the immediate environment towards the requirements of both the standard language and types of the text new to the pupil. - - The pupils improve as text analysts and critical interpreters and are able to produce the texts need in different types of communication situations” (NCCBE, 2004, 49).

The wide content has many elements. For example building bridges between the text and the recipient, and sharing reading experiences, are mentioned. It is also emphasized how literature and other kinds of texts are connected to each other. Examination and interpretation of literary texts provide experiences and shape opinions. And also for example explanatory, descriptive, instructive, narrative, reflective and attitudinal text types are found both in factual texts and literature. Also culturally central text genres and the interpretation of the texts of these as structural and meaningful entities, is emphasized. As well as the skill of examining the different visual and auditory techniques are used when building meanings in texts. (NCCBE, 2004, 52.)

And finally the pupils learn several things about texts by summarizing text content, recognizing opinion materials and the author’s intentions and techniques. They learn to analyse and assess the impact of texts, and to compare texts from different viewpoints.

The communicative point of view is stressed when pupils prepare compositions and oral presentations. Pupils learn to define the objectives of their work and texts and also to regulate their own processes when creating different types of texts. Their skills of addressing their texts to different target groups, communication situations or communication means, improve. These kinds of skills are needed also when studying foreign languages. It is very useful to compare the ways of communication in different languages. It's also interesting to see your mother tongue through foreign languages.

As you have seen the curriculum sets huge demands for teachers and we teachers and educators have enormous challenges how to apply the wide understanding of text when translating different textual skills into practical pedagogical actions, learning textual skills themselves and when assessing textbooks and how they take the new point of view into account.

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PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO

Kaija Perho

Abstract

This article describes how a research-based school development project has started at Joensuu University Teacher Training School. The project has three main aims: to enrich the number of languages studied, to improve the learning of foreign languages and creating language portfolios with seven-year-old pupils. It also focuses on the improvement of co-operation between the school and parents, student teachers and primary school pupils as well as lecturers at the Faculty of Education and the teachers of the primary school.

The article describes the preliminary analysis of the background data on the command and use of foreign languages obtained from a parents' questionnaire.

Introduction

This language development project is being carried out at Joensuu University Teacher Training School (Joensuun normaalikoulu)²⁸, which is a nine-year comprehensive plus three-year upper secondary school with about 1000 students. The school is a part of the Faculty of Education and it is specially organised for teaching practice.

Teacher training is carried out in collaboration with the professors and lecturers at the Faculty. Student teachers do teaching practice and at the same time they attend lectures, seminars and tutorials. Teaching practice makes up 1/3, i.e. 20 ECTS, of their pedagogical studies, which amount to 60 ECTS. It consists of four

²⁸ Later referred as the School.

periods: orientation practice, basic practice, applied practice, which is carried out in other schools, and advanced practice.

The language project has several aims. The main aim is to improve the learning of foreign languages by exchanging ideas and materials, developing portfolio work with all the pupils and strengthening their different language learning strategies. The aim of the early start in foreign language learning is to cushion the start and even out the differences between pupils.

The whole *language portfolio* project aims at improving pupils' conscious learning of foreign languages with the help of various strategies and this should also improve co-operation between the school and the parents. It is intended to start the portfolio with first- and second-graders efficiently and gather as much detailed data as possible about their learning.

The European language portfolio consists of the authentic learning material that the pupils have collected and organised themselves during their language studies at school. It gives a picture of the pupils' development in their FL studies. The pupils also assesses themselves with the help of the skills levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. (Kohonen 2005, 7-9).

The language portfolio consists of a language biography, a dossier of the pupil's work and his or her language passport as described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001)²⁹. The language biography gives the pupil's history of language studies and his or her linguistic and cultural contacts. It grows and develops all through the school years.

The dossier consists of the products of his or her language studies during the school-years. It can include essays, tests, word lists, tapes and drawings etc. Collecting material for the dossier starts in the first foreign language lesson in the project.

The European language passport should represent the level of language proficiency of all languages learned at school, at home or elsewhere (Kohonen, 2005, 12).

²⁹ See more about European Language Portfolio at http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?M=/main_pages/levels.html

The core issues and recommendations of Finland's Language Policy Project are to ensure a wide selection of foreign languages at schools and them as early a start as possible (Luukka & Pöyhönen, 2007, 19).

The FL teachers plan the realisation of the language portfolio in order to give the pupils a good command in several foreign languages.

The student's *language biography* was chosen to be the first aim of the research project, because the student's linguistic and cultural background and contacts are the basis of language learning.

One of the several aims of this project is to increase the variety of languages learned at primary level. In order to attain this aim it is important to develop co-operation between day-care and school authorities and to organise the exchange of information between the school, day care homes and parents. Parents need information about the various possible language choices before their child starts school, because they have to choose the first foreign language when they register their child at school.

The Project

All six primary school language teachers at the school agreed to take part in the language portfolio project, i.e. two English teachers, one German teacher and one Russian teacher were teaching the first-year pupils in January 2008, and two English teachers were teaching the second grade.

The project started in October 2007 with planning a questionnaire for the parents, an interview with the first-graders and planning the dossier and the language passport.

The teachers discussed the first and second-year curriculum and decided on the learning content. This consists of the language of children's everyday life, including greetings, polite phrases, family members, parts of the body, wild and domestic animals, school supplies, kiosk phrases, traditions, festivities, songs, rhymes, games, the numbers 1-20 and colours.

There were 70 first-grade pupils in school year 2007-2008. Eleven first-graders started Russian, thirteen German and 46 English. The one weekly lesson of the first foreign language began in January.

The collecting of the material began with a questionnaire (Appendix 1) which was sent to the parents. This gave the teachers information about the language history of the pupils before school. It gave data about the pupils' mother tongue, languages spoken at home and in what situations, information about family trips and residence abroad, pupils' encounters with speakers of foreign languages, information about parents' and pupils' linguistic competence and parents' expectations about the pupils' language studies. The teachers interviewed their pupils about their attitudes and expectations (Appendix 2). The questionnaire and interviews will be given with all new groups every December because the background information helps the teachers in their work when they start with a new group.

The design of a language passport for the pupils at the School is being done by the teachers and student teachers and it is a part of the project. The dossier for the pupil's portfolio is made during lessons in connection with different learning activities. In six years' time the students will be able to create a digital portfolio, which will help them when they move up to the seventh grade to secondary level.

The analysis of the dossier and its presentation to parents (usually in the spring), will give data on the learning process to all parties concerned.

Preliminary results

The following results are from the first group of parents of 70 families who answered the questionnaires in January 2008. It seems that the life of the families has become very international. In most families (2/3) travelling abroad is an important part of family life. The majority of first-graders had visited at least two foreign countries and three of them had visited more than four countries. Five pupils had lived in the Philippines, Germany, Canada or the USA for a considerable period.

Many parents emphasized the opportunities their child has to hear foreign languages at home. 13 families had relatives living abroad and 22 families had foreign friends. Half of the parents said that their child experiences foreign languages on TV, in music and in computer games. Foreign languages were also being learned by an older sister or brother or by the mother (7 families / 70). Seven children had attended the Joensuu English kindergarten and one the Russian kindergarten in Joensuu.

Some families (12) chose to speak foreign languages at home with friends or with members of the family and one family used English as their sauna language.

Although Joensuu is situated in Eastern Finland there were many international families among the first-grade pupils. The mother and father of one family were from Germany, four mothers had Russian as their mother tongue, one mother was Japanese and one was Swedish. There was a father from the Netherlands and a grandmother from Brazil.

Most parents had studied Swedish, English and German at school and three parents knew only one foreign language. Some parents had studied as many as seven different languages.

In the future, as the pupils get older, it will be interesting to compare background information from the parents' questionnaires and the pupils' language skills and attitudes towards language studies in sixth grade.

The first groups of first-grade pupils in the project presented their portfolios to their parents in May 2008. The parents showed great of interest in this form of school-home co-operation.

Conclusions

Now that the Language Portfolio Project has started it has already been shown to be successful in promoting co-operation and joint responsibility among the language teachers at the University School. It will gradually extend to all language classes at the school. The project enables teachers to work as a team and create new teaching methods in

order to improve their pupils' language learning. It also provides opportunities for student teachers to do small research tasks on language learning and to describe and write about the advancement of the project in more detail. Thus the student teachers will be familiarized with the latest European trends and ideas in foreign language teaching and learning as well as the European Language Portfolio.

The project, being a joint activity, also gives student teachers a good opportunity to use ideas rising from their teaching experience and practice when writing small research or seminar papers in their pedagogical studies.

The student teachers were recommended by their university teachers to take part in the research project as part of their programme. As a result some students wrote papers on themes such as language biography, native Russian-speaking pupils, and the portfolios of pupils studying German.

The project seems to be successful in its aim to co-operate between the school and the home, because parents are interested in their child's progress in languages.

One future possibility might be to have a joint project between the University of Joensuu and the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia. The project could be extended to some schools in St. Petersburg, and this would give a chance to compare ideas, methods and results between Joensuu and St. Petersburg.

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Appendix 1. Parents' Questionnaire

Joensuu, December 13th 2007

To the Parents of Pupils in the First Grade

Your child will start to learn his/her first foreign language at the beginning of 2008. For the first time at our school Russian, German and English can be taken as the first foreign language. We have now decided to start a language portfolio project in order to support the pupils' foreign language learning.

Within the framework of the language portfolio work we are going to collect information about pupils' language experiences and about your expectations of and opinions on language teaching. During the lessons we will prepare a portfolio which the pupils will present to you at the end of the semester. Now we are sending you a questionnaire including questions about the languages your child has been connected with and questions about your expectations of the foreign language learning and teaching of your child.

The aim of the project

The aim of the project is to collect follow-up information about the first foreign language learning phase of the first- and second-graders. We will also observe the development of the language learning skills and of the self-evaluation skills and try to develop a special language portfolio for 1st- and 2nd-graders as the backbone of their language acquisition. The language portfolio will serve as a material stock and make it possible for us to diversify co-operation with the home.

We kindly ask both parents to answer both their individual and shared questions in the Language portfolio project questionnaire and send it in the enclosed envelope during December. The answers will be treated confidentially. We will also develop the relationship between the school and the home on the basis of the results of the questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

Foreign Language Teachers in Länsikatu School,
Teacher Training School of University of Joensuu

More information of the project: Kaija Perho. gsm:...xxx.

PARENT 1. mother father other _____
 YEAR OF BIRTH _____ MOTHER TONGUE _____

GENERAL EDUCATION elementary school secondary school
 comprehensive school high school high school diploma
 other

POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION vocational school college
 university other

WHAT FOREIGN LANGUAGES HAVE YOU STUDIED?

What language? Where studied? (i.e. comprehensive school, vocational school, night school) _____

WHAT LANGUAGES DO YOU USE WITH YOUR CHILD AT HOME AND HOW OFTEN? (i.e. always, often, sometimes)

PARENT 2. mother father other _____
 YEAR OF BIRTH _____ MOTHER TONGUE _____

GENERAL EDUCATION elementary school secondary school
 comprehensive school high school high school diploma
 other

POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION vocational school college
 university other

WHAT FOREIGN LANGUAGES HAVE YOU STUDIED?

What language? Where studied? i.e. comprehensive school, vocational school, night school) _____

WHAT LANGUAGES DO YOU USE WITH YOUR CHILD AT HOME AND HOW OFTEN? (i.e. always, often, sometimes)

THE QUESTIONS FOR BOTH PARENTS ON THE PUPIL

FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE: _____

CHILD'S MOTHER TONGUE/S: _____

WHAT LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN AT HOME:

IN WHICH SITUATIONS DOES THE CHILD HEAR DIFFERENT LANGUAGES?

(i.e. the family has relatives, friends or playmates speaking in different languages, the child uses the computer or plays other games in different languages or fairy-tales are read to the child in different languages)

Can you describe as thoroughly as possible the experiences your child has had with different languages, countries and cultures:

Why did you choose Länsikatu School, Teacher Training School of University of Joensuu?

nearest school location of the school
sisters or brothers at the school language selection other grounds _____

For what reasons did your family choose the early start of foreign language learning?

What opinions and expectations do you have about your child's foreign language learning beginning in January?

Thank you for your answers!
The Seasons greetings to your whole family!

Appendix 2: Interview with the pupils in the first grade of Joensuu University Teacher Training School

Name of the pupil _____ grade _____

Observations on different countries and people

Have you ever been abroad? If yes, can you tell me where?

Have you ever lived in another country? Which country?

Have you met people who have not been born in Finland? (Where have you met them? What did you do?)

Which countries are you interested in? Which country? Why?

Which country would you like travel to? Why?

Observations on different languages

Could you name some languages that are spoken in the world?

Which language is your mother tongue? (In which language do you think?)

Would you like to learn to speak any other languages? Which languages?

Can you say something in another language than Finnish (for instance: hello, thank you, good bye, I love you)?

Have you heard people speaking other languages at home here in Finland? At school? In the yard? Who? Which language?

Have you heard someone speaking English somewhere? (On television?)

Language studies

Which language are you starting to learn?

What would you like to be able to say in English? Why?

What are your expectations about language lessons? What will happen?

Have you been to the Russian club at school? What did you do there? What did you learn there?

Part III

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGE PROJECTS AND TEACHING**

INTRODUCTORY COURSE OF ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Olga Malova

Abstract

This article will explore a variety of introductory courses of English. The general theme is classifying introductory courses according to their aims and objectives, selecting the most appropriate one and giving steps for developing pronunciation skills, sounds acquisition, learning transcriptional signs and letters.

1. A Diversity of Introductory Foreign Language Courses for primary schools

An Introductory course is the initial point in foreign language teaching. There are 4 kinds of introductory courses (IC): Phonetic IC, Oral IC, Listening comprehension IC, and Complex IC. The diversity of introductory courses is conditioned by a variety of their aims and objectives.

The chief aims of Phonetic introductory course are the following:

- 1) teaching pronunciation;
- 2) teaching of particular features of English intonation (given a limited lexical and grammatical material).

During Phonetic introductory course children are taught pronunciation of isolated sounds, separate words and word-combinations (phrases), sentences and short texts. Transcription is used as the way of decoding of pronunciation of difficult words.

The main ideas of Oral introductory course are:

- 1) providing the basis of spoken language;
- 2) teaching pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

The third kind of introductory course is Listening comprehension introductory course, the chief aim of which is to develop listening comprehension. There are 3 ways of teaching listening skills:

- a) the traditional one (when young learners acquire listening through speaking and with speaking);
- b) teaching listening as a communicative activity (when young learners step by step acquire listening skills from of isolated words, word combinations, isolated phrases, sequences of phrases, texts);
- c) teaching listening skills as a special psychophysiological process (in this way of teaching the idea is to develop auditory perception and recognition, concentration, anticipation, prediction and inference, guessing from the content, long-term and short-term memory).

And at last, the fourth one is Complex introductory course, the main aim of which is teaching all the skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The introductory courses differ not only by their main aims and ways of teaching but also by the application of different methodological approaches. A critical analysis of methodological literature has shown that introductory courses are developed on one of the following approaches: Communicative, Cognitive, Learner-centered approach, Active, Structural and System approaches.

In the theory of Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages, the communicative approach is defined as communicatively oriented, aimed at the development of communicative competence. The communicative competence consists of linguistic competence, sociolinguistical competence, discourse competence, strategic, sociocultural and social competence (Sheils, 1993, 1-2). The communicative approach is often contrasted with the cognitive approach which is cognitively oriented and demands a reasonable correlation of voluntary and involuntary memorization in the process of language acquisition.

An active approach is characterized by the unity of consciousness and children's active participation in the process of learning. The main

idea of it is that language acquisition is active, conscious and creative work of young learners.

The learner-centered approach is based on the consideration of children's individual characteristics, and cognitive styles of young learners are taken into account. Brown H.D. (Brown H.D., 1994, pp.104-113) considers that the major cognitive styles relevant for the second language acquisition are: field independence/field dependence, left- and right-brain functioning (children with deductive/analytical and inductive ways of thinking), ambiguity tolerance, reflectivity and impulsivity, visual cognitive style and auditory cognitive style.

The structural approach is oriented at the acquisition of a number of grammar structures.

The main focus of the functional approach is at the acquisition of linguistic/language facilities and at regulations and patterns of their using in speech.

The system approach requires that the process of language acquisition is conducted systematically by taking into account all peculiarities of the object.

A detailed examination of introductory courses has shown that the Phonetic IC is not based on the communicative and cognitive approaches as this kind of IC is oriented at sound, pronunciation and intonation patterns acquisition by using imitation. The active approach is also not used, as Phonetic IC does not view a learner as an active and creative person. It is clear that this course is based on the learner-centered approach: a special consideration is given to children's individual pronunciation characteristics. In general, all the Phonetic IC are developed in the framework of the system and functional approaches.

The listening comprehension introductory course is based on system and active approaches, it is cognitively and communicatively oriented. It also contains the elements of the cognitive and the communicative approaches.

The oral IC is based on the functional approach and is communicatively oriented. This course consists of elements of learner-centered, cognitive, system and active approaches.

The communicative and active approaches, as well as some features of the cognitive, learner-centered and system approaches, form the basis of Complex IC that will be described below.

2. Complex Introductory Course *My First English Lessons*

The Complex Introductory Course (Malova, 2003) is designed with taking into account conscious language acquisition. Young learners have different cognitive styles: children of visual cognitive style and of auditory cognitive style. A consideration should be given to this problem by creating appropriate conditions for language acquisition, and Complex introductory course *My First English Lesson* is a good solution for this problem.

The chief aim of the course is to develop auditory skills and pronunciation, vocabulary and lexical skills and skills in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. The objectives of the course *My First English Lessons* are:

1. the development of elementary speaking skills.
 - teaching the vocabulary and speech patterns on the topics “Acquaintance”, “My Family”, “I am a Pupil”.
2. the development of elementary listening comprehension skills.
 - teaching listening comprehension of vocabulary and speech patterns .
3. the development of auditory and pronunciation skills.
 - development, clarification and perfection of the main motions of the articulation organs.
 - teaching pronunciation of isolated sounds and acoustic patterns;
 - teaching long/short, flat/sonour sounds;
 - teaching English intonation.
4. the development of elementary reading skills.
 - teaching reading of transcriptional signs;
 - teaching the ABC (Russian and English alphabets are different, so Russian children have to be taught the Latin alphabet);

- teaching sound-letter correlations.
5. the development of elementary writing skills.
 - teaching the ABC.
 6. the development of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence.

The Complex Introductory Course *My First English Lesson* provides special emphasis to teaching phonetics. The strategy of work is the following:

1. Conscious engagement in articulation exercises.

Their aim is development, clarification and perfection of the main motions of the articulation organs. There are two types of articulation exercises: static and dynamic, and there are special exercises for lips and tongue. The articulation exercises are done with a mirror, under the teacher's supervision.

For example, static exercises for the tongue:

- “A Teacup” (The mouth is widely opened. Raise the fore-part and side-parts of your tongue, but do not touch your teeth),
- “A Mushroom” (The mouth is widely opened. Touch the hard palate by your tongue).
- Static exercises for lips: “A Smile” (Keep smiling for 5 seconds), “A Trunk” (Stretch your lips forward),
- Dynamic exercise for lips: “A Smile – A Trunk” (Interchanging of lips' position).

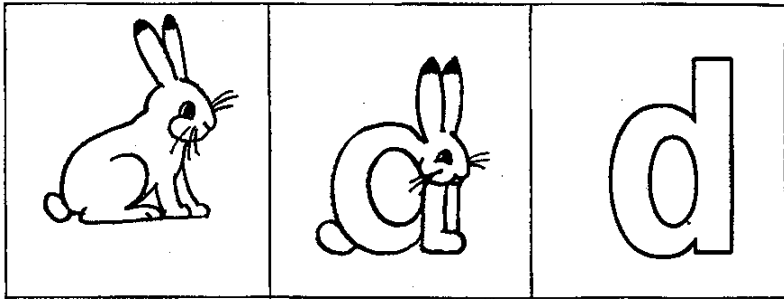
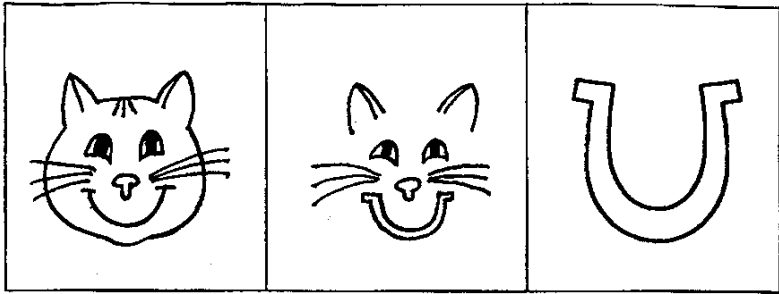
2. Respiratory exercises.

They are done for relaxation of articulation organs. For example: *“Take Christmas glare. Keep it not far from your mouth. Take a breath and breathe out at your glare. Repeat 4-5 times.”*

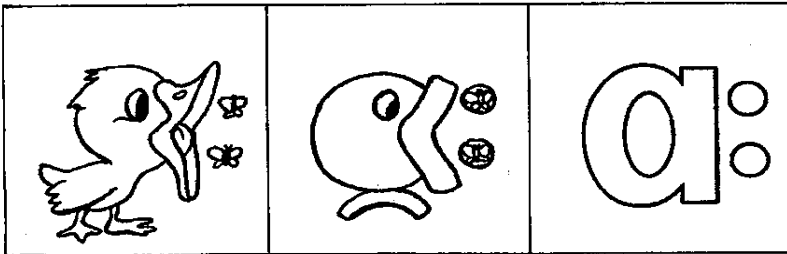
3. Sound acquisition.

For example, using a fairy-tale “Tongue's Travels”:

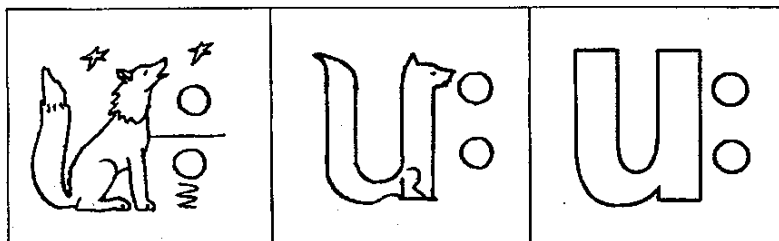
“Once there lived Mr. Tongue. He is very fond of picture books. One morning Mr. Tongue and a small Hare read “Alice's Adventures in Wonderland” and saw a Cat, a mysterious Cat, a magical one, a Cheshire Cat. The cat smiled and suddenly began to disappear ... only the smile remained. Mr. Tongue was so surprised, that simply said: [u-u-u]. But the Hare was really scared and began to tremble with fear: [d-d-d].”



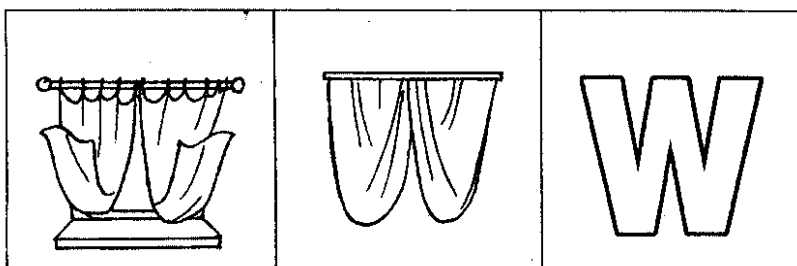
"Mr. Tongue has a lot of friends. In the morning he met a Duckling. He was young, but knew how to swallow midges: [a:-a:-a:-a:m]"



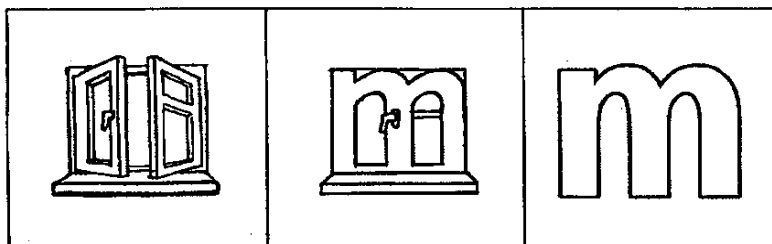
"At night Mr. Tongue saw a Wolf near the lake. The Moon reflected a yellow circle in it. The Wolf howled: [u:-u:-u:] [mu:n]."



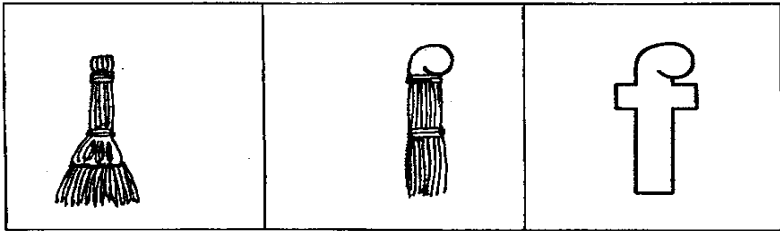
"Suddenly a Wind got up and began to play with curtains: [w-w-w]"



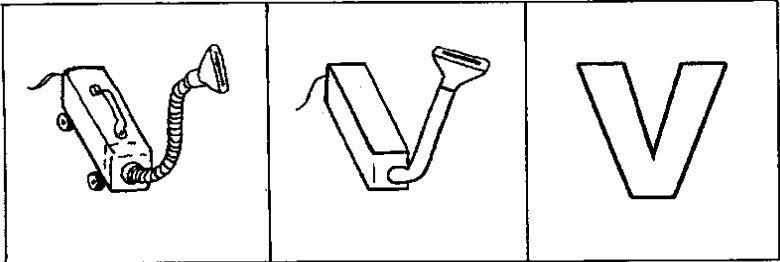
"It was so strong that even closed the window leaves: [m-m-m]"



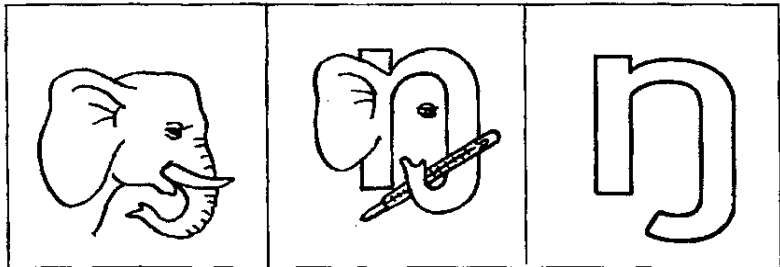
"The window was closed, but the room is so untidy! Let's take a Broom. It's doing his best and is very hard-working. It is sniffing all the time: [f-f-f]. What a mess!"



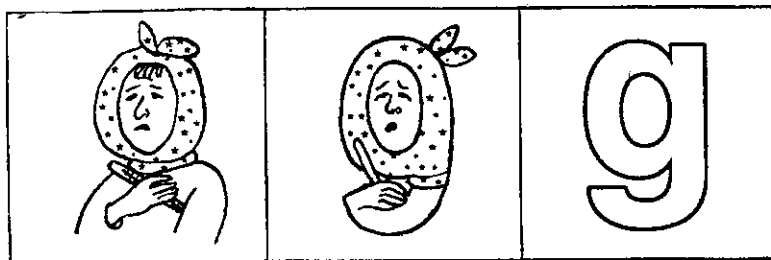
"Who will help the Broom? A Vacuum-cleaner will: [v-v-v]"



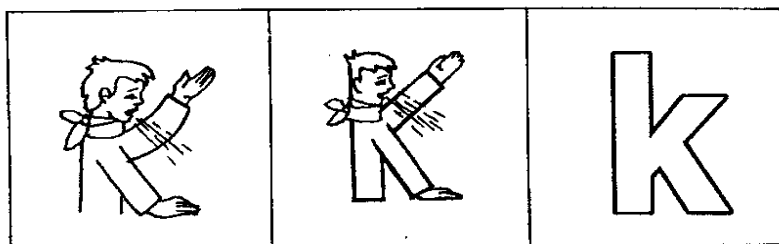
"A little Elephant caught cold and spoke through nose: [η-η-η]"



"A Boy is ill, too. He is coughing all the time: [g-g-g]"



“The next day Mr. Tongue visited the Boy, he is still coughing, but not so strong: [k-k-k].”³⁰



The transcriptional signs of sounds are learnt with the use of coloration. This work is a logical follow-up of sound acquisition. Young learners learn transcription by using three kinds of pictures:

- 1) an associative shape of a sound;
- 2) a sketchy picture of a transcriptional sign;
- 3) a transcriptional sign.

Children are to color them at home, to remember the fairy-tale and to practice sounds. So, from the second lesson of Complex Introductory Course children begin to read combinations of sounds; from the sixth – to read words and from the ninth lesson they begin to read combinations of words and sentences. Learning of transcription is an end in itself and an auxiliary instrument for teaching reading.

³⁰ *These examples are taken from Malova O.V. 2003. Introductory Course of English in Primary School: My First English Lessons. Saint-Petersburg: Anthology. [in Russian]*

During Complex Introductory Course attention should be paid to the development of children's phonetic hearing:

- *Listen to the words. Raise your hand when you hear the word with the sound [θ]: bath, cloud, tree, bin, three, cloth, them, club, thin, mouse, mouth.*
- *Listen to the words. Name the initial sound ([f]-[θ]): phone, flag, thing, face, thin, friend, thanks, farm.*
- *Listen to the words. Show correct transcriptional sign ([i]-[i]): he, gyp, fit, she, peace, since, big, key, myth, pea, sea.*
- *Listen to the words. In what part (at the beginning, in the middle or at the end) is the sound [ð]: with, those, father, these, bathe.*
- *How many syllables are there in the following words? Listen and clap the number of syllables: sister, brother, son, father, niece, mother. Which one is stressed? Clap the rhythm of words, marking the stressed syllable.*
- *Listen to the words. Find the odd one: cat, let, hat, fat; ten, pen, me, vet.*

During Complex Introductory Course children begin to learn the ABC from the second lesson. First of all, children are taught differences between sounds and letters: "We read and write letters. We listen and pronounce sounds." The following exercises may be used:

- *Write the letter (the capital letter and the small one).*

While learning some letters children become really confused. For Russian young learners the most confusing letters are: S, D, d, b, B. So we give them an example of an associative form of the letter and ask them to think of their own example: S = 5, ... ; d = ♪,

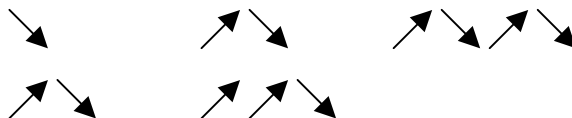
- *Name the letter (children have to say, for example: "The capital letter L. The small letter l").*
- *Circle the signs, which indicate sounds: [e], [l], m, [w], n, l.*
- *Pronounce the sounds: [e, s, z, f, l, m, n].*
- *What sounds form the name of the letter: L - [...] [...]; M - [...] [...].*
- *Sound-letter dictation (children have to identify sounds and letters and write them down correctly): [v], Dd, [a:], Cc, Vv, Jj, [b], [h], Gg, [f]... .*
- *Body Writing: Think of a letter or letters you may show alone or with your partner (This kind of exercises stirs up the intellectual process,*

establishes links between written and oral forms of a letter and promote cooperation of young learners).

- *Circle the English letters (children are to identify the letters of their native language and the English letters, the problem is that these letters are very similar): ВВ - Bb; Dd – ДД; Кк - Kk; Nn – НН.*
- *Identify the language and name the initial letter: BIG - БЕЧЕР, HELLO - ГОЛЬ, ДОМ - DAD, ОЦЕНЬ - OCEAN.*

During Complex Introductory Course *My First English Lessons* attention is paid to intonation as well. First of all, children are taught that there are 2 types of intonation (falling intonation and rising intonation). They listen to examples of it in their native language, the examples of musical intonation. While listening young learners have to identify the type of intonation and to show it with their hands (the hand is going up – rising intonation, or down – the falling one) or with pointers. Children compare intonation of positive, negative sentences and questions in both languages. So, they acquire the English intonation consciously.

- *Intonation dictation: Listen to the melodies and sentences. Mark the intonation.*
- *Think of the sentences, that suit the following intonation models:*



Introductory Course lasts for 2 months and consists of 16 lessons, 3 educational situations: “Acquaintance” (Lessons 1-6). ”My Family” (Lessons 7-11), ”I am a Pupil” (Lessons 12-16). The last lesson of each educational situation is the Review. Each lesson has a certain plot, in which a teacher, pupils and fairy tale characters participate in communication.

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USING PICTURE TESTS IN THE YOUNG LEARNERS' CLASSROOM

Yekaterina Vorontsova

Abstract

This article will concentrate on the problem of oral skills formation and testing these skills at the pre-reading stage of teaching 5 – 8 year-old children. This period requires special techniques based on specially designed visual aids which help avoid or minimize using the native language of children. For this purpose it is proposed to use picture tests containing visually presented information about children from different countries or pictures based on the children's game 'Find the differences'. Picture Tests provide a variety of listening and speaking activities focused on training and reinforcing, as well as testing the basic speech-patterns with the verbs 'be', 'can', 'have (got)', 'like'. The described technique has been applied in more than twenty kindergartens and schools in Saint-Petersburg.

Oral Skills Formation and Testing of Young Learners

English teachers of young learners need special skills and special techniques to maintain a high degree of motivation and make the English class a playful and enjoyable experience for the children.

It is obvious that at the initial (pre-reading) stage of learning English the teachers should bear in mind some points:

- enjoyable activities are memorable ones;
- to avoid lapsing into the mother tongue of the children the teacher should use activities based on special visual aids;
- listening comes first in any language acquisition. So listening skills are prior to other skills (i.e. speaking, reading and

writing are dependent on listening). That is why at the initial stage of language learning, listening activities should take up a larger proportion of class time.

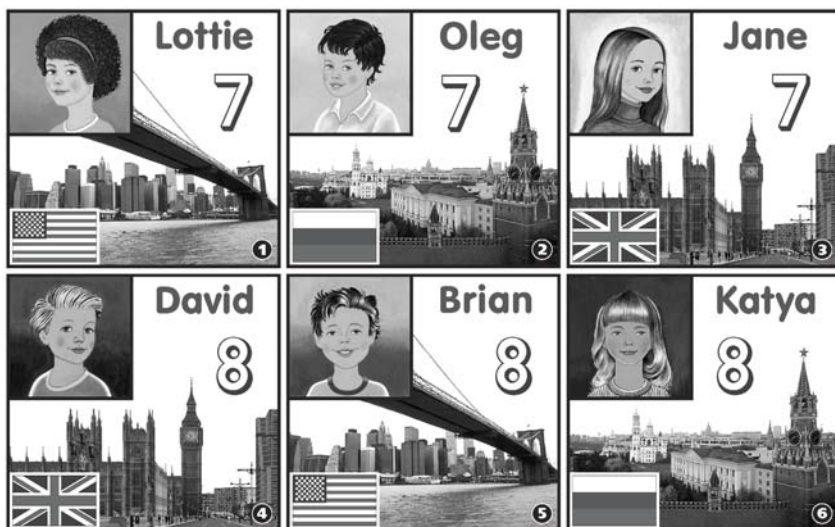
- during this period children are able to understand and produce a minimum of language and a very limited number of basic speech-patterns have to be trained and tested (as a rule, the ones with the verbs 'be', 'can', 'have got', 'like' and some others);

A special activity named 'Picture Tests' can be used to train, reinforce, and test the following basic speech-patterns at the starter level:

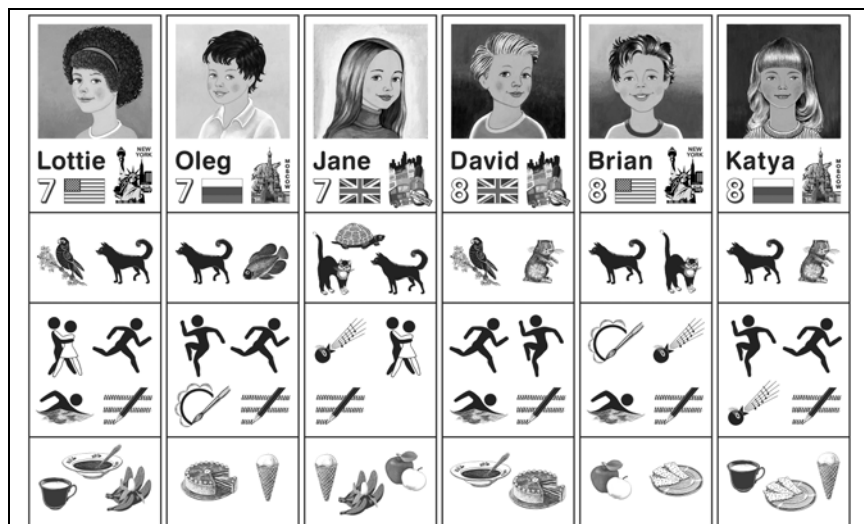
I We You	am are is	Dima / Dasha... 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 from Russia / Great Britain / USA from Moscow / Saint Petersburg / London / New York happy / sad
	can	swim / run / fly
He She	have / has (got)	a dog / a cat... Mum / Dad / Granny / Grandpa
	like(s)	bananas / ice cream... blue / green / yellow
It	see(s)	blue / green / yellow a dog / a cat...

The set of 'Picture Tests' contains ten pictures aimed at training and testing oral skills of the young learners. The pictures are stress-free, motivating, carefully designed for the age of 5 through 8 and presented in full colour. Some Pictures contain visual information about the children from Russia, Great Britain and the USA. ³¹

³¹ Artist, pictures G. Penziakov; the computer version by E. Lukashonok.



Picture 1. Meet the children.

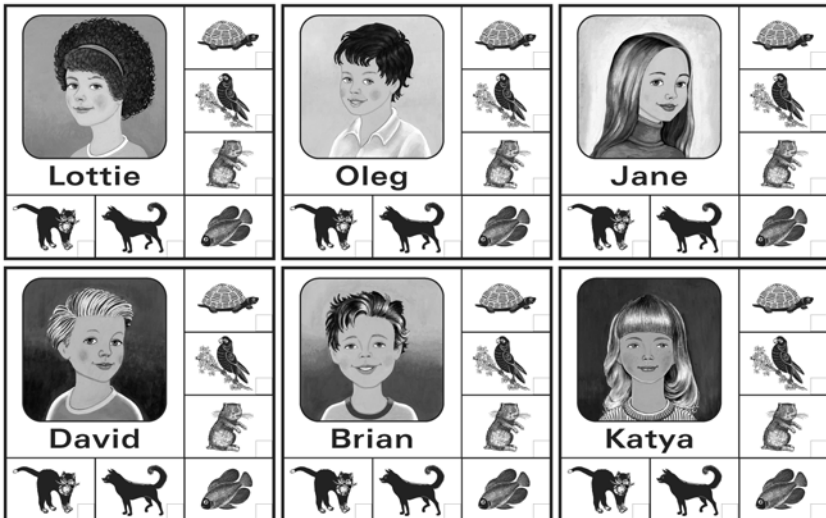


Picture 2. All about the children.

Some pictures are based on multiple choice:

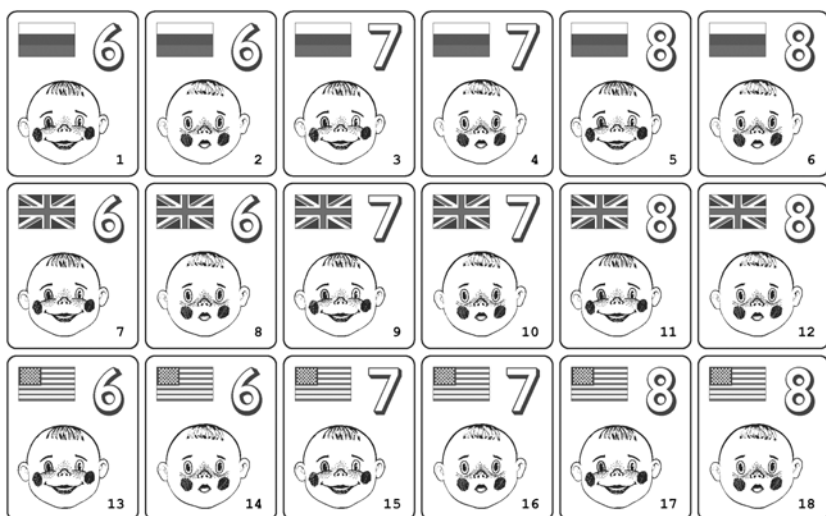


Picture 3. What they can do.

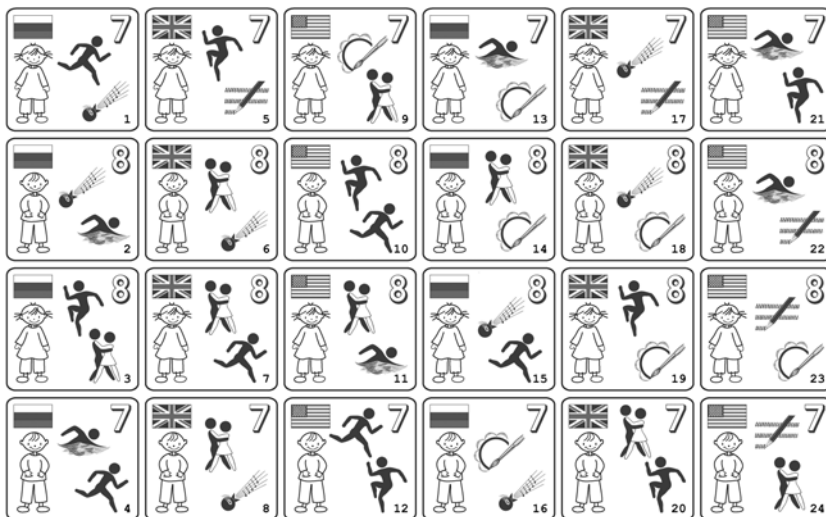


Picture 4. What they have (got).

Some pictures are based on the game 'Find the differences' so much loved by children:



Picture 5. Find the boy.



Picture 6. Find the child.

The pictures here are classified to provide the optimal field of search for the children, e.g. in Picture 5 the boys are situated across or down: happy or sad; 6, 7, 8 years old; from Russia, Great Britain or the USA.

All the pictures make a basis for both listening and speaking activities: e.g. using Picture 1 the teacher can give the following tasks: 'Look at the pictures of the children. They are speaking about themselves. Listen to the text and put down the numbers of the pictures'.

The teacher reads the texts to different pictures: e.g. *"Hello, I'm 8. I'm from Great Britain. I'm from London"*, *"Hello, I'm 7. I'm from Russia. I'm from Moscow"*, etc.

The children listen and put down the numbers 4, 2... etc.

Using the pictures based on multiple choice the children listen to the text and tick the boxes, e. g. *"Hello, I'm Lottie. I can dance, run, swim and write very well"*.

Listening becomes more enjoyable and stimulating when the pictures based on the children's game 'Find the differences' are used. In spite of their 'likeness', the pictures have some differences, which the children have to find out and be especially attentive while listening to the teacher's description of them. For example, using Picture 5 the teacher describes the boys while the children put down the numbers: *'This boy is 6. He is from Great Britain. He is sad'*; *'This boy is 8. He is from the USA. He is happy'*, etc.

The children put down the numbers: 8, 7... etc.

Listening activities can be changed to provide a variety of them, e.g.

a) Listen to the text and raise your hand when you hear the wrong statement:

'Boy No. 2 is 8.' (The children raise hands)... etc.

b) Listen to the contrary statements and find out which boy it is: *'This boy is not from the USA. He is not from Russia. He is not 7, he is not 8. He is not sad'* (No.7).

Speaking skills can also be formed on the basis of the pictures: the teacher can ask questions and the children answer them, the children can work in pairs, when one child thinks of a picture and the

other asks questions to find out which picture it is, the children can describe pictures, etc.

At the very first classes as the kids learn speech-patterns *'I'm Dima/ 6, 7, 8.../ from Russia/ Great Britain/ the USA'* they are given the tasks on Picture 1 (Meet the children):

a) *'Look at Brian/Janel/ Oleg... What can he/she say about himself/herself?'*

The children speak in the name of Brian/Janel/ Oleg... : *'Hello! I'm Brian. I'm 8...'*

After the kids learn the speech-patterns with *'He/She is...'* the teacher asks them to say as much as they can about each child: *'This is Brian. He is 8. He is from the USA. He is from New-York.'*

We can also teach dialogue on the basis of Picture 1:

Student 1: I think of a boy.

Student 2: Is he 7?

Student 1: No, he isn't.

Student 2: Is he from the USA?

Student 1: No, he isn't.

Student 2: Is he from Great Britain?

Student 1: Yes, he is.

Student 2: Is he David?

Student 1: Yes, he is.

Similar tasks can be given when the teacher uses any Picture as a basis for training or testing speech-patterns with *'can'*, *'have (got)'* and *'like'*. For example, after having fulfilled listening activities, i.e. having done the multiple choice on Picture 4 (What they can do) the teacher can practise speaking;

Task 1.

'Look at Lottiel/ Janel/ Brian... and say what she/he can do.'

Task 2.

Lottiel/ Janel/ Brian... says what she/he cannot do. What does she/he say?'

Task 3.

'Work in pairs. One of you think of a boy or a girl. The other ask questions to find out which boy or girl it is.'

When used for testing listening and speaking skills Pictures 1-9 can be used as progress tests while Picture 10 makes a basis for the final testing of the studied language material.

Using Picture 10 children should demonstrate their capability to produce longer texts, asking and answering questions including different speech-patterns.

Task 1.

'Speak about Brian/ Jane... Say how old he/she is, where he/she is from, what he/she can do, what pets he/she has got and what he/she likes.'

Task 2.

Answer my questions: 'Is Oleg from Russia or the USA? Can Jane swim? What does David like? Has Katya got a hamster or a parrot? Is Brian 8? ...'

Task 3.

'Work in pairs. One of you ask questions about the children the other answer them'

The teacher should stimulate children to ask different questions: general, alternative and special.

Picture Tests is a multifunctional technique. The number of tasks depends on how creative a teacher is. Some teachers in St. Petersburg use Picture Tests for teaching reading and writing: at the classes children match the texts and the pictures, write affirmative and negative sentences and questions etc. Especially children are attracted by Picture Tests based on the game 'Find the differences', which they are ready to return to again and again.

This technique which may be used alongside any book-course for young learners will create a playful atmosphere in the class and help the children memorize both vocabulary and grammar more efficiently.

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STORY-BASED COURSE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Kira Ostapenko

Abstract

It is widely accepted that literature is a component of syllabi for teaching English as a foreign or second language to young children. Stories can be used as extra reading material. On the other hand, stories can be used a basis for the course of study. Our aim is to integrate an authentic story into the national curriculum. If you want to make a story-based course for teaching English in compliance with the national curriculum, you should provide the following step-by-step instructions. Firstly, you should select a story appropriate for the age and the interests of your students and adapt it. Then you should analyse the national primary school curriculum. The next step is to divide the story into some episodes and to add the vocabulary and grammar to be trained and acquired. Each unit should consist of a short story and some language exercises. Doing these exercises children are supposed to learn new grammar and vocabulary. The plot of the authentic story is to penetrate the whole textbook. So the students should have a feeling that they are reading a book.

Literature as a part of the curriculum for English as a foreign language

You may find that the situation, materials and techniques I describe are different from the situation in your schools, but I expect you will find some ideas to pick your interest. Let me get started with observing the following question: Should literature be part of the curriculum for

English as a foreign language? Arguments have been made for and against this proposition.

First, let us examine the common arguments against using literature.

- The main goal of ESL teachers is to teach the grammar and vocabulary of the language. Literature often doesn't relate to everyday English.
- That's why, the study of literature will contribute nothing to help the students meet their academic goals.
- Finally, literature may be quite difficult for students, especially for beginners.

However, there are advantages of using literature:

- Stories are motivating and can help to develop positive attitudes to the foreign language and language learning.
- Stories develop imagination and shared social experience
- Children enjoy listening to stories over and over again. This frequent repetition allows us to teach children certain language items.

I will argue that we should use literature, but using literature in teaching English as a foreign language is complicated.

Let us examine some ways of using literature.

Storybooks can be used in different ways:

- Stories can be simply read without preparation. But this can be disastrous. Understanding a story in a foreign language is a hard work which requires preparation.
- Stories can be used as extra reading materials which correlate to the textbook. For example, the textbook for teaching English in elementary school "Set Sail 2" has its own storybook. It is the second year of studying English. During the first year children were taught only to speak and understand oral speech. During the second year, students began reading and writing. So, after completing the textbook, children read the storybook. This storybook is an example of reading materials written for the textbook. Let us read a poem from this book, "Country mouse, town mouse". Can anybody help me to read? Children know

most of words in the poem. Only the underlined words are unknown. Learning a poem or other literary materials involves the following steps. The teacher reads the text, translates new words and provides a literary translation. After that children read this poem in paragraphs and memorize it. At the end they can make a drama based on a poem. What do you think, is it a hard work for children to read and memorize this poem after two years of learning English? It's a hard work. I know it exactly, because I was studying this poem with my son.

- Stories can be used as a basis of the course of study. (For example, if you have just covered a unit in your course book about animals, you may read your pupils an animal story, to discuss and retell it Or, if you have just covered a unit for particular language structure, you can read a story which demonstrates its usage in a different context. Or, if you want to study a particular rule, for example, Simple Past Tense or the modal “can”, you can select a story with verbs in Simple Past Tense or with “can”).
- We can devise a story-based course book for teaching English as a foreign language taking into account the requirements of the national curriculum. This approach allows us to incorporate literature into the study of English making the study more interesting for students, allowing better integration of cultural materials into the study of the language, while at the same time meeting the standards of the national curriculum.

Creating a story-based course: four steps

So, if you want to create a story-based course for teaching English as a foreign language at elementary school in compliance with the national curriculum, I suggest the following procedure.

The first step: the selection of the story. First of all we should understand the difference between children's literature and materials written for children, because not all materials written for children have literary value. Besides literary value, children's literature is well suited to

the psychological, emotional and cognitive features of pre-school and elementary school children. So, the first step is to select a story appropriate to the age and the interests of the students. Many publishers produce simplified storybooks for children learning English. However, there are many authentic storybooks written for English-speaking children. These books are also suitable for making (creating) a story-based course book. The book I have chosen, “Blackberry Farm” by Jane Pilgrim, is an authentic storybook which has not been specifically written for teaching English as a second language.

The second step: the adaptation of the story. How to get from the original version to the adapted version? The main rule for adaptation is to keep the meaning of the story. Adaptation has two aims. The first aim is to exclude difficult grammar structures and secondary plot topics.

Example 1. *How to adapt and eliminate the secondary topics which do not influence the main storyline.*

Original version	Adapted version
<p>1. Sometimes Naughty George, the Blackberry Farm kitten, would be at milking-time – hoping for a little extra milk, and Emily would give him a drop. And when Mrs. Nibble’s baby bunnies were all in bed with measles, Emily would find a little extra milk for her too.</p> <p>2. When Emily was two years old she had a baby of her own, a little Billy – goat, which Joy and Bob loved. But there was enough food at Blackberry Farm for two goats, so Billy went to live with some friends down to road.</p>	<p>1. This is George the kitten. He likes milk. This is a boy-bunny, this is a girl-bunny and this is a girl-bunny. The three bunnies like milk, too. Emily gives milk for George the kitten and for the bunnies.</p> <p>2. It’s a secondary topic which doesn’t influence into the main topic.</p>
Original version	Adapted version
<p>Emily was a very nice goat. She had a light-brown shaggy coat, two little horns and a neat beard. She was born at Blackberry Farm in a bad snowstorm. Mr. And Mrs. Smiles and their children, Joy and Bob were very excited.</p>	<p>“My name is Emily. I am a nice goat. I am brown. I live with a family”.</p>

The second aim of adaptation is adding the vocabulary and grammar structures in compliance with the national curriculum, because adaptation means not only simplifying the original text but also bringing it into the balance with the national curriculum and children's level of English. For example, you study the topic "Food". In the original version there are only some words denoting food. You have to add some more in compliance with the national curriculum.

Example 2.

Original version	Adapted version
<p>One day Mr. Smiles said: "Three is a little lamb in the field, and her mother has no milk for her."</p> <p>"I don't know where we are going to get any more milk for the lamb", Mrs. Smiles said; "unless Emily can help us".</p> <p>Emily looked at Little Martha in Mrs. Smiles arms and said: "I'll try very hard, Mrs. Smiles – but I must more to eat".</p> <p>So, everyone at Blackberry Farm went looking for more food for Emily.</p> <p>Mrs. Nibble and Walter Duck brought some fresh green leaves. Mother Hen and Lucy Mouse found her some extra corn and maize. And Mrs. Squirrel gave her some nuts.</p>	<p>"I am a little sheep. My name is Martha. My mother sheep has no milk. Emily, give me some milk, please".</p> <p>"Oh, I can give only six bottles of milk. Give me some more food".</p> <p>Mrs. Smiles gives Emily <i>some porridge</i>. Joy and Bob give Emily <i>three carrots</i>. Jess the Rabbit and Walter the Duck give Emily <i>some cabbage</i>. Susie the Squirrel and Sam the Sparrow give Emily <i>three nuts</i>.</p>

In the adapted version you can see words in bold and italics. Before and after reading this paragraph students do a lot of exercises on the usage of single and plural nouns, countable and uncountable nouns, regular and irregular verbs .

If you study the topic "Family", you can also add some necessary structures.

Example 3.

Original version	Adapted version
1. Mr. Smiles	1. His name is John. His last name is Smiles. This is Mr. Smiles.
2. Mrs. Smiles	2. Her name is Ann. Her last name is Smiles. This is Mrs. Smiles.

Example 4. This is an example of semantic and linguistic adaptation of the book's entire first chapter "Emily the goat". New words for students are in bold.

Original version	Adapted version
<p>Emily was a very nice goat. She had a light-brown shaggy coat, two little horns and a neat little beard. She was born at Blackberry Farm in a bad snowstorm. Mr. and Mrs. Smiles and their children, Joy and Bob were very excited.</p> <p>But Emily's mother could not feed her, so Mrs. Smiles gave her a bottle. Soon Joy learnt to feed her too. And sometimes Bob fed her.</p> <p>When Emily was two years old she had a baby of her own, a little Billy - goat, which Joy and Bob loved. But there was not enough food at Blackberry Farm for two goats, so Billy went to live with some friends down the road.</p> <p>Emily was a very good goat, and she gave Mrs. Smiles as much milk as she could. Two jugfuls in the morning, and two jugfuls at night.</p> <p>Sometimes Naughty George, the Blackberry Farm kitten, would be there at milking - time - hoping for a little extra milk, and Emily would give him a drop. And when Mrs. Nibble's baby bunnies were all in bed with measles, Emily would find a little extra for her too.</p> <p>So everyone at Blackberry Farm was very fond of Emily, because she was such a kind, helpful goat.</p> <p>Then one day Mr. Smiles was very worried, and scratched his head and racked his brain and wondered what to do. He told his trouble to Mrs. Smiles as she was milking Emily. "There is a little lamb in</p>	<p>"Hello. My name is Emily. I am a goat. I am a nice goat. I am brown. I live with a family. I love the family".</p> <p>This is a father. His name is Dan. His last name is Smiles. This is a mother. Her name is Ann. Her last name is Smiles. This is a boy. His name is Bob. This is a girl. Her name is Joy. Mr. Smiles, Mrs. Smiles, Joy and Bob love Emily.</p> <p>Emily has a mother-goat. She loves Emily. But mother-goat has no milk. Mrs. Smiles gives Emily a bottle of milk.</p> <p>This is George the kitten. He likes milk. This is a boy-bunny, this is a girl-bunny and this is a boy-bunny. The three bunnies like milk too.</p> <p>Emily gives milk for George the kitten, for the bunnies, for Bob and Joy. They like milk. Mr. and Mrs. Smiles don't like milk.</p> <p>This is Lucy the mouse. She likes apples. This is Walter the duck. He likes sweets. This is Jess the rabbit. She doesn't like coffee. This is Betsy the hen. She doesn't like tea.</p>

the field, and her mother has no milk for her. I am afraid she will die”.

“We must feed her with a bottle”, Mrs. Smiles said. “Bring her up to me”. So Mrs. Smiles went down to the field. Little Martha, the lamb, was crying sadly because she was so hungry, and Mr. Smiles picked her up and brought her straight to Mrs. Smiles.

“I don’t know where we are going to get any more milk”, Mrs. Smiles said; “unless Emily can help us”. Emily looked at Little Martha in Mrs. Smile’s arms, and she thought hard. Then she turned to Mrs. Smiles and said: “I’ll try very hard, Mrs. Smiles – but I must have more to eat”. So, everyone at Blackberry Farm went looking for more food for Emily.

Mrs. Nibble and Walter Duck brought some fresh green leaves. Mother Hen and Lucy Mouse found her some extra corn and maize. And Mrs. Squirrel gave her some nuts.

Then in the evening, after Mrs. Smiles had milked Emily, there were THREE jugfuls of milk. Mrs. Smiles was very pleased with Emily. “You are dear, good goat”, she said. “Now we are able to give Little Martha her bottle”.

So every day Mrs. Nibble and Mother Hen and Walter Duck and Lucy Mouse and Mrs. Squirrel all brought a little something for Emily.

After every day Emily gave Mrs. Smiles a little extra milk. And Mr. and Mrs. Smiles, and Joy and Bob, all told her what a dear, good goat she was. And Emily was very happy at Blackberry Farm.

This is a **squirrel**. Her name is **Hazel**. She likes nuts. This is a **sparrow**. His name is **Sam**. He doesn’t like Pepsi.

“I am a **little sheep**. My name is **Martha**. My mother-sheep has no milk. Emily, give me a bottle of milk, please”.

“Oh, I can’t. I can give six bottles of milk. Give me some **more food**”.

Mrs. Smiles gives Emily some porridge. Joy and Bob give Emily three plums. Jess the Rabbit and Walter the Duck give Emily ten apples. Hazel the squirrel and Sam the sparrow give Emily six nuts.

“Thank you, I can give a bottle of milk for Martha the sheep”.

Martha is **happy**. Emily is happy too.

Example 5. This is an example of semantic and linguistic adaptation of the second chapter “Saturday at Blackberry Farm”.

Original version	Adapted version
<p>Saturday morning. Pocket-money morning. A busy morning for Sam Sparrow in his shop. He got up very early to tidy it up.</p> <p>At nine o'clock he opened the door, and waited to see who would come first.</p> <p>In his little house across the field Mr. Nibble turned out his pockets. "I don't seem to have any pennies this week," he said to Rosy, posy and Christopher, and Mrs. Nibble found some in her purse, and she gave two each of them. So they were happy.</p> <p>Off they went to the shop with their pennies. What would they buy this week? "I want a new pencil," said Rosy. "I want a new bit of ribbon for my dress," said Posy. "I want some more sweeties," said Christopher, who was always hungry.</p> <p>At the shop Sam Sparrow was talking to George the kitten and Little Martha the Lamb. They had enough pennies between them to buy a new ball, and Sam showed them a lovely big red one. "This is a very good one," he said. "I have sold a lot like this one." George gave money and said "Thank you!"</p> <p>The next to come was Mrs. Squirrel and Hazel. Mrs. Squirrel filled her basket with good things for the weekend, but Hazel was in tears. "She lost the pennies I gave her," said Mrs. Squirrel. "And I cannot give her any more. So she cannot buy anything this week."</p> <p>Sam Sparrow was very sorry for Hazel, and he tried to think how to help her. He had had a very good idea. "Ernest Owl isn't</p>	<p>Saturday morning. Pocket money morning. Sam Sparrow works in the shop. At nine o'clock he opens his shop. "Welcome to my shop", says Sam Sparrow.</p> <p>Three little bunnies want to go to the shop. Mrs. Nibble gives two pennies to Rose, two pennies to Pose and two pennies to Christopher. They go to the shop and chat. "I want to buy a new pencil", says Rose. "I want to buy a new ribbon", says Pose. "I'm hungry. I want to buy some sweeties", says Christopher. They come to the shop and see George the kitten and little Martha the lamb. They want to buy a ball. "A big red ball, please", say George the kitten and Martha the lamb. "Here you are", Says Sam Sparrow. Little friends give four pennies to Sam Sparrow and say "Thank you".</p> <p>After that Mrs. Squirrel and her daughter Hazel come. Mrs. Squirrel buys some nuts and apples. Hazel wants to buy a doll, but she has no money. She lost her money.</p> <p>"Poor Hazel", says Sam</p>

very well today," he said. "I believe if you did his shopping for him, he would gladly give you a penny or two. Run along and ask if you if you can help him." So Hazel ran along to the Big Oak Tree where Ernest Owl lived, and there she found Ernest Owl in bed with a terrible cold.

"Please, Mr. Owl, would you like me to do your shopping for you?" she said. "I've lost my pocket-money, and Mr. Sparrow said you might give me a penny if I helped you." "Thank you very much," said Earnest Owl. "It would be a great help to me, because I am much too poorly to do my own shopping." And he gave an enormous sneeze and coughed for a long time. Hazel took his list and shopping bag and went back to Mr. Sparrow's shop.

When Hazel got back to the shop she had to wait while Sam Sparrow served Lucy Mouse's two little boys, Len and Sid. Len had an ice-cream, and Sid had a banana. Hazel longed for an ice-cream, and she liked bananas almost better than anything. Perhaps Earnest Owl would give her two pennies if she was very quick with his shopping!

Sam Sparrow took the list from the Hazel, and he took the shopping bag. "There a lot of things that Mr. Owl wants," he said. "I don't think you will be able to carry the bag. You had better go home and I will send it round later on." But Hazel wanted her pennies very badly. "Please, Mr. Sparrow, let me try," she cried. "I can go backwards and forwards if there are too many things to fit in to one bag."

So Mr. Sparrow filled the bag three times, and three times Little Hazel went to the Big Tree where Ernest Owl Lived. She

Sparrow. "I can help you. Ernest Owl is ill. He can't go to the shop. You can help him to go to the shop. After that Ernest Owl can give you some pennies.

Hazel goes to Ernest Owl's house. "Hello, Mr. Owl. How are you?" asks Hazel. "I'm bad", answers Ernest Owl. "Help me please. Can you go to the shop and buy me some tea, some milk and some sausage.

Hazel takes the shopping-bag and goes to the shop. The shopping-bag is big and heavy. Hazel is small. Hazel must go to the shop three times.

After that Hazel makes a cup of tea with honey for Ernest Owl. "Thank you, Hazel. I'm better now. I can give you THREE pennies", says Ernest Owl.

Hazel is happy. She goes to the Sam Sparrow's shop and buys an ice-cream, a banana, a new ribbon and a pencil.

got very tired.

Ernest Owl watched the little squirrel coming in and going out until everything he wanted was on his table. Then she put them all away tidily in his cupboard.

“Thank you, Hazel,” he called. “You have been a great help to me, and I really don’t feel very well.” Hazel was very sorry for Ernest Owl. He didn’t look very well. So she put the kettle on and made him a nice hot drink, just like her mother did for her when she wasn’t very well, and she quite forgot about her pennies. She was just very sorry for poor Mr. Owl.

Ernest Owl drank his hot drink, and felt much better. He gave Hazel THREE big, shiny pennies. “Go to Sam Sparrow’s shop and buy just what you want,” he said. “And thank you very much for all you have done for me.”

Hazel Squirrel hopped and skipped and jumped all the way to the shop. She bought an ice-cream, a banana, a new ribbon for her dress, two biscuits and a pencil. She thought that it was the best Saturday she had ever known at Blackberry Farm.

After the adaptation the original story loses some part of its literary value. But in my opinion it is better than to create my own story: I am not a writer and I am not a native speaker of the language I teach. Besides, any authentic story has useful information about customs, culture and language of the characters.

The third step: the division of the story into some episodes. Each episode forms the basis of a unit. The main rule for dividing a story is that each episode should be comprehensible on its own. Each chapter is divided into some short episodes.

The last step: compiling each unit of the textbook. It is the most difficult part. You should analyze the national curriculum one more time, add the required vocabulary and grammar structures and create

corresponding exercises. Doing these exercises children are supposed to learn new grammar and vocabulary. The plot of the authentic story is to penetrate the entire course book, and students will feel that they are reading a book.

Conclusion. The adaptation of authentic texts to the requirements of national curriculum is one of the most suitable ways of integrating literary works into teaching English as a foreign language.

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ADAPTING EFL METHODOLOGY TO TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS

Lilia Ivanova

Abstract

This article will explore some issues related to teaching children English at primary level as well as teacher training format. The general theme will be the acquisition of the professional competences by a teacher when developing vocabulary for the first lessons of teaching speaking seven-year-olds.

Special emphasis is placed on the training sequence and establishing participatory tasks for teacher students: input for trainees based on a specific aspect of language methodology, practical activities for the teachers within the training classroom, discussion tasks.

Why and how to be competent in EFL teaching

Nowadays it is a well established reality that governments in many countries have adopted the policy of introducing English at primary level. The main reasons are obvious. English is increasingly playing the role of the global language, therefore English language competencies becoming a must for citizens responsible for their career and the country's benefit. The same refers to Russian educational system where the need for teaching English in early age has been recognized and English language learning at primary level has been introduced recently.

As a result, there is a need to determine the aims and objectives of primary level foreign language learning and also to outline its basic trends as compared to teaching process in secondary school. As the aim of foreign language teaching at primary school is communicative competence of learners the ways of integrating EFL methods into

primary classroom are of special importance. Taking into account the age and the needs of young learners it seems to be justified to recommend an activity-based approach to teaching children English as the most appropriate for this age group.

The experts now suggest that the language teacher should use activities that foster natural acquisition in the foreign-language classroom similarly to the way the first language is learned. According to David Vale & Anne Feunteun (1998, 27), the activity-based approach can be very beneficial for children because they become more motivated and interested in what they are studying, they can be introduced to a wide range of natural English. They can cope with the language as it is meaningful and understandable and the activities are meaningful and understandable too. The important feature is that children are taught in the target language. They are not introduced to the English language in an artificially pre-determined sequence of grammatical structures or functions, the input from the teacher, and their learning about the world, is in English.

According to another researcher, “once you have become accustomed to the rewards and pleasures gained from teaching through activities, you will wonder how second-language teaching ever got to be anything else. Your own ideas for activities and their management will flow, and your students’ language-learning rates will soar!”(Claire, 1988, 1) .

While the policy of teaching English to young learners includes several aspects, i.e. psychological, linguistic and cultural, the consideration of them all lies outside the scope of this paper though a teacher should always be aware of their importance in everyday teaching practice.

The observed classroom practice shows that it is not so easy to realize the goals stated by the Government policy as most teachers are still in the grip of textbooks and are afraid to leave the seemingly safe sailing from page to page. Unfortunately, even updated textbooks are sometimes not very helpful to them. They feel that they lack training in the appropriate methods. Special training in using the activity-based approach will not only encourage teachers in trying something new but

also enable them to reach the end points of the primary phase of learning.

An attempt has been undertaken by us at Herzen University to outline the guidelines of training student teachers to teach English as a foreign language to young learners. The training format included the following:

- sharing the ideas concerning the guidelines of teacher's behaviour in the primary classroom (the use of the target language, communication across the language gap, classroom management, the use of games and songs as a special tool at this level, etc);
- giving students practical experience through classroom demonstrations based on peer teaching;
- evaluating the didactic potential of different activities with particular focus on the objectives in language learning;
- providing students an opportunity to acknowledge their peers' achievements thus improving their own teaching skills;
- having students prepare activity-based materials during their field experience;

providing resource evaluation in terms of specific teaching needs.

Undoubtedly, it is a very demanding task to help pre-service teachers acquire the skills and techniques which are necessary to perform successfully at primary level. Student teachers are taught to deal with a specific teaching situation and with practical teaching content. The basic procedure includes:

- an input for the teaching situation;
- practical activities presented by students;
- discussion following the trainee's demonstration.

The example below deals with the topic "*The first lessons of speaking. Vocabulary development.*"

Phase 1. Evaluation of the teaching situation.

By the time we start teaching the first lessons of speaking pupils have been exposed to a good deal of listening practice through Total Physical

Response Activities. They possess rather an extensive passive vocabulary and are able to pronounce some words and rhymes taught during the very first lessons of English. They are ready to respond with one-word replies.

Adapting EFL methodology to teaching children vocabulary is done by reminding the teaching sequence generally adopted – presentation, practice and production and demonstrating how it can be accomplished when teaching young learners through situational games.

Topic: Animals

Language input from the teacher: vocabulary taught - cat, fox, rabbit, crab, frog, yes, no.

This is a cat. (fox, rabbit, crab, frog)

Is this a cat? No.

Is this a crab? Yes.

Is this a cat or a crab? A cat.

What's this? A fox.

Look at the animals. Look at the animals now. What's missing?

Language output from the children: Yes. No. A cat, A fox. A rabbit. A crab. A frog.

Pronunciation practice: vowels **a**, **o**.

Activity: A situational game.

The teaching sequence is demonstrated through technology as it helps to focus on the important points and provide the necessary hints.

At the presentation stage it is important to present a word in the context hence the pupils are exposed to the structure "This is a cat.", then they hear "A cat" which is a one-word answer for the questions "Is this a cat or a fox?" "What's this?" and finally, "cat" to segregate the noun.

At the practice stage the teaching sequence is being introduced: passive recognition, active recognition, imitation, naming and finally, communicative activity, pronunciation practice being included before children attempt to pronounce the vocabulary taught. The trainees' attention is focused on such things as how many words should be taught at a go, how the toys should be arranged around the classroom, how they should be presented to the class. These seemingly minor questions are important not only because they contribute to the smooth

flow of the activity but may also help the language development as the end product. Then comes a crucial question: how to use English as a language of instruction with true beginners. To avoid using their mother tongue teachers can use a special toy assistant whose language behaviour should be imitated by pupils. Thus a good deal of instructions become unnecessary and there is an effective communication either between the teacher and his assistant or the assistant and pupils or else between pupils. In fact, the controversial issue of the L1 role in the second-language classroom is debated with every new team of trainees but even most persistent opponents get convinced when demonstrations are presented in some language unknown to the audience, e.g. Finnish, Chinese or Farsi and they are able to perform as pupils without any explanations in Russian.

The production stage involves a very simple situational game “What’s missing?” which is based on the same vocabulary. At first all the animals are presented, then one is removed and the participants are asked to guess which one is missing.

The introduction of the theme “Vocabulary Development” is concluded with a test meant as a feed-back to evaluate the learning process.

Phase 2. Trainees’ demonstrations

During the second stage the trainees perform practical tasks simulating the primary classroom teaching situation. It is noteworthy that although the teaching objective is the same and the language material is related to the same topic demonstrations vary greatly. Apart from observing the teaching sequence some other factors are drawn attention to, e.g. how well a teacher is able to communicate with learners in English, how language learning is being monitored, whether the choice of aids was helpful or confusing. Finally the demonstrations are evaluated in terms of achieving positive results. The evaluation is aimed not at putting certain grades to the trainees but at focusing on strong points and helping them overcome some shortcomings in

teaching that come quite naturally if we take into account how difficult the job is.

When evaluating the quality of teaching the following points seem to be of primary importance:

- teacher's speech;
- teacher's behaviour in the classroom;
- development of language skills;
- teachers preparedness;
- statement of the teaching objectives.

Phase 3. Discussion.

The discussion is intended to elicit some points that might be helpful to student teachers:

1. How did you feel as a teacher?
2. What was most difficult for you?
3. How do you estimate your own performance?
4. How can you make the language of instruction comprehensive to true beginners in this teaching situation?
5. What would you like to change?
6. How did you feel as learners?
7. In your opinion, what would be difficult for real pupils?
8. Do you feel more confident now to teach seven-year-olds?

This was just one example to demonstrate how student teachers can be trained with the training content focusing on the vocabulary development at the first lessons of speaking. It was used for demonstrating how to integrate EFL methods into a seven-year-old audience. In addition to theoretical background the trainees get first hand experience within the training classroom. It is also worth mentioning that sometimes the teaching content meant for the prospective pupils is taught to the trainees within the training classroom in a language which is really unknown to the students teachers. In this way the real classroom situation is being simulated and this helps the teachers realize some difficulties their pupils may confront with when

learning a foreign language and organize the teaching process accordingly.

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INTERNET COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Margarita Kiseleva

Abstract

The article will explore the issues related to using Internet for intercultural communication at primary school for teaching English. It will discuss the advantages of using e-mail exchanges for learning both a foreign language and a new culture. It will give details of designing lessons for promoting intercultural competence, and also developing writing, reading and speaking skills. As an example, a description of a series of lessons on Thanksgiving Day is given.

1. Intercultural competence in the classroom

Teaching and learning foreign languages are usually associated with developing foreign language proficiency regarded as a certain level of communicative competence which in its turn is considered to be the goal of foreign language training. This is certainly true, but, as recent research proves, communicative competence is not enough for reaching understanding while communicating with representatives of other cultures. The effective intercultural communication requires, besides a high level of communicative competence, also intercultural competence (Elizarova, 2004). The issue of teaching for intercultural competence raises a lot of questions: What skills are important for adequate intercultural communication? In which way should these skills be developed? At what age (grade) or level of communicative competence should teaching for intercultural competence start? etc.

One of the main ideas of the communicative approach to teaching languages is that students should be engaged a lot in

communicating in a foreign language. That is why there are a many communicative activities in the foreign language classroom. This idea is quite applicable for training for intercultural communication skills, and there may be suggested activities simulating situations of intercultural communication. But the attempts to role-play situations of intercultural communication cannot be successful when all the participants of communication belong to one culture, they are not able to act, react, speak, think and understand the way representatives of other cultures do. The solution to this problem can be found in using intercultural telecommunication via Internet.

2. The didactic potential of Internet communication in the foreign language classroom

Internet was not designed for didactic purposes, but it has some features that can be useful for the goals of language training:

- it provides opportunities for intercultural communication of students of a foreign language with native speakers (teachers and pupils of schools in other countries),
- it provides access to World Wide Web resources which can be used in education.

Using intercultural telecommunication via Internet for a foreign language training provides opportunities for students to engage in communication with native speakers, in a free exchange of opinions, and that naturally stimulates general motivation to mastering a foreign language, promotes practicing various language skills. Intercultural telecommunication provides opportunities to:

- get beyond the borders and get acquainted with culture, way of life, customs and traditions of other people all over the world;
- work on joint educational projects with schoolchildren from other countries.

Considering all the mentioned above, Internet communication possesses a huge didactic potential for the development of intercultural

competence, it also creates a unique opportunity for integrating intercultural communication into the educational process.

Out of many telecommunication means provided by the Internet (discussion forums, bulletin boards, e-mail, chat, videoconferences) which can be used for the educational process, the most convenient and easy one is e-mail.

E-mail allows to exchange not only text messages, but also graphic images, photos, sound and video files. First of all it is useful for the development of reading and writing skills, and what is very relevant, it provides specific authentic material for reading - letters of communication partners which give a chance to learn both the language and the culture. These letters are regarded as authentic language material as they are written by native speakers and are not especially adapted and simplified for teaching purposes like texts in a textbook.

The basic feature of e-mail is a great speed of message exchange. This speed essentially influences the language of messages, it becomes more compressed, dynamical, and emotional. Besides, the speed creates the effect of expectation of a fast reply (compared with the traditional mail) which results in an intensive, creative and productive communication.

At the same time e-mail is a bit less "strict" mode of communication, than, for example, telephone conversation, as it provides the time to think over the message.

Thus telecommunication by e-mail has advantages of oral communication (due to the speed, interactivity, opportunity to receive immediate reply), and of written communication (an opportunity to think over a phrase, to check the message in order to prevent grammatical or stylistic mistakes).

These features are very relevant for intercultural communication as, on the one hand, they lift pressure of psychological barriers typical for face-to-face intercultural communication situations especially when people do not speak a foreign language fluently and get extremely worried when speaking with native speakers.

That is why, although intercultural communication via e-mail is "indirect", "mediated" communication, different from face-to face communication, for teaching purposes it may be advantageous. Using

e-mail in education can be transformed into effective, practically invaluable language training tool. Below there is an example of applying it at a primary school level.

3. Intercultural communication via Internet in teaching English to primary school pupils

It is obvious that using e-mails will develop mostly writing and reading skills, but lessons may be designed in such a way that speaking skills will also be developed, although the main goal still remains teaching for intercultural skills. Using intercultural communication via e-mail was a part of an experiment organised at primary school № 56 of Petrogradski district (Saint-Petersburg, Russia) in October-November, 2005. The participants of the project were Russian pupils of grade 4 and the pupils of an elementary school in Richland (Washington, USA). The goal of the experiment was to identify the advantages and disadvantages of using Internet as a tool for teaching intercultural skills. To reach that goal, a series of lessons was given to the Russian pupils. The lessons were focused on both cultural and language issues which will be described below.

The purpose of the first lessons is to teach children to write short letters-introductions. But first of all, children should be motivated. In the beginning of the lesson the teacher asks whether they like to write letters to get acquainted with boys and girls from the United States and exchange e-mail letters with them. Then the teacher reads a sample letter: "Let's see how Pete writes about himself in a letter to his friend". Children read Pete's letter and answer following questions: *How does Pete address and greet his friend? What does he tell about himself? What questions does he ask his friend? What else can be asked in the letter to a new friend? What does he put in the end of the letter? How does he finish the letter?*

After that the pupils write answers to the following questions: *What is your name? Where do you live? Have you got a family, friends? What do you like to play?* At the next stage the pupils are ready to do the following task: Write a letter to Pete, introduce yourself, and do not

forget to greet the addressee, ask some questions and say goodbye in the end. So children create a prototype of the e-mail letter to a pupil from the American school. The next step is typing the letters and e-mailing them.

When the replies are received, they should be printed to provide an opportunity to read and discuss them. The letters are addressed personally to each pupil so they are asked to read small extracts and give comments. Children should read aloud special phrases used in the beginning and in the end of the letter (a greeting and farewell). The most common patterns are written out on the board, so the pupils have a list of variants of greeting and farewell phrases which could be used when writing letters.

For helping children to discuss the information they got from their communication partners, and simultaneously train the language, the teacher writes out questions on the board: *What does he/she like (to do, to play, to ride)?* Pupils search in the letters sentences about what their partners like and read them.

In order to develop writing skills, the pupils are also offered to write what they learnt about their pen-pal. The following example can be used: *His name is Nick. He lives in Richland, USA. He has a sister. He likes to play computer games etc.*

The described procedure is suggested for the first exchange of letters, afterwards, the teacher should select culturally relevant topics for communication. Below is an example of the topic *Thanksgiving Day*. This holiday has been chosen as a typically American holiday which has no equivalent in Russia and is the least known to Russian children, at the same time it is a significant event in the life of American children. The further work is divided into three stages:

1. Presentation.
2. Pre-communicative exercises.
3. Communicative exercises.

At the stage of the presentation, the lesson begins with motivating pupils for learning about new culture. The teacher tells the children that they are going to learn a lot of interesting information about an American holiday "Thanksgiving Day" which is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. So the teacher suggests to

congratulate the new friends on this holiday in their next letter. But in order to do that it is necessary to read the story about this holiday and learn why it is important for people in America.

The teacher shows children a picture with the family sitting at the festive table. On the table there are dishes which are traditional for Thanksgiving Day: turkey, pumpkin pie, corn bread, nuts, and apples. The teacher explains that they are traditional Thanksgiving dishes - *Look! This is a turkey (a pumpkin pie, corn bread, nuts, and apples)*. Then the teacher asks questions about the picture and helps them to answer them:

- Whom do we see? – We see a family.
- Are they happy? - Yes, they are.
- Why do you think so? - It is a holiday dinner.
- What holiday is that? - Thanksgiving Day.
- What do they say to each other? - They say "Thank You".

Then the teacher shows a picture with pilgrims and the Indians sitting at the table (pronouncing and repeating the new words). On the table there are the same dishes. The teacher says: *It is Thanksgiving Day too.-Who is this? This is a pilgrim. Who is this? This is an Indian.*

At the stage of pre-communicative exercises the main aim of the teacher is to provide training of the language. So the teacher points to each dish at the festive table and asks pupils, for example: *-Is it a turkey or a pumpkin pie?*

Then the pupils read a poem *Thanksgiving Day*, and translate it (all unfamiliar words are written out on the board in advance), then they repeat every line after the teacher and answer the following questions: *What holiday is it? What do you know about Thanksgiving Day?*

The next lesson begins with revision. The teacher shows pictures of Indians, pilgrims, turkey, etc. and asks questions: *Who is this? What is this?* After that the teacher tells the pupils the history of this holiday using the method of storytelling. The teacher tells the history of the holiday using visual aids (pictures of pilgrims, ship Mayflower, Indians, turkey and a pumpkin pie). Then the pupils repeat the words and phrases, and, at last, tell the story pointing to the pictures.

The next lesson may be devoted to making a Thanksgiving gift for their American friends. The children can make, for example a collage showing how the first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated in America. For this purpose the envelopes with pictures are given to each pupil. The teacher reads the story and children make a collage putting the figures of the pilgrims Indians, turkey and pumpkin pie on a sheet of paper and then glue them. Then photos of the collages can be sent to the American pen-pals.

The purpose of the next lesson is to teach pupils to write short letters (e-mails) congratulating their American friends. The pupils also ask the American children how they celebrate Thanksgiving Day, what they do, what they eat and what they say to each other. When the pupils receive their replies, they share that information during the lesson. Children exchange a lot of graphic files: photos showing families at the Thanksgiving table, baked turkey, and the parade on the main street of the city. Some participants send recipes of how to cook turkey and pumpkin pie.

At the last lessons on the topic pupils learn the poem *Thanksgiving Day*

*Thank you for the world so sweet
Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you for everything.*

Then they discuss what they learnt about the holiday. The teacher asks what was interesting to learn, what topic they wish to discuss with children from the USA next time.

This series of classes excited the children, they were happy to get letters, photos, to learn about a new culture, to get acquainted with foreign children of their age, they got confidence in their ability to use English in communicating with native speakers and felt proud of themselves, they showed the letters at home, they learnt English with joy.

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FIELD EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT TEACHING IN TRAINING PRE-SERVICE PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS

Olga Selivanovskaya

Abstract

This article will explore a variety of issues related to student teaching in training pre-service primary school English teachers. The general theme will be teaching practicum programs aimed at teaching English to primary schoolchildren. The article will dwell upon the issues of collaboration between primary school and universities. It will state the objectives and the contents of student teaching and field experience in training pre-service primary school English teachers at Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia. The article will give examples of various assignments such as a questionnaire for pupils, observation and self-evaluation tasks. It will also explore the issue of assessment.

1. Introduction

Field experience and student teaching are indispensable for training pre-service teachers. They are extremely valuable aspects of developing teaching skills. When pre-service teachers acquire basic knowledge of current language learning theories and methodologies, and even participate in microteaching or peer teaching or observe videotaped lessons, they still do not get quality training. No one would argue the significance of face-to-face contact between a prospective teacher and the pupils. As for pre-service teachers, student teaching can become one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences.

Both field experience and student teaching within the context of Herzen University programme allow students to observe to observe and participate in teaching primary school children. The students gain

professional insights into the professional responsibilities of the teacher, such as instruction, classroom management, pupils evaluation, planning and implementing lessons, following the curriculum guidelines, meeting the individual needs of children, etc. The main difference between field experience and student teaching is that the former is practicum related, while the latter is student teaching related.

Field experience provides short-term placements in primary schools where the students observe teaching and learning and involves short-term teaching under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher and a university lecturer. Student teaching is a long-term experience in which students teach full time under the supervision of both the university and school teachers, they are expected to become increasingly independent in their planning, classroom management, and teaching.

One of the most important issues of organizing field experience and student teaching is collaboration between schools and universities. In many countries universities have their own laboratory schools which prove to provide a professional and supportive environment for pre-service teachers. However, this experience is difficult to apply in Russia. It is assumed that teaching at an ordinary or a laboratory school helps a student to become aware of best teaching practice, as well as to become aware of the reality of day-to-day teaching and classroom management. Typically in Russia schools involved in field experience and student teaching and a certain Department of the University sign a contract according to which pupils finishing these schools will be given a preference if they want to go to the Department. There are other forms of cooperation between schools and the university such as professional development seminars for school teachers, mutual research in the field of innovative teaching technologies, etc.

School administration may have its own preferences. Some schools prefer to be involved in classroom observation and student teaching rather than in field experience. School principals and teachers admit that they are not ready to let a university student teach a class for a month as they are afraid that they will have to “re-teach” the same material once more. Other school administrations prefer being involved in field experience because they get an opportunity to choose prospective teachers for their schools among the university students.

The majority of principals and school teachers believe that collaboration between schools and the university is mutually beneficial as students always bring new concepts and ideas about teaching, they are enthusiastic and creative. Participating in student teaching motivates school teachers for further professional development. The most favorable situation is when the students visit the same school both for student teaching and field experience. On the one hand, the students feel more comfortable when they are familiar with the school, the teachers and the pupils. On the other hand, the teacher supervising the student is aware of his or her competence and abilities and can develop and improve them in a more effective way.

It is obvious that not every school teacher can become a successful mentor; therefore university supervisors cooperate with school teachers while holding opening and final sessions and continuously monitoring students' activities and achievements.

The students trained to be primary school teachers and English teachers at primary school have field experience during their fourth and fifth year of studies. The programmes include:

1. Practicum related field experience for the 4th year students, which lasts for 5 weeks and covers different subjects such as Russian, Literature, Math, Natural Science, Art, Music and English;
2. Student teaching experience for the 5th year students, which lasts for 6 weeks and is focused only on teaching English at primary school.

Each practicum has its own objectives, contents and assessment criteria.

2. Practicum related field experience for the 4th year students

The objectives for the 4th year students are focused on developing the following professional skills:

- analyzing the processes of teaching and learning English (with the help of a teacher);
- setting the goals and objectives of the lesson;

- choosing appropriate activities and techniques according to the goals and objectives;
- self-evaluating and improving one's own teaching.

The content of classroom observation and student teaching for the 4th year students include four stages.

2.1 The preliminary stage.

Preliminary stage serves for getting acquainted with the teacher and children, for studying the learning environment, the syllabus, the textbook and available recourses, planning the students' activities at school. The student starts his teaching journal with the information about the school and the pupils. A teaching journal is to reflect student' activity during classroom observation and student teaching. It does not have any strict rules of filling.

2.2 Classroom observation.

Classroom observation involves attending at least three lessons of English given by the schoolteacher or by other students and completing three written assignments in analyzing the English lessons. Classroom observation assignments are set in such a way as to highlight the main aspects of English lesson planning and to prevent possible students' problems.

For example, assignment # 1 is an analysis of the lesson structure. Before the lesson students discuss with the teacher goals and objectives of the lesson, then they attend the English lesson and take notes fixing the duration of each activity. After the lesson students comment on the lesson structure. This assignment prepares the students to cope with the problem of time and to structure their own lessons.

Assignment # 2 is an analysis of introducing and practicing new language. This assignment has two options: a student may focus on presenting and practicing new vocabulary or grammar. Students are to attend a lesson and write detailed answers to the given questions. These questions can also be used by the students as guidelines while planning their own lessons. For example, an analysis of introducing and practicing new vocabulary contains the following questions:

- a) How was the new vocabulary presented? What ways of introducing the meaning did the teacher use?
- b) How was oral practice organized? Was it effective? Why?
- c) Did the students practise in reading and writing new words? Was it effective? Why?
- d) How was speech production organized? Was it effective? Why?
- e) What mistakes did the students do during the speech production stage? Explain the origin of their mistakes.

Assignment # 3 is an analysis of communicative activities. This assignment has four options: a student may analyze communicative activities in listening, reading, monologue or dialogue. Students are to attend a lesson and write detailed answers to the given questions.

2.3 Student teaching.

A student is to give at least two English lessons. The first lesson is supposed to be a preparatory one. Lesson planning starts with its discussion with the in-service teacher who has a better knowledge of the lessons objectives and the children's needs and abilities. Then the student makes a draft plan of the lesson which is discussed with the teacher and the university supervisor. After that the final plan of the lesson is made by the student and the lesson takes place. The preparatory lesson is not graded. Even if the student has made sufficient preparation, the lesson may go wrong due to a great number of various reasons. It is not reasonable to discourage the student or hurt his or her feelings. The preparatory lesson is discussed by the student with the schoolteacher and the supervisor in order to improve the student teaching. After the preparatory lesson the student gives a credit lesson. The planning procedure is the same but this lesson is graded.

Final stage.

The final stage presents a feedback and evaluation session. It includes discussions at school and at the University. The students, in-service teachers and university supervisors share their opinions of the process and results of the student teaching. These discussions are very important for improving student teaching management. They provide

feedback for improving teaching practicum, its content and assessment. As a result of these discussions some of assignments are changed or replaced as they proved to be too complicated or not very effective.

The final assessment consists of two components: the teaching journal and classroom observation write-ups which count 50% of the mark awarded and credit lesson mark which counts 50% of the mark awarded.

The objectives for the 5th year students practicum are:

- to develop and enrich professional skills while teaching English to children of different age (from 6 to 10) and different levels of English;
- to enable the students experience the whole range of the English teacher's functions;
- to develop analytical and self-evaluation skills.

3. The student teaching programme for the 5th year students

The student teaching programme for the 5th year students includes four stages.

3.1 Preliminary stage.

At this stage students get acquainted with the teacher and children, study the learning conditions, the syllabus, the textbook and available resources, and plan their activity at school. They start their teaching journal with the information about the school and the pupils. As the students are trained to become primary school English teachers, they should understand similarities and differences in teaching English to children of different ages and levels of English. Therefore during field experience the students are supposed to choose two groups of children belonging to different grades, for example a group of first-graders and a group of third-graders.

3.2 Classroom observation.

The classroom observation starts from the first day and actually continues through all field experience. But during the first week the students attend lessons given by in-service teachers in the two selected groups. When student teaching starts, students continue their classroom observations but in two various classes. In Russian schools there usually are several grades of the same level (letters are used to name them, for example forms “1a”, “1b”, “1c”). So if a student teaches English to grade “1a” he or she should attend English lessons in grade “1b”. The corresponding grades usually have the same syllabi and use the same textbooks. Comparing their own teaching experience to that of an in-service teacher enables students to choose and apply the most effective teaching techniques.

3.3 Student teaching

During this stage the students are supposed to fulfill the whole scope of the English teacher’s functions. They teach not less than 20 English lessons and also organize some extra-curriculum activity in English. Thus the students may organize a children concert for parents and teachers, dramatize a play in English or make a poster, etc. The level of students’ autonomy is much higher than during the 4th year student teaching. One of the student’s lessons is a credit lesson, it is discussed by the student, the schoolteacher and the university supervisor and graded.

During this stage the students are to complete four written assignments, which are described below.

Assignment # 1 involves interviewing the children in Russian; the questionnaire for the interviews is aimed at studying the children’s motivation for learning English at primary school. The students analyze their answers choosing the most and the least popular opinions and giving their reasons for that. The students are also supposed to choose two pupils from the same form but with different progress in English. Comparing the pupils’ answers to the questionnaire students should trace how motivation can influence success in learning English. The interview is conducted in Russian, but it has been translated from Russian into English for this publication.

3.4 Questionnaire for children

1. Why do you study English?
 - a) Because it is one of the subjects at school;
 - b) Because I have good marks in other subjects and I want to have good marks in English too;
 - c) Because my parents want me to learn it;
 - d) Because English is useful in life (for traveling, etc.);
 - e) Because I want my profession to be connected with English;
 - f) Because it is interesting to know how a language works.
2. What do you like/dislike doing at English lessons?
3. What are you good/not very good at?
4. Compared with the time when you started learning English, has your attitude to it changed?
 - a) It's more interesting for me now;
 - b) It's as interesting as before;
 - c) It's less interesting than before;
 - d) It never was interesting for me.
5. Does anybody help you with your homework in English?
6. Would you like to study any other foreign languages?
7. What are your favorite subjects at school?

Assignment # 2 is aimed at reflective teaching and it consists of an analysis of teaching a textbook unit. Students choose a textbook unit (several lessons which they have studied with the pupils) and give written answers to the questions

1. What can the children do in English (listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing) after studying this unit?
2. What vocabulary or grammar was difficult for the children to learn and why?
3. What vocabulary or grammar would you add/extract from this unit?
4. What additional resources did you use?

Assignment # 3 has the students use authentic texts for teaching English. Students choose an authentic text (a nursery rhyme, a picture book, a fairy-tale, etc.), use it at the lesson and write self-evaluation in their journals.

Assignment # 4 is connected with using game activities for teaching English. The students choose a game (an action game, a seat game, a chalkboard game, a game with a song or a chant, etc.) and use it at the English lesson and write self-evaluation in their journals.

4. The Final stage presents a feedback and evaluation session. It includes discussions at school and at the University. Schoolteachers are asked to fill in the student's achievements map. This map is an instrument for assessment which shows the students progress during the field experience. It is rather difficult to enumerate all components of professional competence of a primary school English teacher. According to different sources it includes communicative, linguistic, cultural, social and methodological competences. We assume that the student's achievements map should reflect the level of student's professional competence in the way that is quite comprehensible both for the student and for the teacher. Here is an example of it.

Student's achievements map

No.	Student's professional skills and qualities	Mark
1	Setting goals and objectives for the lesson.	
2	Choosing activities according to the goals and objectives.	
3	Structuring the lesson.	
4	Giving the lesson according to the plan, changing it if necessary	
5	Teaching the pronunciation skills.	
6	Teaching the vocabulary skills.	
7	Teaching the grammar skills.	
8	Teaching the listening skills.	
9	Teaching the speaking skills.	
10	Teaching the reading skills.	
11	Teaching the writing skills.	
12	Using various technical and other aids.	
13	Classroom management.	
14	Speaking appropriate English.	
15	Following the school rules and regulations.	

At the University final practicum conference the students share their teaching experience, they participate in peer teaching demonstrating the most interesting and effective techniques. We also ask the students to make some projects illustrating their field experience (posters, video-taped lessons, etc.). Final assessment consists of four components: student's achievements map – 25%, teaching journal and self-evaluation write-ups – 25%, credit lesson mark – 25% and round-up table participation – 25% of the mark awarded.

The assignments and assessment instruments mentioned in this article have been developed for more than 10 years. Training pre-service teachers is an on-going process and tomorrow will bring some changes improving student teaching and field experience.

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