START TALKING!

A communicative material package for the upper secondary school oral English course

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Suullisen kielitaidon opetus etenkin lukiossa on saanut viime aikoina paljon huomiota osakseen. Tästä huolimatta suullinen kielitaito jää valitettavan usein muiden kielitaidon osa-alueiden varjoon, mikä saattaa osaltaan johtua siitä, että ylioppilaskokeessa sitä ei arvioida. Tällä hetkellä käytössä olevissa oppikirjoissa olevat suulliset harjoitukset eivät aina anna oppilaille mahdollisuutta harjoittaa vapaata suullista tuottamista, vaan vaativat tiettyjen kielimuotojen käyttöä ja keskittyvät esimerkiksi sanaston ja kieliopin harjoittelemiseen. Sellaisia tehtäviä, joissa oppilaiden käyttämä kieli muistuttaa oikeaa kielenkäyttötilannetta, ei ole läheskään tarpeeksi.

Tämän oppimateriaalin päätavoitteina on parantaa oppilaiden suullisen tuottamisen sujuvuutta, vahvistaa heidän itsevarmuuttaan viestiä vieraalla kielellä sekä tarjota mahdollisuuksia harjoitella vieraan kielen käyttöä erilaisissa tilanteissa ja aihepiireissä. Materiaalin tavoitteita lähdettiin toteuttamaan kommunikatiivisen kieltenopetuksen keinoilla. Kommunikatiivisen kieltenopetuksen lähtökohtana on oppilaiden kommunikatiivisen kompetenssin eli tietouden erilaisissa kielenkäyttötilanteissa sopivasta kielestä, kielimuodoista, ääntämistavoista, eleistä jne. kehittäminen. Kommunikatiivinen kieltenopetus on oppijakeskeinen ja tarvelähtöinen lähestymistapa, jossa painotetaan viestin sisältöä muodon sijaan.

Oppimateriaali on suunniteltu vuoden 2015 opetussuunnitelman mukaista lukion valinnaista englannin kurssia varten, mutta materiaalia on mahdollista hyödyntää muillakin englannin kursseilla. Oppimateriaali koostuu viidestä eri aihepiiristä, jotka kertaavat lukion pakollisilla kursseilla käsiteltyjä sisältöjä. Näkökulmat aiheisiin on valittu siten, että ne olisivat oppilaille mahdollisimman mielenkiintoisia ja heidän kielenkäyttötarpeitaan vastaavia.

Asiasanat – Keywords communicative language teaching, oral skills, material package

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1 INTRODUCTION

Rapidly advancing technology and globalization have allowed the English language to gain a respected status in the Finnish society. Through the internationalization of workplaces and popular culture, English has become an unavoidable part of life in Finland. In fact, as Leppänen et al. (2009:15) state, the increased usage of English in Finland is not caused by an increase in the number of native English-speakers living in Finland, but by the demands placed by the changing society. Furthermore, in their study Leppänen et al. (2009:138) found that Finns think that it will be more important to know English than Swedish in the future. It was considered especially important that politicians, government officials, scientists, young people and journalists can speak English (ibid.). In response to these changes, the Finnish school system and especially the teaching of English need to adapt in order to provide the students with the skills they will need in the increasingly international society. Special attention needs to be paid to the development of the speaking skill.

For decades now, the role of oral skills in language teaching in upper secondary school has been the source of some debate. A common argument has been that since the matriculation examination does not test the speaking skill, it is not practiced enough on the courses either. Instead, teachers, and in fact students themselves, focus on those aspects of language that are tested in the examination: grammar, vocabulary, and the abilities to understand written and spoken texts and to produce writing. In fact, the speaking skill is the only language skill that is not tested in the matriculation examination. Recently, there has been discussion about including an oral part in the matriculation examination, but unfortunately, this debate has continued from the 1980's onwards (Saleva 1997:11). So far, there has been very little progress. An optional oral course as well as a voluntary oral exam were introduced in 2009 (*Changes to the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2003* 2009), but since they are voluntary, I feel that they have not had a significant effect on the teaching of oral skills.

However, the recent changes to the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools have made an effort towards teaching that pays equal attention to all language skills. In the new curriculum, language skills are separated into three distinct 'abilities': the ability to interact, the ability to interpret texts, and the ability to produce texts. Text, in this context, is said to mean both written and oral language. (NCC 2015:113-114) In theory, this could mean that in the future, equal attention is paid to the teaching of spoken and written language. Whether this actually happens in practice or not remains to be seen. Coursebook designers are in a vital position, since more than 90% of teachers mainly use the textbook and additional material that comes with the book (Luukka et al. 2008:94-95). I fear that there will be very little change if the creators of teaching materials are not ready to make some major changes. Nonetheless, the new curriculum (2015:113) states that the teaching of foreign languages aims to strengthen students' willingness and ability to operate in culturally and linguistically varied environments and contexts. This is what the present material aims to do for oral skills.

Communicative language teaching methodology (CLT) forms the main pedagogical framework of the current material package. In essence, the approach sees language as context bound communication and emphasizes the role of the learner as an active participator in communication and as a cooperative negotiator (Harjanne 2009:122-123). The main reason for choosing this approach was precisely its focus on communication and the active role of the students in the classroom. The target group of the material package is upper secondary schools students taking the voluntary oral English course. The course is usually taken in the third year, which means that the students are mainly 18-year-olds. However, the activities can also be used on the mandatory English courses, since the themes that were chosen for the package are discussed on the mandatory courses as well.

The theoretical framework of this study consists of three chapters. Chapter 2 examines speaking as a skill: the characteristics of spoken language and the abilities needed in speech

are described and the implications they have for the teaching of oral skills are discussed. Chapter 3 presents the main pedagogical frame of the material package, communicative language teaching. The term is defined; its strengths and weaknesses are considered, and its practical implementation is explained by describing exercise types commonly used in the CLT classroom. Chapter 3 considers the effect of the National Core Curriculum on the teaching of oral skills. Chapter 4 takes a look at research done in Finland on the topic of oral skills and their teaching. Chapter 5 then introduces the aims of the material package. In addition, the chapter presents the motivation behind the present material, explains the target group and describes the content of the material. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the functionality of the present material. The actual material package can be found at the end of the thesis.

2 SPEAKING AS A SKILL

Oral skills are a vital part of successful communication in a foreign language. However, for most of its history, language learning has mainly focused on the teaching of written language (Nunan 1989:26). There are several reasons for this, and Bygate (2001:14-15) lists three. The first is the tradition of language teaching, which has been greatly influenced by grammar-translation approaches. The second reason is technological: only since the invention of reasonably affordable and practical tape-recorders in the 1960's has it been possible to study talk more extensively. Bygate calls the third reason 'exploitation', meaning that many language-teaching approaches have treated speaking not as a skill on its own, but as a medium for providing language input. Nonetheless, ever since the 1970's it has become more and more widely acknowledged than since spoken language differs greatly from written language, specific attention needs to be paid on the teaching of oral skills (Bygate 2002: 34-37). In this chapter, the characteristics of spoken language will be discussed. First, the nature and linguistic features of spoken language will be examined. Second, the abilities involved in the act of speaking will be explored. Third, the implications for the teaching of oral skills are discussed.

2.1 Characteristics of spoken language

2.1.1 Nature of spoken language

Speaking is often thought of as the oral equivalent of written language. However, as Bygate (1987:11) puts it, "speaking like a book is, in two words, disagreeable and difficult". This is mainly caused by the unique context in which speaking occurs when compared to the context of writing. Bygate (1987) calls the demands placed by the context of speaking **processing** and **reciprocity** conditions. The processing condition means that speech takes place under the pressure of time: words are being decided, spoken and then understood by the listener very rapidly. This affects the speaker's ability to plan and organize the message, which makes getting the message across much less straightforward and logical than in writing. Furthermore, once the words have been said, and unless they have been recorded, they are gone. The listener cannot 'rehear' the words the same way a reader can reread a passage, which can lead to misunderstandings or requests for repetition. (Bygate 1987:11) Because of the processing condition, it is practically impossible for spontaneous, unprepared speech to be as well organized as writing. Instead, as Nunan (1989:26-27) states, spoken language tends to consist of short, fragmentary utterances. Additionally, Luoma (2004:12) claims that while written language consists of sentences, spoken language tends to consist of idea units: short phrases and clauses connected with simple conjunctions like *and*, *or*, and *but*, or simply separated by short pauses. The obvious exception to these views of spoken language are speeches and other monologues that have been prepared in advance, as well as fixed institutional phrases that the speaker has little control over, such as phrases used in an official meeting. However, the ability to give an uninterrupted oral presentation is very different to the ability to interact with other speakers in actual communication situations.

The reciprocity condition refers to the relation between the speaker and the listener in a situation where both or all participants are allowed to speak. The listener can correct the speaker if necessary, or show agreement and understanding, while the speaker can adapt his or her speech according to the listener's reaction. For example, the speaker may have to use simpler language if the listener does not seem to understand the message. A writer, however, does not get any immediate feedback, and has to anticipate what the reader may or may not know or understand. (Bygate 1987:12) Furthermore, the reciprocity condition affects spoken language through social speaking contexts and the relationships between speakers. Different situations often require different language use. According to Luoma (2004:24-25), social aspects that influence speech include situation, participants, norms and genre. The relationship between speakers particularly affects the way politeness appears in the discussion: for example, speakers may try to seem interested by talking 'too much', or bend the truth in order not to hurt someone (Luoma 2004:26). All these aspects of spoken language affect the language forms that tend to appear in speech.

2.1.2 Features of spoken language

The fact that spoken language takes place in its unique context has some considerable effects on the language forms used while speaking. In order to combat the time limit of speaking and to create some planning time, speakers tend to use filler words or formulaic phrases, such as *As I was saying…*, *Well…* or *um* (Bygate 2001:17). Fixed conversational phrases, such as *I thought you'd never ask* and *All things considered, I'm doing all right*, can also be used for creating time, but they also serve another purpose. They often come automatically in relevant situations, and move the conversation forward while also creating planning time. (Luoma 2004:18). In addition to these words and phrases, Nunan (1989:26-27) states that speakers also tend to use non-specific references, such as 'thing', 'this' and 'it', instead of more specific descriptions. Luoma (2004:17) adds that this tendency makes speaking easier and quicker because the words refer to people, things or activities that are either familiar to the speakers

or can be seen, and therefore do not require a more detailed explanation. Finally, in a communication situation, spoken language also features negotiation language, which is used by the listener to seek clarification and by the speaker to indicate how the things that are being said are connected (Harmer 2001:269).

There are also some features in spoken language that are caused by the phonetic structure of spoken English and the nature of face-to-face interaction. These features are connected speech and non-verbal factors. Harmer (2001:169) explains that speakers of English have to be able not only to produce the individual phonemes of English, but also to be able to assimilate, omit, add or weaken sounds. For example, the phrase *I would have gone* is shortened to *I'd've gone* in connected speech. This is a more natural and effective way to get things said, and is a crucial aspect to fluency and not sounding like a book being read aloud. Non-verbal factors, however, strongly affect the conveying of meanings in spoken language. Harmer (1983:48) explains that for example by using intonation and stress, the speaker can indicate which parts of the speech are more or less important. Additionally, the speaker can vary speed and volume to affect the interpretation of the message. Non-verbal factors also include non-verbal communication, such as facial expression, gestures and other physical means of communicating. All these factors allow extra expression of emotion and intensity. (Harmer 2001:269)

Another major difference between writing and speaking is the need for accuracy. As stated above, spoken language usually consist of short, fragmented utterances and often includes a lot of repetition and hesitation. As Harmer (1983:48) puts it, a piece of writing with these traits would be judged as illiterate since these 'mistakes' are not acceptable in written language. In speech, however, they are unavoidable, and Harmer (ibid.) mentions that even native speakers make errors while talking. Furthermore, Bygate (1987:11) explains that syntactic errors often occur simply because speakers lose their place in the grammar, meaning

that they might forget how the sentence started and finish in a way that no longer fits into the original utterance. Because of this naturally occurring inaccuracy in speech, it seems unreasonable to demand complete accuracy from foreign language learners in a classroom setting. Nonetheless, as Brumfit (1984:51) illustrates, language produced by the learner for display purposes, i.e. to be evaluated by the teacher, needs to meet the syntactic, lexical or stylistic requirements set by the teacher. This creates a discrepancy between the language practiced in the classroom and the language used outside it.

2.2 Abilities needed in speech

Hughes (2010:208) summarizes the challenges of speaking in a foreign language with these words: "A second language user needs to acquire an array of cultural and pragmatic skills and knowledge alongside the basic building blocks of vocabulary and grammar, fluency, and pronunciation". In other words, there are many linguistic, metalinguistic and social abilities involved in the act of speaking and interacting. Nunan (1989:32) provides a useful summary of these skills:

- The ability to articulate phonological features
- Mastering stress, rhythm and intonation patterns
- Achieving an acceptable degree of fluency
- Transactional and interpersonal skills
- Skills in the management of interaction and negotiation of meaning
- Conversational listening skills
- Skills in knowing about and negotiating purposes for conversations
- Using appropriate conversational formulae and fillers

Bygate (1987) divides the skills involved in speaking into motor-perceptive skills and interactional skills. Motor-perceptive skills involve mastering the sounds and structures of a language, whereas interactional skills are the skills needed to successfully use the motor-

perceptive skills for communication. Motor-perceptive skills are traditionally developed in the language classroom by using oral drills and other non-communicative activities. However, interactional skills also need to be practiced, since motor-perceptive skills do not automatically transfer to interactional skills.

The abilities involved in the production of speech can also be put under the term 'communicative competence'. The term evolved from Chomsky's notions of 'competence' and 'performance' in the early 1970's and its coinage is generally attributed to Dell Hymes. The concept emphasizes the role of language users and the use of language for communication (Luoma 2004:97). Canale and Swain (1980:29-31) defined communicative competence in terms of three components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence naturally includes knowledge of lexical items and rules of syntax, semantics and phonology. Sociolinguistic competence, however, is crucial for interpreting utterances for social meaning. It is also needed to understand what language forms are appropriate for a certain context. For example, it would be inappropriate for a waiter in a fancy restaurant to use slang with the customers. Strategic competence is made up of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that are used to compensate for insufficient language skills. These strategies relate either to grammatical or sociolinguistic competence. As Savignon (1976:4) summarizes, a speaker with good communicative competence is able to interact effectively and spontaneously with other speakers. In her words, the "speaker knows not only _how_ to say something but _what_ to say and _when_ to say it."

However, since a language learner does not always know what to say and how to say it, strategic competence is often needed. This includes compensation and communication strategies. Compensation strategies help the speaker overcome difficulties related to the language itself. These strategies are also responsible for the semantic and lexical features that

make spoken language different from written language. They include adjustments, repetition, and the use of formulaic expressions, such as greetings or filler phrases that stay relatively unchanged. In addition, spoken language often features ellipsis (leaving out a word or a phrase with the assumption that the listener will understand what is meant), and parataxis (an instance where clauses are connected without conjunctions). (Bygate 1987:18-20)

Communication strategies, however, help the speaker with the interactional aspects of communication. In other words, these strategies facilitate successful communication. According to Bygate (1987:22-40), there are two kinds of skills involved here: the skill to use routines and negotiation skills. Luoma (2004:104) divides routines into two categories: information and interaction routines. Routines are conventional ways to present information, and as such, they help ensure clarity and enable planning. Information routines are used to describe places or people or to present facts: the principal types of information routines are narration, description, and instruction. Interaction routines, though, are based on sequences that commonly occur in interaction. These are, for example, service encounters, telephone conversations, interviews, and even lessons at school. Bygate (1987:22-40) states that negotiation skills consist of the skills needed in negotiation of meaning and management of interaction. Negotiation of meaning means the skill to communicate ideas clearly. This involves being as explicit as needed based on the listeners previous knowledge and understanding, as well as ensuring understanding and then clarifying if it is necessary. Management of interaction refers to the ways in which participants of a conversation take turns and choose topics. All these skills can only be acquired and practiced by drawing attention to them and actually communicating in the foreign language.

2.3 Implications for the teaching of oral skills

As can be seen in sections 2.1 and 2.2, spoken language differs from written language to some extent, and the abilities needed to process speech are very different to those needed to produce and understand written language. Therefore, I think that teachers and teaching materials should put more focus on oral skills and their development. Currently, as Bygate (2001:14-15) states, oral skills are often seen as vehicle for practicing a language feature, and consequently, oral activities often become repetitive drills. According to Johnson (2008: 255-256), drills have five common characteristics: repetitiveness, relative meaninglessness, tendency to focus on one small area of language, only slight resemblance to real life language use and control over language forms used. As is the case with almost any other skill, practice is essential in improving the speaking skill. All in all, it is rather tedious as well as extremely ineffective to practice spoken language using drills, since they have little resemblance to real life language use situations and thus do not function fully as speaking practice.

Instead of meaningless drills, teaching materials should include more of what Johnson (2001:266-270) calls 'real-thing practice': activities that allow more meaningful, free communication between students. Such activities are non-repetitive, meaningful, practice the whole speaking skill and not just a segment of it, resemble real language use situations and allow free speech production (Johnson 2001:267). Real-thing practice allows students to develop their strategic competence (see section 2.2), and provides more meaningful contact with the target language. In addition, through communication that is as close to real language use situations as possible, students learn to cope with the unavoidable insecurity that comes with an oral communication situation. This insecurity is caused by the demands placed by the context of speaking, in other words the processing and reciprocity conditions. Having to produce speech under the pressure of time can be very difficult and even overwhelming without practice. Insecurity is also caused by the students' insufficient language skills: it is almost impossible to avoid ending up in situations where one does not know how to say

something or what an object is called in the target language. In order to successfully cope in these situations, strategic competence is needed. The ability to be able to deal with this kind of insecurity only comes through sufficient communication practice. Therefore, there needs to be a communicative aspect to the teaching of speaking.

In addition to providing opportunities to develop strategic competence in a communication situation, teaching materials should also draw specific attention to different communication strategies and different speaking contexts. Existing materials tend to draw more attention to pronunciation than any other separate aspect of speaking, and while pronunciation is an important part of oral communication, there are several other skills that need to be taken into account as well. For example, teaching materials should draw more attention to communication strategies, such as different routines (see section 2.2). Routines can be practiced in the classroom by first inspecting the common features of a type of narration or an interaction sequence by using an example or the students' own experiences of the situation, and then acting the said situation out. This is also a way to practice using socially and contextually appropriate language, and to bring attention to the fact that speaking conventions differ between languages. For example, in Finnish it is alright to wait silently for your turn to speak, whereas in English the listener usually reacts to what is being said while the speaker is still talking. An opportunity to teach these aspects of spoken language is provided by the communicative language teaching approach.

3 TEACHING SPEAKING COMMUNICATIVELY

As stated in the previous chapter, there are several linguistic, metalinguistic and social aspects that are crucial to successfully communicating in a foreign language and should be taken into consideration in the teaching of oral skills. The communicative language teaching approach is a good way to teach these aspects of language. In this chapter, I will talk about

communicative language teaching (shortened to CLT). The issues addressed in this section are the background from which the approach emerged, its main pedagogical views, and the division to strong and weak forms of CLT. Additionally, the advantages and disadvantages of CLT for the foreign language classroom will be discussed. Furthermore, I will look at different types of exercises commonly used in CLT, and discuss the effects of the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary schools (the NCC) on the communicativeness of language teaching in Finland.

3.1 Communicative language teaching

3.1.1 Definition of CLT

Communicative language teaching derives from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research (Savignon 2002:4). It was preceded by the grammar-translation method and audiolingualism, which both saw language as a formal system of rules and structures that needed to be mastered, and language learning as the incalculation of habits (Bingham and Skehan 2002:208). By the early 1970's, these views started to become increasingly criticized since it was thought that they failed to prepare the language learner for actual spontaneous and contextualized language use (Bingham and Skehan 2002:209). In Europe, the language learning needs of an increasing group of immigrants led the Council of Europe to develop a syllabus based on notional-functional concepts of language use. The syllabus was derived from neo-Firthian systemic or functional linguistics, in which language is viewed as ''meaning potential,'' and the ''context of situation'' is viewed as central to understanding language systems and how they work. The term "communicative" was attached to programs following this notional-functional syllabus. (Savignon 2002:1-2) At the same time in North America, several researchers (see for example Allen, Howard and Ullman 1984; Geddes and Sturtridge 1979; Blundell 1983) were designing engaging activities for the new, communicative methodology (Bingham and

Skehan 2002:213) These developments demonstrated the limitations of the conventional approaches to language teaching and provided alternatives. In time, communicative language teaching methodology emerged.

The main aim in CLT is to develop the language learner's communicative competence (Savignon 2002:1, for the definition of communicative competence see section 2.2). What distinguishes CLT from the conventional approaches is its view of language. In essence, CLT views language as context-bound communication (Harjanne 2009:122). Whereas grammar-translation and audiolingualism saw language as a set of rules to be learned, CLT pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining them into a more fully communicative view (Littlewood 1981:1). Nunan (1989:12) supports Littlewood's view by saying that the approach does not see language as a set of rules, and pays more attention to knowing how to use the rules effectively and appropriately in communication. Harmer (2001:84) even claims that the term CLT includes a complete re-examination of what aspects of language should be taught and how languages should be taught in general. Furthermore, Harmer (2001:86) suggests that CLT has now become a general term that describes teaching which aims to improve the students' ability to communicate, both orally and in written form. In fact, it needs to be clarified that CLT does not focus exclusively on oral communication: the principles apply equally to reading and writing activities that involve readers and writers in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning (Savignon 2002:22). However, as the focus of this thesis is on oral communication, applying CLT methods to the teaching of other skills will not be discussed.

By its definition, CLT puts focus on the learner, since language learning is seen as an interactive, cooperative, experimental process (Harjanne 2009:122). According to Savignon (2002:6), it is essential for learners to be engaged in doing things with language—that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes in all phases of learning. In addition, Harjanne

(2009:123) states that the learner is an active participator in communication and as a cooperative negotiator, whereas the teacher's role is to act as a facilitator, instructor, organizer and provider of feedback. Furthermore, if CLT is followed to the letter, learners' communicative needs should provide a framework for the course syllabus (Savignon 2002:4), and as such, be the starting point of the whole learning process.

Bingham and Skehan (2002) and Harjanne (2009) both mention the so-called "weak" and "strong" versions of CLT. The versions differ in their views of how second languages are learned. The weak version sees spontaneous communication as an end rather than a means, meaning that language items are first taught separately and then used in communicative activities. The strong version assumes that communicative competence is acquired through language use, and requires the tasks to pay attention to grammatical and lexical aspects of the language at different times. However, as Bingham and Skehan (2002:216) note, students who are being taught through the strong form of CLT often fail to acquire sufficient levels of accuracy to match their rapidly advancing fluency. Harjanne, on the other hand, seems to prefer the strong version, and suggests that it could be a good way to bring more oral competence training into the foreign language classroom in Finland (2009:125-126). Personally, I do not think that one version is better than the other: they both have their advantages and disadvantages. The weak version might be easier for teachers to put into practice and more familiar to students, while the strong version could prove to be the more authentically communicative option. It is also possible that different learners might benefit more from one or the other, which would make it sensible to use both forms. Therefore, I do not find it necessary to choose one over the other.

3.1.2 Advantages and challenges of CLT

CLT has some considerable advantages for the foreign language classroom especially when compared with some of the traditional language teaching methods, such as audiolingualism and grammar-translation. As stated above, the main aim of CLT is to improve the students' communicative competence - in other words to teach them the skills needed to communicate successfully with others. Furthermore, as Harjanne (2009:124) states, communicative activities emphasize pragmatic language use and focus on the communicative goal and the connection with real-life language use. Because of these goals, I would claim that CLT prepares students for actual language use situations better than the traditional approaches. Additionally, CLT's holistic view of language and the notion that language use should be practiced not only by training the *part-skills* but the *total skill* as well corresponds more with the demands of real life language use situations than, for example, the fragmented grammar-translation method view (Littlewood 1981:17).

A major advantage of CLT is that it affects the students' motivation in many ways. Firstly, the connection to real life language use situations helps bridge the gap between language use in the classroom and the students' actual communicative needs. This is emphasized by the fact that in the planning of a CLT-oriented syllabus, the basis should be the students' needs (Harjanne 2009:123). Secondly, motivation can be improved by the types of tasks used in the CLT classroom: after all, the main objective in communicative activities is to take part in communication with others (Littlewood 1981:17). Richards (2006:22) adds that meaningful communication is a product of students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging. In addition, CLT's slight inclination towards the use of authentic materials[1] can help students to relate their learning to the outside world, consequently

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[1] Even though CLT activities aim to mimic real language use, classroom materials themselves do not need to be authentic or be derived from authentic texts, as long as the learning processes they facilitate are authentic. In any case, textbooks and other teaching materials have now taken on a much more "authentic" look: for example,

increasing motivation (Olagboyega 2012:20). The types of activities commonly used in the CLT classroom will be discussed further in the next section. Thirdly, CLT aims to give the learners some room for creativity in their language use inside the classroom (Bingham and Skehan 2002:208). This applies to the form of the language produced, which should not be excessively controlled by the material or the teacher (Harmer 2001:85), as well as the content: students are allowed to express their own thoughts and ideas (Harjanne 2009:124-125). Especially being able to talk about their own ideas and experiences can be very motivating for students.

Another advantage of CLT is that it can help create a context that supports learning in the classroom by changing the traditional roles of the student and the teacher and by giving students opportunities to develop personal relationships between their peers (Littlewood 1981:18). As stated in the previous section, the student's role in the classroom is active, and while the teacher is still an important component, his or her role is much less dominant than before (Littlewood 1981:19). The teacher is more a counsellor/colleague or "co-communicator" than a distant, omniscient figure, making him or her more approachable for students. This, in turn, allows better classroom rapport (Olagboyega 2012:20), and overall makes the atmosphere in the classroom more relaxed.

The challenges of CLT have been studied in many different educational contexts. For example, Ansarey (2012) studied the attitudes and perceptions of primary and secondary level teachers in Bangladesh, while Chang (2011) examined factors affecting the implementation of CLT in Taiwanese college English classes. In addition, Koosha and Yakhabi (2013) discussed the problems associated with the use of CLT in EFL contexts in general. Based on these three studies, the challenges of CLT can be roughly divided into three categories: challenges related to the teacher, the students and the educational system. Firstly,

reading passages are often designed to look like magazine articles to create the feel of reading a newspaper. (Richards 2006: 20-21)

the teacher's insufficient language skills can be a problem, since CLT lessons can be unpredictable and the teacher needs to be ready to deal with unexpected issues on a second's notice (Koosha and Yakhabi 2013:70-71). A non-native English teacher may also have limited knowledge of the strategic as well as sociolinguistic aspects of the language (Ansarey 2012:70). Furthermore, as both Chang (2011:8) and Ansarey (2012:71) discovered, teachers often felt that teacher training did not prepare them for using CLT. Secondly, the students' low proficiency in English can cause difficulties in the classroom, as CLT demands quite a lot from the students. This was mentioned in all three of the studies. Students can also be somewhat reluctant to take part in the communicative activities, if they are used to a more teacher-centered method of language teaching (Ansarey 2012:73). Additionally, Koosha and Yakhabi (2013:66-67) claim that students may have low motivation to communicate in the foreign language in a setting where the language is not a part of their everyday lives. Thirdly, the educational systems in which CLT is used can affect the teaching. The most common complaint was that testing in many countries is completely grammar-based, and CLT does not prepare the students for the tests (Ansarey 2012:74; Chang 2011:9). In addition, CLT itself lacks assessment procedures as it is quite difficult to measure a student's oral skills and communicative competence (Koosha and Yakhabi 2013:67-68).

However, I believe that the difficulties created by these challenges can be lessened to some extent by slowly introducing communicative activities into the classroom instead of suddenly changing from a traditional language teaching method to CLT. The gradual implementation of CLT methods gives both the teacher and the students time to adjust to a new type of teaching. Furthermore, in a context like Finland, where teaching in general has already become less traditional than before, CLT may not be as big of a shock as in countries like Bangladesh and Taiwan, where the teaching is primarily very teacher-centered. I also believe that teacher and student proficiency is not such a problem in Finland, and neither is motivation especially in the case of English since it has become a part of everyday life for many through globalization and popular culture. Finally, there is the challenge with education systems, which may not be as easy to solve as the other problems. It seems that

unless the testing and evaluation systems are changed, CLT cannot be the primary language teaching method. Nevertheless, implementing some CLT-inspired methods should be possible even without any radical changes to education systems.

3.2 Exercise types commonly used in CLT

Generally speaking, exercises in a foreign language classroom tend to consist of different stages. According to Littlewood (1981:85), in CLT the stages of introducing and practicing a new language items are divided into pre-communicative and communicative exercises. Pre-communicative activities include the majority of exercises found in traditional textbooks, such as different types of drills and mechanical question-and-answer –tasks. For example, crossword puzzles, translation and simple fill-in-the-gaps exercises based on a text previously read by the students can function as pre-communicative exercises. A communicative exercise following these types of activities could be, for example, a discussion using the new words introduced in the text. As Harmer (1983:45) puts it, the role of pre-communicative activities is to introduce a new language item and to practice using it. In the actual communicative exercise, the learner has to activate the knowledge acquired in the pre-communicative part in order to successfully use it in communication (Littlewood 1981:86).[2] The activities following pre-communicative activities can be placed at the communicative end of the communication continuum (see Table 1, presented by Harmer 2001:85).

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[2] A communicative activity does not necessarily have to be preceded by a pre-communicative activity. For example, if the aim of a teaching material is to focus on enhancing oral skills, pre-communicative activities may be very scarce.

Table 1. The communication continuum (Harmer 2001:85)

Non-communicative activities   **Communicative activities**

• no communicative desire • no communicative purpose • form not content • one language item only • teacher intervention • materials control	• a desire to communicate • a communicative purpose • content not form • variety of language • no teacher intervention • no materials control

At one end of the continuum are non-communicative activities, where pre-communicative exercises and other traditional language practise activities often fall. These exercises generally do not have a communicative purpose and they often focus on form or a single grammatical structure. At the other end are communicative activities, where there is a desire to communicate something and the language used is more versatile and not controlled by materials. Johnson's (2001) idea of drills vs real-thing practice (explained in section 2.3) bears some resemblance to Harmer's communication continuum. Drills would be placed at the non-communicative and, and real-thing practice at the communicative end.

Of course, not all activities occur at either extreme of the continuum, hence the use of the word *continuum* (Harmer 2001:85), and it is possible to enhance the communicative purpose of a task by using the so-called "gap-activities": the information-, reasoning- and opinion-gap activities (Nunan 1989:66). In an information-gap activity, one participant has knowledge that the others do not have. A typical and widely used example is an exercise where students have incomplete maps that are missing different components, and they have to locate the missing places by asking questions and giving directions. A reasoning-gap activity involves deriving some new information from the given information through deduction or reasoning. For example, students have to decide the quickest way to travel somewhere by examining bus and train schedules. An opinion-gap activity requires the students to identify and articulate a

personal preference or an attitude in a given situation. This may involve discussing a social issue; or simply deciding which three items to take to a deserted island and why. These types of activities help create a purpose for the communication as well an actual desire to use the language.

It is obvious that in order to communicate the students have to be working with each other, which is why the majority of activities in a CLT classroom involve pair or group work. As Lynch (1996:110-111) states, working in groups maximises each learner's opportunity to speak. In addition, he mentions that students are more likely to use a wider range of language and give fuller answers than in whole-class work with a teacher. Brumfit (1984:77) adds that the group work setting is more natural, since the group resembles a normal conversational grouping, and that the psychological burden of 'public' speaking is therefore reduced. There are, however, some challenges accompanied with group work. One is getting all the learners to participate: Brumfit (1984:75), for example, notes that students are frequently working on their own in a group activity. Lynch (1996:115-116) suggests the use of 'required information exchange tasks', where each student has a piece of information that is needed in order to complete the task. The teacher can also try to encourage everyone to participate by keeping track of the interaction and by asking questions. Another problem is that the teacher's intention of raising communicative problems might lead to frustration and competition between the students instead. Therefore, it is important to create a co-operative atmosphere in the classroom (Lynch 1996:111-113). Finally, there is the problem of forming the groups. Lynch (1996:115) suggests that a higher-level learner may not want to work with a weaker partner, despite the fact that there are some benefits for both the stronger and the weaker speaker. It is also worth noting that personal relationships between the students may affect how well the groups work. These problems are easier to deal with when the teacher knows his or her students well, and when there are no big conflicts between the students.

There are several ways to categorize the exercise types used in CLT (see for example Clark 1987 and Pattison 1987). These listings can differ quite radically depending on whether the categorization is based on the requirements of real-life language use situations or on a pedagogical framework. Harmer (1983:113-132) lists and illustrates the following seven activity types commonly used to promote oral communication:

1. *Reaching a consensus*: Students have to agree with each other on a certain topic, for example on how to act when faced with a moral dilemma. These activities are very successful in promoting free and spontaneous language use.

2. *Relaying instructions*: A group of students has the necessary information to perform a task, such as making a certain kind of model from Legos, building bricks etc. The group then has to instruct another group to complete the task without showing them the instructions.

3. *Communication games*: These activities are based on the principle of the information gap. Students are put into 'game-like' situations, such as having to find similarities in two slightly different pictures.

4. *Problem solving*: This activity type is similar to 'consensus' activities. The difference is that here the students need to find an actual solution to a problem presented in the activity.

5. *Interpersonal exchange*: The stimulus for conversation comes from the students themselves. For example, the students need to find out each other's favorite movies. The amount of language produced in such tasks is usually quite high.

6. *Story construction*: Students are given partial information and then asked to construct a story in a small group from the different situations. This technique should produce a great deal of discussion and interaction.

7. *Simulation and roleplay*: These activities aim to create the pretense of a real-life language use situation in the classroom. Students can be asked to imagine that they are, for example, buying a bus ticket at a bus station or working as a travel agent.

This list provides a good overview of the types of activities commonly used in CLT classrooms, but it is not by any means exhaustive. Furthermore, as stated above, lists compiled by other researchers can be very different in how they categorize the activities. Pattison (1987, in Nunan 1989:68), for example, has some similar activity types as Harmer (1983), but presents learning communication strategies as its own type, and combines items 1 and 4 in Harmers list into one category. In other words, there is not a clear consensus on how oral communication activities should be categorized, but instead, researchers are free to choose their own view of how the categorizations should be made. Harmer's list was chosen as an example of such categorizations since I felt that the list provided the most comprehensive overview of the common exercise types. Furthermore, almost all the items on his list described the types of activities I was planning to include in the material package, which is ultimately why I chose to include Harmer's list over the other possible versions.

3.3 Influence of the NCC on the teaching of oral skills

Language teachers in Finland are generally quite free to choose the methods they want to use in their classrooms, as long as the teaching follows the guidelines set by the Board of Education. In the case of upper secondary school education, the guidelines are presented in the *National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools* (NCC for short). The NCC specifies the goals and contents for each course and each subject, as well as target proficiency levels that vary according to how long a student has been studying a certain language. The scale that is used to describe the target levels is adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference, and the different target levels range from A1.1 (beginner level) to C1.2 (NCC 2003) or C1.1 (NCC 2015). For most students, English is an A-level language, meaning that they have started studying it as their first foreign language, and in this case the target skill level at the end of upper secondary school is B2.1 (NCC 2015:114). At this level, students should be able to communicate freely even in some new situations, to articulate their own

opinions, to negotiate meanings and to express themselves in a way that is suitable for the communication context (NCC 2015:268). These goals apply both to written and oral language.

The NCC is revised and updated regularly. The curriculum that is currently in use is the 2003 version, but a new curriculum will be introduced in August 2016. This will somewhat change the goals and aims of foreign language teaching in general, and also bring some changes to English teaching in particular. I will now look at some of the changes focusing on the aspects that affect the teaching of oral skills.

The current curriculum emphasizes the communicative aspect of language, stating that a student should be able to communicate in a way that is natural to the target language and its culture. Students should also be allowed to practice using all language skills for different purposes on every course. (NCC 2003:100-101) In the new curriculum, the emphasis is put on interaction. Among the general goals for foreign language teaching, specific attention is paid to encouraging students to use their language skills creatively both in the classroom and in their spare time. Students should also be able to consider their future language needs from the point of view of further education, working life and the continuing globalization. (NCC 2015:113-114) These goals from both the new and old curriculum work quite well with the CLT approach and the aims of the current material package, since they focus on the ability to actually use a foreign language instead of mastering required lexical or grammatical items.

The categorization of different language skills has undergone a major change in the new curriculum. In the old curriculum, language skills were separated in the traditional way into reading, writing, listening and speaking, and target proficiency levels were given separately for all four skills (NCC 2003:100). In the new curriculum, however, language skills are separated into three distinct 'abilities': the ability to interact, the ability to interpret texts, and the ability to produce texts. Text, in this context, means both written and oral language. (NCC

2015:113-114) In other words, these three abilities include using several aspects of language simultaneously to achieve the goal of written or oral communication. In my opinion, the new division represents the actual language use situation better than the previously used traditional view. After all, the four skills rarely occur in complete isolation outside the foreign language classroom: for example, a speaking situation almost always involves listening as well, and is often preceded by reading something like instructions, a timetable or a menu.

According to both the new and the old curriculum, students studying English as an A-level language should achieve level B2.1 in all the skills (NCC 2003:100) and all the abilities (NCC 2015:114). If this were in fact the case, students would be able to handle spoken language as well as written language, but this balance is often not achieved in practice. This issue will be discussed further in the next chapter.

4 RESEARCH ON THE TEACHING OF ORAL SKILLS IN FINLAND

The teaching of oral skills has been a popular topic in research focusing on foreign language education in Finland. This seems to be caused by the perceived imbalance in the teaching of different language skills. In practice, according to Leppänen et al (2009:82), Finns are most confident in their abilities to understand written and spoken English, and less confident when it comes to actually producing the language. Finns also often feel that their language skills are inadequate especially in situations where they would have to speak with a native English speaker (Leppänen et al 2009:86). In the case of upper secondary school education, the imbalance between teaching different language skills is most likely caused by the washback effect of the current matriculation examination, which does not test the speaking skill. According to Yli-Renko (1991:25), this was indeed the case at the beginning of the 1990's. She also states that the Board of Education was preparing some changes to the curriculum to

increase the amount of oral practice in upper secondary school by possibly adding an oral exam to the matriculation examination.

According to Saleva (1997:11), a similar debate was going on in the 1980s and even earlier, but this change has so far not been made. In order to address the possibility of having an oral part in the matriculation examination, Saleva (1997) devised an oral proficiency test that could easily be done in a language laboratory. The test was piloted with 60 students in two upper secondary schools that had participated in an experiment on the teaching and testing of the speaking skill (Saleva 1997:106). According to Saleva (ibid.), the schools were chosen because "the teaching of the speaking skill in an ordinary Finnish upper secondary school has so far been a rather neglected area. If the students of such schools had been tested for the speaking skill, both the tester and the testees would have been left with a sense of frustration." In addition to testing the possible exam, Saleva conducted a survey concerning the students' attitudes towards speaking English and testing speaking. 90% of the students who had taken part in the exam had a positive view of testing spoken language (Saleva 1997:139). The biggest change was made in 2009, when a voluntary oral course was added to the 2003 NCC (*Changes to the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2003* 2009:3). However, the matriculation examination still seems to have a negative effect on the teaching of oral skills (Vaarala 2013:108).

The attitudes of both students and teachers towards the teaching and practicing of oral skills have been studied quite extensively. In the early 1990's, Yli-Renko (1991) examined the attitudes of upper secondary school students in their final year towards the level of language teaching they had received. More specifically, she wanted to know if the students achieved good language skills during upper secondary school. Specific attention was paid to the development of oral skills, and the students' opinions on including an oral part in the matriculation examination were also discussed. Out of the 431 respondents, 72% agreed that the upper secondary school language teaching offers good textual language skills, but only

42% agreed that it offers the students good oral language skills. A few years later, Mäkelä (2005) studied oral exercises in upper secondary school. He analyzed the exercises in one coursebook set, conducted a questionnaire for 233 teachers and 375 students, and followed some English lessons. Mäkelä (2005) found that there are actually a lot of oral exercises in school books, and that students value speaking and listening skills highly.

However, Yli-Renko (1991: 53), Saleva (1997:11), as well as Mäkelä (2005:109-116) all came to the same conclusion: students want to have more oral skills practice in teaching. In addition, Huuskonen and Kähkönen (2006:79) studied teachers' views on practising, testing and assessing oral skills in Finnish upper secondary schools. They sent out 150 questionnaires to the English teachers in the county of western Finland and 50 questionnaires to the county of Oulu. 60 of the questionnaires sent to the county of western Finland were returned, as well as 21 questionnaires from the county of Oulu (Huuskonen and Kähkönen 2006:70). 95.1 % of the respondents agreed that the teaching oral skills is important in upper secondary school. Nonetheless, 60.8 % thought that teaching written skills is more important than teaching oral skills, and a third of the teachers reported that the students' oral skills do not have an effect on the course grade. (Huuskonen and Kähkönen 2006:77). Furthermore, according to Mäkelä (2005:109-116), students have a positive view of oral practise and want more fluency practise, as well as more meaningful contact with the target language. However, as Vaarala (2013:108) found out in her master's thesis, teachers seemed to think that oral skills were sufficiently present in the upper secondary school curriculum and, therefore, well present in the courses as well.

Despite wanting more oral practice, students still seem to be somewhat afraid to speak in class. Korpela (2010) conducted a study which aimed to describe, analyse and interpret why students feel apprehensive in EFL classes as well as what they consider the most anxiety-arousing oral production tasks and activities in classes and why. The data was gathered in two parts: in part one, 129 first-year upper secondary school students answered a

questionnaire, and in part two, eleven theme interviews were conducted (Korpela 2010:46-47). In the results of the study, Korpela (2010:63-92) listed 16 reasons for communication apprehension. These reasons included perceived low proficiency, concerns over errors, evaluation and the impression made on other students, the size and familiarity of the audience, as well as external and internal demands on the oral performance. Kostiainen (2015:56) adds that students are generally more willing to communicate when the conversation and topic are real, meaningful and interesting and the speaking is free. The willingness to communicate is also increased when students do not need to focus on grammar and the correctness of language, can choose their speaking partners, and the atmosphere or situation is relaxed.

The current teaching materials have also been under scrutiny lately, and not without reason. Textbooks that provide all the content for a language course have a considerable status, and teachers tend to rely on them very heavily. As Luukka et al. (2008:94-95) found out, more than 90% of teachers often use the textbook and additional material that comes with the book, and rarely bring in any materials that students would use outside the classroom. Therefore, the books themselves have a strong influence on how language and oral skills are taught. Hietala (2013) examined the oral exercises of two coursebook series for A-level upper secondary school English teaching. She calculated the number of oral exercises in each series, and categorized the exercises based on their focus. According to her, some activities seemed oral at first, but on a closer look were discovered to focus on other matters. In addition, the majority of exercises focused on formulating accurate utterances. In other words, while the coursebooks do have discussions, role-plays and problem-solving activities, there is usually very little about communication strategies and other aspects of communication that are vital in successful communication. (Hietala 2013:108) I came to a similar conclusion in my bachelor's thesis, where I examined the restrictiveness of oral exercises in two upper secondary school coursebooks. Activities marked as 'oral exercises' often do not, in fact, allow students to produce speech freely, but instead demand the use of certain language forms

(Kallio 2013:17). In my opinion, this indicates that there is indeed a need for more oral practice that focuses on communication, fluency, free speech production and meaning instead of form.

5 AIMS OF THE MATERIAL PACKAGE

The theoretical cornerstones of the current material package were presented in chapters 2 and 3, and chapter 4 started to look at the reasons for making the package. In this chapter, these reasons will be explored in more detail, and the precise aims of the material package will be explained. Finally, the target group and the contents of the package will be described.

5.1 Motivation and aims

Currently, the teaching of oral skills in Finnish upper secondary schools has a generally more prominent status than it has had in the past. Since the traditional language teaching methods that focus on grammar and vocabulary and are almost exclusively teacher-led are no longer as predominant as they have been before, foreign language classrooms are becoming more and more interactive and teaching materials have started to feature a wider array of oral exercises. The new National Core Curriculum also acknowledges the communicational aspect of language, puts more focus on language as a full set of skills, and sets the learning goals as things the students should be able to do with the language, instead of demanding the mastering of isolated, fragmented language forms. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement. As it was discussed in chapter 4, students want more meaningful oral practice, and teachers still tend to put more focus on writing skills.

Existing teaching materials also often focus on accuracy instead of fluency, even though not even native speakers are completely accurate when speaking, as both Harmer (1983:48) and Bygate (1987:11) mention. Oral exercises in the existing textbooks tend to demand a single complete and accurate utterance instead of actual, spontaneous spoken language. In other words, the current materials do not provide enough opportunities for free speech production, which would allow students to practice producing language that is grammatically and lexically at a level suitable for each individual learner. Spoken language is currently seen as a vehicle for practicing grammar or vocabulary, and not as something that should be practiced for its own sake. Because of this, pre-communicative activities that introduce new language items tend to be valued more highly than the actual communicative activities, by both students and teachers.

In addition, current teaching materials seem to pay very little attention to the features that make speech different from writing, and to the strategies that speakers can rely on and need to be aware of when speaking (these features and strategies were explored in chapter 2). The 2015 NCC pays more attention to these issues: in fact, the course description for course 2 specifically mentions interaction skills and strategies, as well as negotiation of meaning (NCC 2015:116-117). However, materials that follow the new curriculum are still very scarce and incomplete even though they will already be needed in 2016. At the moment, there are two coursebook series that both have only the first two or three books published: SanomaPro's *On Track* and Otava's *Insights*. Even though the publishers will undoubtedly provide new materials for the renewed oral course, I feel that a different kind of material could prove to be a valuable addition to the traditional coursebooks. Moreover, after examining some of the existing materials used on the upper secondary school oral English course, I noticed that they are very text-based and contain an alarming number of traditional drills for material that is used on an oral course. In other words, there was little difference between the books used on mandatory courses and the books meant for the oral course. I therefore feel that there is certainly a need for a new kind of material.

This is the gap that the current material package is designed to fill. More precisely, the aims of the material package are:

- **To provide material that allows students to produce speech freely**: The focus in this material is not on using certain language forms, but on successful communication and fluency practice instead.

- **To encourage autonomous interaction between students**: After the students are given an assignment, they need to take responsibility for carrying on the task or conversation and work together as a group or in pairs. The teacher is, of course, there to help them, but overall the students should be able to work relatively independently. This also develops their group-working skills.

- **To enhance the students' fluency and to boost their confidence**: Speaking in a foreign language can be intimidating at first, but with enough practice students will start to become more confident in their speaking skills. In addition, speaking practice enhances fluency, which in turn helps the students become more confident.

- **To allow students to express their own thoughts and ideas by providing engaging and relatable activities**: Many of the activities in the material package rely on students' own experiences and opinions. Furthermore, the topics were chosen with a typical upper secondary school student's interests and life experiences in mind.

- **To increase the students' knowledge of communication skills**: The material includes activities that draw attention to some communication strategies, such as compensating for a forgotten word, listening skills and socially and contextually appropriate language use.

- **To work as a complete material package for the upper secondary school oral course**: The topics covered in the material were chosen according to the course description for the oral course in the new curriculum. Even though the package has been designed as a complete course, the activities can also be used separately on other English courses.

5.2 Target group

The target group for this material package is upper secondary school students, more precisely students in their third and usually final year taking the optional oral course. This particular target group was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, third year students studying English as an A-level language can be expected to have relatively good language skills already. It seems reasonable to expect them to be able complete more complex oral exercises and use English on a more abstract level than for example first year upper secondary school students. Therefore, the topics discussed in the material package do not have to be limited to simple everyday situations: the topics can be more complex and the exercises more demanding and varied. Secondly, the fact that the course is optional can possibly mean that the students taking it are more motivated than students on mandatory courses. I would suggest that students deciding to take an optional oral course like the subject to some extent. This is extremely important, since the majority of the exercises in the package require students to share personal opinions and take part actively in the conversations, and as Johnson (2008:128) mentions, "attitudes toward the language course could compensate for dislike of a particular learning task". In addition, it could be an important factor that the students know that the course focuses on oral communication and are not surprised by the amount of it when the course starts.

The third and final reason for choosing this target group stems from the existence of an oral English course in the upper secondary school system. It seemed natural to choose this already existing course for the context of this material package. Of course, it could have been possible to choose another course and develop the material on that basis, but I felt that suddenly introducing a different kind of teaching method on a mandatory course would confuse the students who are expecting a traditional English course, and consequently affect their

motivation negatively. Moreover, most of the goals of the existing course worked quite well with the goals that had already been established for the material package. The new curriculum states the goals for the oral course as following:

> "On this course, skills to produce oral language, to understand spoken language and to build dialogue are deepened. Fluency is enhanced and the ability to produce planned speech is rehearsed. Topics covered on the subject's mandatory courses are revised and they are supplemented according to students' needs." (NCC 2015:118)

In essence, most of the aims this material package already fit perfectly under the goals of deepening the skills to produce and understand spoken language and enhancing fluency. The topics covered in the material were then chosen on the basis of that course description in order to make the package function fully as course material for the oral course.

5.3 Contents of the material package

The material package covers 16 90-minute lessons, in other words one upper secondary school course. The activities are designed for a group of approximately 20 students, but it is easy to adjust for a slightly smaller or larger group by changing the number of students working in each group in group activities. However, if the group is either very small (10 or so students) or very large (30+ students), the material may not work so well: in a smaller group there may not be enough opinions and ideas to complete the activities, and in a larger group there may not be enough time for everyone to share their thoughts. The package contains five different topics, or 'units', chosen from the topics of mandatory English courses. The units are called "About you", "News", "Jobs", "Culture" and "Society". Each unit takes up three lessons, and while the focus varies from lesson to lesson, all the lessons under one unit follow a certain theme. While the topics were chosen from the course description, the angle on those topics is from the perspective of students. This was done by choosing themes that should have a relevance to students' personal interests in order to make the activities more interesting and engaging. In addition, some themes were chosen on the basis of the students'

probable future language use needs: even if students have not yet encountered situations related to some of the topics, they probably will in the future. Each lesson contains a whole lesson plan, including possible homework and handouts for the students. No extra material is needed for the course. Even though the material has been designed as a whole course, it is also possible to use the exercises separately on other courses. This is especially easy since the topics covered in the material package come directly from the mandatory English courses.

The last lesson of the course is reserved for self-evaluation and feedback or, alternatively, an oral exam. However, I strongly think that this course should be evaluated on a pass/fail scale. One of the main aims of this material package is to enhance the students' fluency, and whether or not that has happened is almost impossible to evaluate by anyone other than the students themselves. In fact, I feel that having numeric assessment and an exam at the end of the course would affect the whole atmosphere of the course negatively: on a course focusing on fluency, the students should not have to feel the pressure of being evaluated and corrected every time they open their mouths. With pass/fail evaluation, the students can focus on communicating without the fear of making mistakes. To get a passing grade, a student has to attend 80% of the lessons, participate in the classroom activities, and do 80% of the homework. The teacher can use the students' self-evaluations as support when deciding the grades. Nonetheless, if numeric assessment is required, I recommend using the exam bank created by the Ministry of Education. Every upper secondary school should have access to it. The bank contains exercises, guides for evaluation and instructions on how to organize the exam.

Since the focus of this course is on oral communication, it is inevitable that the vast majority of the exercises include pair and group work. This has some considerable advantages, some of which were mentioned earlier. As Lynch (1996:110-111) states, working in groups maximizes each learner's opportunity to speak, and students are more likely to use a wider

range of language and give fuller answers. Brumfit (1984:77) adds that working in groups is more natural than the whole-class work with a teacher, since the group resembles a normal conversational grouping, and the nervousness typically associated with this type of 'public' speaking is reduced. However, since it is good to practice all kinds of speaking, including speaking in front of the whole class, some of the activities include discussing a topic with the whole class or performing a short 'play' for the rest of the class. In order to create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, the teacher should at first allow students to work in groups and pairs of their own choosing, since working with familiar people may help combat initial shyness and apprehension for communicating in a foreign language. Furthermore, the material package is heavily influenced by the communicative language teaching approach, and CLT itself can help create a positive learning context by changing the traditional roles of the student and the teacher and by giving students opportunities to develop personal relationships between their peers (Littlewood 1981:18). After a few lessons, it is advisable to start changing the formation of the groups to make sure the students get to practice working with all kinds of people.

As mentioned above, the activities in the material package are influenced by the communicative language teaching approach. According to CLT, it is essential for learners to be engaged in doing things with language and use language for a variety of purposes (Savignon 2002:6). This is exactly what my material aims to achieve: on every lesson, students have to use their language skills to achieve different goals, such as conveying a personal opinion, constructing a story or planning and negotiating with others. In addition, communicative activities emphasize pragmatic language use and focus on the connection with real-life language use (Harjanne 2009:124). When designing the present material, I tried to choose themes and situations from real life that students may have already encountered or will most likely encounter in the future. These themes include, for example, visiting a restaurant, going to a job interview and expressing their own opinions on several different topics. Using authentic materials can also help students to relate their learning to the outside

world, and as Olagboyega (2012:20) mentions, CLT already has an inclination towards authenticity. This is why the material includes some examples of authentic material, such as videos and a short extract from a novel. The videos were specifically chosen to include American, Australian and British accents, and to further increase the diversity of language input, the novel is written by an Irish author and is set in Ireland. In addition, students are sometimes asked to find their own authentic material for the next lesson, like job ads and news articles.

It is also important in CLT to give the learners room for creativity in their language use in the classroom (Bingham and Skehan 2002:208): the form of the language produced should not be excessively controlled by the material or the teacher (Harmer 2001:85). In fact, none of the activities in the present material package limit the language forms produced by the students. The only exceptions are activities where students are asked to pay attention to using language appropriate for the context, such as being polite when visiting a restaurant or speaking more formally in a news broadcast. However, the purpose of the situations presented in the examples is not to be restricting per se, but to practice appropriate language use and to pay attention to the fact that language is used slightly differently in different contexts. The content of the produced language should also allow creativity, and students should be allowed to express their own thoughts and ideas (Harjanne 2009:124-125). In this material, students are encouraged to express their own thoughts, and many activities in fact rely entirely on the exchange of ideas between students. Moreover, students also get to practice creative language use in the sense of using their imagination: the activities include story construction and making short 'plays'.

Special attention has been paid to some communication strategies, more specifically to information and interaction routines (Bygate 1987; Luoma 2004). In the present material, information routines are practiced by narrating, describing and presenting information, and

interaction routines are practiced through simulations of typical language use situations, such as the aforementioned restaurant visit and the job interview. In addition, the material pays attention to contextually appropriate language use, which enhances the students' sociolinguistic competence (Canale and Swain 1980:29-31). As mentioned above, there are some activities where students are asked to pay attention to using appropriate language forms and expressions. Along with the examples mentioned before, the material pays attention to the greeting customs of the English language, such as the formalities of different greetings and the tendency to use a person's name when greeting and saying goodbye to him or her. After learning this on the first lesson, students are encouraged to use this knowledge for the duration of the course. Furthermore, the material allows students to practice explaining words, which is an important compensating method for situations where a speaker has forgotten a word.

5.4 Activity types

There are several different types of activities present in the material package. The most common exercise type is the free discussion, where students are asked to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences on a subject. This activity is based on notion of the opinion-gap activity proposed by Nunan (1989:66). On the list of activity types commonly used to promote oral communication presented by Harmer (1983:113-132, see section 3.2), the free discussion activity type of the present material falls under category 5, the interpersonal exchange activity. These activities can be found on almost every lesson. Free discussion resembles a real-life communication situation better than most other exercise types: the participants are sharing their own thoughts; they have to take the other speakers into consideration, and practice the conventions of turn-taking. However, free discussion can create some challenges, since it does not ensure the participation of all group members. It is therefore important that the teacher encourages the students themselves to make sure everyone is involved and to ask each other's opinions. Furthermore, the material contains an exercise where students are

asked to think about ways to get everyone to participate, and to implement these tactics for the whole duration of the course. Another challenge of the free discussion is that students may experience anxiety about having to share their personal ideas and opinions. Role-playing activities (number 7 on Harmer's list of activity types) allow the students to hide behind a role and not worry about their persona being exposed to other students. In addition, role-play gives a chance to "act" in different contexts and thus, to learn more about the different functions of language. Especially the possibility to simulate various language use situations is the reason for choosing several role-play activities for the material package. For example, role-play is used on lessons 2,3,8, and 13.

In addition to free discussion and role-play, the present material features many other activity types. One of the more common ones is the reaching a consensus activity: students have to agree with each other on a certain topic, for example on how to act when faced with a moral dilemma (Harmer 1983:113-132). In addition to allowing free and spontaneous language production, reaching a consensus activities are good for enhancing the students' negotiation skills. Examples of this activity types are the work place problems on lesson 9, the art-related questions on lesson 12, and the dilemmas of lesson 14. Some of the activities may overlap with the problem solving activity type (ibid.). The fourth common type of activity in the present material package is the story construction, where students are given some information and then asked to construct a story from the different situations (ibid.). According to Harmer, this technique should produce a great deal of discussion and interaction (1989:113-132). In the present material, examples of this activity type can be found on lessons 5 (making up a news story) and 10 (coming up with a story of a certain genre).

Finally, the material contains exercises that are not easily categorizable. Many of these are exercises meant for introducing the topic and activating students' previous knowledge on the subject. For example, the majority of activities involving videos fulfill this purpose.

Furthermore, many of the activities labelled 'Group activity' in the material do not completely fall under any of the categories presented by Harmer (1989:113-132). These activities often involve planning something with the group and then presenting the product to the rest of the class. This activity type is especially valuable since it allows versatile language use: students have to make a plan, negotiate with each other, share responsibility and finally present their products. Students have a clear communicative purpose, which according to Harmer (2001:85) is an essential part of activities that are based on the communicative language teaching approach. For example, on lesson 15 the students are asked to plan a day of activities for a group of teenage refugees with a certain theme and a budget. The plans are then shared and the students choose the one they like the best. The material also includes a number of miscellaneous exercises that fulfill several different functions. Nonetheless, the focus in all the exercises is on creating speaking opportunities.

All in all, one of the main ideas behind the activities in the present material package is that the exercises should fall near the communicative end of the communication continuum presented by Harmer (2001:85, see section 3.2), and be real-thing practice instead of drills (Johnson 2008:266-270, see section 2.3). Harmer states that in such exercises, there is a desire to communicate as well as a purpose for the communication. In addition, the focus of the exercise is on content and not form, a variety of language is used and language use is not controlled by the teacher or the materials. Therefore, in order to achieve the goals of the material package, it was essential for the activities to be truly communicative.

6 DISCUSSION

The main aim of the present thesis was to create a material package that would enhance students' fluency by providing opportunities to produce speech freely without focusing on practicing certain language forms. As was discussed in chapter 5, current materials tend to

focus on accuracy instead of fluency and pay little attention to communication strategies. Current textbooks meant for the upper secondary school oral course are also still very traditional and text-oriented. Furthermore, according to research discussed in chapter 4, students have wanted and still want more oral practice (Yli-Renko 1991; Saleva 1997; Mäkelä 2005). In addition, quite often in the current teaching materials, activities meant for oral practice seem to do that at first, but on a closer look are discovered to focus on other matters instead (Hietala 2013; Kallio 2013). This is the gap that the present material set out to fill.

The process of creating the present material started from setting the general goal for the material. The starting goal was simply to enhance students' fluency. The final, specific goals formed through the process of writing the theoretical framework. Communicative language teaching methodology was already familiar to me, and since the ideas behind the approach worked well with the existing goal of providing fluency practice, CLT was chosen as the main theoretical framework. Needless to say, there are several different teaching approaches that could have been chosen instead of CLT, task-based teaching for instance. However, for a course focusing on oral communication, and for my specific goals, I decided that CLT would be more suitable: as Johnson (2008:174) mentions, the approach emerged from a situation where students are *structurally competent* but *communicatively incompetent*, which I feel is often the problem in Finland. Even so, there are some similarities to task-based teaching in the present material. In addition, I felt that it was necessary to discuss the nature of spoken language, and hence the second chapter was added. In order to avoid a gap between the theoretical background and the actual material, the final goals of the course were affected by the background, and vice versa. Keeping the goals of the material firmly in mind made it easier to create a material that would not seem like a separate entity from the rest of the thesis. The links between the present material and the theoretical background were explained in detail in chapter 5.

In addition to the theoretical background, several other things had to be taken into consideration when designing the material, most notably the target group. The activities had to be designed so that learners belonging to the target group would find them interesting and be able to complete them. Therefore, the target group guided the designing process to a considerable extent. After the material had been designed, the final layout of the material had to be constructed. Especially important was that the final material would be clear, consistent, and visually pleasing. Clearness was ensured by putting lesson plans for the teacher on a green background, and pages meant for the students on a blue background. Consistent use of different font sizes, bolding and underlining further improve the clearness of the material. To make the material more visually pleasing, pictures had to be added. This raised some questions about copyright, so possible issues were avoided by using pictures from free-to-use databases. In addition, the sources for all photos were included. Copyright laws had to be taken into consideration when designing some of the activities as well.

In my opinion, the current material has some considerable advantages. First, the structure of the course has been carefully considered to create a natural transition from simple, everyday topics to more complex and abstract themes. In addition, there is a similar trend in the separate units: each unit starts from the so-called 'surface', and moves on to slightly more difficult activities and themes. This should help the students get started with a topic, and completing more difficult activities should be easier after the initial introduction. The second advantage is the variation in the topics and activities. The lessons do not always follow a certain pattern: sometimes the lesson consists of several shorter activities, and sometimes there are only two longer activities in the whole lesson. Even though some exercise types appear often, the variation should make the lessons more interesting, and from the different topics all students should find something interesting to them. Third, I think that the activities in the material are simple in the sense that they do not require time-consuming preparation from the teacher or lots of material resources. There are only few handouts that need to be printed, and otherwise only a handful of lessons require some sheets of paper for the students

to write on. When technology is needed, students can use their own smartphones or tablets. Nowadays, almost everyone has at least a smartphone, and many upper secondary school students even have their own tablets. Only if the students do not have adequate equipment, the school's computer lab or tablets are needed.

However, the current material does present some challenges as well. The main challenge is that many activities in the material rely heavily on students' knowledge and experiences, as well as their motivation to share and be involved in the classroom activities. It can be very challenging to use the material with a group that is reluctant to participate or that simply lacks the life experience needed in some of the activities. In fact, this challenge was considered in the designing process. The motivation issue was addressed by choosing the existing oral course as the context for the material package. This was discussed in more detail in chapter 5.2. The possibility of students not having experiences of some topics, for example the themes discussed in the Job unit, was considered when designing the activities. It should not be a problem if some students have not had any work experience, since the focus is mostly on theoretical situations that they probably will face in the future, such as job interviews.

Another challenge of the current material package is that it has not been tested in practice. I would have liked to test some of the activities, but unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to do so. Therefore, the evaluation of the functionality of the material is mainly speculation. However, the estimates of the functionality are based on my own experiences as a teacher and a student of English, as well as the feedback I have gotten about the material during the writing process. The best way to properly evaluate the functionality of the material would be to actually use it as course material, which I am certainly going to do if an opportunity arises.

In conclusion, new teaching materials that aim to enhance fluency are needed. Materials for teaching oral communication should especially focus on allowing students to practice producing speech freely in situations that are as close to real-life language use as possible. This is the only way to practice communicating successfully in a foreign language in a classroom setting and to provide students with the tools and the confidence that they need in an actual communication situation. The main motivation behind the present material package was to answer to this need, which I think it has managed to do.

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APPENDIX: MATERIAL PACKAGE

Start talking!

A communicative material package for the upper secondary

school oral English course

Table of Contents

Dear teacher!

In essence, the main goal of this course is to enhance the students' fluency and to boost their confidence when they're faced with a foreign language communication situation. This is done by providing opportunities for the students to practice using English in different situations and to allow them to produce speech freely. In addition, during the course students should learn to notice language learning opportunities in their everyday life. The material also aims to increase students' knowledge of communication strategies, which should also help them cope in different situations. The focus in this material is not on using certain language forms, but on successful communication and fluency practice instead. Motivation to communicate on the course is strengthened by providing engaging and relatable activities that allow students to express their own thoughts and ideas. Finally, the material aims to improve students' group working skills: after the students are given an assignment, they need to take responsibility for carrying on the task or conversation and work together as a group or in pairs. The teacher is, of course, there to help them, but overall the students should be able to work more or less independently.

This material package has been designed for the optional oral English course in upper secondary school. The material covers 16 90-minute lessons, in other words one upper secondary school course. However, it is possible and in fact very easy to take out activities to use on mandatory courses as well. The activities are designed for a group of approximately 20 students, but are easily adjusted for a slightly smaller or larger group by changing the number of students working in each group in group activities. However, if the group is either very small (10 or so students) or very large (30+ students), the material may not work so well: in a smaller group there may not be enough opinions and ideas to complete the activities, and in a larger group there may not be enough time for everyone to share their thoughts.

The package contains five different topics, or 'units'. The units are called "About you", "News", "Jobs", "Culture" and "Society". Each unit takes up three lessons, and while the focus varies from lesson to lesson, all the lessons under one unit follow a certain theme. While the topics were chosen according to the course description for course 8, the angle on those topics is from the perspective of students to make the activities interesting and engaging. This was done by choosing themes that should have a relevance to students' personal interests. In addition, some themes were chosen on the basis of the students' probable future language use needs: even if students have not yet encountered situations related to some of the topics, they probably will in the future. Each lesson contains a whole lesson plan for the teacher on a green background. Materials meant for the students are on a blue background, and handouts needed on some lessons are placed at the end of each lesson. No extra material is needed for the course.

The last lesson of the course is reserved for self-evaluation and feedback or, alternatively, an oral exam. However, I strongly recommend that this course should be evaluated on a pass/fail scale. The main aim of this material is to enhance the students' fluency, and whether or not that has happened is almost impossible to evaluate by anyone other than the students themselves. In fact, I feel that having numeric assessment and an exam at the end of the course would affect the whole atmosphere of the course negatively. On a course focusing on fluency, the students should not have to worry about being evaluated and corrected every time they open their mouths. With pass/fail evaluation, the students can focus on communicating without the fear of being criticized for making mistakes. To get a passing grade, a student has to attend 80% of the lessons, participate actively in the classroom activities, and do 80% of the homework. You can use the students' self-evaluations as support when deciding the grades. Nonetheless, if numeric assessment is required, I recommend using the exam bank created by the Ministry of Education. A link to the bank is provided in the lesson plan for the last lesson.

As the focus of this course is on oral communication, almost all the activities require working in pairs or groups. At the beginning of the course it might be a good idea to let the students choose who they work with. This can help create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and combat initial apprehension for using a foreign language. However, as the course progresses, I recommend changing the formation of the groups to make sure students get to practice working with different people.

Many of the activities require you to 'wrap up' a discussion with the whole class. The purpose of this is to share ideas that different groups and pairs had, and to create a wider view of the whole group's thoughts and attitudes. Sometimes, the lesson plan includes a few suggestions that you can use; if it doesn't, simply pick some of the questions the students were discussing that you find interesting, and use those. It might also be a good idea to get the conversation started by sharing your own thoughts. In addition, since the focus of this course is on communication, try to be involved with the students while they're discussing a topic or completing a task. Walk around the room, ask questions and offer help if it looks like a group or a pair is stuck on something!

I hope you enjoy using this material!

Sanni

Course outline

	Lesson	Topic
UNIT 1: **About you**	1	Greetings.
	2	Where do YOU use English?
	3	Studying abroad
UNIT 2: **News**	4	World Wide News
	5	Working as a reporter
	6	Making the news
UNIT 3: **Jobs**	7	What's your dream job?
	8	Job hunting
	9	At work
UNIT 4: **Culture**	10	Culture 101
	11	The greatest stories
	12	Let's talk art
UNIT 5: **Society**	13	Save the environment
	14	Making a difference
	15	Help!
	16	Exam week (possible oral examination)

32 lessons in total, divided into 16 double lessons (2x45 minutes)

Unit 1: About you

Lesson 1: Greetings.

Theme: Getting started, dealing with nervousness

Requirements: None

Introduction to the course (10 min)

Introduce the goals of the course (explained in "Dear teacher" and in chapter 5 of the thesis), as well as evaluation criteria, the general schedule and topics covered.

Saying hello (15 min)

Students get up and walk around the room, greeting each other and introducing themselves. With each new person, they should try to come up with a new way to say hello. The teacher should join in.

<u>Example</u>: *Hi, I'm Anna. Good morning, my name is Anna. What's up, I'm Anna.*

Afterwards, compile all the greetings the students used on the blackboard (or something similar): the "Formal" greetings on one side and the "Informal" ones on the other. Greetings that are neither can go in the middle. The students should decide the formality of the greeting, but the teacher can help.

Group chat: Nervousness (15+20 min)

Students discuss the questions written on blue background.

After that they make a list of seven things that could help deal with nervousness. Each group presents their list to the rest of the class.

Group activity: 1 Minute Babble (20 min)

3 or 4 people, each group should have the same number of students. The students choose a topic they think they can talk about non-stop: the main thing is to keep talking no matter what. The first hesitation or break ends the speech. The students are given one minute to prepare. Then each student talks as long as they can while the others take time. On the second round, students try to beat their previous times. When the students are done, ask them these questions:

Was it difficult? How long did the students manage to speak?

Saying goodbye (10 min)

Same as Saying hello, instead with ways to say goodbye and without giving names. If the students already remember each other's names, they should use them.

Example: *Bye, John! See you tomorrow, John! Laters, John!*

For the duration of the course, encourage students to greet each other using the greetings when coming to class and leaving the class.

Homework

Pay attention to English in your environment and make a list of places where English is used.

Lesson 1: Greetings.

Lesson 2: Where do YOU use English?

Theme: English in everyday life, being polite

Requirements: Handout 1: Menu (for ¾ of the class), Handout 2: TV Guide (1 per pair)

Homework (10 min)

Ask students to compare lists with a partner. Did they find anything surprising?

Group chat: Where do you use English? (15 min)

Students discuss the questions. When they seem to be done, make a list of contexts the students now use English in on a blackboard. On the other side, collect a list of predictions for future use.

Role play: At a restaurant (15+20 min)

First, give the students a few minutes to think about visiting a restaurant with the help of the questions. With the whole class, go through the phases of eating in a restaurant (coming in, ordering, paying etc.). Make sure to remind the students about saying please and thank you.

Then introduce the context of the role-play and give out the menus (Handout 1: Menu).

Pair activity: Choosing what to watch (15 min)

Give Handout 2: TV Guide to the students. Give them a minute to go through it and to decide what they would like to watch. Then explain the activity. When the students are done, ask them how they came to an agreement.

Homework for next lesson

For one hour, ask the students to try to use nothing but English. They can do this at home, with friends, or if they're feeling particularly adventurous, in public.

Lesson 2: Where do YOU use English?

Group chat: Where do you use English?

- Do you use English outside the classroom? Where? When? With who?

- Why do you use it? Or, why don't you use it?

- Do you think you'll be using English in the future? Why/why not?

- Where do you think you'll be using English in the future?

ClipArt

At a restaurant

Think about visiting a restaurant. What do you do first? How do you behave? What does the waiter say, what do the customers say?

Role-play: Visiting a restaurant

Act out an entire visit to a restaurant. One student is the waiter, and three or four others are customers. The customers are a group of exchange students, discussing their favorite past times. Start by choosing what to eat and drink. The waiter then comes to take the orders. While waiting for the food, the customers keep chatting. The waiter brings the plates, they eat, pay and leave. Remember to be polite!

Rehearse once, then perform for the rest of the class!

ClipArt

Pair activity: Choosing what to watch

You and your roommate only have one TV and you are trying to decide what to watch tonight. Do not agree right away, fight for your favorite show! Prepare to tell the group how you came to an agreement.

Restaurant Italian Garden

Menu

Salads

Green salad
Greek salad
Caesar salad
Prosciutto and melon

Pasta

Pasta Bolognese
Pasta Carbonara
Lasagna
Cheese-filled cannelloni
Meat-filled ravioli

Pizza

Margherita
Quattro Stagioni
Americana
Pepperoni
Frutti di Mare

Drinks

Water
Coca-Cola, Fanta, Sprite
Orange juice
House wine (red or white)

Handout 2: TV Guide

TV Guide UK Jan 19 2016 (http://tvguideuk.telegraph.co.uk/)

	7.00pm		8.00pm		9.00pm	
BBC One	The One Show	EastEnders	Sign Zone: Holby City		Silent Witness	
BBC Two	Celebrity Antiques Road Trip		Victorian Bakers		Barely Legal Grafters	
ITV1 (London)	Emmerdale		Trawlermen Tales		Saved	
Channel 4	Channel 4 News		Tricks of the Restaurant Trade	Travel Man: 48 Hours in Copenhagen	The Jihadis Next Door	
Channel Five	The Dog Rescuers with Alan Davies		Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun		Celebrity Big Brother: The Eviction	
BBC Three	Top Gear		Don't Tell the Bride		Adam Pearson: Freak Show	
BBC Four	World News Today	Sorry!	Alex Higgins: The People's Champion		The Queen's Castle	
ITV2	You've Been Framed! Gold	You've Been Framed! Gold	Two and a Half Men	Two and a Half Men	Mom	Mom
ITV2 (Plus 1)	Take Me Out	The Hot	You've Been Framed! Gold	You've Been Framed! Gold	Two and a Half Men	Two and a Half Men
ITV3	Murder, She Wrote		Midsomer Murders			
ITV4	Pawn Stars	Pawn Stars	The Chase: Celebrity Special		River Monsters	
Channel 4 (Plus 1)	The Simpsons	Hollyoaks	Channel 4 News		Tricks of the Restaurant Trade	Travel Man: 48 Hours in Copenhagen
E4	Hollyoaks	2 Broke Girls	The Big Bang Theory	The Big Bang Theory	Tattoo Fixers	
E4 (Plus 1)	The Big Bang Theory	The Big Bang Theory	Hollyoaks	2 Broke Girls	The Big Bang Theory	The Big Bang Theory
More4	A Place in the Sun: Home or Away		Grand Designs		Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb	
Film4	FILM: Run Fat Boy Run (2007)				FILM: The Hunger Games (2012)	
Fiver	Benefit Brits by the Sea		Baby Faced Brides		Botched Up Bodies: Brides	
Five USA	NCIS		NCIS		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit	
Dave	American Pickers		Storage Hunters UK	Storage Hunters UK	QI XL	
Dave ja vu	Ice Road Truckers		American Pickers		Storage Hunters UK	Storage Hunters UK
Sky3	Monkey Business	Monkey Thieves	Stargate Universe		A Haunting	
Yesterday	Coast		Monarchy by David Starkey		Secrets of the Stonehenge Skeletons	
Quest	Salvage Hunters		Outback Truckers		Mighty Ships	
4Music	Triple Whammy!	11 Vids Were Loving Right Now	American Idol 2016			Party

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Lesson 3: Studying abroad

Theme: Student exchange, studying

Requirements: Handout 3: Alias (1 per pair)

Homework (15 min)

In pairs, ask students to talk about their experience using the questions. Wrap up with the whole class (what did they do, how was it, did anything funny happen?)

Group chat: Wanna go abroad? (5+15+15min)

Before starting the actual discussion, think about ways to get everyone in the group to participate (asking opinions, taking turns etc.). Give the groups a few minutes to think, and then gather their ideas. Encourage the students to use these tricks in every conversation from now on.

When the students have gone through the question, tell them to make a list of the pros and cons of going abroad. When they're finished, one group reads aloud their pros: others add if they have anything. Another group tells their cons, others add.

Role play: Help! (10+15 min)

First, tell the student to make a list of words they need while talking about your school and the Finnish school system. Put two pairs together and ask them to compare lists and to add any words that they were missing.

Then move on to the actual role-play.

Pair-activity: Alias (10 min)

This is a version of the traditional word-explaining game with words related to studying and school.

Homework: Introduction to World Wide News (5 min)

For the next three lessons, students have to find a piece of news (in English!) they find interesting and prepare to explain and discuss them in small groups. Here are some examples of news sites the students could use:

- http://www.bbc.com/news

- http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/

- http://www.theguardian.com/

- http://www.usatoday.com/

- http://edition.cnn.com/

- http://www.theaustralian.com.au/

Show the students a few news sites and shortly explain how to navigate them (where to find the latest news, different sections, the search function).

Lesson 3: Studying abroad

Homework

You had to try and use nothing but English for one hour. How did it go?

What did you do?   Was it difficult?   How did the other people react?

ClipArt

Group chat: Wanna go abroad?

- Have you thought about going abroad to study? Why? Or have you been already?

- Where would you like to go and why? If you don't want to go, why is that?

- Do you know anyone who's done a student exchange?

- Have you met any exchange students in Finland?

The pros and cons of going abroad

Make a list of the pros and cons of going on a student exchange abroad.

Pros	Cons

Role-play: Help!

What kinds of words do you need while talking about your school and the Finnish school system? Make a list with your partner.

There is a new exchange student coming to your class, and the principle has asked you to tutor him/her. The exchange student has a lot of questions about the school. One student plays the foreigner, the other is the tutor. Topics to consider: timetable, subjects, teachers, lunch, where to find the school nurse/guidance counselor/janitor etc. When you're done, switch roles.

Handout 3: School alias

upper secondary school	absence	biology	bullying	calculator	course
curriculum	principal	distance learning	to fail	foreign languages	lunch
PE	grade	guidance counsellor	history	lesson	pass
matriculation examination	curriculum	school year	self-assessment	student association	timetable

Unit 2: News

Lesson 4: World Wide News

Theme: Introduction to the unit, being a critical reader

Requirements: The students need access to the internet. If you know that many have their own tablets, ask the students to bring them, or you can book a computer class or the school's laptops or tablets.

Group discussion: Introduction to the topic (15 min)

Ask students to discuss the question. Wrap the discussion up with the whole class.

Homework: Discussing the news (15+10 min)

Form groups of 4 or 5. Each student presents their article (the main idea) and the others try to come up with questions about it. For example, they can ask the presenter to clarify something or explain an unfamiliar word. Follow-up questions are also encouraged.

When all the articles have been presented, the group chooses the most interesting one to present to the rest of the class.

Pair work: Where to find trustworthy news? (10+20+20 min)

First, students consider the trustworthiness of a few familiar Finnish newspapers. Give them a few minutes and go through their answers.

Second, students do the same for some English-language news sites. For this they need access to the internet.

Third, discuss the answers with the class and make a list of things you need to consider when deciding whether to trust a news source or not. Generally speaking, at least The Onion should not be trusted since it is a satire site. In addition, Fox News is notorious for exaggerating and taking things out of context, so some caution should be used there as well.

Homework: Same as last time

Lesson 4: World Wide news

<u>Group discussion: Warm-up</u>

- How often do you watch/read the news?

- Where do you find them?

- Have you read the news in English (or in any other language) before?

- Do you think that it's important to follow the news?

ClipArt

<u>Pair work: Where to find trustworthy news?</u>

Which of these Finnish newspapers do you think are good sources of information and which are not?

Helsingin Sanomat   **Iltalehti**   **Hufvudstadsbladet**   **your local newspaper**

Do some research on these American news sites and decide if they're trustworthy or not. Look at the websites, google the names, whatever you can think of. Give reasons for your decisions!

- Fox News (http://www.foxnews.com/)

- The New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com/)

- The Onion (http://www.theonion.com/)

- USA Today (http://www.usatoday.com/)

https://www.flickr.com/photos/myephemerality/16490157436/

Lesson 5: Working as a reporter

Theme: Storytelling in the news

Requirements: Handout 4: Story words (one per group), cut into pieces.

Group activity: Homework (15+10 min)

The students discuss their news articles like last time.

Pair work: Interviewing the president (10+15+5 min)

Students imagine that the president is coming to visit their home town, and will be giving an interview to the local newspaper. Give the students a few minutes to think about things the president could do and places he/she could visit. Share the ideas with the whole class.

When the first part is done, students take the roles of a reporter and the president. Remind the reporters to start the interview by introducing themselves and to end the interview appropriately. When they're done, they should switch roles.

Finally, ask a few pairs to act out their interview for the rest of the class.

Group activity: Making up a news story (30 min)

Handout 4 has words and phrases that the students have to use to construct a news story. Start the activity by choosing a theme for the whole class, such as sports, an accident, a burglary, politics and so on. Each student picks a word randomly and continues the story. Share the stories with the whole class and repeat with a different theme.

Lesson 5: Working as a reporter

Pair work: Interviewing the president

The president is coming to visit your town and will be giving an interview to the local newspaper. Take a few minutes to think about things the president could do and see in your town.

One student is a reporter, asking the president questions about the visit. Start the interview by introducing yourself and end it appropriately. When you're done, switch roles.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembassy_montevideo/4540561757/

Group activity: Making up a news story

The teacher gives you a bunch of words. Take turns picking a word and make up a news story that fits the given theme. Share the gist of your story and repeat with another theme.

Handout 4: Story words

an old man	in a movie theatre	running away
a young couple	at the library	swimming in the fountain
the police	in a supermarket	walking a dog
the president	at church	during a snowstorm
a fire man	in the woods	a Christmas tree
a drunk woman	to the police station	a moose

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a drunk woman	to the police station	a moose

Lesson 6: Making the news

Theme: News broadcast

Requirements: Filming equipment (students' own smartphones and tablets or the school's tablets)

Group activity: Homework (15+10 min)

As before.

Pair activity: Watching the news (20 min)

Find two or three recent news broadcasts to show to the class (Yle News, BBC etc).

While they're watching, ask the students to pay attention to the features of a news broadcast: phrases, expression, sections. Give them a few minutes to compare notes with a partner. Pay specific attention to the fact that the language used is generally more formal than in regular speaking situations. Make a graph of the structure of a news broadcast (how does it begin, what comes then, how it ends etc.). Mark down all useful phrases the students picked up.

Group activity: Making a news broadcast (20+10+15 min)

Students plan a news broadcast that should last about 3 minutes and film it using a phone or a tablet. Watch the final products with the whole class.

Lesson 6: Making the news

Pair activity: Watching the news

The teacher shows you a few news broadcasts. While you're watching, make some notes:

- What sections are there?
- What phrases and expressions do the anchors use?
- What kind of language is used?

Compare your observations with a partner.

Group activity: Making a news broadcast

In groups of 3 or 4, plan a news broadcast that should last about 3 minutes. Make up your own stories. You don't have to plan it word-to-word, but make a rough draft. Practice once, then film it using a phone or a tablet. Watch the final products with the whole class.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/geminidustin/275375860/

Unit 3: Jobs

Lesson 7: What's your dream job?

Theme: Plans for the future, different jobs

Requirements: Sheets of paper (A4)

Group chat: Dream jobs (10+10 min)

Students discuss the questions.

With the whole class, talk about ways to reach your dream. You can start by telling your own story of how you became a teacher. Remember to consider things to do when you are studying for your degree.

Pair activity: Pros of different jobs (20 min)

In pairs, give the students an A4 sheet of paper and ask them to choose a job and begin writing a list of the pros of the job. Make sure the students have different jobs! After a few minutes, rotate the lists around to give each pair a new topic. When the sheets are almost full, stop the students.

Group activity: Debate (45 min)

Ask the students if they are already familiar with debates. Explain the idea briefly.

Group two pairs together. Each pair has a sheet from the previous exercise. Students try to convince each other that their job is better than the other pair's. Rotate the sheets around after ~5 minutes. Repeat a few times. When you do the last rotation, each group does their debate while the rest of the class watches.

Homework (5 min)

For the next lesson, students have to find a job vacancy that they find interesting. Introduce a few sites where students can find job ads, like:

https://jobs.theguardian.com/   http://jobsearch.monster.com/

http://www.careerbuilder.com/

Lesson 7: What's your dream job?

Group chat: Dream jobs

- What was your childhood dream job? Why?

- What do you want to do after upper secondary school?

- How are you planning to achieve your goal?

- Have you already done something to get there?

ClipArt

Pair activity: Pros of different jobs

The teacher gives you a sheet of paper. Choose a job and write it on the top of the page. Start thinking about the pros of that job. After a few minutes, the teacher tells you to rotate the sheets around, giving you a new job. Continue listing the pros of different jobs until the teacher tells you to stop.

Group activity: Debate

Each pair has a sheet of paper from the previous exercise. Form a group with another pair and try to convince them that your job is better than theirs.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/jonathanharford/1372761169/

Lesson 8: Job hunting

Theme: Vacancies, job interviews

Requirements: None

Warm-up: Video (5 min)

Show the students this prank video where the "interviewer" messes with the interviewee.

> Worst job interview ever (3:32) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm1eAOzMy8k

Have the students had any bad job interview experiences (or have you had one yourself)?

Group chat: Job interviews (10+10+5 min)

Students discuss the questions and make a list of tips for going to a job interview. Compile all the tips in a single list.

Pair activity: Typical interview questions (15+20 min)

Students go through the list of typical interview questions and think about how to best answer them.

With the whole class, go through their suggestions for good answers and possibly add the tips on the following page.

Role play: Interview (5+20 min)

For this, the students need the job ads they found at home. First they need to go through each other's' ads and see what're about.

Then they interview each other for the jobs they found interesting.

Example: Student A chose a lawyer's ad, student B interviews him/her for that position

Tips for answering common interview questions

<u>Tell me about yourself.</u>

Don't tell your whole life story. Summarize yourself shortly and focus on the relevant things, like your education.

<u>What is your greatest strength?</u>

Going into the interview you should have several strengths in mind. Begin with a brief statement and provide a clear example: "I am very good at multitasking. Even if I have several things on my plate at the same time I don't get overwhelmed."

<u>Do you have any weaknesses?</u>

Everybody has some weaknesses, so claiming that you don't have any doesn't make a good impression. Try to think of something that can be improved, like worrying too much or wanting to take control of everything.

<u>What are your career goals?</u>

Quite often, it is important to have some goals for your career. You want to leave the impression that you are a growth-oriented person with realistic expectations about promotion opportunities.

<u>Do you work well under stress?</u>

You don't have to say that you like stress, but you need to let them know that you can work well under stress. Give examples of times when you have coped well with stress.

<u>Are you a team player?</u>

Most jobs require contact with other people, so saying that you don't work well with others may not lead to a job offer. Instead, focus on your best qualities as a team member.

<u>Why would you like to work for us?</u>

This is your chance to show that you really want the job. Find out as much as you can about the job, and say something positive about it.

Lesson 8: Job hunting

Group chat: <u>Job interviews</u>

- Have you had a job? What was it and how did you get the place?

- Are you trying to find a job for next summer/when you graduate? What would you like to do?

- Have you been to any job interviews? How was it? Did you get the job?

- How would you prepare for a job interview?

With the group, make a list of things you need to consider when going to an interview.

- ○
- ○
- ○
- ○
- ○
- ○

https://www.flickr.com/photos/gangplankhq/5590138183/

Pair activity: Typical interview questions

Go through this list of questions and think about how to best answer them.

- Tell me about yourself.

- What is your greatest strength?

- Do you have any weaknesses?

- What are your career goals?

- Do you work well under stress?

- Are you a team player?

- Why would you like to work for us?

ClipArt

Role play: Interview

For this exercise, you need the job ads you found at home. Go through each other's ads and see what they're about. Now interview each other for the jobs you found interesting. You can use the questions from the previous exercise.

Lesson 9: At work

Theme: Problems at work, being a good listener

Requirements:

Warm-up: Vocabulary (10 min)

Students take turns explaining the words to their partner as best as they can. Go through the meanings with the class.

Pair activity: Listening to your coworker (15+25 min)

Show the class this video:

> How to improve your listening skills (4:54)
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6-MIeRr1e8

Pause the video or show twice if necessary. While the students are watching, ask them to pick up things that make someone a good listener.

The students pretend to be co-workers in customer service. One tries to share an unpleasant experience with a customer while the other is a bad listener. Both students try the part of a bad listener, then ask them how they felt during the exercise.

Repeat the role-play, but this time the other student is a good listener. Ask them if they felt any different this time.

Group chat: Problems at work (20+20 min)

Students come up with possible solutions to some workplace dilemmas.

Discuss the answers with the whole class. What would be the best solution?

Lesson 9: At work

Warm-up: Vocabulary

What do you think these words mean? Take turns explaining them to your partner as best as you can.

> vacation day   outsourcing   burnout   flexible working hours
>
> maternity leave   telecommuting   overwork   casual Friday

Pair activity: Listening to your coworker

The teacher shows you a video that tells you how to improve your listening skills. While you're watching, make a list of things that make someone a good listener. Compare your lists with your partner.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/walmart3/15639139471/

Imagine you're working in customer service (in a shop, a café…). One of you has had a terrible encounter with a rude customer, and wants to tell the other all about it. The other pretends to be an awful listener (seems uninterested, interrupts, starts talking about his/herself etc.), while the one telling the story tries to stick to the story. When you're done, switch roles.

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Repeat the exercise, but be a good listener this time. Pay attention, ask questions and be interested in what the other has to say. Switch roles again.

Unit 4: Culture

Lesson 10: Culture 101

Theme: Popular culture

Requirements: None

Group chat: What is culture? (20+20 min)

Students discuss the questions, decide whether the forms of culture are popular or high culture and think about the difference between popular and high culture.

With the whole class, go through their answers to the division task. Make a list on the blackboard (on one side popular, both in the middle and high on the other side). With the help of the blackboard, discuss the last question.

Pair activity: Genre (5+15+25 min)

First, students try to define the term "genre". If they have no idea, they can use their phones/tablets. Define the term with the whole class.

Now, the pairs try to remember as many movie genres as they can and think about what typically happens in each genre. Make a list of all the genres on the blackboard and ask students to shortly describe each genre.

Lastly, each pair picks a genre. It's okay to have some genres twice but make sure there is some variation. Each pair comes up with their own, stereotypical story that fits their genre. The story must have at least one main character, a villain, a setting and a rough plot. Give them about fifteen minutes to plan and then ask everyone to present their story to the rest of the class.

Homework (5 min)

Students need to think about the last thing they read and prepare to tell the group who wrote it, what it was about and whether they liked it or not. It doesn't have to be a book: the students can present almost anything that can be read, like a short story, an article, a comic, a newspaper, a site on the internet and so on.

Lesson 10: Culture 101

Group chat: What is culture?

- What forms of culture do you enjoy the most?

- How often do you go the movies/concerts? How about the theatre/art exhibitions/other cultural events?

- What comes to your mind when you think about the term "high culture"?

- Decide whether these forms of culture are "popular" or "high" culture. If you think some can be both, explain your opinion.

> classical music   rock music   movies   paintings
>
> photography   poetry   musicals   plays   literature
>
> music videos   architecture   chess   video games

- What's the difference between popular culture and the so called "high culture"?

Carnegie Music Hall (https://www.flickr.com/photos/brookward/16744047681/)

Pair activity: Genre

What is genre? Try to define the term. If nothing comes to mind, consult your phone/tablet.

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List all the genres you can think of that go under "Movies". What usually happens in a movie of each genre?

https://www.flickr.com/photos/jimdphoto/2334239034/

Pick a genre. Come up with your own, stereotypical story that fits your genre. The story must have at least **one main character**, **a villain**, **a setting** and a rough **plot**. Prepare to tell your story to the rest of the class.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/nostri-imago/3001714270/

Lesson 11: The greatest stories

Theme: Literature

Requirements: Handout 5: Literary alias (1 per group, cut up) and Handout 6: Paddy Clarke HA HA HA (1 per student)

Group chat: Warm-up and homework (20 min)

Wrap up: Does the class like to read, what was the last thing they read

Group activity: Literary alias (20 min)

Students take turns explaining some well-known stories to their group. The first one to guess right gets a point. If they don't know the story, they put the paper on the bottom of the stack.

Pair activity: What's this book about? (20+25 min)

Students read a short extract from a book (Handout 6) and answer the questions. Go through the answers with the whole class. Make sure to listen to the students' answers first, and only after that share the "correct" answers.

Answers:

a) Patrick "Paddy" Clarke, a schoolboy (10 years old)
b) Liam, Kevin and James, Patrick's schoolmates; Aidan, Liam's brother; Sinbad, Paddy's little brother
c) They are out playing, coming home from a building site where they were making a mess
d) Ireland (Hints: O'Keefe, O'Connell, "da", "ma" and "mammy")
e) The book describes one year in Patrick's life, especially his relationships with his younger brother, his parents and his schoolmates and teachers. The book begins with a mischievous boy roaming around his neighborhood and ends with his father leaving the family, forcing the boy to take up more responsibilities.

Homework: A piece of art (5 min)

For the next lesson, students need to find a piece of art that they like. It can be a painting, a photograph, a sculpture, a statue, anything they like. They have to prepare to tell their group about it:

- Where it is

- Who made it

- When it was made

- Why they liked it

They should also bring a printed picture of it or prepare to show it to others on their phone/tablet.

Lesson 11: The greatest stories

Group chat: Do you like to read?

- Do you like to read? Why/not?

- Do you have a favorite book/writer?

- Homework: Present your latest read.

Group activity: Literary Alias   ClipArt

Take turns explaining some well-known stories to your group. The first one to guess right gets a point. If you don't know the story, put the paper on the bottom of the stack.

Pair activity: What's this book about?

The teacher gives you a short extract from a book (Paddy Clarke HA HA HA by Roddy Doyle). Read it first and then discuss these questions with your partner. Some answers you can find in the text, some require imagination.

a) The main character is the narrator. What's his name, who is he?

b) Who are the other characters? Names, relation to the main character

c) What are the boys doing?

d) Where does the story take place?

e) How does the story continue? Use your imagination!

Handout 5: Literary Alias

Lord of the Rings	Chronicles of Narnia	Romeo and Juliet	Sherlock Holmes
Twilight	Game of Thrones	The Hobbit	Robinson Crusoe
Frankenstein	Alice's Adventures in Wonderland		The Unknown Soldier
The Kalevala	Harry Potter	The Hunger Games	James Bond
Don Quijote	Moby Dick	The Moomins	
Pippi Longstockings	The Seven Brothers	The Little Mermaid	Snow White

We were coming down our road. Kevin stopped at a gate and bashed it with his stick. It was Missis Quigley's gate; she was always looking out the window but never did anything.

–Quigley!

–Quigley!

–Quigley! Quigley Quigley!

Liam and Aidan turned down their cul-de-sac (a dead end street). We said nothing; they said nothing. Liam and Aidan had a dead mother. Missis O'Connell was her name.

– It'd be brilliant, wouldn't it? I said.

– Yeah, said Kevin. – Cool.

We were talking about having a dead ma. Sinbad, my little brother, started crying. Liam was in my class in school. He dirtied his trousers one day – the smell of it rushed at us like the blast of heat when an oven door was opened – and the master did nothing. He didn't shout or slam his desk with his leather or anything. He told us to fold our arms and go to sleep and when we did he carried Liam out of the class. He didn't come back for ages and Liam didn't come back at all.

James O'Keefe whispered, –If I did a gick (slang for shit) in me pants he'd kill me!

–Yeah.

–It's not fair, said James O'Keefe. –So it's not.

The master, mister Hennessey, hated James O'Keefe. He'd be writing something on the board with his back to us and he'd say, -O'Keefe, I know you're up to something down there. Don't let me catch you. He said it one morning and James O'Keefe wasn't even in. He was at home with the mumps (a disease).

Henno brought Liam to the teachers' toilet and cleaned him up and then brought him to the headmaster's office and the headmaster brought him to his auntie's in his car because there was no one at home in his own house. Liam's auntie's house was in Raheny.

–He used up two rolls of toilet paper, Liam told us. –And he gave me a shilling.

–He did not; show us it.

–There.

–That's only a threepence.

–I spent the rest, said Liam.

He got the remains of a packet of Toffo out of his pocket and showed it to us.

–There, he said.

–Give us one.

–There's only four left, said Liam; he was putting the packet back in his pocket.

–Ah, said Kevin.

He pushed Liam.

Liam went home.

Today, we were coming home from the building site. We'd got a load of six-inch nails and a few bits of plank for making boats, and we'd been pushing bricks into a trench full of wet cement when Aidan started running away. We could hear his asthma, and we all ran as well. We were being chased. I had to wait for Sinbad. I looked back and there was no one after us but I didn't say anything. I grabbed Sinbad's hand and ran and caught up with the rest of them. We stopped when we got out of the fields onto the end of the road. We laughed. We roared through the gap in the hedge. We got into the gap and looked to see if anyone was coming to get us. Sinbad's sleeve was caught in the thorns.

–The man's coming! said Kevin, and he slid through the gap.

We left Sinbad stuck in the hedge and pretended we'd run away. We heard him sniveling (to cry in an annoying way). We crouched behind the gate pillars of the last house before the road stopped at the hedge, O'Driscoll's.

–Patrick—, Sinbad whinged.

 –Sin-bahhhd—, said Kevin.

Aidan had his knuckles in his mouth. Liam threw a stone at the hedge.

–I'm telling Mammy, said Sinbad.

I gave up. I got Sinbad out of the hedge and made him wipe his nose on my sleeve. We were going home for our dinner; shepherd's pie on a Tuesday.

Liam and Aidan's da howled at the moon. Late at night, in his back garden; not every night, only sometimes. I'd never heard him but Kevin said he had. My ma said that he did it because he missed his wife.

–Missis O'Connell?

–That's right.

My da agreed with her. –He's grieving, said my mother. –The poor man.

Kevin's father said that Mister O'Connell howled because he was drunk. He never called him Mister O'Connell; he called him the Tinker.

–Will you look who's talking, said my mother when I told her that. And then she said, – Don't listen to him, Patrick; he's codding (fooling) you. Sure, where would he get drunk? There's no pubs in Barrytown.

–There's three in Raheny, I said.

–That's miles away, she said. –Poor Mister O'Connell. No more talk about it.

Lesson 12: Let's talk art

Theme: Art

Requirements: None

Group activity: Homework (20 min)

In groups, students present their artwork. What is it, where is it, who made it, why did they like it? Wrap up the discussion with the whole class: what did everyone find, why did they like it?

Group chat: Opinions on art (20 min)

Students decide whether they agree with the statements or not. Go through the opinions of each group with the class.

Pair activity: Works of art (20+30 min)

First, students match the work with its name and artist. Then they look at the pictures and discuss whether they are art or not. Officially, everything is considered art. Did the students disagree with this?

Next, students talk about and describe the artworks with the help of the questions. Go through some of the questions and works with the whole class.

Lesson 12: Let's talk art

Group chat: Opinions on art

Do you agree with these opinions? Why? Why not?

- Modern art is not real art.

- An upside down toilet is not a work of art.

- Art isn't important.

- Art is only for old, rich people.

- Children should spend much more time at school painting.

- Everyone can be an artist.

- You need to be crazy to become an artist.

- Real art is paintings by famous painters.

Pair activity: Works of art

What is art?

On the next page there are pictures of some works of art. Match the work with its name and the artist. Then look at the pictures and discuss whether you think they are art or not.

Talking about art

Take another look at these works of art and answer these questions.

- What is happening?

- What can you say about the colors and shapes?

- What is the atmosphere like?

- What do you like about the works of art? What don't you like?

- Which are your favorites?
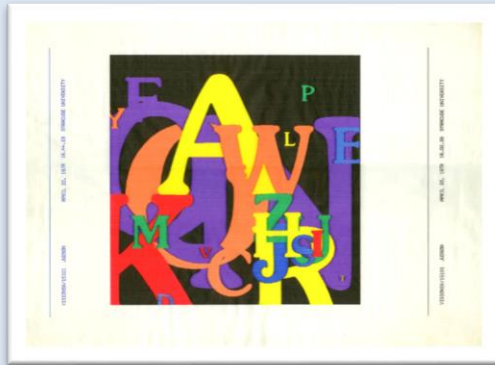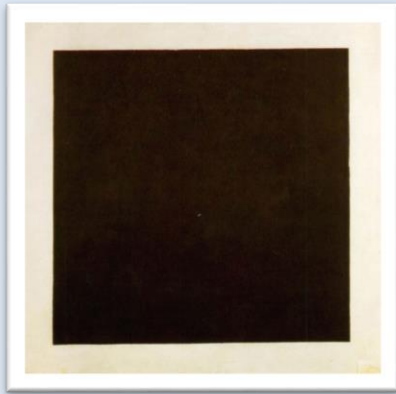
Judson Rosebush: Letter Field
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Judson_Rosebush_Visions_15101_Computer_Art_April_22,_1978_JGR19780422
_100.JPG)

Ilia Repin: Volga Boatmen
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ilia_Efimovich_Repin_(1844-1930)_-_Volga_Boatmen_(1870-1873).jpg)

Kazimir Malevich: Black Square
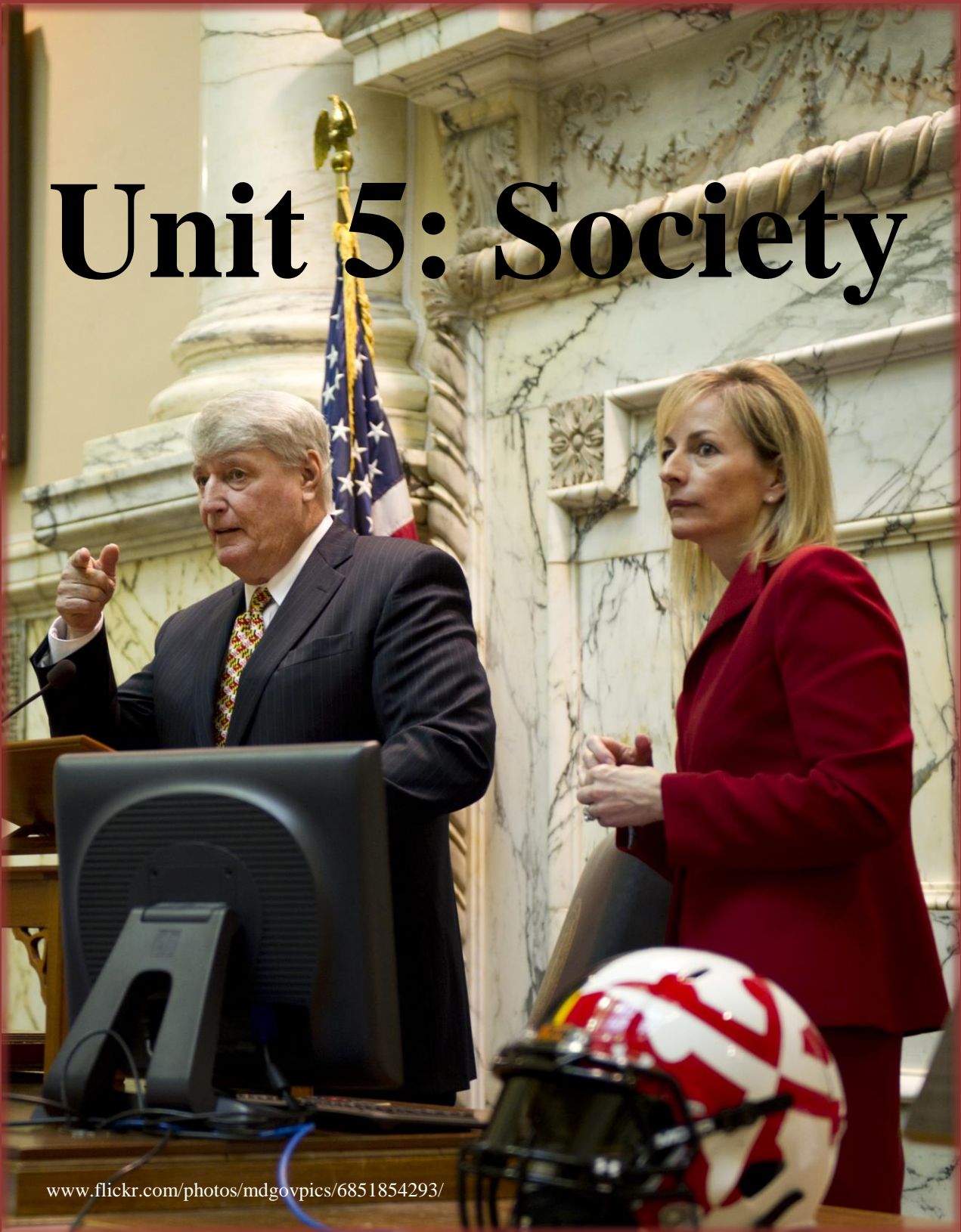(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Black_square_lg.jpg)

Vincent van Gogh: Starry Night
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Van_Gogh_-_Starry_Night_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

Albert Hirsch: Le Grand Eploiement

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Modern_sculptures#/media/File:12_Le_grand_Eploiement.jpg)

Unit 5: Society

Lesson 13: Save the environment

Theme: Environmental issues

Requirements: Large sheets of paper, colorful pencils and markers

Warm-up: Video (10 min)

Show this video on global environmental issues. Ask students to make a list of issues mentioned. See what the students picked up.

> Global environmental problems HD (4:36)
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEwVp815cxI

Pair-activity: Concerns (10+20 min)

First, students explain the words to each other. When they're done, make sure that everyone in the class understands the words.

Pairs then discuss the questions. When they are done, g through the questions with the whole class (what concerns them and what could be done about it).

Group activity: Activism (30+20 min)

Students pretend to be environmental activists (like Greenpeace). Each group gets an environmental issue that they are protesting against (pollution, poaching, fossil fuels, deforestation, extinction, etc.). They need to decide on a name for the group and to think about why they're against it, and come up with a few things they want politicians/companies/regular people to do about it. Groups make a poster and prepare to present their group to the class.

Lesson 13: Save the environment

Pair activity: Concerns

Take turns explaining these words to your partner.

global warming	pollution	poaching	deforestation
drought flood	overpopulation		fossil fuels
extinction	mining		recycling

-·-

Discuss these questions.

- What environmental issues are you most concerned about? Why?

- What can we do about it?

http://www.gratisography.com/

Group activity: Activism

Imagine you are environmental activists (like Greenpeace). Each group gets an environmental issue that they are protesting against.

Decide on a name for your group. Think about why you're against the issue, and come up with a few things you want politicians/companies/regular people to do about it. Make a poster and prepare to present your group to the class.

Lesson 14: Making a difference

Theme: Social issues

Requirements: None

Warm-up: Video (10 min)

Show this video on how to change the world.

> Kid President - How to Change the World (a work in progress) (3:43)
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z7gDsSKUmU

After watching the video, students discuss the questions in pairs. When they're done, ask the class what they thought.

Pair activity: So many problems... (40 min)

First the students read through the list of words to see if they understand them. Make sure everyone understands the words. The students then try to decide which of them are issues in different countries. Go through their answers.

The next part is putting the issues in order from what the students think is the smallest problem on a global scale to the worst problem. Then they do the same but this time from the perspective of Finland (which issues are bigger here and which are smaller). When they're done, ask them if there were any differences in the two lists.

Follow up with these questions:

- Why is illiteracy not an issue in Finland?
- Why is obesity a problem in the US?
- Why is corruption a problem in Russia?

Group activity: Is there anything you can do? (10+20+10 min)

Students think about the issues mentioned in the previous exercise and think about what people can do to help.

They then discuss the issues listed and try to come up with at least one thing they could do about them.

Make a list of their ideas on the blackboard. Make a separate list for each problem.

Lesson 14: Making a difference

Pair activity: So many problems…

Make sure you understand these words:

> hunger   wage gap between men and women   racism   homelessness
>
> obesity   drug abuse   drinking   bullying   illiteracy   teenage pregnancy
>
> poverty   child labor   social inequality   corruption

Which of these are issues:

In Finland?   In the US?

In Russia?   In Kenya?

-·-

Put the issues in order from what you think is the smallest problem on a global scale to the worst problem. Then do the same but this time from the perspective of Finland. Are there any differences?

	Globally	In Finland
Biggest problem		
Smallest problem		

Group activity: Is there anything you can do?

Have you ever done anything about the issues listed above? How about anyone you know? If you don't know anyone who's actually done anything, what ways of helping have you heard of?

For example: "My mom donates 10 euros a month to Save the Children"

      "Every year, I give some money to the Red Cross on Hunger Day".

-·-

Discuss these issues and come up with at least one thing you could do about them.

- Bullying in your class
- A friend has a drinking problem
- Racist relatives
- Child labor in the clothing industry
- Hunger in Africa

Lesson 15: Help!

Theme: The refugee crisis

Requirements: Large sheets of paper, markers and pencils

Pair activity: What's this all about? (15+20 min)

Students read through the list of words that appear in the video and talk about what they already know about the refugee crisis. When they're done, show this video:

Europe's Refugee Crisis Explained
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v13kTeAHY4c) (4:37)

After the video, students discuss the three questions at the end of the page. Go through the questions with the whole class. You can also share your own thoughts.

Group activity: Integration (35+20 min)

Students plan a day of activities for the teenagers living in your local refugee center. The purpose is to show the teenagers what life in Finland is like. Groups prepare to present their plans for the rest of the class. When all the plans have been presented, students vote for the plan they would like to do in reality.

Lesson 15: Help!

Pair activity: What's this all about?

Read through this list of words. If you don't know the word, what do you think it might mean?

asylum	asylum seeker
available labor	civil war
dictator	economic prospects
fence	humanitarian aid
migrant	persecution
refugee camp	route
smuggler	unseaworthy

- How much do you know about the refugee crisis?

- Where are the people coming from, and why are they leaving?

https://www.flickr.com/photos/tracyhunter/373153782/

- What are your thoughts on the issue?

- How do you feel about refugees coming to Finland?

- What should be done about the crisis?

Group activity: Integration

A local refugee center has asked your school to organize an event for the 12 teenagers living there. The purpose is to show the teenagers what life in Finland is like. The visitors will be brought to your school at 9 AM and they will leave at 2 PM. You have a budget of 500 euros and access to everything in the school. You can also leave the school, as long as everything you do in the city fits your budget (activities, eating, transportation etc.).

Prepare to present your plan for the rest of the class.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/69583224@N05/11643036935/

Which plan would you actually like to do? Vote for the best plan!

Lesson 16: Exam week

Theme: Self-evaluation/oral exam

Requirements: Self-evaluation and feedback sheets or materials for the oral exam.

If the school requires the course to be evaluated on a scale from 4-10, and for there to be a test, use the exam bank developed by the ministry of Education: https://suko.oph.fi/. The test is done in pairs, and should take about 15-20 minutes per pair.

However, since the main aim of this course is to enhance students' fluency, I feel that there is no need to have and exam at the end of the course. If it is possible to give the students either passing or failing grades, the last lesson should be used for self-evaluation and giving feedback (forms included). Additionally, you can choose a few exercises from the course and repeat them, or discuss a topic proposed by the students.

Handout 7: Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation   Name:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Can't say	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I participated actively in the discussions					
I tried my best in every situation					
I did my homework					
Everybody did their part in group discussions					
I feel that I am now a more fluent speaker					
Speaking in English does not make me as nervous as before					

Is there anything you wish you had/ had not done during the course?

Self-evaluation   Name:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Can't say	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I participated actively in the discussions					
I tried my best in every situation					
I did my homework					
Everybody did their part in group discussions					
I feel that I am now a more fluent speaker					
Speaking in English does not make me as nervous as before					

Is there anything you wish you had/ had not done during the course?

Handout 8: Course feedback

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
The goals of the course were clear.			
The activities were mostly interesting.			
The material looked nice.			
Instructions were clear.			
There was enough to do on each lesson.			
There was enough time to do everything.			

My grade for the course as a whole (from 4 to 10):_____

Other comments:_____

_____

_____

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
The goals of the course were clear.			
The activities were mostly interesting.			
The material looked nice.			
Instructions were clear.			
There was enough to do on each lesson.			
There was enough time to do everything.			

My grade for the course as a whole (from 4 to 10):_____

Other comments:_____

_____

_____