

**TAKE A SHOWER!**  
A teacher's handbook for language showering in  
English

Master's thesis  
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## JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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<p>Tapa, jolla lapset oppivat vieraita kieliä on hyvin erilainen verrattuna vanhempiin oppijoihin. Kielten opetuksessa tämä tiedostetaan ainakin aihepiireissä, joita lapsille opetetaan. Kuitenkin opetustavat itsessään ovat melko samalaisia. Opetuksen tärkeänä nuorana käytetään oppikirjoja ja niiden tarjoamaa materiaalia. Tulevaisuudessa on kuitenkin todennäköistä, että vieraan kielen oppiminen Suomessa alkaa varhaisemmalla iällä, mikä tarkoittaa muutoksia niin opetusmenetelmiin kuin materiaaleihin.</p> <p>Tämä tutkielma käsittelee nuorten oppijoiden erityispiirteitä kielisuihkuksen näkökulmasta. Tutkielma on teoreettisesti motivoitu materiaalipaketti, joka pyrkii kehittämään kielisuihutuspedagogiikkaa. Tavoitteena on myös esitellä eri menetelmiä, joita nuorten kielten oppijoiden opetuksessa käytetään. Materiaalin lähtökohtana toimivat kielisuihkuksen periaatteet aktiivisesta kielen käytöstä sekä runsaasta altistumisesta kohdekielelle. Lisäksi materiaalissa on huomioitu ikäryhmän luontainen tapa toimia aktiivisesti pelejä ja leikkejä hyödyntäen.</p> <p>Oppimateriaali on suunniteltu alakoulun ensimmäisen ja toisen luokan oppilaille englannin kielen oppimisen alkutaipaleelle. Sitä voidaan hyödyntää myös kielikerhoissa tai esimerkiksi varhaisen kielen opettamisen tukena muun materiaalin kanssa. Materiaali koostuu 14 eri aihepiirin oppitunnista, joita käsitellään muun muassa leikkien, laulaen, askarrella ja englannin kielellä toimien. Oppituntien aihepiirit on valittu peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman antamien ohjeiden peruustella tarkoituksenaan, että teemat olisivat arkipäiväisiä ja lasten maailmaa lähellä. Oppitunneissa on yritetty huomioida taitojen kasvattaminen yksittäisistä sanoista helppoihin fraaseihin. Lisäksi materiaalin on nivottu kulttuuria perinteisten leikkien ja lorujen muodossa. Oppimateriaali pilotoitiin syksyllä 2013 kahdessa englannin kielikerhossa, jonka osallistujat olivat seitsemänvuotiaita. Pilotoinnin pohjalta materiaalia on kehitetty ja muokattu.</p>	
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APPENDIX 1: Take a shower! Material package

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

During the past few decades the emphasis of research on second language learning and teaching has shifted towards learners. One area of study in this field has been young second language learners, how they are taught and how they learn. It is a fact that learning is an active process which needs concentration from the learner's mind and body in order to be successful. This is especially evident with young learners who can spend hours playing a game that they are interested in. Young learners learn by playing, listening and trying together with the help from adults who guide and support them (Pinter 2006: 5). Therefore, the learning process of a young foreign language learner can be very different from that of an older learner's. This also suggests that the methods used to teach young learners and older learners have to take into account the learners' features such as their attention span, cognitive skills, reading and writing skills, etc.

There have been many changes in language teaching methods as well. Immersion for early language learning started to develop already in the 1960s, which was followed by CLIL education in the 1990s. During the past few years even "lighter" ways of early language learning have surfaced, and these make use of the rich language exposure and use through active participation of learners. One of these methods is language showering, which aims at increasing cultural awareness of the target language and exposing students to the target language in a way that creates a basis for motivation and further language learning in the future (Kielikampus n.d.). At this moment the Finnish school system is on the verge of change as the new National Core Curriculum (NCC), which comes to effect in 2016, will most likely change the starting age of foreign language learning in Finnish primary schools. This suggests that the teaching methods could also benefit from an update.

Although the statistics (Koulutuksen tilastollinen vuosikirja 2011:49) show that there has been a growing trend to start learning a second language on the first or second grade, there is a bigger chance that the guidelines of the current NCC have not been taken into account as efficiently as could be possible. One reason for this could be that foreign language learning in schools before the age of nine is seen more as an exception than a rule. These attitudes might also be reinforced by the NCC. In 2001 the percentage



of first-graders starting to learn a foreign language was 5.8% and with second-graders the percentage was 10.4%. Since then the percentages have been growing slowly but steadily. In 2010 the percentage of first-graders was 7.9% and of second-graders 12.9%. However, still almost 80% of Finnish children start learning a foreign language on the third grade. This leads to a question whether this is enough. In her study Tuokko (2003:3,44) stated that only 2% of the 1600 Finnish who took part in the study thought that they had learned their English skills in a classroom and that 10% of the students used only 5-10 minutes per day for their homework. However 90% of them liked the English language and 93% considered the language useful. In addition it has been noted that although Finnish children succeed in PISA-tests they do not enjoy school (UNICEF 2012). However, the latest PISA-results also show that the Finnish children no longer stand on the first place, but have lower skills in all of the subjects that are tested (Helsingin Sanomat 2013) These results imply harsh facts, which set new challenges also to English language learning and to schools. New ways of teaching in schools are needed in order to motivate children to learn English from early on.

The present study focuses on examining the special features that young language learners might have and then narrows the perspective to language showering as a teaching method. The aim is to develop this teaching method by providing more information about it together with a material package that can be used in English language showering of Finnish first- and second-graders.

The theoretical background of the study consists of five chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on justifying the need for a material package, which is discussed from three different perspectives: a sociological, child developmental and pedagogical perspective. Chapter 3 deals with children and second language learning more generally and seeks to find out how and in which aspects young learners differ from adults. This chapter also discusses the Finnish NCC and its relation to early language learning as well as the ways that could be used in the teaching of young language learners. The different contexts for early language learning are discussed in chapter 4, which also provides more detailed information about language showering. Language showering is used as a teaching method and a basis for the material package and its framework is presented in chapter 5 together with the aims, target group and the organization of the material package.

Finally, chapter 6 summarizes the present study, provides information about the piloting of the material and gives suggestions for further studies in this field of study.

## **2 NEED FOR A LANGUAGE SHOWERING MATERIAL PACKAGE**

The upcoming changes in the Finnish foreign language education predict that it is not only those who we teach that is going to change but also that the ways, methods and materials have to be updated in order to provide quality language teaching in Finnish schools. The method chosen for this material package is language showering, which is a practical and functional approach to second language learning. Language showering takes into consideration the development of children by trying to utilize language tasks, games and other hands-on activities to support this development. However, there are no ready-made materials for language showering and often the teachers using this method start from scratch. On the other hand, the lack of material alone is not the only reason for this material package. The need for this material arises from three different perspectives: sociological perspective, child developmental perspective and pedagogical perspective, i.e., the developing pedagogy of language showering. These three perspectives are next presented and discussed in more detail.

### **2.1 Sociological perspective**

At the moment the Finnish education system lives on the verge of change. Basic education in Finland is known for its merits as one of the world's best education systems. However, even the finest systems have to change and evolve if they want to avoid the risk of becoming outdated and too set in their ways. These possible changes could also affect the subjects taught in schools. In Finland there has been an ongoing, heated discussion about the selection of languages in Finnish schools as well as the status of different languages, some compulsory, others optional. The two biggest issues have been the obligatoriness of Swedish and the decline of students in optional language classrooms.

Luckily this time the public discussion has not gone unnoticed. In 2012 the Finnish Council of State laid down a regulation considering the division of subject lessons in schools. Based on the suggestions of the regulation the National Board of Education started to work on with a new NCC, which will be finished by 2016 and then becomes

the new NCC of Finnish schools from 2016 onwards. In terms of languages the biggest change will be with the starting of compulsory Swedish. At the moment the studying of Swedish starts on the seventh grade at the age of thirteen, but in the new NCC Swedish will start in primary school on the sixth grade, at the age of twelve. The tradition has been that the first foreign language, often English, starts on the third grade at the age of nine. In 2010 90.5 percent of the students starting their first language chose English (SUKOL 2013). The second foreign language (e.g. German, French, Russian), which is optional starts on the fourth or fifth grade. Therefore, if there will be no changes to the starting ages, it is possible that a Finnish primary school student can start three foreign languages during a four-year period. If it is taken into consideration that also their skills in their mother tongue are still developing, this option can turn out to be quite challenging.

However, the scenario of three foreign languages starting so closely is an unlikely solution as the intention is to improve students' skills and motivation in Swedish and still encourage students and their families to choose an optional language as part of their curriculum. One of the suggested solutions to this new language situation in primary schools is that the first foreign language would start already on the first grade or on the second grade. The latter option has been seen as preferable because of its construction: a new language would start every second year in primary school. This suggestion is likely to be discussed thoroughly, but the starting of languages from early on has been tried in other countries as well. For example, children in Sweden have started to learn English at the age of seven since 2011, and it has been defined as one of the core subjects of their national curriculum (Enever 2011: 31). The change in the Swedish curriculum has been seen as positive and the children learning English have found language learning fun and enjoyable (Lundberg 2011:22). In practice the early English language learning in Sweden means that textbooks are not used, but instead other materials such as picture cards, real life objects, songs and video clips are utilized. However, all this work is made by teachers who find it very time-consuming and are frustrated with the fact that the publishers have been so slow to respond to their needs (ELLiE 2011). All this is also likely to be part of the future in Finland, if the needs for other language teaching materials than textbooks are not met.

## 2.2 Child developmental perspective

As mentioned in section 2.1, one of the biggest challenges in teaching languages to young learners is to make language learning fun and enjoyable, in other words, to know the characteristics of young learners, see how they differ from older learners and to provide them with the most useful tools for language learning. This is a discussion that can be looked at least from biological, psychological and linguistic perspectives. As early as in 1981 Krashen discussed the question of acquiring versus learning a second language, the former referring to second language learning in a way first languages are learnt through modified input and natural communication and the latter referring to learning a second language through explicit rules and error correction. The learning of a second language and Krashen's Monitor model were related to adult learners and the acquisition of a second language to young learners. However, later it has been noticed that the distinction between these two ways of adopting a second language is not that clear as second language learning often is a mixture of both, acquisition and learning (Johnson 2008:81). It might be that there are similarities in the way second languages are learnt by children and adults, but another factor that separates these two groups is age. From a psychological point of view the different stages in cognitive development between children and adults are clear. The Critical Period Hypothesis suggests that young learners are more apt to learn languages and to sustain better skills in the second language (e.g. Abello-Contesse 2009, Pinter 2011). The child development theory by Piaget (1959) argues that from the age of seven onwards a child develops, for example, logical thinking skills, competence in analogy, reasoning skills, abilities to deal with several aspects of a task and relational logic, skills that are useful in second language learning. Another possibility to look at second language learning is to see it as a continuum as opposed to stages or step by step development. In this continuum the role of a teacher is important as learning is based on the social environment and interaction as well as on an expert helping a novice, which can be seen similar to a child's relationship with a parent and can therefore be a useful working method with young language learners (Vygotsky 1982).

It is worth noticing that all these theories concentrate on one aspect of learning and when contemplated together they can provide a bigger picture of all the issues that affect young language learners together with the practical choices that are made

considering language learning and teaching. More and more of these practical choices have been studied during the past few years on a European and a national level. A team set up by the European Commission and consisting of the early language learning experts of the member states, outlined in their final report that early language learning should provide the possibility to acquire the target language spontaneously instead of learning consciously. The acquisition should take place in meaningful and possibly authentic settings (European Commission 2011:13). The conclusions of the Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) project were that young second language learners need to practice positive and supportive attitudes towards speaking and reading and confidence in communicating in the foreign language. In addition, a great emphasis was put on qualified and competent teachers, whose job it is to provide and maximize the use of the target language in class and to design activities that provide students with linguistic challenges. Similar guidelines can be found in the Finnish NCC (2004) where it is defined that the Finnish comprehensive school should provide surroundings that support the students' development of cultural and linguistic knowledge as foreign languages are both skill and art related subjects. Second language learning of young students should make use of listening comprehension, repetition and application and practicing of oral skills. Home, school and everyday life are outlined as essential themes of the second language learning of first- and second-graders (7-8 year olds) and the use of games, songs and play as a medium is encouraged (NCC 2004:138).

Unfortunately the English language classrooms in Finland generally make use of these themes and variations (game, songs, etc.) only if they are found in the textbooks, which are full of drills and fill-in exercises instead of communicative or concrete tasks. A textbook analysis of the English text and workbooks used with Finnish third-graders showed that most of the books concentrate on visual and auditory skills instead of using tactile or kinesthetic method (Pänkäläinen 2012). One could think that all this depends on the language teacher, which can, to some extent, be true. However, material designing, collecting and adapting can take a lot of time and effort. Therefore, it is no wonder that the increased workload of language teachers leads to the use of a material that is the easiest available – textbooks and workbooks together with teacher's extra material, exam packages, etc. It can also be assumed that some teachers use the textbooks, because they do not know about other possibilities and have become too workmanlike in their own profession. It could be that a new working method and some

new material could also help the English teachers to get inspired, which could have a positive effect on their own work in inspiring children to learn more English in their own level of development. One good way of introducing languages to young learners is language showering, which will be discussed next.

### **2.3 Pedagogical perspective**

So far language showering has not been used that much as a method in language teaching as it has been seen something “extra”. For some reason its aims for raising cultural awareness and exposing children to languages through functional activities have not been seen as learning that could take place in a classroom during a language lesson, but as something outside of the normal curriculum. Language showering has been used in showering sessions where, for example, a university language student comes to a school and has one or two showering sessions per week. Another alternative has been to set up language clubs that also take place after school hours as extracurricular activities and also in these language clubs the teacher often comes from outside of the school. This reinforces the suggestion that new language teachers are more aware of this method than the ones that have been teaching for a longer time. It can also be that it is easier to ask someone else who designs the sessions and comes with ready materials to come and teach instead of doing the same things yourself. This is a shame as most of the language showering experiences have been nothing but positive and the showerers themselves have found the method rewarding for the teacher as well (Bärlund 2012). The showerers have had the experience that children become interested in the target language and also learn some basics of the language (Pynnönen 2013, 2012, Mela 2012).

Despite the mostly positive experiences, a common opinion that is evident in the reports that the showerers have written and in a couple of studies about language showering (Pynnönen 2013, 2012, Mela 2012) is that there are still some aspects in language showering that could be developed further. An example of this is that even though language showering is seen as a rewarding and interesting working method, it is at the same time challenging because it is the teacher’s responsibility to come up with exercises and activities without any pedagogical support available (Mela 2012). As all the responsibility is left for the teachers it makes it difficult to compare language showering in different cities and even between showering groups in the same city. It

could happen that instead of developing language showering didactics and pedagogy together, every teacher develops them to their own direction. This becomes important when the developing of language showering pedagogy and material for showering could be a possibility to increase the number of teachers using language showering as a teaching method. In addition, text- and workbooks play a big role in language teaching in Finland. It is even said that they are “the hidden curriculum” of Finnish schools and many teachers rely their teaching on using them (Luukka et al. 2008). Therefore, the lack of ready material for language showering can lead to a situation where this type of a new method for teaching is not that eagerly used.

In the light of the experiences in Finland and abroad one should not underestimate the importance of materials in language showering. Although there are a number of materials for English as second language and English as foreign classrooms, they are not necessarily fit for more informal language learning such as language showering. It should also be stated that the word material does not necessarily refer to a text- or a workbook, but can be more of a collection of functional activities and tasks for teachers which deal with themes close to young language learners. These activities can also have some goals and aims without them being just a game after a game, in other words, also language showering sessions/lessons need a plan. The present study aims at providing material that could encourage English teachers to use language showering as a method with young learners and to ease the teachers’ workload by providing them with ready plans for language showering. In addition, the idea of a teaching material in general is to support and encourage learning and at best it does so (Harju-Luukkainen 2007:145). In his review of the latest language learning and teaching material development books Tomlinson (2012) highlights the purpose of material as a facilitator of teaching and states that from ready materials teachers can modify and adapt their own versions. In summary, it would be an achievement if this material package could be an inspiration for any English teacher to start using and even designing language showering activities in their own early language learning classrooms. Next the characteristics of young language learners are discussed from the perspective of Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), biology, socio-constructivist learning theory and motivation.



### **3 CHILDREN AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

The following chapter examines the second language learning of children from four different perspectives. Firstly, the role of age and a possible critical period in development will be discussed from the point of view of Critical Period Hypothesis and Piaget's Stage Theory of Cognitive Development. Secondly, the focus moves from specific ages and stages to more gradual development of cognition and discusses the possible advantages that a young learner might have in this process. Thirdly, children and second language learning will be observed from the point of view of social environment together with Vygotsky's socio-constructivist learning theory. Fourthly, some other aspects such as attitudes and motivational strategies of young language learners and their possible positive role in second language learning will be discussed.

#### **3.1 Age and its possible effects on second language learning**

The term *critical period* was first introduced in the field of natural sciences where it was defined as a restriction in the development of a skill or behavior (Pinter 2011:49). In other words, time is money and as many things as possible should be learned before or during the time of a critical period after which learning becomes more difficult or even impossible. The theory of CPH was adapted to linguistic studies by researchers interested in knowing whether there would be a critical period in a person's first language learning. After some positive evidence (e.g. Curtiss 1977, Mayberry et al. 2002) the interest then shifted to second language learning, where the situation proved to be more complex, and the debate about a critical period in second language learning has been ongoing ever since. In second language learning the critical period is considered to be a cut-off point after which the success in second language learning starts declining (Hakuta et al. 2003). The assumption is that a critical period would explain the differences in skill levels between young and adult second language learners. However, studies have shown great variation in the age ranges of a critical period starting from four-year-olds to fifteen-year-olds, and therefore the existence of a critical period has been a debatable topic in second language learning. Those in favor of the theory often state that the most common point in life for a critical period is at the

age of seven which is based on the stages of cognitive development by Piaget (Pinter 2011:50-51). Next the age factor is viewed from the point of view of this theory.

The stage theory of cognitive development by Piaget suggests that a child goes through a fixed number of stages and during those stages develops as a human being. The theory was based on the assumption that a child has to go through each stage in a fixed order in order to develop normally (Piaget 1959). The stage theory consists of four stages called sensory-motor stage, pre-operational stage, concrete operational stage and formal operational stage. In the two first stages a child develops, for example, its active curiosity, imitating skills and repetitive motor habits. The child learns to take care of one aspect of a task at a time and becomes more egocentric in the way he sees the world (Piaget 1959, Pinter 2011). From the point of view of the critical period the most important stage of development is the pre-operational stage. In this stage a child's perspective to the world is quite one-sided and as Piaget described it: egocentric. Instead of thinking objectively and logically a child makes use of intuition while learning new things. According to Piaget (1959:75), the revolutionary change in a child takes place at the age of seven when he develops logical thinking skills and the ability to deal with more than one aspect of a task at a time. In addition, a seven-year old child knows how to make use of analogy and reasoning and also gradually loses the egocentric way of looking at the world. In the context of second language learning this would mean that a young language learner needs clear instructions, simple problem solving tasks, simple repetitive tasks and games and stories (Pinter 2011:11). These kinds of activities develop the learner's skills for the future and support more goal-orientated language learning in the long run.

However, as both CPH and Piaget's theory are well-known and also quite widely researched there has also been criticism towards them. As the critical period age has varied so much in all the studies that have been conducted, it seems unreliable to claim that such would exist. More recent studies (Hakuta et al. 2003, Bialystok and Hakuta 1999) also suggest that the development or regression in second language learning is more gradual than the CPH implies. On the other hand, if researchers have not been able to prove that a critical period necessarily exists, it has also been difficult to prove otherwise. From the point of view of Piaget's theory the biggest questions have been about his research methods and the fact that his theory leaves out the social aspects in cognitive development. Some consider his theory to be based only on biological

assumptions and others find the assumption that every child would develop at the same pace in different cultures impossible (Garton 1992, Pinter 2011). Despite the critical period debate, it is still believed that there is something in children and their age that makes them more apt to second language learning. The effects of age on second language learning have now been discussed from a one perspective. In section 3.2 the learning of a second language will be viewed from a more physical point of view and the differences in the cognitive development of children and adults and some differences in information processing are discussed.

### **3.2 Biological and cognitive differences between children and adults**

Even without a proven critical period, age seems to matter in second language learning. Some of the differences suggested can be found in cognitive development, which can be seen as something gradually evolving, but also at the same time gradually regressing as the mind learns new ways to process information replacing the old patterns that have been used. Although older learners have more tools and strategies to use and therefore often are faster learners, younger learners win when it comes to language attainment (Pinter 2011:57). Next some of the suggested biological and cognitive reasons for this are considered.

Two hypothesis of cognitive development have been set to find reasons that could explain the better performance of children in second language learning (Aitchison 1996). One of the reasons is that young learners have a skill to filter the language that they hear in a way that they know how to leave out all the complex structures and focus on the simpler features of a language. This theory is often referred as the Natural Sieve Hypothesis, and it suggests that this filtering quality of the mind ceases to exist when the learner becomes older. The other possibility is called the Tuning in Hypothesis, where the assumption is that a child is attuned to one aspect of language at a time and that the aspect of language depends on their age. For example, young learners may be tuned into the sounds of a language, older children to syntax, after which vocabulary becomes one of the key elements of a language. One could think that a child makes use of capability for selective attention already from the start and in accordance with the Natural Sieve Hypothesis does not try to acquire too much at the same time. As mentioned, these filters and selective attention are thought to vanish as children grow

older. When these cognitive patterns are replaced with new ones it is possible that second language learning becomes more difficult. Cognitive aging can result in gradual difficulties in learning complex entities such as a new language. It is known that the capacity of working memory, the speed of cognitive processing and attention gradually decline with age and changes with processes such as the coding of new information and remembering details can lead to a lowered ability to learn and acquire a new language (Hakuta et al. 2003:31-32). In this light, there would not be a need for a critical period as the human biology would control second language learning.

On the other hand, it has also been suggested that young and old learners of a second language just process the language in a different way. Especially the grammatical processing of young learners has shown their own ways and methods of learning grammatical features. In a study by Dimroth (2008) two Russian beginners, aged 8 and 14, and with German as their second language were studied for their order of acquisition and learning of different aspects of grammar. They were compared with each other and with a group of adults, and the results showed that the learning of the older learner was less efficient and that the way the 14-year old learned was similar to the adult control group. The 8-year old child was a faster and more efficient learner and learned in a different order compared to the others. One explanation for this could be that there are neurological differences between younger and older learners and that, for example, different areas of the brain are influenced by the language depending on the age of the learner (Kim et al. 1997). This suggests that young and older children process information differently and that in terms of learning this is in favor of younger learners.

So far the importance and effect of age have been discussed from the point of view of a critical language learning period, stages of cognitive development by Piaget as well as from a more biological perspective as the gradual changes in cognition and possible differences in the information processing of the brain have been introduced. All of these play an important role in the second language learning of young learners, but do not necessarily provide enough information. As Bialystok and Hakuta (1999: 161) put it:

Are young learners generally more successful than older ones when ultimate proficiency in a second language is assessed? Yes. Do younger and older learners approach the learning problem differently? Presumably. Are there neurological differences in the brains of younger and older learners? Probably. None of these statements however compels the conclusion that there is a critical period for second language acquisition.

It has become evident that age does play a role in second language learning, but it cannot be viewed separately from such factors as social support, motivation and the importance of professional instruction. Section 3.3 takes into account the socio-constructivist learning theory by Vygotsky and looks at young learners from a wider perspective as also the surroundings and facilitators of learning are taken into consideration instead of just seeing the learner as an outcome of biological development.

### **3.3 Young language learners and the social environment**

Successful learning is often a combination of a learner's inner qualities and development together with supporting and motivating surroundings for learning. In second language learning the importance of social support and optimal learning environment is considered to be one of the key factors. It may be that a critical period is not necessarily the way to early language learning, but that also social and environmental as well as individual differences help in explaining the success of young children in second language learning (Pinter 2011:64). Most of these ideas rest on the conceptions of a Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and his socio-constructivist learning theory. Next the theory is briefly summarized after which some points of the theory are discussed from the point of view of a young language learner and a language teacher.

#### **3.3.1 Socio-constructivist learning theory**

Whereas Piaget saw learning and cognitive development as something to be taking place in stages, Vygotsky (1982) thought of the process as something more gradual and ongoing. Instead of the changes itself, Vygotsky focused on the role that the social environment had on the process of learning. The idea was that cognitive development does not happen in isolation but in social interaction with others. Social interaction as a fundamental force would start the learning process in a child and the information provided by another person would then be processed by the child. After the processing of information, learning would take place and the child could internalize the given information and guidance. In fact, one of the most important features in Vygotsky's

theory is the idea of an expert helping a novice. The role of an expert in second language learning, be it a native speaker, a teacher or a more advanced learner of a language, is to provide a novice with such information and support that should assist this to develop (language) skills further. Vygotsky came up with the term *zone of proximal development*, *ZPD* which means that at first a child (= a novice) has his own ability to, for example, solve a problem. However, if the child wanted to have skills to solve the problem better or faster the help of an adult (= expert) would be useful. This help could develop the child's problem solving skills even further, which would enable gradual cognitive development. In Vygotsky's theory learning takes place in social interaction when both the novice and the expert are engaged in the process of learning. Next the ideas of ZPD, novice and expert are taken from theory to practice.

### **3.3.2 Implications of Vygotsky's theory in second language learning of children**

The idea of ZPD is connected to learning both from a theoretical and a pedagogical point of view as its theoretical possibilities can be seen in recognizing the meaning of social interaction in learning and pedagogical possibilities in challenging the child to learn more (Harju-Luukkanen 2007:40). It is possible to think that both of these challenges rely and depend on the course of actions of the language expert, in this case the language teacher. The role of a language teacher in the second language learning of children has proven to be important in terms of efficiency in learning (Pinter 2011:92). In order to make use of social interaction in teaching, the language teacher has to get to know his students and become familiar with their current knowledge of the target language. When starting from scratch, such as in language immersion or lower level language exposure programs such language showering, the defining and deciding the starting level can be difficult as the children may not have any previous experience of the new language. On the other hand, in both immersion and language showering one can start building good social relations between students from early on, which can then facilitate the actual learning process.

For a young language learner the socio-constructivist learning theory gives a possibility to take responsibility. The active role of a student is important not only from the information exchange point of view, but also from the point of view of language enthusiasm and motivation, which are discussed in more detail in the section 3.4. The

active exchange of information between students and the teacher also sets challenges to classrooms. It is easy to wonder whether there is enough time to individual teacher-student interaction and communication. One possible solution for this could be group work. In group work students take different roles in terms of their individuality but also in terms of their skills. The realization of ZPD does not necessarily mean that it is the teacher who is always challenging students but that students can learn from one another as well (Pinter 2011:19). Most young learners are eager to take on group work tasks and work as active participants in language classrooms. In addition, younger learners devote more time to language learning and are often less inhibited language users (Pinter 2006:29). All this can turn in favor of the young learners in terms of their language learning, which suggests that the social environment and interaction could affect the learning of students and that with younger learners the positive impact could be stronger.

However, the effect of social interaction does not rule out the physical advantages of a young learner. Therefore, it is also important to mention that although Piaget and Vygotsky approached learning from two different perspectives; neither one of them denied the work of the other (Harju-Luukkanen 2007:35). In summary, the intention has not been to set these two theories against each other, but to try to highlight that age and physical qualities as well as the early age social interaction between a learner and a teacher can work in favor of young children as second language learners. As the process of second language learning is complex, it is necessary to examine it from several perspectives and to contemplate the issues that could support the advantages of young learners in the process. The following section analyzes second language learning from one more angle and focuses on attitudes of young children.

### **3.4 Young language learners and attitudes**

Motivation is one of the most complex topics possible in learning and teaching. There are several theories about motivation and all concentrate on different aspects of the complex and multidimensional concept of motivation. Motivation researchers disagree about many things, but the one thing that they do agree on is the definition of motivation, it is about choice of action, the persistence with this action and the amount of effort that is put into the action (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011: 4). As one theory of

motivation alone would be enough to work as a topic for a MA thesis, motivation is next discussed only from the perspective of learner attitudes in the light of previous studies. The summary of the previous studies is then followed by some motivational strategies that could be useful in early language learning classroom.

There have been many suggestions about the issues that support more positive attitudes towards and motivation in second language learning with young learners. These suggestions have covered the more communicative teaching methods that are often used in primary schools as well as the change in the attitudes towards the school system as children grow older (Cenoz 2003: 79). A study by Lamb (2003) examined the general attitudes and motivation patterns of 219 Indonesian children, aged between eleven and twelve, in relation to their English language learning. The research methods used included observations, teacher interviews and a questionnaire which was followed by group interviews with a selected group of learners. The questionnaire had five sections with a three-point Likert scales covering issues: 1) how satisfied the students were with their own progress in English; 2) how positive and confident they were about their abilities to learn; 3) how much they enjoyed English; 4) how important English was to the students and 5) how they saw the importance of English compared to the other subjects in schools. The students were also asked about their use of English in their free time. The interviews, by contrast, concentrated on their feelings and attitudes as well as their friends' attitudes towards English. The results showed that the attitudes towards English were positive and that the children used the language a lot in their everyday lives outside school. English was also ranked as an important subject to be learned. However, the reasons behind these perceptions, in other words, the issues that motivated children were both internally originated (personal positive attitudes) and instrumental (English as means for e.g. a better job) and that the children could not differentiate between these two.

Whereas Lamb focused more on the general factors that motivate children, Heining-Boynton and Haitema (2007) focused on the change in attitudes towards foreign language learning in a ten-year, longitudinal study conducted in two parts, in two school districts in North Carolina, USA. The survey they conducted was a part of a Foreign Language in Elementary School Program Evaluation Inventory and had several thousand participants (between six and eight years of age) who took part in the survey on the primary level. Of them thirteen volunteers were interviewed again in high school



ten years later for a follow up study. The overall results showed that the attitudes towards foreign language learning changed during the period and mostly to a more negative direction. There was also a gender difference, the male participants having generally more negative attitudes towards foreign language learning, as they did not find foreign language learning as important as other subjects in the curriculum. In terms of positive experiences some of the participants felt that their positive experiences on the primary level had helped them to maintain an interest in learning a foreign language at a later age. In addition, foreign language learning on the primary level seemed to have a big role in the students' appreciation of foreign cultures.

Similar results have been reported from the Basque country (Cenoz 2003: 80-91). A research group REAL (Research in English Applied Linguistics), from the university of the Basque country, conducted a study on the ultimate achievement in English, the rate of acquisition and development of attitudes. Altogether three groups of children all of which had started to learn English as a foreign language at a different age: at the age of four, eight or eleven were studied. One of the main research questions of the study was whether attitudes towards English were more or less positive when the language had been taught from early on. To study the question a questionnaire about attitudes towards languages was used. In the questionnaire the students were given eight adjectives and their opposites and were asked to express their opinions about English, Spanish and Basque. The first questionnaire was followed by a second one, where the desire to learn languages, attitudes towards language learning and the made effort was measured with thirteen statements, which the students then evaluated on a five-point Likert scale the options varying from "I strongly agree" to "I strongly disagree". By the time the students answered these questionnaires they all had received the same number of hours of English teaching in schools, 600 hours each group. The results showed great variation between the youngest group of learners and the older ones. After the same amount of language exposure the group of four-year-olds had more positive attitudes and better motivation to learn English than the two other groups. However, the differences in motivation between the two older groups were only marginal. The researchers suggested that the reasons behind these differences can lie in psychological and linguistic issues. From a psychological point of view the older learners might reject the school system in general and have negative attitudes towards any learning. The linguistic explanation they found was that the change in teaching methods from more

oral and communicative approach to grammar orientated one often decreased the students' motivation to learn English.

As the previous studies above suggest, motivation and positive attitudes to second language learning and foreign language learning seem to decrease over the years of studying. The reasons behind this demotivation vary and no clear reason for this has been found. Therefore, it could be useful to concentrate on the ways motivation could be increased already in an early language learning classroom and perhaps in a way that could prevent drastic demotivation over the years of studying a language. There are many practical motivational strategies that can be of use in classroom situations. Next some of the strategies that could work in an early language learning classroom are introduced and discussed.

Motivational strategies can be defined as “techniques that promote the individual’s goal-related behavior” (Dörnyei 2001: 28). Examples of these could be: giving feedback, communicative tasks, setting goals, creating learner autonomy, creating a positive atmosphere in a classroom, etc. One of the ways to look at motivational strategies is to see language learning as a process. A special model for second language motivational teaching has been developed by Dörnyei (2001) in order to describe the motivational process from the first sparks towards language learning to maintaining motivation, encouraging students as language learners and also creating the best possible conditions for motivation in a classroom. In this model one starts by creating the surroundings for motivational learning, for example, with a good group spirit and with a supportive atmosphere for learning. After this one moves on generating initial motivation in students, by supporting their positive attitudes towards the second language and supporting their goal-orientedness. This starting phase creates a basis for motivation, which then has to be protected. Suggested ways for doing this include making learning enjoyable, setting learner goals, supporting and creating autonomy and increasing confidence in learners. Finally, a language teacher should give the students positive feedback and reward them for doing a good job. The motivational teaching practice by Dörnyei is summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Motivational teaching practice (adapted from Dörnyei 2001:29)

<b>Creating the best possible conditions for motivation</b>	<b>Generating initial motivation</b>	<b>Maintaining motivation</b>	<b>Encouraging positive self-evaluation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good group spirit</li> <li>• Positive learning environment and atmosphere</li> <li>• Encouraging teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting positive attitudes towards SLL</li> <li>• Increasing goal-orientedness</li> <li>• Increasing the beliefs in successful SLL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making learning enjoyable</li> <li>• Setting goals</li> <li>• Increasing self-confidence as language users</li> <li>• Creating autonomy</li> <li>• Co-operating with other students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving positive feedback</li> <li>• Rewarding and grading in a motivating way</li> </ul>

One could think most of these suggestions for increasing motivation as platitudes, but they can be forgotten in action. The reasons behind this could be also culturally motivated. For example, in Sweden schools strive towards equality and inclusion which can be related to the fact that rewarding or praising students on lessons is not emphasized (Lundberg 2011: 129). Similarities can be found in the Finnish context and therefore the problems with using these motivational strategies may occur. However, early language learning and teaching has some of the best possibilities to affect language learners' motivation as the process of language learning is just getting started. By taking into account also the process in motivational strategies one could support lifelong language learning. Lifelong learning is also one of the aims set for second language learning in the Finnish NCC, which is discussed in the next section.

### **3.5 Young language learners and the NCC**

The general aims for learning in the NCC (2004: 12-16) include that the Finnish comprehensive school should support students' cultural and linguistic knowledge as well as to raise their desire for lifelong learning. In addition, it is important to develop critical thinking and to regenerate new ways of thinking and courses of action. In order to succeed in all this it is important to make use of all the different ways of learning, which then leads to the possibility to improve students social skills, active participation and "learning to learn" skills. How all of this is carried out depends on the teacher and the age of his students. In the NCC it is also stated that one should not forget that the different working methods should support creative activity, game and play in a way that is appropriate for the group.

A closer look at the NCC (2004: 132-138) and especially at the section where teaching of foreign languages in the first and second grade are discussed shows that these guidelines give only a vague idea of what language learning in the first and second grade could be. Usually Finnish children start learning a foreign language on the third grade at the age of nine, which is also evident in the curriculum. However, some guidelines are given if the teaching of a foreign language should begin earlier. For example, one should concentrate on listening comprehension, repetition and oral communication exercises. These exercises should be linked to themes that are familiar to the students and the teaching itself should be functional and involve games and play. All this aims at raising students, who are ready to communicate in a foreign language in different situations and know that language learning presumes dedication to practicing versatile communication. It is also possible that the methods chosen for language teaching could support the students' motivation and language learning in the future. In addition, the importance of the first foreign language is emphasized as the skills learned then create a basis for the additional foreign language learning of children in the future.

Sections 3.1-3.5 have viewed early language learning from four different perspectives and tried to show that a young language learner is a whole affected by biological, psychological, social and motivational issues. In addition, a closer look at the Finnish NCC has been taken and its suggestions for early language learning discussed. All these perspectives show that young language learners differ from older learners and that this

should also be taken into account when teaching young learners. In the next section the features of teaching English to young learners are discussed and young learners are looked at from a more practical point of view.

### **3.6 Teaching English to young language learners**

This section discusses the features that teaching English to young learners has in terms of the teacher, the issues thought and the methods used for teaching. Firstly, the role of the first English language teacher is discussed. Secondly, some methods that have been found useful with young language learners are reviewed. Finally the content that children should be learning during their first years with the English language are discussed.

Many (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011, Enever 2011, Lundberg 2011, Pinter 2006) agree that the first English language teacher of a child plays a big role in his language learning. Even though more and more authentic tapes and CDs are used in classrooms the English teacher is still the biggest language role model the children have during their lessons (Lundberg 2011). The first English language teacher is the one who gets the wheels turning in terms of language learning, linguistic development, raising self-confidence and cultural education. In addition, the teacher is responsible for creating a safe learning environment where young language learners are not afraid of trying to use English and making some mistakes as well. As a language model the teacher is responsible for being a competent user of the English language and he has to be able to modify the used language in ways that young learners are able to understand him (Lundberg 2011: 25). Ways of modifying the language input include adjusting speed while talking, using gestures and facial expressions, repeating and possibly using visual aids (Pinter 2006: 48). The ELLiE project also showed that the more the teacher uses English the more his students use it as well (Enever 2011), in other words, the teacher should be a fluent and competent user of English and use it as much as possible in the classroom.

However, even a highly-educated and competent teacher might find himself wondering, which methods to use and which aspects of language to focus with young language learners. As language learners, children still have quite a short attention span (Lundberg

2011:34.) Therefore, it is important to first focus on some language chunks in language input and output in order to establish some routines in language classrooms (Pinter 2006). An example of this could be greetings when a lesson starts and ends. This can help the children to get a grasp of the organization of a language lesson. In addition, by repeating and recycling expressions in a foreign language children start to pick up the language and easily become intrinsically motivated (Pinter 2006:30-37). Language learning is often divided into four different skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading. Both Pinter (2006) and Lundberg (2011) suggest that with young language learners the focus should be on listening and speaking as the learners are still developing their reading and writing skills in their first language. Some suggested ways to teach listening are songs, rhymes and the total physical response (TRP) method, which emphasizes the understanding of the language input. The TRP method can be used in games such as *Simon says* where children are supposed to clap their hands or stomp their feet if Simon says so. The positive side to TRP is that it is something that can be used in very early stages of language learning. However, the amount of learners' actual output is minimal. This is not necessarily a problem as it often is that the exposure to a language creates a will to start using the language (Pinter 2006:56). The language that young learners start to use often comes from songs, rhymes, stories and dialogues, which are an important tools for a teacher.

After having the competence and right tools for language teaching a teacher has to start thinking about the content, i.e., the topics and themes that are taken as a part of the curriculum. As mentioned in section 3.5, the NCC provides the guidelines for early language learning in the Finnish context and some general themes and topics have been given. A teacher might also find some available material such as the books that have been designed for third-graders helpful in terms of the topics. However, and most importantly, teachers work as the NCC as their guideline and make use of their own professional competence while designing language lessons and material. As a result of this each lesson and each material that has been designed reflects the views of a single teacher which makes them all in a way unique. If there were a ready list for language content that should be taught at the age of six, seven or eight there would be many homogenous English classrooms and most likely less motivation and intent for further development of English teaching.

This section has viewed the qualifications that an English teacher should have, but also the tools and methods he could use when teaching young learners. It has also been argued that the language content, topics and themes depend on the teacher and his expertise and are only guided to the right direction by the NCC. However, all methods, ideas, learners and teachers need a framework, which they use as a background. These are the contexts where language learning takes place. The following chapter takes a closer look at these contexts and their special features.

## 4 EARLY LANGUAGE LEARNING CONTEXTS

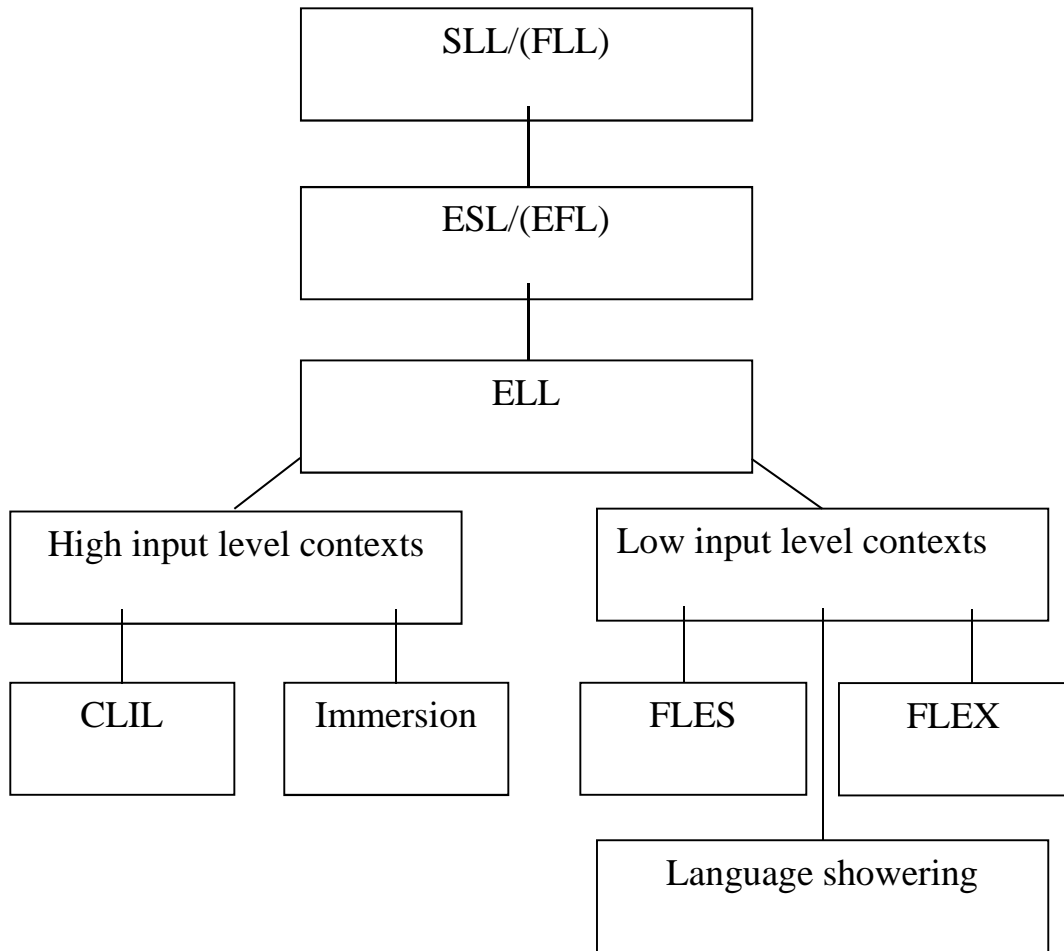
The previous chapter concentrated on biological, cognitive and motivational issues that might be in favor of young language learners and at the same time it aimed at answering the question why language learning at a young age could be beneficial for a child. In this chapter the point of view shifts from why to how. As the field of early language learning is constantly evolving it is important to take a look at the variety of terms and definitions that are used abroad as well as in Finland and define the terms that are relevant for this study and the material package. On the other hand, there are as many different methods of early language learning as there are countries. This makes it important to take a look at the similarities and differences between the different language learning programs that have been used in early language learning. Furthermore, these policies can then be compared with Finnish language showering which has started to spread in Finland during the past few years. As the term *language showering* might still seem vague it is necessary to take a look at the ideas behind the method and the ways that it has been utilized in Finland. Next the key terminology of this study and early language learning are discussed, after which foreign early language learning programs are discussed in detail. Finally, the perspective is narrowed down to Finnish language showering, which is looked at more closely.

### 4.1 Terms and definitions

The field of early language learning is full of terminology and abbreviations including SLL, FLL, ELL, CLIL, FLEX, FLES, etc. The list could be continued almost endlessly. Next the terms and definitions are approached from a top down-perspective to narrow down the key terms that are used in this study. However, it is important to notice that the choices made are based on one understanding of language learning and that in some other texts the choices can be different. In addition, the aim is not to impose opinions about language learning but to help to make the text easier to follow and grasp through a coherent use of terms. The terms used are first presented in Table 1 after which they are discussed and explained one at a time.



Table 2. Key terms



Firstly, the learning of English in Finland is in this study referred to as second language learning (SLL) as the position of the English language in Finland has started to resemble SLL. The typical distinction between SLL and FLL is that in SLL the learning of a language refers to a language that is spoken in the community (in the Finnish context Swedish) and that with FLL one refers to a language that is not generally spoken in the surrounding community. However, often the first foreign language that Finnish children start learning in schools is English and only after that comes Swedish. Also the use of English is more common at home, with friends and in travel and hobbies especially with young language users (Leppänen et al. 2009). As the aim is to generally describe the learning of a second language, the term SLL suits for the purposes of this study. Also the term ESL (English as a Second Language) might appear as the focus is on learning English.

Secondly, the branch of SLL that focuses on children learning languages is ELL (early language learning). ELL refers to language learning that takes place in primary school and the ages can vary from five- to eight-year-old children depending on different countries and their policies. The term ELL can also be used of the time before systematic SLL in schools. In the Finnish context this would concern children from six- to eight-year-olds. ELL can be divided into high and low input level contexts depending on the role that the second language plays in learning. In high input level contexts the language is often integrated in the curriculum and children are exposed to the target language several hours per week. In contrast, in the low input level contexts children are exposed to a lesser amount of language at a time and that the target language is not necessarily used in their everyday surroundings. In addition, it is also a fact that the aims in high and low input level contexts are quite different. In high input level contexts such as immersion and CLIL (content and language integrated learning) the focus is on using the language as a tool or a medium to learn content through a foreign language. In low input level contexts, such as FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School), FLEX (Foreign Language Exploratory/Experience/Exposure) and language showering, the aims are less goal-oriented and the biggest interest is in exposing children to new languages, raising cultural awareness and interest in the target language (Pinter 2011: 86-87). Although, for example, CLIL and language showering are quite different from one another, these methods have not developed separately but are to some extent related.

In addition, the high and low input level language learning programs can be looked at from one more perspective, which is time. Some of the first bilingual education was provided in the USA already in the mid-nineteenth century and probably the most well-known immersion programs, the French immersion programs, got started in Canada in the 1960s (Genesee 1987: 2-9). Since then bilingual education has been developing rapidly from different types of immersion to CLIL education and low input level language programs. The issue that separates high input level programs such as immersion and CLIL is that in immersion the language that is used is somehow relevant locally, for example, at home or in the society, and in contrast in CLIL education the foreign language can be whatever, although it most often is English, and that the language is used to teach new content for students (Lasagabaster and Sierra 2010: 369-370). On the other hand, what these two programs have in common is the striving for

proficiency in two languages, the first and the second language, and this again separates them from the low input level language learning contexts. Next some of these low input level contexts and programs that have been used abroad are reviewed and the features that they have in common are discussed.

#### **4.2 Low input level contexts in early language learning**

As mentioned above, low input level contexts lack the emphasis on linguistic and proficiency outcomes. Instead some other similarities have been found in these language programs. The main similarities include the development of communication skills, intention to increase motivation through fun experiences, familiarization with new cultures and development of cognitive, metacognitive and metalinguistic skills and at the same time expose children to a new language (Pinter 2011:87). From a large variety of these programs at least Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES), Foreign Language Exploratory/Experience/Exposure (FLEX) and an EU-funded project ELLiE, show that there are versatile and innovative ways to SLL all over the world.

The history of FLES and FLEX programs rises from the United States. The earliest forms of FLES were popular as early as in the 1960s but many programs stopped existing in the 1970s when the learning of foreign languages was not prioritized nationally. After taking foreign languages as a part of the core curriculum in the USA and releasing acts such as Goals 2000: Educate America and Improving America's schools of 1994 the importance of learning languages was highlighted and programs like FLES and FLEX resurfaced. At the moment FLES education can be divided into two: FLES and content-based FLES. The goals of FLES include improving students' listening and speaking skills and raising appreciation of other cultures. Some of the time is also used to practice reading and writing skills. There is a minimum of 75 minutes of FLES education per week and groups meet at least every other day. The time spent on FLES education increases in content-based FLES groups, where there is greater exposure to the foreign language, approximately 15-50% of their weekly class time. In content-based FLES one focuses on reading and writing skills and other subjects are learnt together with the foreign language. Therefore it can be seen almost as intermediate form of high and low input level language learning, which is quite far from

the basic ideology of the third alternative Foreign Language Exploratory/Experience/Exposure (FLEX) (CAL 2010).

Some ideas behind FLEX are quite similar to Finnish language showering as the aims are that students are exposed to the new language and culture, they learn some words and phrases and through this develop their interest in new languages. However, FLEX can also be organized in a way that it introduces samples from more than one language, or that some details of the new language are first provided in students' first language before using the target language. How the FLEX meetings are organized also varies. The group can meet frequently under a tight time frame or that there are longer pauses between sessions, which can then last a bit longer (CAL 2010). FLEX can also cover several different program types depending on schools and their choices. The first possibility is *a general course* where students get to know about language families, different modalities with languages (written, spoken, signed, etc.) and modern/classical languages. A general course aims at providing general information about languages and language learning is not an aim of the teaching at any point. The second possibility is *a language potpourri* where students are introduced to several languages on one course. The students taking part in a language potpourri learn some simple phrases of many languages together with some cultural aspects. This type of FLEX programs have been used to help children with their language choices and familiarize them with all the language options available in their schools. The third and final FLEX program is *a single language program*, which reminds Finnish language showering the most. In a single language program children are exposed only to one new language, which they may later start to study in school. In a single language program there is an expectation for some language learning and there is an emphasis on cultural awareness and functional language activities (Marcos 1996).

More recently the Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) team of international researchers set out to find differences and similarities in early foreign language learning policies across Europe. In the transnational and longitudinal study over 1400 children together with their teachers, families and schools from seven European countries (the UK, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Poland and Croatia) participated in questionnaires, interviews and observations during the years 2006-2010. The aims of the study were to investigate the effectiveness of ELL and the variables affecting the effectiveness. The results showed that justifying ELL with the age of the learners is not

enough but that effectiveness is related to language policies, teacher education, learners school and out-of-school experiences in each country. The biggest problems were found in the countries' language policies where early foreign language teachers lack support on the regional and local level and are not provided with education in methodology. On the other hand, there are also big differences in teacher education in the seven countries and in some of these the teachers are not linguistically proficient enough to teach in a foreign language. The role of an unqualified teacher was seen remarkable in terms of the language learning of children and it could undo all the benefits that have been tried to reach in ELL. However, the positive results of the study showed that children are interested in learning languages and take an advantage of especially the English language around them. The final conclusion of the study was that instead of coming up with new programs and ways for early language learning one should focus on developing the existing ones into efficient ways to learn new languages (Enever 2011: 11-20, 145-151). In a Finnish context one of the newest low input level ELL programs is language showering, which because of its increasing popularity has the possibility to develop into a successful way for ELL in Finland. The next section discusses the short history of language showering and gives examples of the ways it has been used in the Finnish context, but also reasons that have impacted ELL on a national level.

### **4.3 Language showering in Finland**

In Finland the term language showering (*kielisuihkutus*) started to spread around the country after a nationwide project called *Kielitivoli* during the years 2009-2011 (Bärlund 2012). The project had two main aims (Kielitivoli! 2012): to develop language teaching in Finland and to diversify the languages taught and learnt in schools by increasing cooperation between communities, schools and parents. Language showers were one method that was used to reach these aims. Although language showering has been influenced by language immersion it differs from it in various ways. Bärlund (2012) explains that whereas language immersion often uses language as a tool or device to content learning, in language showers two languages are used: the first language (in this case often Finnish) and the language that is used for showering. She continues by adding that language showers are more short-term exposure to the language and that, for example, showering can be woven into the everyday activities

that children have in schools. Another definition for language showering (Nikula and Marsh 1997: 25) concentrates on the fact that language showering differs from “normal” SLL in many ways. Firstly, language showering is mainly done in the target language as the learners are exposed to a large amount of language input at once. Secondly, language showering focuses on interaction in the target language even though the students’ skills in the target language might be quite elementary. Finally, it is emphasized that language showering is learning and teaching without pens and books. In other words, language showering is a less goal-orientated way of getting in touch with a new language through activities and tasks where the learner has an active role as a participant instead of a recipient.

Language showering is a versatile method for language teaching and it can be used in many ways. At the moment, probably one of the most common ways of using language showering in Finland is after school language clubs where an attempt has been made to motivate and stimulate children to learn languages, for example, through game and play. Language clubs for language showering have been used at least in Jyväskylä, Tampere, Ylivieska, Sodankylä and Helsinki (Kielitivoli 2012). In order to get more visibility language showering has been part of language selection days in schools and given children the possibility to try at new languages before they choose one to study. At the university of Jyväskylä there has been a great emphasis on language showering in theme days at university (Tieteenpäivät 2013), but also in the city (Yläkaupungin yö 2012, 2013) and there is a possibility to call a language showerer from the university to a school (Kielikampus). Despite all the variations that have been tested, language showering is still a developing pedagogy and even some basic guidelines for using might be hard to find. However, this is not necessarily a problem for just language showering, but part of a bigger process of defining second language teaching in Finnish schools. On a national level there can be great variation how language teaching is organized in schools. Positive about this is that schools can tailor their second language teaching to their needs, but on the negative side the variety of different ways of teaching might complicate the compiling of appropriate teaching materials and evaluation of teaching in the long run (Nikula and Marsh 1997: 24). This correlates with the results of the ELLiE study in which one of the outcomes also was that the development of existing ELL methods should be emphasized (Enever 2011).

There are several possibilities for developing language showering pedagogy. One could be to define the role of the target language and students' first language and to give examples of when to use the first language and when the second language. Another possibility would be to gather the language showerers or early language teachers together by providing them extra education and a possibility to interact with each other in a seminar or, for example, through an internet forum. An internet forum could also work as a material bank where teachers could share showering tasks, games, useful links, etc. The present study approaches language showering from this developmental perspective and focuses on the developing of material for language showering. The framework of the material package and its aims are discussed in the next chapter.

## **5 FRAMEWORK OF THE MATERIAL PACKAGE**

The material package “Take a shower!” is a collection of activities and tasks designed for an English language teacher planning to use language showering as a teaching method in an ELL classroom or in language clubs, etc. The material is designed as a starting point for a short six-week period of language showering, and as language showering is language teaching without books and booklets this material is targeted just at teachers. Firstly, this chapter summarizes the starting points of the material package, which are followed by the specific aims of the material package. After this the target group of the present study is discussed. This is followed by a presentation of the organization of the material package. Finally, the types of activities chosen for this material package are presented together with justifications.

### **5.1 Starting points of the material package**

Early second language learning and teaching is still taking baby steps in Finland although different contexts for ELL have existed for decades (see section 4.2). One of the possible reasons behind this is the Finnish NCC and the Finnish custom to start second language learning at the age of nine. At the moment the NCC provides only vague suggestions of the issues that could be taken account of if SLL should start as early as on the first or second grade as it was discussed in section 3.5. As the NCC provides the guidelines of the Finnish education, not many communities or schools have taken advantage of an early start to language learning. In 2011 only about ten percent of Finnish children start learning a new language on the first or second grade (Koulutuksen tilastollinen vuosikirja 2011: 49). Another possible reason for the low percentage of early language learners is the number of different developing methods and pedagogies. It can be difficult for many teachers to start using a new method if there is not enough information about it, the ways it can be used and some available material to get things started.

However, there are likely to be some changes to the current situation when the new NCC comes into effect in 2016 and alters the status of foreign languages in the curriculum (for further discussion see section 2.1). Sticking to the current model would



mean that a Finnish child in primary school could start a new foreign language every year during a three-year period, which can be seen as too overwhelming. Therefore, it is likely that the first foreign language is going to start before the third grade in primary school. The question is whether this has been noticed soon enough and whether there will be any changes in the ways children are taught in their first foreign language, most likely English. The development of children, which was discussed from different perspectives in chapter 3, and the way they are taught must be taken into account as the preparedness to start learning new languages is different on the first grade than it is on the third grade. For this reason, it is important to notice that ELL could and should differ from ideas and perceptions that people normally have about language learning in schools. Most of the different ELL methods and especially language showering takes into account the special features that children have as developing learners and aim at providing them with such teaching that could be the most beneficial for them at a young age. In practice this means that the students are introduced to pieces of the English language and these pieces are chosen based on the themes that are close to their everyday life. This is in line with the guidelines that the Finnish NCC provides. The guidelines and the special features of language showering can also be seen in the way the activities are compiled. The activities are rich in input and output, activating but also simple enough for young learners to grasp. Besides the language showering method this material uses Vygotsky's ZPD as one starting point and in the material this can be seen in building a close relationship between the students and the teacher, but also in using group work and challenging the student from one level to the next as the lessons go by. This creates a cumulative effect on learning.

One possibility to provide young language learners functional language teaching is through the use of language showering as a teaching method. In the few small-scale studies that have been conducted (Pynnönen 2013, 2012, Mela 2012) language showering has shown to be a motivational method that supports also the development of learners' cultural knowledge as well as their communication skills. This suggests that language showering could be taken advantage of in the future Finnish ELL. In order for language showering to break through and become a more widely used method for language learning and teaching it has to be developed further as pedagogy. One part of this development is material development, which is targeted in the present study as there is no publicly available material package for language showering.

## 5.2 Aims

The present study has several different aims, which can be divided into two main categories: general aims and those related with material package. One could itemize the general aims as highlighting the positive sides of ELL and to show that there are reasons why teaching should also be based on a group's needs and special features. In addition, the intention is to show that changes need to be made in the Finnish language learning field and to question whether we are prepared for these changes or not. Finally, the present study wants to encourage teachers to use language showering as a method for early language teaching and to think what kind of issues could support the language learning of a child in the best possible way.

On the other hand, the aims related with the material package rise from the more general ones. Firstly, the idea is to develop language showering pedagogy by providing material that is specifically directed to language showering and the material should take into consideration the functionality of language showering, raising the students' cultural awareness and supporting the communicative nature of language learning (see sections 3.6 and 4.3). The development of children should be considered when designing the activities and the length of showering lessons (see chapter 3). It is important that the material package is clearly structured and that different sections of it provide enough information for the teacher using the material. All the activities should have clear instructions about the possible preparations that have to be made, a list of things a teacher might need during the showering lesson and good explanations about the activities for each lesson. The activities should vary in terms of whether they are more receptive or productive as young children need both a large amount of language input and a possibility to use the language. The input makes them familiar with the language and the use of the target language raises their self-confidence as language speakers. All in all, the package should help the teacher to get to know the principles of language showering and the activities should be based on these principles and support the ideology of language showering and, in addition, take into account the special characteristics of young language learners.

### **5.3 Target group**

The first- and second-graders were chosen as the target group of the present study as at the moment they could benefit most of English language showering before the “actual” teaching of English starting on the third grade. On the other hand, if there should be changes in the age that Finnish children start learning English this material could be used as one way of English teaching, as the material attempts to take into account the special features of six-, seven- and eight-year-old learners. Some of the activities might work also with older learners, but mostly the material has been designed to be as simple and unambiguous that it would be easy to use with young learners.

The saying goes: play is the work of children, which is something that has been tried to keep in mind while designing the material. It takes time for young learners to adapt to the way things are done in school and the shift from a playing preschooler to a young student can be difficult for some. In language showering the first- and second-graders should be able to use their own strengths as active, enthusiastic and curious learners and the methods used help them to grasp points and ideas about the new language.

### **5.4 Organization of the material package**

Firstly, the material package provides the teacher with some of the basic principles of language showering and the starting points of the material. This includes giving instructions about the preferable group size, length of each lesson and the basic equipment needed in order to make use of the material the best possible way. Secondly, the material takes into account the fact that language showering as a teaching method might be unfamiliar to teachers and some tips for getting started with showering are given. Finally, there is a material outline chart, which shows the theme and the language elements for each lesson together with names of the activities.

The material package consists of fourteen lessons with different themes related to life and surroundings of a young language learner. The themes have been chosen based on the guidelines that the Finnish NCC provides about young learners and early language learning before the third grade in Finnish primary school (NCC 2004: 138). Each lesson has been designed by keeping in mind the method of topic-based planning, which

means that during one lesson one topic such as numbers, colours, school, time, etc. are dealt with in various ways. This type of topic-based planning is often used in CLIL education, but has also been found useful by English teachers who design their own materials (Pinter 2006: 124-125). In other words the idea of topic-based planning is to start from one theme and then think about all the possible ways that it can be taught and learned.

Each lesson is divided into four parts. After some opening words there are some points for the teacher to consider specifically before and during the lesson. As language showering does not aim at evaluating language skills, no specified skill objectives can be determined. However, the objectives that are given to the students aim at pointing the teacher's attention to the right direction about language showering. The students' objectives are directed to the teachers and the idea is that they give concrete examples of the issues that the students learn on that lesson. The objectives can also be a way to evaluate one's own teaching: Have I made it possible for the students to reach these aims? Furthermore, the objectives of the students are intentionally formed in such a way that they could support further learning with the activities that have been designed for each lesson. These thoughts are followed by the showering plan, which consists of three parts: drizzle, shower and drying-off, each containing generally at least a one activity. With drizzle activities the intention is to get the children attuned to a new theme and warm up a little bit with the language needed. Often a drizzle activity can be a song, a rhyme or something else that provides a large amount of target language input. Drizzle is followed by one or more shower activities where the students are more involved with the learning and practice and use the language more. The new information of each lesson is presented through the shower activities. Finally, each lesson is finished with a drying-off activity which either are activities that recap the shower activities or, for example, bring in some cultural information related to the theme. At the end of each lesson there is also a list of accessories that are needed during the lesson.

As mentioned, the exercises and tasks in this material are designed by using topic-based planning and the structure of the showering plan, on the other hand, resembles a normal language lesson plan. Therefore, it is the content that mostly differs. The content of each showering lesson is designed by keeping in mind the principles of language showering, but also the guidelines for early second language learning. The activities include a lot of English language input together with speaking activities, which provide the students

with a possibility to start practicing their language skills from the first lesson on. The emphasis on listening and speaking skills with young second language learners has been especially useful in terms of their still developing writing and reading skills and the active nature of learning stands out when listening and speaking is practiced more (Lundberg 2011, Pinter 2006). Some of the activities have been designed by me and some others taken from other sources such as books or the internet. The sources have always been indicated under different songs, rhymes, etc. With video material there are often only suggestions for search words as there is no guarantee for the links to be working by the time the material is used by someone.

To sum up, the material package contains fourteen lessons, which each cover a language theme. The 45-minute language showering lessons are divided into four parts: some ideas for the teacher, objectives for the students, the language showering plan and a list of accessories needed for the lesson. The activities of each lesson have been constructed from warm-up activities, to action and finally some revision. In the exercises there is an emphasis on practicing listening and speaking skills through games, songs and other hands-on activities. The topics and activities of each lesson are listed in table 3.

Table 3. Content of the material package

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Drizzle</b>	<b>Shower</b>	<b>Drying-off</b>
1. The Kick-off	Getting to know each other and English	Nameformula,	Catch the ball, It sounds like English, English all over	-
2. Meetings and greetings	Introducing oneself	Good morning/ afternoon/ evening/ good night	Greetings!, The unique cocktail party	Until next time
3. I can count...	Numbers	A rhyme: I can count	Memory game, Writing to the back, How old are you?	Atoms
4. On my freetime...	Hobbies	Teacher pantomime	Students pantomime/ Pictionary	I like/ I don't like, Reveal the hobby!
5. Shades of the rainbow	Colors	Touch a color	Bingo preparations, Color bingo	The Color King

6. What's the time Mr. Wolf?	Time	Rock around the clock	Cliketty CLOCK, What's the time Mr. Wolf?	Big Ben
7. What's cool in school?	School	Familiar words?	Classroom raiders, Kim's game	Please bring me
8. We are the Johnssons	Family	My family	Daddy finger, mommy finger	Presenting my family
9. Wuff, oink, miaow, roar!	Animals	Guess the song	Let me see your funky monkey!	Animal riddles
10. Yummy food in the tummy	Food	Cooking show	Food place mats	Yummy, yummy!
11. Let the sunshine in	Weather	Sunshine reggae, Weather forecast	The absent-minded meteorologist	What's the weather like?
12. Headbanging	Body parts	Head, shoulders, knees and toes	Just like me	Monsters
13. On the catwalk	Clothes	Organizing the store	The designer says	Fashion show
14. What have I learned so far	Recap	The ship is loaded with...	Snakes and ladders	Top three

## 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at developing language showering pedagogy by providing more information about the method itself, but also by creating a material package that could be used in English language showering. For this to be possible, the theoretical background of the study focused on the distinctive characteristics that young learners have compared to adults and older learners. The theoretical background showed that some of the differences between young and older learners are not unambiguous, but more complex. This, however, does not change the fact that these two groups differ from one another. The background also focused on the upcoming changes in Finnish society and discussed the current and new NCC. All this aimed at highlighting the point that if there are likely to be changes in the starting ages of foreign languages, there has to be changes in the teaching methods and materials as well.

An attempt was made to show a connection between the ways that young learners learn and an existing, but still developing, teaching method, i.e., language showering. Although language showering as a method is not based on a specific theory it is possible to find connections from Piaget's and Vygotsky's language learning theories on the background of language showering. Learning in stages, support of an adult, the learning environment and the teaching methods that are used have shown to be important in language showering as well. The intention was to show that by developing an existing teaching method and providing ready material for English teachers it would be easier to start teaching and learning English on the first or second grade of Finnish primary school. One point of the material package was to provide teachers with ready-made material and make language showering as easy as possible. Another point was to try to show that learning a language is also possible by singing, playing and using, for example, the body as a learning tool.

The writing process lasted almost a year and a half. During the first year the background of the study was written and the framework for the material package created. The last six months were used to design and test the material package. The material was tested in Central Finland with two English language showering groups that consisted of 3-15 students, who were seven or eight years old. This time language showering was used as a method in a voluntary after school club. The number of participants varied weekly,

because the principle was that the students could choose from a variety of clubs every day without having to committing to one or two clubs. The way language showering was conducted was that the two groups met weekly for a session of 45-60 minutes. Each week one theme from the material package was used to create the basis for the lesson. Based on the observations made in the classroom during the language showering sessions the material was revised and adapted in order to make the activities work better.

Some points can be made about the young learners that took part in the English language showering. The issues that were brought up in the theoretical background, such as the difference in how young learners act and work, the importance of the language teacher and the useful methods with young learners seemed to be true at least with these two groups. The students were like sponges, which absorbed more and more information every week. After a couple of weeks basic greetings and phrases of politeness were familiar to the ones that participated regularly. However, when it comes to the students who did not attend language showering regularly the development was much more subtle and they were more likely to have more challenges in getting attuned to the language. Songs and games were very popular among the students and if they liked a game or a song they also wanted to repeat it, i.e., repetition was important. For such young learners as seven- or eight-year-olds building a relationship with the teacher was important and often the students were already standing by the classroom door and waiting for the club to start. However, the time when language showering was held was sometimes a bit problematic. During after-school hours in the afternoon the students were at times a bit hysterical and tired and their attention span may have been even shorter than usual. In these situations the lesson plan had to be changed on the fly, but that is something that one has to be able to deal with in this profession.

Despite the testing and revising of the material there are likely to be some limitations to it. The material focuses mainly on the themes of each lesson, which define the structure of the lessons. For example, the cultural aspect of language showering is not necessarily highlighted in the best way possible, although an attempt was made to weave culture into the activities by using traditional games, rhymes and songs. In addition, from the point of view of language development these 14 lessons provide some of the basic phrases or “survival English” together with samples of vocabulary. However, it does not provide tools for teaching, for example, grammar. It is also a fact that the material is



designed to quite a modern classroom with internet access, a computer, a projector and a document camera. Unfortunately, there are still some schools that do not have these luxuries and therefore the use of videos, for example, might turn out to be difficult. Finally, it is also possible that the material alone is not enough for the teachers to start language showering, but that they would need even more information or some practical training with the method. This being said, unlike many materials designed as part of a MA thesis, this material package has been piloted with two different groups and based on the observations it has also been revised. It can be said that the material is appropriate for the target group and that the activities are possible to carry out in the time frames given. The material has also worked in terms of being versatile, enthusiastic, learner orientated and activating. The students in the piloting groups enjoyed the lessons and were eager to learn more English. From this point of view the aims of language showering were met.

It seems that ELL research and especially the research on the teaching methods that can be used with young learners is developing at this moment. The present study took a look at one teaching method and tried to shed more light on language showering. However, more studies on the teaching methods and the background on ELL are needed in order to get a deeper and more profound perspective on the topic. There is a specific need for studies that would provide a theoretical background for the available teaching methods and show what they are based on. In other words, there is a need for studies that combine theory and practice. It would also be interesting to make a longitudinal study of the students who participated in language showering as children and to study whether their perceptions of English changes during the years as they grow older. On the other hand, more material development is also needed in order to get activities from which to choose from and material with different focuses (vocabulary, grammar, speaking, etc.) Hopefully, this material package can encourage some English teachers to start language showering and that the material could show that language showering is not just for fun, but that it can be used for learning purposes as well. By thinking how someone learns, it is possible to provide students with teaching that supports their development and encourages lifelong language learning. And you can still have some fun on the side.

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# Take a shower!

A teacher's handbook for  
language showering in English

Laura Sainio

2013





## Take a shower!

Dear colleague, you are holding on to a teacher's handbook for language showering. The handbook consists of ready-made language showering material that can be used with young novice English language learners as a kick-off to the English language and culture. The material of the handbook is designed for six to eight-year-olds as a target group, but some of the activities might work with older learners as well.

Language showering as a method might be something new to you, but the aim of this handbook is to give you some suggestions how you can get started with showering. As a teaching method language showering aims at providing rich exposure to the target language and culture. In addition, language showering emphasizes the functionality of language learning. The term functionality is best explained by some of the main principles of language showering, which can be listed as follows:

- ❖ Language showering is language learning without text- and workbooks.
- ❖ During language showering lessons or sessions the students are exposed to a large amount of input in English and the understanding is supported with e.g. visual aids, gestures, facial expressions and mime. However, language showering is not immersion and therefore also the students' first language has a place in the classroom, and the two languages can be used side by side.
- ❖ The students start using English from early on and build their language skills from separate words to simple phrases in the target language.
- ❖ Language showering lessons consist of many hands-on activities where the students are active participants and use their whole body in learning, instead of only sitting still and listening. These activities can consist of, for example, rhymes, songs and games in English.
- ❖ The intention of language showering is to encourage further language learning and to get the students interested in languages. Therefore, the students are not evaluated in any way during language showering. In addition, mistakes and errors happen in the target language, but they are not pointed out or emphasized in any way.

The material package that you are holding has been compiled with these guidelines in mind, which is also one of the reasons why this material in paper is designed only for

the teachers. The intention is to get you started and excited with language showering and to provide support and new ideas to your teaching. The material for showering sessions such as number and color cards, flags of different countries, clock instructions, etc. can be found on a CD that comes with the material package.

Hope you'll have some amazing language showering lessons ahead!

Jyväskylä, November 20<sup>th</sup> 2013


Laura Sainio


## Starting points of the handbook

- ❖ The activities and plans have been designed for a group consisting of a maximum of fifteen students and a minimum of five students. As the idea is to be able to activate all the students, the group size should not rise above the maximum suggested. In addition, in order for the activities to work there should be at least five students in a group.
- ❖ The showering lessons are designed to last 45 minutes. The time frame for each language showering lesson has been chosen for two reasons: the previous experiences of language showering and the Finnish school system, where lessons in primary schools often last 45 minutes. It has also been taken into account that the attention span of a six-, seven-, or an eight-year-old is not necessarily enough for longer lessons.
- ❖ Most of the material in the handbook is designed to be used in a classroom context with equipment that can usually be found in a classroom. This equipment includes a computer with Internet access and/or a CD-player.
- ❖ The handbook is divided into 14 topics, which each form the basis of one showering lesson. This way it is possible to concentrate on one aspect of language at a time and also to use variable activities to approach a specific topic.
- ❖ The topics have been chosen based on the guidelines that the Finnish NCC provides on the themes close to children and also to fit the functional nature of language showering.
- ❖ The activities have been chosen based on the methods that have been found useful with young language learners. Therefore, there are many songs, rhymes and games.
- ❖ Next to each activity there is a time frame for that activity. However, the time frames for each of the activities are only estimations and can vary depending on group size, participants, etc. This should be taken into account while using the material.
- ❖ Each showering lesson consists of four parts: the ideas for the teacher, the objectives for the students, the showering plan with its activities and

also a list of accessories that are needed during the lesson. Ideas for the teacher-sections suggest some points that might be useful to consider and keep in mind during the showering lesson. Objectives for the students are intended to be formed in a way that they would support enthusiasm towards language learning further as language showering does not aim at evaluating children and their use of the target language.

- ❖ The showering plan activities consist of *drizzle*, *shower* and *drying off*. *Drizzle* is a warm-up activity and a way to tune in to the theme of each

lesson. These activities are marked with:  After this it is time for *shower*, in other words, the main activities of the lesson, which are

marked with:  Finally the lesson is commonly ended with a revision activity/activities i.e. *drying off*. These activities are marked

with: 

- ❖ In some of the activities there are suggestions for a video, song or a rhyme, but no direct links to any. This has been a conscious choice as the world of the Internet is amazing but at the same time unpredictable and it might be that by the time you tried the link the material has been removed or the web page shut down. However, there are always some suggestions for search words which can be used in Youtube or Google and hopefully that way you can always find the best material for your purposes.

## Issues to consider before you start language showering

- ❖ Create certain rituals for the beginning and the end of the lesson. Greet the students and teach them to greet you back. Ask how they are doing and teach them alternatives with which to respond. You could also use a specific song to start or end the showering lesson. The different variations are up to you and your personality. The important thing is that there are routines.

- ❖ Use as much English as possible. The students can understand many things if you help them with gestures, facial expressions or visual clues.
- ❖ Encourage the students to use English. However, don't make a problem of the students' or your use of Finnish. Both languages can be used in the same classroom and can support learning. The same principle applies to mistakes in English. They do not matter and they should not be pointed out. One of the main points of language showering is to get the students interested in English and this is unlikely to happen if the students feel like they do not understand what is being said and advised in the classroom or if they feel like that they do not know how to use the language "correctly".
- ❖ In language showering the teacher plays a big role as a supportive, encouraging and involved adult. Throw yourself into teaching and make yourself approachable in the students' eyes.
- ❖ The handbook provides only a few ways of doing language showering. You might feel that some of the activities do not suit your purposes or your group. In these situations feel free to adapt the activities in a way that could work better with your students and situation.
- ❖ Surprise! A teacher knows that almost anything can happen in a classroom during a lesson. At times it can be that you feel like you need more activities than the plan gives you or that you only have time to do half of the activities. This kind of flexibility is a part of our profession and that is why every showering lesson is unique.

## Material outline

Lesson	Theme	Language elements	Activities	Pages
1	The kick-off	Getting to know each other and English	Nameformula, Catch the ball, It sounds like English, English all over	10-13
2	Meetings and greetings	Most common greetings, introducing oneself	Good morning/afternoon/evening/night, Greetings!, The unique cocktail party, Until next time	14-16
3	I can count...	Numbers	I can count-rhyme, Memory game, Writing to the back, How old are you?, Atoms	17-20
4	On my freetime...	Hobbies	Teacher pantomime, Student pantomime/Pictionary, I like/I don't like, EXTRA: Reveal the hobby!	21-23
5	Shades of the rainbow	Colors	Touch a color, Bingo (preparations + game), The Color King	24-27
6	What's the time Mr. Wolf?	Time	Rock around the clock, Clicketty CLOCK, What's the time Mr. Wolf?, Big	28-31

			Ben	
7	What's cool in school?	School	Familiar words?, Classroom raiders, Kim's game, Please bring me	32-34
8	We are the Johnssons	Family	My family, Daddy finger, mommy finger, Presenting my family	35-37
9	Wuff, oink, miaow, roar!	Animals, adjectives	Guess the song, Let me see your funky monkey!, Animal riddles	38-41
10	Yummy food in the tummy	Food	Cooking show, Food place mats, Yummy, yummy!	42-44
11	Let the sunshine in	Weather	Sunshine reggae, Weather forecast, The absent-minded meteorologist, What's the weather like?	45-48
12	Headbanging	Body parts	Head, shoulders, knees and toes, Just like me, Monsters	49-52
13	On the catwalk	Clothes	Organizing the store, The designer says, Fashion show	53-55
14	What have I learned so far...	Recap	The ship is loaded with..., Snakes and ladders, Top three	56-58

## Lesson 1 – The Kick-off

The first lesson of language showering is crucial as it gives the students their first impression of the English language, but also of the teacher and the ways that English is learned in a language showering classroom. For a young learner the situation can be very exciting, but at the same time a bit nerve-racking as there can be so many new elements related to the showering situation: the teacher, the language, the other students and even the space. It is important to try to make the first lesson as approachable as possible and to provide the students with possibilities to succeed and feel like they know and can do various things. The main aim should be that the students could leave the language showering lesson with a smile on their face.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ On the first lesson the balance between English and Finnish is important. You do not want to drown the children with complex expressions and phrases in English but to give them samples that are easy to grasp. It is likely that most of you speak Finnish as your mother tongue and therefore it is natural to get started in Finnish.
- ❖ Try to break the ice. The more familiar you become with your group the easier the future lessons will be. This is also why it is important that you take part in the activities.
- ❖ Make use of the knowledge that the students already have about the English language and culture. Let them tell you and the other students things that they know about the language or the English speaking countries. Young learners are eager to share their knowledge and experiences with the whole group.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students get a visual image about the English speaking world and see that the language is spoken all over the world.
- ❖ The students get to know each other and the teacher by using simple English.



## Showering plan



### **Nameformula (5 minutes)**

Nameformula is one of the most simplest getting-to-know activities, but it is useful when there is a need for an ice-breaker. First, everybody sits in a ring on the floor. The teacher has a ball that can be passed around in the ring. The idea is to say your name when the ball is passed on to you and then for you to pass it on to the person sitting next to you, who says his name and passes the ball on to the person sitting next to him and so on. The game starts with a slow round and after each round you pick up the speed. During the rounds the teacher times the laps and encourages the students for a quicker lap. If the students get excited the game can go on endlessly. Therefore, it is a good idea to set a time limit. For example, *If we go under seven seconds we can stop, because you have done so great.*



### **Catch the ball (5-10 minutes)**

The whole group can continue sitting in the ring and do another introducing task. In this activity the students get to speak in English, but also repeat their names. This time the one holding the ball introduces himself/herself in English by saying, for example, *I'm Lauri/Pekka/Leena...* then he makes eye contact with another student, and continues *Catch the ball Jonna/Simo/Salla...* and throws the ball to this person. The first couple of times it is good to repeat the phrases together, except the names of course. The ball-throwing continues until each student has thrown the ball to another student.



### **It sounds like English... (10 minutes)**

The children, as we all, are surrounded by the English language in our everyday lives. It has become a natural part of our lives and we do not necessarily pay that big attention when we hear English. The intention of this task is to get the students attuned to English and try to spot English among other languages. For this the teacher has to have either music or speech samples in different languages from the Internet or on CDs. A good number of sample languages is English plus five other languages. At this point of language learning the languages should be as different from each other as possible, so that the spotting of English is possible for many students. The easiest way to find samples could be Youtube, but also CDs from the library are easily available. In Youtube you could use search words such as: *svenska, deutsch, language sample English, song in French*, etc.

To begin with the task the teacher starts playing the music/language samples and tells the students to walk freely in the classroom, but to stop when they feel like they are hearing music or speech in English. When the students stop the teacher can ask follow-up questions like *Why was that English?, What did English sound like to you?* or *Where have you heard English before, On TV, on the radio...*



### **English all over (20 minutes)**

The idea behind this task is to visualize the phrase *English is spoken all over the world* by using a map of the world and small flags of the countries where English is an official language. In this activity the students try to find the right country for a flag from the map. Even students who cannot read can take part in this activity as they can compare the countries written on the flags with the names of the countries written on the map. The students attach the flags on the map with blue-tack. The twelve flags have been

chosen so that they would visually show how widely spread the English speaking world is. However, it is important to explain to the students that English is spoken in many more countries, including Finland (not only these twelve) and that it is an official language in over 50 countries.

### Accessories

- ❖ a ball
- ❖ CDs or music from Youtube in different languages. Alternatively, speech samples in different languages
- ❖ a map of the world
- ❖ pictures of the flags of English speaking countries (document 1 on the CD)
- ❖ Blu-tack

## Lesson 2 – Meetings and greetings

One of the first things that you learn in a foreign language is to present yourself and to greet others. This second lesson focuses on both of these themes. On this lesson the students start to use more English and become more involved also physically in language learning. The phrases are repeated many times by making use of both receptive and productive skills to make memory traces stronger.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ Give the students a possibility to affect their learning in the classroom. They are good at inventing movements and gestures. At times when you feel like your head is empty they can be a great asset to you.
- ❖ In tasks where there are different phases or steps focus on giving clear instructions and take one step at a time. If you have a clear picture of what you are doing, it is likely to come across to your students too.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students become aware of the most common greetings in English and practice their use.
- ❖ The students practice introducing themselves and asking for someone's name.
- ❖ The students become an involved part of their own learning process and are able to give the teacher their own suggestions.

### Showering plan



#### **Good morning/afternoon/evening/night (5 minutes)**

You can find many colorful greeting videos in the Internet. These are a good way to pique the students' interest and introduce them to the topic. Try search words such as *greeting song, hello song or nursery rhyme greetings* on Youtube and you will find

plenty of videos from which to choose from. Play one song or a video for your students at the beginning of your lesson.



### **Greetings! (10-15 minutes)**

*Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, good night, hello, nice to meet you, see you,* are some of the most basic greetings in English. However, if you want to learn or teach them there has to be some context around them. This game makes use of TPR *total physical response* where the students use their whole body in responding when they hear something in the target language.

In this game the teacher starts by presenting the greetings to the students. This can be done with the help of pantomime, picture cards or even a song. After this the students suggest moves or gestures that would describe each greeting the best. For example, when saying *nice to meet you* one could shake hands or with *good night* one could pretend to be sleeping. The important thing is that every greeting gets its own move or gesture. After this the whole group starts repeating the greetings, together with the chosen gestures. You should start slowly and if it feels like pick up the speed round after round. After a couple of rounds the teacher stops with the gestures and only says the greetings when the students should respond with the correct gesture. To make the activity a bit more demanding it is possible to mix up the order of the greetings during each round. This way the students cannot rely only on their memory but have to listen what the teacher says.



### **The unique cocktail party (20-25 minutes)**

As a task this might feel like quite a long one compared to most tasks in this material package. However there are many steps to this unique cocktail party which should help in keeping the students busy and interested.

**Step 1** Prepare nametags for everyone. Most of the young students know how to write their own name, but provide help if needed. (If you have a small group or students that know how to write you could also choose an English name for everyone.) Then mix up the nametags so that everyone gets somebody else's name and that way a new identity for the game. Attach the nametags to chests with tape. You could also use stickers that you can write on or post-it notes.

**Step 2** Dress-up a little bit. Bring with you hats, ties, scarfs, old glasses, sun glasses, shirts, etc. and let the students invent the looks for their new personalities.

**Step 3** Practice the question *What's your name?* and the answer *I'm...* together a couple of times.

**Step 4** Play some cocktail party music in the background. Tell the students to walk freely in the classroom, but to stop every time the music stops. After this they should walk up to the closest person next to them and say *hello*, ask the person his/her name and also answer the same question and finally end the conversation with *bye* or *see you!* Remember to illustrate the situation to the students so that everyone knows what to do. Emphasize also that they can and should play a role as they have a new name and new clothes for this party.



**Until next time (a couple of minutes)**

End the lesson by shaking hands with everyone and thanking them for joining the party.

You could repeat phrases like *It was nice to meet you*, *See you*, *Bye*, etc.

### Accessories

- ❖ nametags
- ❖ pencils
- ❖ tape, stickers or post-it notes
- ❖ clothes and accessories for the role play
- ❖ music for the cocktail party

## Lesson 3 – I can count

On this lesson the students get to know numbers from one to ten. The shower activities on this lesson can be used in order and move from the first activity to the second and so on. This could be a good approach if the size of the group is rather small. However, if the group size should be closer to ten students an alternative way for using the activities is the so called “checkpoint” method, where the students are divided into small groups and they go around in the classroom from one checkpoint to another and independently work on the different showering tasks. The students spend about ten minutes on each of the checkpoints and on the teacher’s mark move to a next checkpoint. Before and after the shower activities there is a drizzle and a drying-off activity which are suggested to be used with the whole group.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ The written form of a number and the way it is pronounced can be difficult for a young learner. Usually the symbol together with the written form e.g. *1 – one*, helps the learner to piece them together. It might be a good idea to write these down on the blackboard and place some visual clues like one heart next written form *one* or three triangles next to *three*. The children can then look for help from the blackboard while working.
- ❖ The independent work on the checkpoints might encourage some students to use English more as they can use it in front of a smaller group of children. Therefore, do not be afraid of using the checkpoints.
- ❖ Explain all the checkpoints point by point and show which activity is done where. This helps making the working procedure as fluent as possible.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students should become familiar with some numbers in English and also become aware of the fact that the way the numbers are spelled in English differs from the way they are pronounced.
- ❖ The students learn the question *How old are you?* and how to answer it.
- ❖ The students learn to work together in English in small groups.

## Showering plan



### **A rhyme: I can count (10 minutes)**

Tell the students that you are going to tell them a rhyme, and that the students should listen carefully and try to guess what the rhyme is about. While performing, try to visualize the rhyme with your hands as much as possible, in order to make the rhyme easier to grasp. It can also be a good idea to repeat the rhyme twice and ask the children to join you.

### **I Can Count**

I can count, want to see?

Here's my fingers- one, two, three (*Hold up fingers as you count*)

Four and five, this hand is done.

Now I'll count the other one.

Six, seven, eight and nine (*Hold up fingers on other hand*)

Just one more, I'm doing fine.

The last little finger is number ten.

Now I'll count them all again.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten!

Source: <http://www.teachingyourchild.org.uk/number-songs.htm>





### **Memory game (10minutes)**

The students play a memory game with cards. A pair is found when the symbol of a number e.g. *1* and the written form *one*, are turned over at the same time. The one to find a pair gets to continue until he gets two cards that don't match. Then the other player gets the turn.



### **Writing to the back (10 minutes)**

One student at a time sits with his back towards the other students. The others take turns and go and write a number on their friend's back with their finger. The one sitting tries to guess which number has been drawn and to say the number aloud in English. After each number the students change places so that everybody gets to guess and draw.



### **How old are you? (10 minutes)**

The teacher takes part and guides this checkpoint. First, the question *How old are you?* is taught and practiced together. The teacher can ask the question from all students and they can answer it "truthfully". After this the students can practice the question more by asking it from the students in their small group. At this point the students can also change the answer and choose whichever number they want as their age. After each answer the students could also have a little competition about who is the first one to know the number in Finnish.



### **Atoms (5-10 minutes)**

The teacher asks the students in English to form groups of different sizes e.g.: *Please form groups of four*. The students should gather as atoms, which have the right number of students in them. The one asking does not necessarily have to be the teacher, but one of the students could lead the game as well.

### **Accessories**

- ❖ memory game cards (document 2 on the CD)

## Lesson 4 – On my free time

Hobbies are a big part of young learners' lives as they are part of their free time and often chosen by the students themselves. At best they provide something fun to do outside home and school and are also a place to make new friends. These are the things that young students often want to share with others, so why not in English as well. On the CD you find 18 flashcards for hobbies. Choose which ones to use or make your own with your students based on their hobbies, if you have the time. This time the flashcards form the basis of the lesson and the activities show how many things you can do with them. However, again the number of hobbies that you go through during a one lesson matters. It is a good idea to choose a maximum of ten hobbies to be learned in the classroom.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ Acting or miming can be hard for many, especially in front of other students. Therefore, don't force anyone to come in front of the class. Sometimes the doubtful ones get excited after a couple of rounds, sometimes they do an excellent job as the ones guessing.
- ❖ During this lesson it is especially important to emphasize that using English is not that serious and to help your students with the language, which can be a challenge on this lesson.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ Students should feel relaxed and have a positive feeling about using English during this lesson.
- ❖ This time the point does not necessarily lie in learning all the words and phrases, but in trying and guessing as well.

## Showering plan



### Teacher pantomime (10 minutes)

Mime all the different hobbies that you have chosen to your students and ask them to guess them in Finnish. After they have guessed a hobby correctly say the hobby in English and repeat it together with the children.



### Students' pantomime/Pictionary (20 minutes)

If the students get excited about miming you can continue the pantomime game with them so that each one of them gets to pick up a hobby flashcard and mime that hobby to the others. The ones guessing should try to guess the hobby in English. However, if your group is not that much into acting you could turn the game into a Pictionary and ask the students to draw the hobby on the flashcard on the blackboard. This might take a little longer, but it might also be easier for some students.



### I like/I don't like (15 minutes)

Start by sitting in a ring on the floor. Go through the flashcards with your students once more. Then spread the cards on the floor. You will also need two papers one with a smiling face on it and the other one with a sad face on it. Then show an example to the students by picking up two cards. Put the first one next to the smiley face and say *I like xxx*. And then put the second one next to the sad face and say *I don't like xxx*. Then again you can ask the students to guess what you said or just tell them without further ado. After this each student gets a turn to pick a hobby he likes and doesn't like and to tell their choices to the others. The task can be challenging as you learn phrases *I like/I*

*don't like* and also the two hobbies, but all these can be repeated together as many times as needed.



**EXTRA: Reveal the hobby! (10 minutes)**

For this guessing game you need a document camera, a projector and a screen. Take one flashcard at a time and hide it with another piece of paper. Then slowly start revealing the card by dragging the top-paper down. The students should try to guess and say the hobby in English.

**Accessories**

- ❖ hobbies flashcards (document 3 on the CD)
- ❖ two papers, one with a smiling face, the other with a sad face.

## Lesson 5 – Colors of the rainbow

Colors are one of the language elements that the young learners are drawn to. Based on my own experience, colors have been one of the most interesting topics in the language showering classroom together with numbers and animals. Because of its popularity as a topic and as one of the key elements to any language there are dozens of different ways of learning colors. The internet is full of different versions of rhymes, songs, etc. Therefore, if the tasks that have been chosen here seem unsuitable for your purposes, it does not take more than ten minutes of googling and you have a handfull of new activities. One shortcut could be that you make the colored bingo sheets yourself and that way you have more time for the Color King activity. The final extra tip is that if you have some extra time in your hands or want to spend two lessons on learning colors, make some color posters for each color. The students can draw things that are green, yellow, brown etc. and the posters can be hung on the classroom walls. All in all, there are various possibilities for learning colors in English.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ There are many colors in the color cards, which can be found on the CD. If your students seem puzzled don't take them all at once. Choose first only a few colors and add more in when it feels suitable.
- ❖ Make use of objects or clothes that are of different colors. This can make them easier to remember.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ To challenge the students' English listening skills.
- ❖ The students become familiar with some colors in English and use them during the lesson.

## Showering plan



### **Touch a color (10 minutes)**

Use the color cards and present the different colors to the students. Repeat the colors together. Then place each color card somewhere in the classroom where it is easy to spot. After this, start naming the colors in random order. The students should react to what they hear and go and touch the right color card.



### **Bingo preparations (10 minutes)**

Collect the color cards from the classroom. Choose nine of the colors to be used in a bingo game, for example: black, white, red, blue, green, yellow, gray, brown and pink. Then hand out the bingo sheets with nine boxes together with color pencils. Tell the students to color each slot with one color in whatever order they want, but the colors that will be used in this game are told by the teacher. This means that everyone will have the same colors on their bingo sheet but in different slots of the sheet. Then the teacher starts calling the colors and can use a visual aid by showing the right color card with each color. The students then pick which slot they want to color with e.g. red. The end result should be that each student has a unique bingo sheet with all nine colors in it.



### **Color bingo (15 minutes)**

When the bingo sheets are ready it's time to play bingo. The easiest way is that the teacher starts calling the colors and the students tick the color that they hear. Otherwise the game is like any other bingo: when one gets three ticks vertically, horizontally or

from one corner to another, one gets to shout BINGO! An alternative, a more demanding, but perhaps a more fun way to play this bingo is to play samples of songs with colors and with each song the students will have to listen carefully in order to spot the right color. Here are some song suggestions for each color:

**White:** Ella Fitzgerald (and many more) – White Christmas, Dido – White flag

**Black:** Soundgarden – Black hole sun, Michael Jackson – Black or white

**Red:** Aqua – Roses are red

**Blue:** Eiffel 65 – Blue (da ba dee), Limp Bizkit – Behind blue eyes. The Weeping Willows – Blue and alone

**Yellow:** Coldplay – Yellow, The Beatles – Yellow submarine

**Green:** Tom Jones – Green green grass of home, Coldplay – Green eyes

**Gray:** Elton John – Grey Seal

**Brown:** The Coasters – Charlie Brown

**Pink:** Aerosmith - Pink



### **The Color King (10 minutes)**

For many this is a familiar game from their own childhood and the game also has many names. In this English version it is called the Color King. In this game one of the players is chosen to be the first Color King (on the first round the teacher is a good option for a King). The other players stand on a line about ten meters away from the King. The players all want to be the next King, but can only move when the current King makes it possible. The King stands with his/her back towards the other players and shouts one color at a time and the number of steps that can be taken if a player wears this color on him/her. The other players start moving towards the King and get closer on each round. The first one of the players to touch the King becomes the next King and the game starts from the beginning.



## Accessories

- ❖ color cards (document 4 on the CD)
- ❖ colored pencils for each child
- ❖ bingo sheets (document 5 on the CD)

## Lesson 6 – What's the time Mr. Wolf?

The concept of time could be something that your students are still learning and therefore time in English might not be the easiest thing to grasp for everyone. During this lesson the abstract time is visualized with the help of paper clocks and own body, which could be helpful for the students. Learning about time is also a good way to recap numbers from one to ten and also learn two new ones: eleven and twelve. On the other hand, even though language showering is about action and doing something with the language the young students are also interested in stories about real life places and events. This is one of the reasons why this lesson is ended with a small Power Point story about Big Ben, which also fits the theme of this lesson.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ With abstract topics it is important to illustrate them in different ways. For someone an actual concrete object can do the trick whereas someone could remember better if they get to use their own body in learning. Therefore, do not forget the different learning styles while language showering.
- ❖ Language showering is not only about games, songs or rhymes. The students get easily excited about learning new things about the culture as well. Don't be afraid of showing them pictures and telling them what you know about the English-speaking world.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students should find the concept of time easier to grasp and remember some of the time phrases in English.
- ❖ The students become familiar with Big Ben and see and hear about it.

## Showering plan



### **Rock around the clock (5 minutes)**

Find a version of the song *Rock Around the Clock* by Bill Haley and His Comets. Play the song/ music video and ask the students to guess the topic of the day. Bring lyrics to the song with you and you can also sing it together with the students.

### **Rock Around the Clock**

One, two, three o'clock, four o'clock rock  
 Five, six, seven o'clock, eight o'clock rock  
 Nine, ten, eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock rock  
 We're gonna rock around the clock tonight

Put your glad rags on, join me, Hon  
 We'll have some fun when the clock strikes one  
 We're gonna rock around the clock tonight  
 We're gonna rock, rock, rock, 'til broad daylight  
 We're gonna rock, gonna rock around the clock tonight

When the clock strikes two, three and four  
 If the band slows down we'll yell for more  
 We're gonna rock around the clock tonight  
 We're gonna rock, rock, rock, 'til broad daylight  
 We're gonna rock, gonna rock around the clock tonight

When the chimes ring five, six, and seven  
 We'll be right in seventh heaven  
 We're gonna rock around the clock tonight  
 We're gonna rock, rock, rock, 'til broad daylight  
 We're gonna rock, gonna rock around the clock tonight

When it's eight, nine, ten, eleven too  
 I'll be goin' strong and so will you  
 We're gonna rock around the clock tonight  
 We're gonna rock, rock, rock, 'til broad daylight  
 We're gonna rock, gonna rock around the clock tonight

When the clock strikes twelve, we'll cool off then  
 Start a'rockin' round the clock again  
 We're gonna rock around the clock tonight  
 We're gonna rock, rock, rock, 'til broad daylight  
 We're gonna rock, gonna rock around the clock tonight

Source: [www.aldielyrics.com](http://www.aldielyrics.com)



### **Clicketty CLOCK (15 minutes)**

In this activity the students work in pairs and you need as many paper clocks as there are pairs plus one for the teacher as well. Instructions and a template for building a paper clock can be found on the CD. Start off by asking some questions about the students' daily routines. What time do they wake up, eat breakfast, go to school, go home etc. and show the time with your clock and say it in English. Teach your students the expressions: *x o'clock, quarter past, half past and quarter to*. These four expressions are an easier way to start and the students are more likely to be able to remember the expressions.

After this, start saying different times and ask the students to show you the right time with their clock. After a couple rounds each of the pairs can come up with a new time and the others try to answer with their clocks, by showing the time they hear. This way it is not always the teacher leading an activity but the students can try it out as well.



### **What's the time Mr. Wolf? (10-15 minutes)**

For this game you need a large space or alternatively it is played outdoors.

One student or the teacher is chosen to be Mr. Wolf, who then stands at one end of the playing area. The other players stand in a line at the other end, about ten meters away from the wolf. Mr. Wolf turns his back to start the game. The players call out, *What's the time Mr. Wolf?* and Mr. Wolf turns and answers with a time (i.e. 3 o'clock) and the other players can take that number of steps towards Mr. Wolf. He then turns his back again while the children advance again chanting *What's the time Mr. Wolf?* To which Mr. Wolf will continue to respond until the players come very close.

Once the line of players is close to Mr. Wolf, he can respond to the chant with *It's dinner time!* at which point, he will chase the players back to the starting line with the aim to catch one of the them, who will then become Mr. Wolf for the next round of the game.

If it is hard for the students to remember the time, just by hearing it, Mr. Wolf could have a paper clock where he also shows the time to the players. It is also possible to include the expression *half past, quarter past/to* by taking only half a step or a quarter of a step with these times.

Adapted from the source: <http://www.kidspot.com.au/kids-activities-and-games/Outdoor-activities+9/Whats-the-Time-Mr-Wolf+10965.htm>



### **Big Ben (~10 minutes)**

A Power Point story about Big Ben. You can find the story on the CD.

### **Accessories**

- ❖ paper clocks (document 6 on the CD)
- ❖ Big Ben power point (document 7 on the CD)

## Lesson 7 – What’s cool in school?

Even the youngest students spend many hours per week in school and they quickly become familiar with the world of school. This lesson focuses on learning new vocabulary about school supplies and other objects in a classroom. The idea is that the students come up with the words that they want to learn and the teacher works first as a translator and then helps the students with the learning of the new words. On this lesson the teacher provides the theme and the frames in the form of the games. However, the students themselves can choose the words that they would like to learn. This possibility to influence one’s own learning should also support the memorizing of the words.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ Give the students possibilities to affect their own learning. You can provide the theme and frames for it, but the students get excited about the fact that they can choose the words that they would like to know in English.
- ❖ Make use of the issues that you have discussed in previous lessons whenever you can. It is important to show the students what they already know and give them possibilities to realize this as well. On this lesson the drizzle activity aims at this.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students realize that even the most normal items such as school supplies have English names and become interested in learning new words.
- ❖ The students make use of their listening skills and also try out writing in English. The difference between the visual form of a word and the pronounced form becomes more concrete.

## Showering plan



### **Familiar words? (5 minutes)**

Listen to the song *ABC* by the Jackson Five and ask the students, for example, to show a thumb up every time they hear a word that they have heard before. You could also ask the students to guess the theme by giving them hints about where you learn these familiar words etc. In other words, guide the students' understanding to the right direction. Feel free to use another school related song, if you find it more suitable.



### **Classroom raiders (15 minutes)**

Ask the students to think of items or objects in the classroom in Finnish. You need as many words as there are students. List the words on a blackboard in Finnish and then translate and write the words into English next to the Finnish ones. Say the words aloud together. Then give each student one word that they copy in English on a post-it note and ask them to memorize the meaning of that word. After everyone has written down a word the idea is that the students find the item that they have written down and go and attach the post-it note to that item. Suddenly, there are many new words in English visually available in the classroom.



### **Kim's game (15 minutes)**

Gather a selection of different small school supplies such as a rubber, a pen, a pencil, a ruler, a pencil case, a book, crayons, a sharpener, etc., altogether about 10 different items. Most likely some these words came up already with the previous activity, which

is only good. Recap the words in English and spread them on the floor or on a desk. Then ask the students to take a close look at the items and memorize them. After this cover the items with a scarf, ask the students to close their eyes and remove one of the items. Ask the students to open their eyes and guess which of the items is missing. It is possible that the students, at first, remember only the Finnish words but after a couple of rounds the English words come back easier for the students as they hear and repeat them several times.



### **Please bring me (10 minutes)**

Spread the items that were used in Kim's game around the classroom. The students can even hide the items to make the game more interesting. The teacher leads the game by saying, for example, *Please, bring me a ruler* and the students have to find the ruler in the classroom. The first one to find it gets to hide it again. Then the teacher asks the students to bring him/her another item. Finally, the teacher asks for all the items to be returned and the game ends.

### **Accessories**

- ❖ the song *ABC* on CD or from another source
- ❖ post-it notes and pencils
- ❖ a collection of school supplies (small items)
- ❖ a scarf



## Lesson 8 – We are the Johnssons

The importance of a family for a first- or a second-grader is very clear. The stories that they share in the classroom often include mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and grandparents. However, as the concept of family has expanded and families today are more heterogeneous than they perhaps were a couple of decades ago, it is important to discuss with your students the fact that each family is different. The students are often very open and talk about their families, but it is a good idea that the teacher is the one who brings up the fact of different kinds of families. In some groups this can raise questions and discussions, which is only a good thing. In some groups the fact that families can consist of various combinations can be an ordinary thing and the topic does not raise further discussion. All in all, it is a good thing to come to this lesson prepared.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ Start with the most obvious family members: mother, father, sister, brother and expand with more specific terms such as *step-mother/-father* if you need to. The students are most likely to ask you for the information and you can also encourage them to ask you questions.
- ❖ You could hang the family pictures that are made in the drizzle activity up to the walls in your classroom. This is a great reminder of how different each family can be.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students become familiar at least with the names of their own family members.
- ❖ The students practice presenting their family in a small group.

## Showering plan



### **My family (15 minutes)**

Ask the students to draw a picture of their family with their closest family members in it. You will need them at the end of the lesson. Do not forget to draw your own family. Family in this activity can also be imaginary. (See Presenting my family-activity)



### **Daddy finger, mommy finger (15 minutes)**

To visualize this rhyme, you will need pictures of different family members or some finger puppets. By googling *finger puppets family printable* or *family finger puppets template* you will find easy ready-made finger puppets that only need some coloring. In this rhyme you start with your thumb and then move to your index finger etc. Each family member has its own finger. You can find a song for this rhyme as well by using *The Finger Family* as your search words on Youtube. It is also possible to add more family members to the rhyme as you now only use the first five fingers.

### **The Finger Family**

Daddy finger, Daddy finger, where are you?  
Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Mommy finger, Mommy finger, where are you?  
Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Brother finger, Brother finger, where are you?  
Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Sister finger, Sister finger, where are you?  
Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Baby finger, Baby finger, where are you?  
Here I am, here I am. How do you do?

Source: <http://nurseryrhymes4kids.com/muffin-songs-the-finger-family-daddy-finger-nursery-rhymes-children-songs-with-lyrics-muffin-songs-2/>



### **Presenting my family (15 minutes)**

Divide your students into small groups of three or four. Or if your group is small you can do the presenting together. Present your own family to the students as an example. You could say, for example, *Here's my family. I have a mother, a father, This is my..., etc.* and just list the family members that you have. Then the students can practice presenting their own family. As it was mentioned before the situations in families can sometimes be difficult. Therefore, the teacher can give directions that one can present their own family or imagination family if they do not want to talk about their own. After the presenting of families you can hang your drawings up the walls in your classroom.

### **Accessories**

- ❖ paper
- ❖ crayons or colored pencils
- ❖ pictures of family members or family finger puppets
- ❖ Blue-tack

## Lesson 9 – Wuff, oink, miaow, roar!

Animals are a great way to combine movement, voices and vocabulary in language showering. On this lesson you can also find links between English and Finnish culture by playing some of the children's songs that we have in both languages. With the animal riddles the students are exposed to a large amount of English input, which makes it important that, again, you remember to visualize your speech while you are talking. This lesson does not focus specifically on pets, farm animals or animals in the jungle, but it takes bits and pieces from all animals. The shower activity and the drying-off activity are easy to adapt if you preferred having a more specified animal theme on your lesson.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ If you should have more time on your hands easy animal mask made out of cardboard are a fun way to expand this theme. Templates for masks can be found in the Internet or they can be drawn by the students themselves.
- ❖ Instead of the songs in the drizzle activity you could also compare what the animals say in Finnish and what they say in English. For example, a Finnish pig says *röh röh*, but the English pig says *oink oink*.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students learn to make connections with English culture and their own culture.
- ❖ The students combine their body and sounds in the learning of animals in English.
- ❖ The students practice their listening and reasoning.

## Showering plan



### Guess the song (10 minutes)

Play a guessing game with your students by playing them English versions of some of the famous Finnish children's songs. For example, you could divide the group in half and the teams could compete against each other and try to guess as many songs as they can.

### Some suggestions for songs

Mary had a little lamb – Maijalla oli karitsa

Itsy bitsy spider – Hämä hämä häkki

Old MacDonald had a farm – Piippolan vaarilla oli talo

Five little ducks – Viisi pientä ankaa

BINGO – BINGO (iso musta kissa istui ikkunalaudalla..)



### Let me see your funky monkey! (15 minutes)

This rhyme game is based on the dialogue between the game leader and players. The game leader starts by shouting *Let me see your funky monkey!* The players reply *What did you say?* After this the game leader continues with *I said: uuu a a a uuu a a a uuu, one more time, uuu a a a uuu a a a uuu* at same time the game leader mimics a funky monkey. After the “one more time” mark the players join the leader in mimicking the monkey once more. After this the game leader comes up with a new animal and gestures for the next round. The game can be played with as many animals and adjectives that you come up with and also the students can invent animals and gestures. Here are some animal suggestions:

*funky monkey, elegant elephant, fishy fish. curious cat, strong spider, crazy crocodile, dangerous dog*



### **Animal riddles (20 minutes)**

On the CD you can find animal flashcards that could be useful with this activity. The idea is that the teacher tells the students riddles of animals and the students guess the right animal. This can be easier if the students see the animals and can pick the right one from the flashcards.

#### **Animal riddles**

**Dog:** I have four legs. I'm a pet. Lassie and Beethoven are my friends. I bark.

**Cat:** I'm a pet. I don't like mice. Garfield is my friend. I purr and miaow

**Pig:** I live on a farm. I'm pink. I give you bacon and Christmas ham. I say oink oink.

**Cow:** I'm big. I eat grass. I give you milk. I live on a farm.

**Horse:** I have four long legs. You can ride me. I can jump high over obstacles. I have a long face.

**Bird:** I'm small. I eat worms. I can fly up in the sky. I can sing.

**Monkey:** I live in the jungle. I'm very good at climbing. I like bananas.

**Elephant:** I live in Africa. I'm big. I'm gray. I have a long trunk.

**Lion:** I'm the king of the jungle. I roar. I'm yellow. I eat other animals.

**Fish:** I live in water. I can swim. You can eat me.

**Frog:** I am green. I hop. I eat flies. I can be slimy.

**Crocodile:** I eat other animals. I live in the river. I'm green. I have a big mouth.

**Mouse:** I'm gray. Cats don't like me. I'm small. I like cheese.

**Panda:** I live in China. I'm black and white. I eat bamboo.

**Butterfly:** I'm very small. I'm colorful. I fly. I like flowers.

**Bear:** I live in the forest. I'm brown. I sleep during winter. I'm big.

**Snake:** I'm long and slim. I hiss. I can be poisonous. I have a long tongue.

**Spider:** I have eight legs. I can be scary. I like webs. There is a superhero called .....man.

### Accessories

- ❖ animal flashcards (document 8 on the CD)

## Lesson 10 – Yummy food in the tummy

What is trendier than food these days? Every day, evening and night there is someone on TV cooking, baking, tasting, decorating or judging delicious meals. In a normal classroom it might be a too big of a challenge to get authentic and start preparing traditional British, American, Canadian, Australian, etc. food. However, instead of this you can watch some clips of cooking shows, learn some food vocabulary and phrases and also make a food place mat that the students can take home with them.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ Laminate the food place mats in your own time, if you want to maximize the time that you can use making the place mats and learning new words. The laminating takes you probably around 15-20 minutes, which is time away from the students. However, it is not necessary to laminate the food place mats. Skip this if it is not possible or it would take too much effort.
- ❖ Although the showering activity is also a craft activity, remember to use English and the dictionaries and to repeat food vocabulary during the lesson.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students become familiar with some of their favorite foods in English.
- ❖ The learning includes visual and tactile support.
- ❖ The students make their own language learning material that they can take home.

### Showering plan



#### **Cooking show (5 minutes)**

Choose a clip of a cooking show of your choice and show it to your students. There are many English speaking celebrity chefs and cooking shows from which to choose from,



such as Nigella Lawson, Jamie Oliver, Master Chef, Junior Master Chef, but it is probably a good idea to skip Gordon Ramsay's shows. The students will easily pick up the theme of the day from the video clip and get attuned to the lesson.



### **Food place mats (30 minutes)**

For this activity you need some old papers, magazines and advertisements with lots of pictures of food. The idea is that the students get to choose and clip out pictures of food and glue them on an A3-sized paper. The teacher provides the students with some of the most common phrases that are related to food and which the students can also glue on their place mats. If your students can read you can teach them to use a dictionary and they can find some food words themselves and write them on their place mats. If you want the place mats to last it is a good idea to laminate them. Each student could also present their favorite food on their place mat to the others in English.



### **Yummy, yummy! (10 minutes)**

Play a variation of the game *Fruit salad* by using some of the food words that you learn while making the place mats. Here are the instructions for a variation of the *Fruit salad* game.

#### **Yummy, yummy**

Form a circle of chairs that is one chair fewer than the total number of players.

Nominate a player to be '*in*', that player stands in the center of the circle.

Divide all players into three groups of different foods by going around the circle and naming them e.g. *cheese, bread, milk*.

The player who is '*in*', calls the name of a food item

If he calls out *milk*, everyone who is that food must get up quickly and change places.

Players who are not *milk* remain seated.

The person who is *'in'* tries to sit in an empty spot whenever players swap positions.

If they manage to sit in a chair, the player not sitting in a chair is then *'in'*.

The person in the middle can also call *'yummy, yummy!'* and everyone who is seated has to change spots.

The game can finish whenever you like.

Adapted from the source: <http://www.kidspot.com.au/kids-activities-and-games/outdoor-activities+9/fruit-salad-game+11341.htm>

### Accessories

- ❖ old magazines, papers and advertisements with food pictures
- ❖ scissors
- ❖ glue
- ❖ A3-sized paper sheet for each student
- ❖ dictionaries
- ❖ copies of the food phrases (document 9 on the CD)
- ❖ (laminating machine and laminating pouches)

## Lesson 11 – Let the sunshine in

*You can always talk about the weather!* is probably one of the most common pieces of advice given when someone is having a discussion with a new acquaintance. For this reason or perhaps just because the weather is an everyday phenomenon that surrounds us wherever we go it has been chosen as a theme of this lesson. There are many songs about weather, weather forecasts in English are available in the internet and most importantly weather phenomena are something concrete and easy to grasp for the students. On this lesson the students familiarize themselves with weather vocabulary and help an absent-minded meteorologist who has problems with the weather symbols as well as knowing the weather of the English speaking world.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ On this lesson the role of the absent-minded meteorologist demands a lot from the teacher. The activities alone are quite simple but the success of them depends greatly on how the teacher pulls the role of the meteorologist. Put yourself out there and play along. You don't have to be an actor but to challenge yourself and you will succeed.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students feel like they need the language that they learn for something.
- ❖ The students succeed in helping the meteorologist and are encouraged to make their own weather forecasts.

### Showering plan



#### **Sunshine reggae (5 minutes)**

Listen to Bob Marley's Sunshine reggae.

**Sunshine reggae**

Give me, give me, give me just a little smile

That's all I ask of you

Give me, give me, give me just a little smile

We got a message for you

Sunshine, sunshine reggae

Don't worry, don't hurry, take it easy

Sunshine, sunshine reggae

Let the good vibes get a lot stronger

Give me, give me, give me just a little smile

That's all I ask of you (is that too much?)

Give me, give me, give me just a little smile

We got a message for you

(Join the)sunshine, sunshine reggae

Let the good vibes get a lot stronger

Sunshine sunshine reggae

Don't worry, don't hurry, take it easy

Sunshine, sunshine reggae

Let the good vibes get a lot stronger

Get a lot stronger

Let the good vibes get a lot stronger (x7)

Source: <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/Sunshine-Reggae-lyrics-Bob-Marley/96919B5BDE705AD64825738B000DBFCD>



### **Weather forecast (5-10 minutes)**

Watch a weather forecast broadcast in English. Try to find a video clip with as many different weather expressions as possible and something that sticks to the easy ones such as, *it's sunny/ it's rainy, hot/cold*, etc. There are also some weather forecasts that are directed especially for children. Try googling for *weather forecast children, weather report for kids, weather for children* or, for example, you could try these internet pages:

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/education/kids/rain-or-shine>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/>

<http://www.weather.com/>



### **The absent-minded meteorologist (15 minutes)**

In this activity the students try to spot the errors that they see and here. For this activity you need a map of the world, weather symbols and some role clothes for yourself. The weather symbols can be found on the CD. Dress up as a meteorologist and give a short weather forecast to your students. Attach the weather symbols to your map and start “your forecast”. The idea is that in your forecast you at times forget the names of the weather symbols or mix them up, for example, you say *sunny* even though the symbol that you are pointing at is *cloudy*. The students should stop you whenever you make a mistake and help you when you have forgotten the names of some symbols.



### What's the weather like? (15 minutes)

In this activity you could make use of the flags and countries that were used on the first lesson (document 1 on the CD). However, you will need two copies of the set. Divide the flags into two bowls so that each bowl contains one set of flags. After this divide your students into pairs. Each pair draws a flag and a country from the first bowl. After this the pairs come up with a short weather forecast that answers the question *What's the weather like in .....*? For example, if a pair should draw the flag of Ireland they could say that *the weather in Ireland is rainy and cold*. On this first round each pair comes up with a weather forecast and if needed the teacher should help them.

For the second round the teacher dresses up as the absent-minded meteorologist again. The meteorologist has had problems with doing his forecast and wants help from other countries. By drawing a country's flag from the second bowl the meteorologist "phones" each of the pair and asks the question *What's the weather like in .....*? The pairs help the meteorologist by answering the question. After each pair has answered the question the meteorologist thanks for the help and assures that now he can go to work and predict the weather better.

### Accessories

- ❖ a map of the world
- ❖ weather symbols (document 10 on the CD)
- ❖ role clothes for you
- ❖ pictures of the flags of English speaking
- ❖ two bowls

## Lesson 12 – Headbanging

The theme of this lesson is body parts and what could be a better way to learn them than by using your own body as a learning tool. On this lesson the accessories list is short as the language learning is based on making use of the kinesthetic way of learning. This lesson is based on rhymes, but in the drying-off activity the listening skills are also practiced by drawing some unique monsters. As the main part of the lesson focuses on activating the students physically it is also important to calm things down at the end of the lesson. During the drying-off activity the students have to concentrate on their own work and this also easier after they have had the chance to take out their energy.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ Start the rhymes slowly and at first go through all the different body parts by repeating them together. This way it can be easier to spot the body parts in the rhymes.
- ❖ Remember to help your students visually whenever they need it. This is important especially with the drying-off activity. If the students have difficulties with the spoken input show them the body parts and numbers with your hands.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students hear, touch, repeat and draw body parts and get as many different stimuli as possible during the lesson.
- ❖ The students practice their listening skills and focus on listening to instructions in English.

## Showering plan



### **Head, shoulders, knees and toes (5-10 minutes)**

This nursery rhyme/song is a great way to start a lesson. The students get excited immediately and start repeating the body parts with you. If you are unfamiliar with the melody, you can easily find it in the internet.

### **Head, shoulders, knees and toes**

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,  
Knees and toes.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,  
Knees and toes.

And eyes, and ears, and mouth,  
And nose.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,  
Knees and toes.

*Place both hands on parts of body as they are mentioned. On second time speed up, and get faster with each verse.*

Source: <http://www.scoutsongs.com/lyrics/headshoulders.html>



### **Just like me (10-15 minutes)**

Continue working with your body. This showering activity rhyme is also very simple to execute. It combines body parts, movement and English input in a simple but catchy way. Basically the idea is to do what you say and therefore it is a good idea to repeat each verse twice.



**Clap your hands**

Clap your hands.

Clap your hands.

Clap them just like me.

The verses can be formed in a similar way from other verbs and body parts. Here is a list of alternatives:

*blink your eyes, click your tongue, touch your shoulders, rub your tummy, pat your knees, snap your fingers, stomp your feet, shake your head, roll your hips*

**Monsters (20-25 minutes)**

Give each of the students a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. In this guided drawing activity the students draw monsters based on the instructions that they hear. On each round the teacher chooses a body part and then rolls a dice/ two dices to see how many of those body parts should be drawn on a monster. For example, the first body part could be *head*, then, roll the dice/dices and you get a *six*. This means that the students should draw a monster with six heads. Then choose another body part, roll the dice again and piece by piece the monsters start to build. The ideal way for doing this activity is that you move from top to bottom, i.e., from head to toes, but remember to use only the body parts that you have gone through in the previous two activities. This makes it is easier for the students to imagine the monsters in their minds. Finally, color the monsters.

**Accessories**

- ❖ paper
- ❖ pencils
- ❖ crayons or coloring pencils

❖ a dice/dices

## Lesson 13 – On the catwalk

On this lesson the students play with clothes. The activities are designed to be as concrete and hands-on as possible and the students get to create their own world of fashion. In terms of accessories this is a lesson that demands more than an usual, but it is worth it. If you have more time in your hands, you could watch, for example, a video of a fashion show or make sketches of students' dream outfits. One possibility is that you take a camera or video camera with you and that after the fashion show you can watch pictures or a video together. Attitude is what you need on this lesson and at this point your students are most likely so familiar with you that they also can jump in and give their best without bigger hesitations.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ Do not define the style of your fashion show too narrowly. Some might enjoy the traditional “pretty dress up” but for some it might be more exciting if they can dress up as monsters or any other character. On this lesson they can all fit in the same show.
- ❖ You might wonder why the clothes categories on the CD are in the plural form. The reason behind this is to avoid the confusion that articles raise with young learners. It is also easier to play *the designer says* if the plural forms of the words are familiar.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students organize the fashion show and are encouraged to use English in front of the others.

## Showering plan



### Organizing the store (10 minutes)

Bring a lot of clothes and accessories with you to this lesson or ask the pupils to bring some with them. Print the clothes categories that are on the CD and spread them around the classroom. Put the big pile of clothes and accessories in the middle of the room. Tell your students that your classroom is now turning into a clothing store, but first you have to organize your shop. Present them your categories: *pants, shirts, jackets, shoes, etc.* and ask the students to put each of the items in the pile to their right place.



### The designer says (10 minutes)

After the clothes have found their place, play the adapted version on the game *Simon says*. In this adaptation the leader of the game is a designer who asks the students to put an item of clothing on. For example, when the designer says: *Designer says: Put on hats* the students should all find a hat and put it on. However, if the designer only says: *Put on hats* without the *designer says* the students shouldn't react but stay put. This can be repeated a couple of times with different items.



### Fashion show (25 minutes)

Ask the students to prepare a fashion show. They can dress up in the clothes that you have brought or they can just wear their own. The idea is that each “model” presents what they are wearing to the others and that way practice the clothing vocabulary orally. This can simply be done by using the phrase *I'm wearing...* The students could also work in pairs and style each other. While the students are dressing up, build a runway

across the classroom and put on some music that fits the atmosphere of a fashion show. When the fashion show starts each student in turn (or one pair at a time) walks down the runway, then tell the others what they are wearing and finally, walk back. After each model the others remember to applaud of course.

### Accessories

- ❖ clothes and accessories that the students can use
- ❖ different clothing categories printed (document 11 on the CD)
- ❖ music for the fashion show

## Lesson 14 – What have I learned so far...

Thirteen lessons with different themes, all of which have exposed the students to the English language and culture. Most likely there have been highlights that the students can still remember and some of the activities might have been less unforgettable. However, at times it is good to stop and try to remember what I have learned so far and what do I know at this very moment. Therefore, this final lesson concentrates on recapping the themes that have been part of this English language showering for the past thirteen weeks. In addition, although the feedback from young learners can at times be very straightforward and apparent, it is important that you give them the possibility to give you feedback and tell what they have liked and haven't. This makes it possible for you to develop as a language showerer.

### Ideas for the teacher

- ❖ During this final lesson try not to think like a traditional language teacher and measure how much your students have *learned*. Remember that exposure, enthusiasm and the fact that your students have been participating in language showering for the past thirteen weeks is amazing. You have most likely given them something that will encourage them to learn English in the future and in their free time as well.

### Objectives for the students

- ❖ The students get a chance to reflect on the different activities that they have done in the past weeks.
- ❖ The students have the possibility to give feedback to the teacher.

## Showering plan



### **The ship is loaded with... (15 minutes)**

Make a circle and sit on chairs or on the floor. The idea is that for each round there is a theme, such as, *colors*. You will also need a ball. The game starts when the teacher tells the students the theme of the round, then gives an example word of that theme and passes the ball to a student sitting next to him. The student then continues by saying another word related to that theme and passes the ball on. On each round everybody tries to come up with as many words as possible related to the theme. If a student cannot come up with a word the ball can be passed on to next one or the theme can be changed.

Possible themes for the game: *colors, numbers, clothes, body parts, hobbies, animals, greetings, etc.*



### **Snakes and ladders (20 minutes)**

Make your own *Snakes and ladders* board game or use the ready-made game to recap the themes that you have had in your language showering. Divide your students into groups of three or four or if you have a small group, play the game together. The students can ask you about the words that they do not remember, but otherwise they can play independently. Remember to teach them that on the game board you can climb the ladders up but also slide down if you meet a snake. The game boards and more detailed instructions for the game in Finnish can be found on the CD.



### **Top three (10 minutes)**

As the final activity is about giving feedback it is a good idea to use Finnish as a language. Sit on a floor in a circle. Ask the students to think three of the activities/lessons/etc. that they have liked the most and three of the activities/lessons/etc. that they have liked the least. Everybody gets their turn to say their opinion. The teacher writes down all the things and counts the votes if there are many similar favorites or dislikes. This way you get some feedback on the activities that succeeded and the activities that weren't such a big hit.

### **Accessories**

- ❖ a ball
- ❖ snakes and ladders-game templates and instructions (Documents 12, 13 and 14 on the CD)
- ❖ dices
- ❖ paper
- ❖ pens