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FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Four cases

A Pro Gradu Thesis

by

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Yhä useampi vieraan kielen oppija, joka kärsii erilaisista oppimisvaikeuksista, etsii keinoja, joilla edesauttaa oppimisprosessiaan. Tämä tutkielma on opetuskokeilu, jossa neljälle oppimisvaikeuksiselle aikuisoppijalle opetettiin kolme erilaista kielenoppimisstrategiaa. Strategioiden harjoittelun ohella heille annettiin myös englannin kielen tukiopetusta. Koehenkilöistä käytetään peitenimiä Arja, Eeva, Julia ja Minna. Tutkimusaineistona työssä käytetään kenttämuistiinpanoja opetuskokeilusta, koehenkilöiden haastatteluja ja koevastauksia. Tutkielmassa vastataan kysymyksiin: 1) Oppivatko koehenkilöt käyttämään opetettuja kielenoppimisstrategioita? 2) Mitä mieltä koehenkilöt olivat opetetuista kielenoppimisstrategioista? 3) Kokivatko koehenkilöt opetetut kielenoppimisstrategiat hyödyllisiksi vieraan kielen oppimiselleen? Koska kyseessä on tapaustutkimus, tutkielma on pääosin kuvaileva.

Oppijalähtöisen opetuskokeilun tarkoituksena oli tukea koehenkilöitä oppimisvaikeuksien voittamisessa. Heidän englannin kielen oppimistaan ja kielenopinnoissa menestymistään pyrittiin edistämään opettamalla heille luokkaopetuksesta poikkeavia kielenoppimisstrategioita. Opiskelussa otettiin huomioon koehenkilöiden oppimisvaikeudet ja tunne-elämän haasteet käyttämällä kannustavaa ja tukevaa lähestymistapaa.

Tutkielmassa kuvataan koehenkilöiden oppimisvaikeuksia ja kielenoppimistaustaa. Laadullisen analyysin tarkoituksena on selvittää, millaiset kielenoppimisstrategiat ovat hyödyllisiä oppimisvaikeuksisille oppijoille sekä miten oppijat ottavat ne vastaan. Analyysi perustuu koehenkilöiden haastatteluvastauksiin, heidän kommentteihinsa ja tuotoksiinsa opetuskokeilun aikana sekä heidän menestykseensä loppukokeessa.

Tutkimus osoitti, että oppimisvaikeuksiset koehenkilöt pystyivät oppimaan kielenoppimisstrategioiden käyttöä. Se, mitä strategiaa he halusivat harjoitella ja hyödyntää tulevaisuudessa riippui strategian helppoudesta ja mielekkyydestä. Myös koehenkilöiden oppimistyyli ja yleinen kielitaso vaikuttivat strategioiden käyttöön. Opetuskokeilun johdosta koehenkilöiden itsetunto, kielenoppimismotivaatio sekä asenne kieliä kohtaan paranivat. Kokeilu johti heidät myös arvioimaan enemmän omaa oppimistaan, oppimistyyliään ja oppimisvaikeuksiaan.

Asiasanat: learner characteristics, foreign language, language learning, learning difficulty, learning disability, learning strategy, colour-note strategy, reading comprehension, key phrase strategy, elaboration

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Need and motivation for this study

It is no understatement that in today's society good language skills are highly appreciated. Especially English has gained a status of *lingua franca* in the world. This creates pressure to the school system to produce graduates with good language skills. But what about learners who suffer from learning difficulties? They also would like to learn foreign languages but are constantly faced with even more obstacles in learning than others. These weak language learners have always existed, struggling with their foreign language studies and receiving practically no real support from their school. Furthermore, the dilemma of why it is in fact obligatory also for the weaker students to pass a certain degree in a foreign language has remained unsolved. If a student thrives in other subjects and does not necessarily need the foreign language for occupational or other purposes in the future, is it fair to deny them an academic degree only because of language learning difficulties. This is a question that the subjects of the present study repeatedly brought up. Overall, it may suffice to say that the debate over the matter has been and is hectic even today in the academic circles. It is only recently that the school world has truly began to take into account and study the possible learning disabilities behind language learning difficulties. Only in the past few decades has there emerged studies and guides on the learning and teaching of foreign languages to learners with learning disabilities or milder learning difficulties. In addition, it has now become possible for a student to be warranted a waiver of a language course under certain circumstances. However, the field of empirical studies on educational alternatives for foreign language learners with learning disabilities is still quite narrow.

There are a number of books and studies on what makes 'a good language learner' (see for example Johnson 2001, chapter 9). An essential part of being a good language learner is, according to Johnson, the ability to use learning strategies as an aid in foreign language learning (2001:155). Oxford (1990:1) stresses the importance of learning strategies in enhancing one's language

learning and communicative competence. Furthermore, Kristiansen (1998:45) maintains that learning to learn foreign languages is, above all, learning to use as appropriate and effective learning strategies as possible. In addition, Lerner (1993:286) mentions that poor learners often succeed better in learning when taught to use learning strategies. However, there is not much research on whether learners with learning difficulties use learning strategies when studying foreign languages. Furthermore, the questions of 'can learners with learning difficulties learn to use learning strategies' and 'do they consider learning strategies useful for their foreign language learning' have been left unanswered. This is a big gap in the research domain. Due to the lack of previous empirical studies on teaching both foreign languages and learning strategies to learners with learning difficulties, there is a great demand for a study like the one you are holding in your hands now.

The present study concentrates on four adult language learners who have learning difficulties. These difficulties affect greatly their learning of English as a foreign language. The four subjects are taught three different specific learning strategies. The main goal is to examine whether the subjects learn to use the strategies and whether they feel that the strategies are useful for their foreign language learning. In addition, there may come up some other important insights into their foreign language learning and learning difficulties as a result from this educational experiment.

1.2 Contents and terminology

Contents of this study

As research on language learning difficulties is relatively new, there is a lot of variety in the use of terminology in the related literature. Section 1.2 will clarify the main terms used in the field of research and the choices I have made regarding the use of terminology in this study. Chapter 2 deals with language learning difficulties particularly from the point of view of foreign languages. Section 2.1 will concentrate particularly on dyslexia as a foreign language learning difficulty. In 2.2 I will take a closer look at some typical individual

differences also causing problems in foreign language learning, namely, learning disabilities (2.2.1), foreign language aptitude (2.2.2), attitudes and motivation (2.2.3), personality and intelligence (2.2.4), anxiety (2.2.5), learning style (2.2.6), and learning strategies (2.2.7). Section 3.1 in chapter 3 will cover the quite narrow field of previous empirical studies on teaching foreign language learners with learning difficulties. Section 3.2 will present some general guidelines for teaching learning disabled and dyslexic learners, and section 3.3 will concentrate on guidelines for teaching learning strategies, in particular.

The present study is covered in chapter 4. The research questions are presented in section 4.1, the four subjects in section 4.2, the learning strategies experimented with in section 4.3 (the colour-note strategy in 4.3.1, the reading comprehension strategy in 4.3.2, and the elaboration- and key phrase strategies in 4.3.3), the data collection methods in section 4.4, and the data analysis methods are presented in section 4.5. The results of this study are found in chapter 5. The chapter is divided into four parts according to each subject. Section 5.1 concentrates on the subject called Arja and presents both her language learning history and current skills in English (5.1.1) and her responses to the strategies experimented with (5.1.2), that is, to the colour-note strategy (5.1.2.1), to the reading comprehension strategy (5.1.2.2), and to the elaboration- and key phrase strategies (5.1.2.3). The same order of contents is later applied to all the subjects, namely Eeva (section 5.2), Julia (section 5.3), and Minna (section 5.4).

Chapter 6, the discussion, gathers together the findings of the present study. It offers a cross-case analysis of the subjects' responses to the strategies experimented with and discusses the effects of the study to the subjects' emotional side. In addition, the chapter includes comparisons to previous studies and evaluation of the present study. Chapter 7 concludes this study with a summary of the results and some implications for further research on foreign language learning difficulties and learning strategies. The bibliography and appendices are attached in the end.

Terminology

Every academic text uses terms in certain ways which may differ from text to text. This does not mean that terms are used arbitrarily but that different writers may use different terms justifiably for the same subjects. The field of terminology is so wide when it comes to foreign language learning that I have had to make choices which terms in specific to use in this study. It is helpful to understand the terms used in the outset to make reading more fluent and enjoyable.

The terms **foreign language** and **target language** are used to refer to the language in question that is being learned. This will be a language learned after one has acquired one's **native language** or languages. I will not use the term second language to refer to a new language being learned for two reasons. Firstly, one of the subjects in this study had two native languages, Finnish and Swedish. In other words, she had two first languages (one of which she later forgot) and learned English as a second language at school which was actually her third language. The term native languages is more appropriate in referring to her first languages and the term foreign language refers to the languages she learned later at school. All the other subjects had only one native language and even though they learned English as their second language at school the term English as a foreign language covers all the subjects better. Secondly, some researchers make a distinction between a foreign language and a second language (see for example Brown 1987). A foreign language is, according to this distinction, learnt in one's own culture with few opportunities to use this language in one's own living environment while a second language is a language learnt within the culture of the language. In the case of the subjects in this study, the term foreign language is considered more appropriate as the subjects' contact with English outside school was quite minimal. Thus I will not use the terms first or second language to avoid any misunderstandings, native and foreign language will be used instead. Furthermore, the term target language will refer to the language being learned, whether native or foreign according to situation, throughout this study.

The term **learning strategy** will be used to refer to the different ways of studying English experimented with during the research project, such as drawing pictures of reading comprehension texts, and creating sentences around target words. Learning strategy is used instead of learning technique or learning method because I have based the theoretical background on the work of Oxford who specifically uses the term strategy in this context. In addition, the term strategy is used in other related sources. For a detailed description of the strategies, see section 4.3.

Learning disability is a general term that is used for specific disorders that influence strongly a learner's performance in school subjects. The number of learning disabilities that have a diagnosis grows all the time and, thus, only those that are relevant to the present study have been presented in subsection 2.2.1. Note that some researchers have used the term learning disability synonymously with the term reading disability. However, in the present study the term learning disability will include also disabilities affecting other skills than reading. The term dyslexia will be used to refer to a specific disability in reading. Nevertheless, I will not use the term learning disability to refer to the problems the subjects of the present study were experiencing. Instead, I will use the term **learning difficulty** as it is more easily related to the problems of the subjects of this study. The term learning disability is a more official term. Learning disabilities are defined in the laws of the respective country and they need to be properly diagnosed through standardised tests. The term learning difficulty includes learning disabilities as well as other aspects that create problems in learning, such as low motivation and anxiety. The only diagnosed learning disability the subjects in this study had was dyslexia. Their problems with learning were mostly caused by other individual differences than learning disabilities. In consequence, the term learning difficulty will be used to refer to the difficulties the subjects had in their foreign language learning.

Dyslexia is a general term that I will use for the specific learning disability related to reading and writing problems. The professional field has suggested and used several other general or more specific terms to describe approximately the same symptoms. The suggestions include such as

developmental dyslexia, specific reading or language disability, and strephosymbolia (Dinklage 1971:190). The debate over the correct terminology will not cease, thus it is not necessary for me to dwell in the matter any more here. The general term dyslexia covers the basic symptoms and is specific enough for the purposes of the present study (see the definition of dyslexia in section 2.1).

The subjects of this study are referred to in the text by pseudonyms **Arja**, **Eeva**, **Julia**, and **Minna** to protect their anonymity. In addition, information on details that are not essential from the point of view of the research questions, and which might risk this anonymity, have not been included. The meaning of any abbreviations that are mentioned is explained in the same paragraph. Possible important words in a paragraph are indicated by **boldface**. In order to illustrate and support my arguments, direct quotations have been given in the text from the research material: strategy training sessions and tests. These quotations are given in their original form in either Finnish or English, respectively. For instance, words that were misspelled in the tests are given in their original form also in the quotations. Any material produced by the subjects in English is given in *italics*. Finnish translations of the quotations that are in English are given immediately after the quotation in square brackets []. The key phrases that the subjects produced are marked with single quotes '…', regardless of whether they consist of English or Finnish words. Below are examples of both cases.

I will go to Helsinki today. [Olen menossa Helsinkiin tänään.]

'Tule missi suorittamaan tehtävä prosentilla.'

2 FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

There are plenty of theories explaining different aspects that can hinder language learning. Most of these aspects affect both native language and foreign language learning. In fact, when we are talking about language learning difficulties it is sometimes very hard to distinguish between their effect on native language and foreign language learning. Some theories claim that if you have difficulties in learning your native language, then you will have difficulties in learning foreign languages (see for example Ganschow et al. 1991). However, this is not always the case. There are as many types and mixtures of language learning difficulties as there are poor language learners. Each language learner experiences and expresses his or her difficulties differently. Nevertheless, researchers have tried to categorise these individual differences and create a whole picture of the factors that may hinder foreign language learning.

The main focus in this study will be on dyslexia (2.1) as it was the only actual learning disability the subjects were diagnosed with. Other learning disabilities will be covered only briefly (2.2.1) as the subjects had not been officially diagnosed with any of them. Furthermore, as the literature on learning disabilities especially related to foreign language learning is practically non-existent, the section will discuss learning disabilities in general keeping in mind the point of view of foreign language learning. The factors that contribute to poor success in foreign language learning according to previous research are presented in section 2.2. These individual differences contain the previously mentioned learning disabilities (2.2.1), foreign language aptitude (2.2.2), attitudes and motivation (2.2.3), personality and intelligence (2.2.4), anxiety (2.2.5), learning style (2.2.6), and learning strategies (2.2.7). At least some of these individual differences can be contributed to the language learning difficulties the subjects in this study had experienced according to their own words.

2.1 Dyslexia

Definition and symptoms

Dyslexia comes from the Latin and Greek words of *dys* meaning difficult and *lexis* meaning speech or word. Thus, we get a specific reading difficulty, the characteristics of which are an inability to translate written language to speech and vice versa (Das 1998:7). There are a number of different definitions of dyslexia and explanations of its nature and causes. However, there are four points that are accepted quite generally (Hynd 1992). Firstly, dyslexia is probably due to a congenital neurological condition. Secondly, the disability persists from childhood to adulthood. Thirdly, dyslexia has subtypes that include perceptual, cognitive, and language dimensions. And lastly, dyslexia leads to deficits in many skill areas as the learner grows.

There are several causes supposed to relate to reading difficulties (Das 1998:13). Firstly, there is a specific cognitive processing difficulty, namely, the phonological coding deficit. Problems with phonology include, among other things, difficulties in the perception, production, and memory of speech sounds in spoken language (Farmer et al. 2002:3). Secondly, reading difficulties can be caused by a failure to learn to read due to other learning difficulties, such as an inability to pay attention during instruction (Das 1998:13). The term dyslexic, however, should only be used to refer to learners who are otherwise normal learners and whose severely impaired reading skills are not due to secondary factors, such as physical or emotional disabilities (Vellutino 1980:7-8). Moreover, dyslexia seems to have a neurological basis. The brains of those who have dyslexia differ both in structure, function, and electrical activity from the brains of normal persons (Lerner 1993:220). However, the evidence is not convincing enough and the studies on dyslexia's neurological basis have not been able to sufficiently exclude other contributing factors from the equation (Vellutino 1980:50-51).

The theories of the probable causes of reading disorder touch four areas of difficulty that are most frequently hypothesised with dyslexics: visual perception and visual memory, intersensory integration, serial order recall, and

verbal processing (Vellutino 1980:327). Problem areas in visual perception include abnormalities in form perception, spatial orientation, and visual pattern analysis. Difficulties in intersensory integration suggest that poor readers have deficiencies in the ability to integrate information received through various sensory systems. Learners who have problems with serial order recall experience difficulty in serial processing, such as reciting the alphabet or ordering the days of the week. Verbal processing, that is, coding information verbally, is seen as a crucial element in acquiring reading skills. Vellutino (1980), however, presents strong criticism towards these theories and towards the reliability of the results of the studies that support them. He considers the results debatable due to sampling, procedural, and interpretative difficulties. Vellutino discusses quite exhaustively the criticism towards a massive amount of research done on dyslexia (for further information, see Vellutino 1980).

Dyslexia has some hereditary tendencies of running in families. If there are dyslexics in the learner's family, they are more at risk of developing dyslexia (Das 1998:10). In addition, dyslexia is more common in boys than in girls. There are several possible reasons for this: there may be some biological factors that make males more prone to dyslexia; girls have superior language skills and develop them more quickly; teachers tend to notice the problems of boys more easily due to their distracting behaviour during lessons; and boys are generally more interested in acquiring physical skills than reading (Das 1998:11). Unfortunately, learners with dyslexia very often suffer from related emotional and mental health problems, such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety (Farmer et al. 2002:61).

Farmer et al. (2002:8-9) talk about two kinds of dyslexics. First, there are those whose problem is phonological in nature and who have difficulty in phoneme-grapheme and grapheme-phoneme transcription. Their greatest problem lies in reading nonwords. Secondly, there are surface dyslexics who have difficulties in reading irregular words, such as *yacht*. There is dispute about the cause of surface dyslexia, whether it is a problem with orthographic memory, that is, remembering the letters and the sequences of letters in a word, or whether surface dyslexia is also a result of a phonological impairment but a much

milder one than the first type of dyslexia (Farmer et al. 2002:9). However, most learners with dyslexia show symptoms of both kinds (Farmer et al. 2002). Lerner (1993:454-455), in turn, identifies three types of dyslexics with the help of the Diagnostic Screening Test for Developmental Dyslexia designed to classify spelling errors. The first type has dysphonetic dyslexia where the spelling errors reflect inaccurate phonic spellings. The words have some correct letters but the letters are placed in odd positions, such as *lghit* for *light*. These learners usually read and spell through visualisation. The second type has dyseidetic dyslexia where the spelling errors reflect phonic-equivalent errors. The misspellings include errors such as *sofer* for *chauffeur*, and *lisn* for *listen*. These learners read and spell primarily through phonic analysis. The third type has dysphonetic-dyseidetic dyslexia which reflects both kinds of errors. Learners belonging to this type are considered the most severe cases of dyslexia.

Farmer et al. (2002:35-41) discuss some problems of writing that dyslexic learners usually encounter. First, their handwriting speed is lower than average. Second, grammatical errors occur on three levels. At word level, parts of words or even whole words are erroneous or omitted. Problem areas include, for example, noun pluralisation, possessive endings, verb tense and number, pronouns, prepositions, and suffixes. At sentence level, the construction of sentences can be incomplete, for example, missing a main verb, there can be inconsistency in verb subject reference, or the sequencing of clauses and phrases can be incorrect. At paragraph level, the relationship between sentences is not clear because there is lack of clarity in verb subject reference and in the use of pronouns. Last, dyslexic learners are more likely to use immature or colloquial words and phrases than more sophisticated, formal language. They also prefer words with fewer syllables. Furthermore, Farmer et al. (2002:118-120) conducted a study where they asked teachers about problem areas for learners with dyslexia. The majority of the teachers mentioned spelling, grammar, clarity and fluency of writing, a restricted vocabulary, slow reading, difficulties in reading comprehension, problems in note-taking, anxiety, and lack of confidence as problem areas they had noted in their dyslexic students.

Dinklage (1971) lists some other symptoms of reading problems. In addition to reversing syllables or letters or omissing letters, dyslexic learners may reverse word sequences, read words backwards, or even misperceive letters in a mirror-image way (*d* becoming *b*) when reading aloud. Interestingly, as such students often suffer from right-left confusion, Dinklage mentions that they rely on mnemonic devices to help keep things in order. These include among other things mental images and mnemonic phrases (Dinklage 1971:189). In general, dyslexics lack the cognitive processing that is essential for breaking down words in an ordered sequence to sounds (Das 1998:12). They find it exceptionally difficult to recognise letters and words and to interpret visual or auditory information (Lerner 1993:385). Moreover, dyslexics are poor at single word reading and at related abilities, such as verbal short-term memory (Farmer et al. 2002:5).

Vellutino (1980:24) talks about the characteristics of severely impaired readers. These probable dyslexics typically have unusual deficiencies in individual word decoding and, consequently, have difficulties with all aspects of reading. Furthermore, they are not only extremely impaired in identifying whole words on sight but are equally impaired in analysing their component sounds. Vellutino (1980:35) stresses the fact that probable dyslexics' poor reading skills should not be due to neurological, sensory, physical, or emotional disabilities. Das (1998:16), in turn, stresses the importance of sequencing difficulties in the characteristics of dyslexia. The problem lies in appreciating the succession of letters within a word and of words within a sentence. Thus, a dyslexic learner should be trained in sequential processing, for example, with exercises where the learner has to rearrange correctly previously mixed letters of a word or words of a sentence. The use of different colours, shapes and objects can also be useful in the exercises (Das 1998:83). The colour-note strategy is one example of an exercise like this (see section 4.3.1).

The ability to decode single written words is the primary prerequisite for reading comprehension and the ability to derive meanings of sentences by combining meanings of single words in an appropriate way is secondary. Farmer et al. (2002:5) claim that as the primary function is related to

phonological ability and the secondary is not, dyslexics are assumed to have problems only as long as poor single word reading disrupts the comprehension process. When examining how problems with grammar and spelling affected academic areas of study, it was noted that the problems affected foreign language learning the most (Farmer et al. 2002:49). Other areas of study, such as engineering, science, and computing, were far less affected by grammar and spelling difficulties. In addition, difficulties in phonological awareness can cause problems in foreign language learning. Phonological awareness is crucial in foreign language learning as one has to translate groups of graphemes into unfamiliar groups of phonemes (Das 1998:22). The development of dyslexics in other areas than literacy is assumed to be normal. However, in practice also other skills, such as the development of vocabulary are impeded by dyslexia (Farmer et al. 2002:14).

Difficult to diagnose dyslexia

The diagnosis of dyslexia usually begins with a teacher or a parent noticing that there is something wrong with the learner's reading. There may be difficulties in learning to read in the first place, or trouble with reading and writing in later studies. There are three basic models of assessment for teachers to use (Lerner 1993:62-63). In the traditional assessment model learners are referred for an evaluation where school personnel try to determine why the learner is having difficulty in learning by giving standardised tests and by using other informal measures. In the dynamic assessment model standardised tests are not important, instead the teacher evaluates the learner's ability to learn in the teaching situation. Dynamic assessment is active, flexible, and continuous. Its goal is to find out how well the learner can learn under favourable conditions by observing his/her reactions and responses in the interactive teaching environment. The third model of assessment is curriculum-based. There the materials used in the assessment are always taken directly from the learner's course of study. The learner is evaluated using tests that belong to his/her own curriculum and match the school's curricular requirements.

When diagnosing dyslexia, it is important to first exclude other possible causes of poor reading, such as low intelligence, inadequate education, social and emotional problems, and overt brain damage (Farmer et al. 2002:1). Traditionally, if an intelligence test indicates that a learner is of normal intelligence but a reading test, the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), for example, indicates that reading is much poorer than would be expected, the learner is considered dyslexic. In contrast to *generally backward poor readers* (GBR) whose poor reading is consistent with their low intelligence, it is assumed that dyslexic poor readers can be helped through remediation (Farmer et al. 2002:2). Some researchers, however, argue that measuring intelligence is irrelevant to diagnosing dyslexia. Das (1998:36) clearly states that intelligence does not predict dyslexia; reading disability is found at all levels of intelligence. The problem lies in the criteria with which expected reading ability is measured in intelligence tests (Farmer et al. 2002).

In cases where learners are reasonably literate in their native language but are having problems with reading and writing in English, the diagnosis becomes complicated. The question is whether their reading and writing difficulties are due to interference from the native language, due to dyslexia, or even both (Farmer et al. 2002:6). Phonemic awareness depends to some extent on the nature of the native language. There is evidence of a correlation between phonemic awareness in the native language and literacy in the foreign language (Farmer et al. 2002). Thus, information about reading and writing ability in the native language can help a lot the diagnosis in the foreign language, English specifically. In addition, subjective information about the subjects' background is very essential in diagnosing dyslexia. The educational history of a dyslexic adult will quite certainly show negative experiences in related areas (Farmer et al. 2002:22). All related documents, such as reports from educational psychologists and other professionals or the subjects' own self-reports of problems at school, are a valuable source of diagnostic information. Participation in remedial classes, feelings of frustration in reading lessons, and a possible discrepancy between subjects' perception of their own ability and performance at school should be noted. As dyslexia has a genetic component, it

is also valuable to look for reading difficulties in subjects' families (Farmer et al. 2002:22).

Identifying dyslexia naturally depends on the definition and criteria used to assess the condition (Lerner 1993:387). Reading can be assessed through informal measures, such as portfolio assessment, or through formal tests, such as survey tests, diagnostic tests, and comprehensive batteries (Lerner 1993:406). Survey tests give an overall reading achievement level while diagnostic tests provide more in-depth information about the learners' strengths and weaknesses in reading. Comprehensive batteries measure more academic areas of skills (Lerner 1993:409-410). Reading comprehension tests are, however, diagnostically ambiguous. Poor reading comprehension may be due to other causes, too, than dyslexia, such as problems with grammar and complex grammatical structures. Therefore, reading comprehension tests can contribute to but cannot be the sole basis of diagnosis (Farmer et al. 2002:13). Proof-reading is a similar case. In contrast, tests of phonological awareness are closely connected with dyslexia and therefore carry much weight in diagnosis (Farmer et al. 2002:13).

The following tests for diagnosing dyslexia are most likely to be reliable and useful according to Farmer et al. (2002:15-21). Firstly, there are phonemic awareness tests, such as phoneme counting, phoneme deleting, and spoonerism, that relate to the component sounds that make up a word. Das (1998:20) adds tests of counting syllables in a word and reorganising sounds of a word to the list. Secondly, nonword reading tests measure both letter to sound (grapheme-phoneme) transcription and blending of the resulting sounds (Farmer et al. 2002:17). Thirdly, single word reading tests give useful information through the reading errors that the subjects make, such as false starts, repeated attempts and dysfluencies, visual guesses, and pronouncing an irregular word according rules (*pint* to rhyme with *hint*) (Farmer et al. 2002:19). Fourthly, in single word spelling tests the biggest differences between dyslexics and controls are seen in irregular words, even familiar ones like *their*. Errors in very common words especially are not considered to be due to poor spelling vocabulary but contribute strongly to the diagnosis of dyslexia

(Farmer et al. 2002:21). It is important to remember that when testing adult subjects they can and will use every guessing strategy available to give an acceptable result (Farmer et al. 2002:20). In comparison to reading, spelling seems to be a better indicator of dyslexia, as guessing will go a long way in reading, especially when there is a context, but in spelling guessing is much less successful.

Farmer et al. (2002:222-223) interviewed a chartered occupational psychologist who assesses dyslexics at a university. His standard package of assessment includes the following steps: a preliminary questionnaire about the learner's reading, spelling, writing, memory skills, and organisational skills in learning situations; a face-to-face discussion of the learner's educational background and present coping strategies; an intelligence test; single word reading and -spelling tests; an arithmetic test; and a free writing task to assess the learner's writing speed, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting. All these aspects and conversations with the university's disability advisers contribute to the overall assessment and diagnosis. In Finland, for example, there is a test available for diagnosing dyslexia which includes the following subtests: a single word spelling test, a synonym test, a multiple choice test of spelling and language structure, and a reading comprehension test with open questions (see also section 4.4).

There are three problems that have to be taken into account in the diagnosis of dyslexia (Farmer et al. 2002:14-15). Firstly, there are dyslexics who have learned to compensate for their difficulties or seem to have 'recovered' from their problems. Secondly, there may occur a snowball effect, that is, for example, learners who have difficulties in reading are likely to avoid reading and, thus, the less they read the more they fall behind their peers both on reading and on other skills that are dependent on reading, such as vocabulary, general knowledge, and even self confidence. Thirdly, there can be problems with the norms or base data against which dyslexics are compared. For non-standardised tests there may not exist a representative example of the general population. Furthermore, most of the several different test batteries for testing dyslexia have a common problem: they tend to be large and time-consuming as

they try to include all the characteristics in which respects dyslexics differ from normal readers (Farmer et al. 2002:11). The test batteries also differ from each other in content depending on which theory of the nature of dyslexia the people who compiled the battery support (Farmer et al. 2002:11). Those who consider dyslexia a phonological problem are likely to avoid tests using visual memory. In contrast, some batteries are based on a view that dyslexia is caused by a visual/orthographic problem and contain, for example, tests of homophone discrimination (Farmer et al. 2002:12).

When examining the various tests available for diagnosing dyslexia, it is important to examine also their diagnostic confidence. Some tests reason their importance only by stressing the fact that dyslexics do more poorly on them than normal subjects (Farmer et al. 2002:23). In some cases, the tests are of core diagnostic significance, whereas in others they have a supplementary role in diagnosis. In addition, some tests have no diagnostic role because poor performance may occur for other reasons than dyslexia. Extreme caution is recommended when diagnosing learners as dyslexic (Farmer et al. 2002:23). The diagnostic label may disadvantage learners all through their lives. Fortunately, an appropriate diagnosis usually leads to good consequences. Dyslexic learners are guided to special instruction groups where there is more time and various teaching methods available for them. With the help of a specialised teacher the learner has a greater chance of learning to read and write correctly than in the regular classroom.

Comments

Studies on dyslexia usually select their subjects based on the scores of standardised reading measures. Subjects who are two or more years below their grade placement are selected (Vellutino 1980:25). This, however, presents some problems: the studies do not take into account the variability between test performance and grade level; the broad grade level descriptions do not take into account small differences in test scores, that is, if someone is just below or above a limit; and the grade level system assumes a constant rate of growth throughout the school year, which is usually not the case. Nevertheless, grade levels seem to be commonly used in dyslexia research as they are simple and

easy to interpret. In addition, there seems to be a lot of dispute between researchers on the true causes of dyslexia. Each theory has its supporting researchers and studies, but what is missing is undeniable proof: there is always someone who will, justifiably, question the results.

The literature on childhood dyslexia is vast, while research on adult dyslexia is more difficult to find. Even though childhood dyslexia research is helpful in diagnosing adults, the aspect that dyslexic adults usually learn to compensate for their problems needs to be kept in mind. Most importantly, it is surprising that just a small portion of the core literature on dyslexia touches the subject of foreign language learning. Dyslexics' problems with learning are mostly looked at from the point of view of native language and other school subjects. Although foreign language learning is obviously hampered by dyslexia, it seems to be forgotten too often from research plans. Thus, there is a great demand for any studies concerning dyslexics and their foreign language learning.

2.2 Individual differences causing problems in foreign language learning

2.2.1 Learning disabilities

The common mistake in diagnosing poorly performing language learners is to blame them for being immature, unmotivated, slow intellectually or lacking self-control. However, when taking a closer look at these learners' behaviour, one may find various kinds of **learning disabilities** behind the troubled and inadequate learning. Learning disabilities, as defined by Smith and Strick (1997:5), are "neurological handicaps that affect the brain's ability to understand, remember, or communicate information". Lerner (1993:9-10) elaborates on these, making a number of additions: first, the disorder is in one or more of the basic psychological processes; second, the learning difficulty affects speaking, listening, writing, reading, and mathematics; third, the difficulty is not primarily due to causes such as visual or hearing impairments, mental retardation, or economic disadvantage; and fourth, the learner's

achievement level is severely lower than his/her potential for learning. The term learning disability does not refer to a single disorder but to a broad range of handicaps that can affect any area of academic performance. The learning disabilities that are most likely to cause academic problems are those affecting visual perception, language processing, fine motor skills, and the ability to focus attention (Smith and Strick 1997:6). When these are combined with hyperactivity, which affects 15-20% of children with learning disabilities, difficulties at school are hard to avoid (Smith and Strick 1997:6).

There are also other symptoms that have been frequently observed in learning disabled learners. Disorders of attention, such as distractibility and poor concentration ability contribute to learning disabilities (Lerner 1993:20). Learners with a short attention span are easily distracted and rapidly loose interest in new activities (Smith and Strick 1997:6). In addition, absentminded learners often lose homework and forget to do required assignments (Smith and Strick 1997:7). Some learning disabled learners fail to develop and mobilise cognitive strategies for learning (Lerner 1993:20). This is shown in poor ability to plan and organise: for example, when faced with several tasks the learner does not know how to break the work down into manageable parts (Smith and Strick 1997:7). Poor motor abilities, that is, general awkwardness and clumsiness, complicate learning in the form of unreadable handwriting, for example (Lerner 1993:20). Difficulty following directions certainly creates problems in the classroom (Smith and Strick 1997:6). This relates to perceptual and information processing problems which include, among others, difficulty in discriminating auditory and visual stimuli (Lerner 1993:20).

Social immaturity and inflexibility are some symptoms of inappropriate social behaviour expressed by learning disabled learners (Smith and Strick 1997:7). The lack of impulse control can lead to socially awkward situations both at school and elsewhere. Furthermore, it is very common that learners have problems in listening and conversation (Smith and Strick 1997:48). In addition to these oral language difficulties, learners may experience difficulties in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading problems affect decoding, basic reading skills, and reading comprehension. Problems with writing include

spelling, handwriting, and written composition, while mathematics difficulties show in quantitative thinking, time, space, and calculation facts (Lerner 1993:21). Some learners develop related emotional problems, such as frustration and low self-esteem. Tracing only a simple cause for the disabilities is rarely possible and they usually occur in combinations that vary tremendously in severity between learners (Smith and Strick 1997:114). Each individual learner is unique and presents only some of these characteristics, never all of them (Lerner 1993:20). What learning disabled learners do have in common is 'unexpected underachievement' in some areas of study. Furthermore, the severity and nature of learning disabilities varies according to the learner's age. When adult learners are concerned, some learn to overcome and compensate their disabilities, while others continue to suffer from related problems in both personal life and at work (Lerner 1993:25). Many adults are nowadays voluntarily seeking help to cope with their learning disabilities.

Learners with learning disabilities frequently have problems in more than one area of information processing. Learning disabilities can be divided into four basic types (Smith and Strick 1997:32-64). First, **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** includes learners who have serious attention deficits and/or hyperactivity problems. They cannot sit still, they interrupt, do not pay attention, are unable to plan ahead and get organised, are impatient, cannot learn rules, often lose things, and are easily distracted. These learners have difficulty staying on given tasks and completing their work, and their work may be sloppy and careless (Lerner 1993:47). However, ADHD is not connected with intelligence (Lerner 1993). Second, learners with **visual perception disabilities** have trouble making sense out of what they see (Smith and Strick 1997:40-47). The problem lies in the way their brains process visual information, not in their eyesight. Learners have difficulty recognising, organising, interpreting and remembering visual images. Thus, they may find it extremely hard to understand written and pictorial symbols, such as letters and words, numbers, diagrams, maps, and graphs. Third, individuals with **fine motor disabilities** cannot fully control groups of small muscles in their hands (Smith and Strick 1997:57-62). It has no impact on their intellectual capacity, but it causes problems at school as it impairs the ability to communicate in

writing. Often their handwriting is so illegible that it is impossible to even guess what the words are and whether they are spelled correctly. These learners have sometimes articulation problems as well, because the brain areas controlling the movements of hands and mouth lie relatively close together.

Last, **language processing disabilities** are probably the type of learning disabilities that affects foreign language learning the most (Smith and Strick 1997:48). These learners can have problems with any aspect of language: hearing words correctly, understanding their meaning, remembering verbal material, and communicating clearly. Language processing disabilities interfere also with the way these learners think: how they remember information, organise ideas, make associations between facts and concepts, and handle abstractions (Smith and Strick 1997:54). All these problems are likely to affect both native and foreign language learning. Learners with oral language disorders are exhausted in situations that require extensive language interactions and conversations (Lerner 1993:357). Their responses to questions or directions may be inappropriate, and their memory for verbal instructions may also be poor. Comprehension problems only increase when the language being used is complex or foreign (Smith and Strick 1997:48). Learners with poor phonological abilities are unable to say, for example, how many sounds there are in the word *cat*, or how many of the sounds are different in the words *cat* and *hat*. The result is inability to learn the alphabet (Lerner 1993:358). Sometimes learners suffering from language processing disabilities mispronounce words, saying “efelent” for *elephant*, for example (Smith and Strick 1997:48). In addition, strange syntactical patterns, confused word order, and inappropriate vocabulary are common in their speech (Lerner 1993:359). Some learners, however, express their oral language disabilities differently. When asked to name pictures as they are shown, these learners are unable to do so rapidly. They cannot access and retrieve the names of the objects from their memories (Lerner 1993:359). This usually results in either total silence or extensive jabbering (Smith and Strick 1997:49).

Writing skills are affected by language processing disabilities, too. Learners with disabilities often lack the critical abilities related to competent writing, such as legible handwriting, knowledge of the rules of written usage, and cognitive strategies for organising and planning the writing (Lerner 1993:437). They may use shorter sentences, smaller vocabularies and poorer grammar than their peers (Smith and Strick 1997:48). Their writing is replete with errors in punctuation, capitalisation, handwriting, and other areas (Lerner 1993:437). The writing is full of bizarre spelling errors, thus making it impossible to decipher even for the learners themselves (Smith and Strick 1997:51). Their phonological and linguistic difficulties prevent them from applying phonics and structural analysis to spelling the word (Lerner 1993:449). Many poor spellers have trouble remembering or visualising the letters and the order of the letters in words. Other learners experience problems with the auditory perception of letter sounds of words or with auditory memory (Lerner 1993:449). They just cannot hold sounds or syllables in memory.

Language processing disabilities affect reading skills as well. Learners have difficulty in associating individual words with their correct meanings, or become confused when words appear in larger combinations (Smith and Strick 1997:52). In addition, they have problems with word sequencing and may easily confuse words that sound alike (Smith and Strick 1997:48-49). Learners with sound processing weaknesses have problems with associating letters with sounds and with breaking down words into sequences of sound units (Smith and Strick 1997:49). The more severe form of a reading disorder, **dyslexia**, has already been examined more thoroughly in section 2.1.

2.2.2 Foreign language aptitude

It is a well-known fact that learners differ a lot in the way they succeed in learning foreign languages. It seems as if some learners have an innate ability to learn languages easily and quickly, while others have to struggle however motivated they are. It has been suggested that one major characteristic which contributes to this is **foreign language aptitude** (Carroll 1981:85). However,

foreign language aptitude is a very controversial concept because it is very hard to define and measure precisely. Wesche describes it as "the ability to learn a new language quickly and to a high degree of proficiency" (1981:119). In other words, foreign language aptitude has an effect on the ease and rate of achieving mastery of a new language (Carroll 1981:86). The study of aptitude has concentrated on foreign language learning through formal instruction, as in school, and not on language acquisition in an informal environment. In fact, the main purpose of studying learners' aptitude seems to have been to assist in screening them to language classrooms with different proficiency levels.

Foreign language aptitude consists of several factors, of which the most important for instructional language learning seem to be 1) auditory ability, 2) phonetic coding ability, 3) grammatical sensitivity, and 4) rote memory (Wesche 1981:129). All these factors influence foreign language learning and a lack of one may hinder learning. Pimsleur (as quoted by Wesche 1981:129) has defined auditory ability as "the ability to receive and process information through the ear". In fact, Pimsleur himself has said, though in 1968, that auditory ability is often responsible for the differences in people's ability to learn foreign languages which cannot be explained by intelligence or motivation (1968:102). Examples of behavioural manifestations of a problem with auditory ability are as follows: difficulty in understanding tape recorded speech, speaking with a noticeably loud voice, constantly asking others to repeat, and difficulty in mimicking auditory material, to mention a few (Wesche 1981:130).

Phonetic coding ability has been defined by Carroll (as quoted by Wesche 1981:130) as the "ability to identify and to store in long-term memory new language sounds or strings of sounds". Wesche (1981:131) has described difficulties in language learning related to phonetic coding ability. Problems can come up when, for example, testing phonetic script or spelling clues. Students need extra time to take in questions and to formulate their answers. In the classroom students skip syllables or words; they forget momentarily the meaning of familiar words in the target language; and they have difficulties in putting words together to create phrases or sentences. Reading comprehension

and spelling are also poor. In addition, there are difficulties in taking in and repeating extended auditory material.

Low performance in exercises involving awareness of structures and grammatical functions of sentence elements (Words in Sentences) or vocabulary knowledge in the target language (Spelling Clues) may reveal students' problems with grammatical sensitivity, which Carroll (as quoted by Wesche 1981:131-132) describes as an individual's "awareness of syntactical patterning of sentences in a language and of the grammatical functions of individual elements in a sentence". The students have problems with understanding and applying grammar rules; they misuse or avoid using complex sentence constructions; and they cannot grasp abstract grammatical explanations or sentence analysis (Wesche 1981:132).

In an exercise where students are first asked to learn one-to-one vocabulary equivalents in the native and the target language and then to choose the appropriate match for one of the target language words from a set of native language words, they are taking advantage of rote memory, the fourth factor contributing to foreign language aptitude. Wesche (1981:134) discusses the relation between rote memory and foreign language learning. In the classroom students with poor rote memory have problems in remembering recently learned information and in repeating longer new expressions. They miss elements at the beginning or end of new segments and may appear quite nervous. One teaching method suitable for such students could be using memorising strategies, for example, by creating visual, auditory, or semantic associations of new material (Wesche 1981:133). The learning strategies experimented with in this study applied the same concept (see section 4.3).

2.2.3 Attitudes and motivation

Krashen (1981:159) has mentioned that the language learner has to be 'open' to input in the target language in order to enable learning. This is where attitude and motivation come into the picture. Attitude and motivation are influential in foreign language learning because they guide the learner to seek out opportunities to learn the language instead of dropping out (Gardner 1985:56). Furthermore, they are tightly connected with the social and cultural milieu of the learning situation. Learners' attitude towards the target language, whether it is actively present in the learners' own culture or spoken on the other side of the world, are bound to influence how successfully they incorporate aspects of that language (Gardner 1985).

The concept of **attitude** is very complex and there have been many attempts to define it. Gardner (1985:9) defines attitude as an evaluative reaction to some object on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the object. He further defines two types of attitudes that relate with language learning: attitude toward learning the target language, which includes attitudes toward the teacher, the course, etc., and attitude toward the community speaking the target language, which includes attitudes toward foreign languages in general and is a more social form of attitude. Gardner (1985:50) claims that an attitude toward learning the target language and interest in foreign languages are the two most relevant attitude measures correlating with foreign language proficiency. Less relevant measures are attitude toward the teacher and toward the community speaking the target language. Krashen (1981:161), however, stresses the role of attitude toward the school and teacher in foreign language learning.

The language learner's attitude toward speakers of the target language has been studied extensively. As expected, a positive attitude toward the target language and its speakers seems to relate to foreign language success (Gardner 1985:45). A poor language learner, according to Krashen (1981:171), has a lack of interest in the target language and its speakers. This is a significant problem in the everyday foreign language classroom. One solution could be immersion programmes: they have been found useful in making foreign language learners'

feelings more positive towards the target language and its speakers (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:209).

A learner's motivation to learn a foreign language depends on several attitudinal factors that have to do with people's attitudes to each other in the learning situation. Spolsky (1989) lists some of these factors based on related literature. Parents' attitudes often influence their children's attitudes which is seen, among other things, in language learning. The attitudes of peers can also direct language learner's attitudes, for example, in which variant of the target language is preferred. A learner's attitude towards the learning situation can affect the degree of success, and moreover the language teacher's attitude toward individual learners is often reflected in language classroom behaviour. Furthermore, several studies have shown that learners' ethnic and cultural background relate strongly with their proficiency especially in oral language skills (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:178-179). However, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) point out a number of studies suggesting that attitudinal factors alone actually may have relatively little to do with success, stressing more the amount of input from the learning environment combined with attitudes. One must keep in mind that measuring attitudinal factors accurately is difficult as it is hard to distinguish and control the number of other factors that contribute to the same linguistic situations and to the testing situation itself.

The definition of **motivation** varies depending on the researcher defining it and the situation in which it is defined. Gardner (1985:10), linking motivation with specifically language learning, defines motivation as a combination of both effort and desire to achieve the goal of learning the target language and favourable attitudes towards language learning itself. In other words, four components are crucial for describing motivated behaviour adequately: attitude toward learning the target language, desire to learn the language, reasons for language learning, and motivational intensity (which means the amount of effort one is willing to put into learning a language) (Gardner 1985:53).

Krashen (1981) and Gardner (1985), among others, have discovered two types of motivation involved in foreign language learning. Firstly, **integrative motivation** refers to the desire to identify with members of the community that speak the target language (Krashen 1981:160, Gardner 1985:11). This relates to interacting with speakers of the target language out of sheer interest. Integrative motivation has been found to relate with foreign language proficiency especially when the linguistic situation enables input outside school, such as the Canadian Anglo situation or the English as a Second Language situation in the United States (Krashen 1981:162-163). Gardner (1985:58-59) reports of studies indicating that integratively motivated students volunteer more frequently and give more correct answers in the language classroom than others not so motivated. Spolsky (1989:159) talks about research showing that learners with integrative motivation are more likely to seek opportunities for informal interaction and less likely to drop out of language classes. Secondly, **instrumental motivation** means the desire to achieve proficiency in the target language for practical reasons or purposes (Krashen 1981:160). The aim of learning is to accomplish a task, for example, pass a course or get a certain job (Gardner 1985:11). The division is broad and includes so many different goals for language learning that it inevitably must allow some personal interpretation.

Instead of integrative and instrumental motivation, Ehrman (1996) talks of **intrinsic** and **extrinsic motivation**. The definitions, however, are quite similar. Intrinsic motivation is involved in foreign language learning when the learner is interested in the target language and its culture, and needs a tool for communicating with people within it. Extrinsic motivation is related to gaining some kind of external benefit, such as passing a test, getting a job, and so on. Naturally, the types of motivation are not mutually exclusive (Ehrman 1996:138). Extrinsic motivation may lead to intrinsic motivation as the learner proceeds in the language learning process, for example.

There are conflicting results on which type of motivation leads to a higher foreign language proficiency, the integrative or the instrumental one (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:173-175). There is, however, no doubt in that they

both correlate with it. Spolsky (1989:151) mentions that integrative motivation has a positive effect especially on the development of native-like pronunciation and the semantic system. Furthermore, he states that the higher the motivation foreign language learners have, the more time and effort they are willing to put into learning aspects of the target language. The importance of the reasons for learning a language will determine what cost the learner will pay for the learning. Spolsky (1989:159) also notes that learners who do poorly will have less favourable attitudes toward language learning.

Several researchers have found that it is difficult to determine the direction of effect between attitude, motivation and foreign language success (see, for example, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, Spolsky 1989). Although positive attitudes and good motivation may lead to success in language learning, the same can be true the other way round. On the one hand, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:117) report that success in learning a foreign language has been studied to increase learner motivation and create more positive attitudes toward the target language and even its speakers. On the other hand, Spolsky (1989:153) states that learning a foreign language does not necessarily improve learners' attitudes to its speakers. Sparks and Ganschow (1995) add to this that it is in fact the difficulties in foreign language learning that lead to lack of motivation, not the other way round. There are also other explanations. Gardner (1985) suggests a linear relationship between attitudes and motivation: attitudes affect motivation which in turn affects foreign language learning. Thus, attitudes have an important but indirect effect on foreign language learning. Spolsky (1989:157) proposes a system where favourable attitudes toward speakers, culture and country of the target language lead to integrative motivation, and favourable attitudes toward the school, teacher and target language as a school subject lead to positive language learning motivation.

Measuring attitude is, unsurprisingly, quite a difficult task. Problems arise especially with reliability (Gardner 1985:9). An individual's interpretation of the test objects, questions, and the test situation itself affect greatly the variation in the results. Furthermore, Spolsky (1989:155-156) discusses some studies that question the appropriateness and exhaustiveness of the distinction

between integrative and instrumental motivation. Gardner (1985:56) stresses the fact that motivation and attitude are tightly connected with other learner variables and that this has to be recognised in any study related to the subject. For further information on the relationship between attitudes, motivation and foreign language learning, see, for example, the various works of Robert C. Gardner.

2.2.4 Personality and intelligence

Extroverts have traditionally been considered good language learners, and there are studies confirming this view (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:186). However, the results of empirical research on extroversion and language learning are inconclusive. Some studies have found no significant correlation between them, while others have discovered even a negative correlation between extroversion and oral skills in the target language (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:185). Spolsky (1989:112) speculates whether introverted learners benefit from learning conditions that permit quiet introspection and extroverted learners from encouragement for public performance. Whatever the case, one must remember to question the validity of these studies because measuring personality traits often relies on inaccurate scales and questionnaires (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:185).

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:188-191) list other **personality** traits that can affect a language learner's performance in the foreign language classroom: 1) willingness to take risks, that is, being willing to guess or appear foolish in order to communicate, 2) sensitivity to rejection, that is, the degree of fearing, for example, ridicule by peers or teacher, 3) empathy, that is, the ability to put oneself in another's place, and 4) tolerance of ambiguity, that is, the ability to cope with unclear stimuli. The ideal situation for successful foreign language learning in relation to these personality traits can be expressed in one word: moderation. Self-image and outgoing personality have also been noted to relate with foreign language achievement, especially with oral skills (Krashen 1981:166). A study by Heyde (as quoted by Larsen-Freeman and Long

1991:184) reveals that language learners' self-esteem, especially the self-evaluation they give themselves on specific language tasks, correlates highly with their performance in an oral production task.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:204) discuss research results claiming that a personality factor called learning stamina contributes to foreign language learning. In practice, this means the ability to maintain the learning effort for a certain amount of time. Poor language learners may abandon their study completely when faced with obstacles while they should try to find a way to make the learning process work for them (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:204).

There is a lot of controversy among researchers over the relationship between general **intelligence** and foreign language proficiency, ranging from them being more or less the same thing to them having no correlation (Spolsky 1989:102). The fact that it is very difficult to measure intelligence and proficiency accurately does not help the explosive situation. Spolsky (1989) claims that high scores in standard intelligence tests correlate strongly with success in school-related foreign language learning but are unrelated to foreign language learning for informal and social functions. He then adds that older language learners who tend to use conscious, intellectual strategies may be an exception to this. Carroll (1962:122) points out that in order for foreign language learning to be successful there are certain requirements for the learner's general intelligence: the learner must understand directions and explanations, and be able to infer them from the total content of the instruction even when they are lacking. When thinking of the relationship between intelligence and foreign language learning difficulties, one can turn to the various studies conducted by Ganschow, Sparks, and their colleagues. They have produced several studies comparing unsuccessful foreign language learners with successful ones. On the basis of their studies, Ganschow and Sparks admit that intelligence can naturally affect foreign language learning (Ganschow et al. 1991, Ganschow and Sparks 1995). However, they argue that there are no significant differences in intelligence between students with and without foreign language learning difficulties.

2.2.5 Anxiety

Many teachers and learners feel strongly that **anxiety** is a major obstacle in foreign language learning (Horwitz et al. 1986:125). It impedes one's ability to perform successfully in the language classroom. Gardner (1985:34) suggests that anxiety which relates to foreign language achievement is rather specific to the language learning situation than general anxiety. Moreover, Horwitz et al. (1986:127) stress that there exists an anxiety specific to foreign language learning and that it is conceptually related to three other specific factors. The first is shyness that interferes with talking to other people (communication apprehension), the second is test anxiety, and the third is fear of negative feedback. Communication apprehension includes classroom situations where language learners have little control of the communicative situation, their performance is constantly monitored, and they are forced to use a medium in which they realise their own limitations. Test anxiety relates to fear of failure. It is common that anxious learners put unrealistic demands on themselves and regard anything less than a perfect test performance as a failure. Fear of negative feedback is not limited to test situations but can occur in any social situation. According to Horwitz et al. (1986:128), foreign language learning anxiety contains elements of all three, but is more than just a combination of them. It includes also the threat to one's self-concept when one is forced to communicate in the target language with less proficiency than desired.

Horwitz et al. (1986:125-126) define foreign language classroom anxiety as a "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system". They also list some symptoms of the problem. Anxious learners have difficulty in concentrating, they forget things, sweat and have palpitations. They begin to avoid anxiety-producing situations by missing classes or postponing homework. Some learners may respond to anxiety by overstudying, that is, trying to compensate their errors by studying more. Unfortunately, this may not always lead to better results. In the language classroom, the more anxious learners usually try to avoid attempting difficult or personal messages in the target language (Horwitz et al. 1986:126). In addition, learners who have

suffered from years of humiliation in foreign language classroom may react rather emotionally sometimes. In fact, Dinklage (1971:199) talks about several cases where a student has thrown up each morning on the way to language class, usually right outside the building.

There is not much research available specifically on the relation between anxiety and foreign language learning. However, Horwitz has developed a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which has been proven to be a reliable and valid test to measure foreign language learning anxiety (Spolsky 1989:115). On the basis of a study using the FLCAS, Horwitz et al. (1986:129-130) list some characteristics of anxious foreign language learners. Firstly, they are afraid of speaking in the target language; their self-consciousness prevents them from taking the risk of revealing themselves in front of other people. Secondly, they fear that they will not understand all of the language input provided for them. Thirdly, they fear being less competent than others in the language classroom. Lastly, they are afraid of making mistakes and regard every correction as a failure. It is thought that while all people experience anxiety sometimes, certain people may have a more severe reaction to anxiety-producing situations than others, language learning being one of them. According to Spolsky (1989), the learners whose anxiety most interferes with the language learning process are typically those who have low initial proficiency, low motivation, and high general anxiety.

Anxiety is often related to listening and speaking in the language classroom. The situations that create most anxiety are speaking in front of class and tests (Spolsky 1989:114). Horwitz et al. (1986:126) add role-play situations to the list. In test situations anxious learners tend to answer incorrectly due to nervousness even though they later claim knowing the correct answer at the time. Other difficulties experienced by anxious learners are not being able to discriminate the sounds and structures or to grasp the content of a target language message (Horwitz et al. 1986:126). In addition, Krashen (1981:165) notes that there seems to be a consistent relationship between various forms of anxiety and language proficiency in informal situations as well as more formal classroom situations.

Studies have shown some correlation between anxiety and language performance, but, surprisingly, the direction of correlation has not always been consistent. In some cases the correlation has been negative and in some anxiety seems to have enhanced performance (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:187). Spolsky (1989) lists a couple of reasons why anxious learners do not make good learners: anxiety distracts from the task of learning and remembering new linguistic items, and it discourages the whole learning process. However, he also acknowledges another point of view, namely, that anxiety can have two effects: up to a certain point an anxious learner tries harder, but beyond this point anxiety prevents learning. Scovel (1978:139) explains this by introducing two types of anxiety: 1) facilitating anxiety which motivates the learner to fight the learning task, and 2) debilitating anxiety which motivates the learner to avoid the new learning task. This quite schizophrenic nature of anxiety has been studied further (see Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:187-188).

2.2.6 Learning style

Every learner has a unique **learning style**. Learning styles are value-neutral, that is, they represent different but equal ways of viewing the complex process of foreign language learning (Kinsella 1995:171). There is a wide range of definitions for describing a learning style because the concept involves so many aspects: perception, cognition, conceptualisation, affect, and behaviour, to mention a few (Kinsella 1995). According to Reinert (1976:160-161), an individual's learning style is "the way in which that individual is programmed to learn most effectively, i.e., to receive, understand, remember, and be able to use new information". Kinsella (1995:171) defines learning styles as "an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills which persist regardless of teaching methods or content area". A review of related literature reveals that the concept of learning style includes both sensory channel preferences, cognitive style, and lateralisation.

Kinsella (1995:172-173) identifies four major categories of **sensory channel preferences**: they are preferences for visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and tactile styles of learning. Even though visual learners learn best when they can use their sight as a major tool in learning, some visual learners absorb new information most effectively by silent reading. They may be overwhelmed by the extensive use of printed material and require a less visual presentation. Learners who have a strong auditory style absorb new information most effectively by their hearing. Oral lectures and instruction, the use of tapes and films, small-group activities, class discussions, and tutorial sessions may help auditory learners to process information. Kinaesthetic learners learn best through whole-body movement. It implies total physical involvement in the learning process, such as taking a field trip, dramatising, pantomiming, or interviewing. Tactile learners prefer hands-on learning. They need to manipulate the resources with their hands, for example, by writing, drawing a picture, building a model, or conducting an experiment.

Learners vary considerably with respect to their learning styles. It is not the case of each individual preferring only one sensory channel; most learners can learn through several channels, for example, kinaesthetic, tactile, and auditory (Kinsella 1995:173). Learning is just easier through one channel than through another. Those learners who have a broader selection of sensory channels to choose from, have a better chance of success in foreign language learning as they can process information in whatever way it is presented. However, when lessons are planned taking advantage of all the sensory channels, learners are not only able to learn in the way best suited to their style, but also to develop a wider repertoire of strengths (Kinsella 1995).

Another aspect of learning style is **cognitive style**, which means the preferred way in which learners process information or approach a learning task (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:192). The research results on correlation between cognitive style and foreign language performance are quite mixed, and the adequacy of measuring cognitive style has been questioned (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:192-193). Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning some factors of cognitive style as, according to several studies, they can influence foreign

language learning and they are a significant aspect of a learning style. Firstly, there is field independence/dependence. A person is field dependent if he or she is unable to abstract an element from its context or background. In language learning a field dependent learner cannot isolate a linguistic element from the context in which it is presented (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:193) and is easily distracted by the learning environment (Gardner 1985:30). Secondly, there is category width which refers to people's ability to categorise items appropriately. Broad categorisers tend to overgeneralise, whereas narrow categorisers tend to formulate more rules than necessary when it comes to foreign language learning (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:195). Thirdly, the factor of reflectivity vs. impulsivity affects language learning in the following way: reflective learners tend to mull things over when making a decision whereas impulsive learners make a quick guess in the same situation. Research shows that impulsive learners make more errors in reading tasks (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:195-196). Impulsive behaviour is characteristic especially of learners with special learning disabilities (Lerner 1993:209). Fourthly, there can be differences in the way learners prefer to receive new information. Some prefer an aural mode of presentation, some visual. The mode of instruction has been proven to influence the success of such language learners who recognise their own preferences. Moreover, kinaesthetic learners, who are usually compulsive note-takers, are included in this category of cognitive style (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:196). Lastly, a distinction can be made between analytic and gestalt learners. Analytic learners take language word by word and are fluent but inaccurate producers of the target language. Gestalt learners approach language more holistically, are keen rule-formers, and use the target language in a more halting but accurate way (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991: 196-197). Research suggests that analytic language learners do better in a deductive instructional method while holistic learners prefer an inductive one (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:210). Krashen (1981:161), too, has noted that learners who have an analytic orientation do better in conscious language learning, that is, through instruction at school. It is worth remembering that even though learners may prefer a certain cognitive style, some may very well be able to adapt their style when the learning situation demands so. Some researchers argue that it would be beneficial for

language learners to be exposed to different cognitive styles and to be encouraged to diversify their own preferences (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:211). Whatever the case, cognitive styles should be taken into account in both foreign language teaching and testing (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:212).

Learning style includes also the notion of **lateralisation**. There each of the two hemispheres of the brain becomes increasingly specialised, being responsible for a particular mode of thinking (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:197). Kinsella (1995) describes the two hemispheres as follows: the left hemisphere is the analytical side which processes information in a step-by-step manner, from one point to another. It can retrieve and string words together logically and syntactically. The right hemisphere sees the picture as a whole; it seeks relationships between things, and is most efficient in the abstract sides of language learning, for example, in interpreting linguistic ambiguity and metaphors. Which hemisphere becomes the dominant one in the learner determines the way the learner looks at and processes language learning. Furthermore, it determines the way in which the learner sets off to tackle the obstacles in learning.

It has been said that field-independent and analytic learners are left-hemisphere dominant, whereas field-dependent and holistic learners are more right-hemisphere dominant (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:198). It is generally agreed that the left hemisphere is the language centre of the brain. However, studies have shown that the right hemisphere is also involved in foreign language learning, especially in the early stages. This line of thinking is not without criticism: researchers have pointed out the problematic nature of measuring hemisphere specialisation and that the research has concentrated more on its relation to language processing rather than actual language learning (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:197-199).

2.2.7 Learning strategies

Learning strategies are an essential part of effective language learning. They aim at improving learners' communicative competence as well as enhancing their self-direction in learning (Oxford 1990:1). Some studies use the term language learning strategy to refer to larger concepts in language learning, such as when one proceeds from the parts to the whole of a language (analytic), and vice versa (gestalt) (Peters 1981:37). This definition is discussed further under the heading of learning style (2.2.6). For example, Rubin (1975) and Oxford (1990), however, define language learning strategies quite differently. Rubin (1975:43) defines learning strategies as "techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". Oxford's definition includes more detailed descriptions of separate actions that a language learner takes advantage of when learning a language. Accordingly, learning strategies are "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford 1990:8).

Learning strategies can be deliberate methods used consciously by the learner or very subtle unconscious manners through which learning is enhanced. Thus many of us may use learning strategies even though we do not necessarily always recognise doing so. Naturally, all learning strategies reflect their individual users, making the field of learning strategies full of variety. In fact, there are undoubtedly many learning strategies in use in the world which still have not been noticed by researchers but are nevertheless effective for their users. The employment of learning strategies by a learner depends on his/her level of proficiency in the target language, age, task, individual style, context, and possible cultural differences (Rubin 1975). If a language learner does not use learning strategies as an aid, there is a big gap in his or her learning capacity (Oxford 1990:201). Moreover, better language learners exploit a greater diversity and number of learning strategies in the classroom than poorer learners (Wesche as quoted by Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:200).

Difficulties in language learning arise also when a learner does not know how to use learning strategies. This is characteristic of learners with learning disabilities (Lerner 1993:206). In addition, if learning strategies are used inappropriately or in an incorrect way it may even do damage to the learning process. Thus it is important for teachers to include strategy training in their foreign language curriculum. Learners who have been trained in learning strategy use are better able to take care of and control their own learning (Kinsella 1995:191). But, although there is evidence that language learners can benefit from explicit training in learning strategies, it should be kept in mind that there are differences in the degree and required time of strategy acquisition of different learners (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:213).

Learning strategies have been an intriguing subject of study for decades now. There are several classifications of learning strategies which contain huge numbers of specific strategies identified and categorised by researchers. One of the major contributors to research on learning strategies has been Rebecca Oxford. For convenience, I will examine briefly her system of categorising learning strategies. The six prime categories of learning strategies are 1) memory, 2) cognitive, 3) compensation, 4) metacognitive, 5) affective, and 6) social strategies (Oxford 1990:14-22). The first three categories influence language learning directly and the three last indirectly. Memory strategies are the techniques used to store and retrieve information in the long-term memory. They create mental linkages through sound, image, location, or action. Some examples of memory strategies are: grouping; elaborating; placing new words into a context; semantic mapping; using keywords; structured reviewing; and using physical sensations. Cognitive strategies are used for understanding and producing language. They make use of intellectual and logical constructs to establish associations. Some examples of these are: practising formally or naturalistically; repeating; using resources for receiving and sending messages; analysing expressions; translating; taking notes; summarising and highlighting. Compensation strategies help in filling or compensating for gaps in knowledge or skill. A learner can guess intelligently using linguistic or other clues. Other examples of overcoming limitations are: switching to the mother tongue; using

mime or gesture; adjusting the message; and using a circumlocution or synonym.

Metacognitive strategies co-ordinate the learning process. They have to do with goal setting, planning work and evaluating it. This can be achieved by paying attention; organising; setting goals and objectives; seeking practice opportunities; self-monitoring and self-evaluating. Affective strategies are used for managing one's feelings. They link language learning with feelings, which has powerful influence on storage and retrieval. Affective strategies can lower one's anxiety by using music, laughter or relaxation. Encouraging strategies include taking risks wisely and rewarding oneself. It could also be wise to keep a language learning diary. Finally, social strategies involve learning with other people. Asking for clarification or correction is an essential strategy in language learning. Co-operating both with peers and native users of the target language enriches the learning process. Empathising with others and developing cultural understanding are social strategies, too.

All learning strategies, that is direct and indirect ones, support and interact with each other (Oxford 1990:14). They are useful in all areas of language learning, but Oxford (1990:17), too, acknowledges that classifying learning strategies is problematic. There is no complete agreement in the research circles on how to define and categorise learning strategies. However, research will go on providing teachers and learners more information about the ways to make language learning more effective. For alternative classifications on learning strategies see, for example, Rubin (1981), Wenden and Rubin (1987), or O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

Comments

There is a need for more valid measures of learner characteristics and for more complex research designs on measuring correlation between them. Learner variables inevitably overlap and interact with each other which in turn should be reflected in research results. Research designs that isolate learner variables may fail to do this. Foreign language aptitude, for example, is actually not a single factor but a cluster of specific abilities in a language learner.

Furthermore, the mechanisms for identifying exactly which learner variable leads to learning success are quite inadequate. An interesting question that has yet been left unanswered is whether language learning difficulties lead to affective factors such as high levels of anxiety, low motivation, and poor attitude or whether the affective factors are by-products of language learning difficulties.

The common tendency in research circles seems to be to look at the above mentioned learner variables as individual differences between foreign language learners. In my opinion, the point of view of seeing them as potential language learning difficulties has been left without the attention it needs. In addition, the number of learners suffering from actual learning disabilities grows all the time and, thus, there is a great demand for identification of new learning disabilities that will match the symptoms of poor language learners. Too many learners have to fight against misinterpretations at school on a daily basis and receive too little support to manage with their studies without a proper diagnosis of their problems.

3 TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

When a language teacher is faced with learning disabled learners, the first thing to do is to recognise the difficulties they are having with their learning. As we can see from the discussion above, these difficulties can take various forms depending on each individual learner. In fact, there is usually not just one of the difficulties mentioned above to be found but a cluster of difficulties that work together to create obstacles in learning. When the teacher and learners have defined the nature of the difficulties, they must begin a search for both proper teaching methods and useful learning strategies that will help the learners with their language learning. The teacher may use some special teaching methods or modify the normal teaching process in order to help particular learners who hopefully will benefit from it. As there are no empirical

studies available on either teaching learning strategies to foreign language learners with learning difficulties, or on teaching foreign languages to dyslexics, I will concentrate on the following issues: firstly, I will introduce some educational experiments conducted on teaching foreign languages to learners with learning difficulties in chronological order (3.1), secondly, I will discuss some guidelines on how to teach foreign languages to learning disabled and dyslexic learners (3.2), and thirdly, I will present some general guidelines for teaching learning strategies (3.3).

3.1 Previous empirical studies

The Orton-Gillingham method

Sparks, Ganschow and their numerous colleagues have investigated foreign language learning difficulties among college students in the United States for years and gained quite a reputation in the research circles. They suggest that difficulties in learning foreign languages are caused by deficits in the brain specific to linguistic skills. According to their *Linguistic Coding Deficit Hypothesis (LCDH)*, difficulties in learning foreign languages are language based and originate from the learner's difficulties with phonology, syntax, or semantics of a language. Learners who have difficulties in the rule systems of their native language are likely to have similar problems when studying a foreign language (Sparks and Ganschow 1993). What Sparks et al. suggest is the use of an approach called the Orton-Gillingham method to teaching foreign languages to learners with coding difficulties. This method has traditionally been used to teach dyslexics and learning disabled learners to read and write their native language (Sparks and Ganschow 1993:61). Researchers, especially Ganschow and Sparks, have adapted the Orton-Gillingham method to help learners particularly with their difficulties with the sounds and symbols of the target language on the basis of several research findings that suggest that at-risk foreign language learners have particular difficulties with the phonological code of language (e.g. Ganschow et al. 1991).

The main idea of the Orton-Gillingham method is explicit and direct teaching of phonology and syntax (Sparks and Ganschow 1993:61). In the Orton-Gillingham method the teaching is multisensory, which implies using many sensory channels for learning new linguistic material: hearing, seeing, speaking, and writing the language simultaneously (Sparks and Ganschow 1993:61). Instruction is highly structured and aims at explicit teaching of foreign language sounds and structures. One important characteristic is that the content to be learned is kept small. All the material is learned through multisensory practise and is supposed to lead to full mastery of the content studied. The structure of the lessons is carefully planned beforehand and consists of drills on sounds and their written forms, grammar exercises, teaching of vocabulary items, and communicative exercises (Ganschow, Sparks, and Javorsky 1998). At each stage, both spoken and written forms are provided for the learners to increase their ability to learn the phoneme-grapheme correspondences of the target language. The teaching involves careful sequencing of materials, controlled pacing, board drills, flash cards, and integration of reading, spelling, and writing (Ganschow, Sparks, and Javorsky 1998:252).

In the beginning of the 90s, Sparks et al. (1992b) completed a study where pre- and post-tests of native language and foreign language aptitude were administered to three classes of learners who had been identified as high-risk for foreign language learning. Many of the learners had been identified as learning disabled and most had experienced difficulties in learning to read, spell, and write in their native language. Two of the classes were taught a foreign language with the Orton-Gillingham method. The third class used a more traditional approach to foreign language learning, focusing on a natural communication methodology while teaching the foreign language in a non-threatening, relaxed environment. The aim of the study was to determine whether teaching a foreign language with the Orton-Gillingham method would have an impact on the learners' native language phonological, syntactic, semantic, and rote memory skills and their foreign language aptitude. Results showed that the groups taught using the Orton-Gillingham method made significant gains in most of the phonological tasks, thus improving word

identification, phoneme segmentation, and nonword recognition skills in their native language. In addition, the Orton-Gillingham group made significant gains in aptitude tests and in measures of vocabulary and verbal memory. The group that had been taught using a more conventional method showed no significant differences in any of the phonological, syntactic, and semantic measures or the aptitude tests. The findings suggest that using the Orton-Gillingham method in foreign language teaching is beneficial for poor language learners.

In 1995, Ganschow and Sparks performed another study where a group of native English-speaking high school women was given direct instruction in the phonology and orthography of Spanish for one academic year (Ganschow and Sparks 1995). The goal was to find out how much the experiment affected the subjects' native language skills and foreign language aptitude. There were 19 not-at-risk foreign language learners in the group who received traditional foreign language teaching. A total of 14 subjects had been identified as at-risk foreign language learners and they received specialised teaching. The specialised teaching approach was the Orton-Gillingham method where learners were given only a small amount of material at a time to process through multisensory practice. The results showed that the Orton-Gillingham group improved significantly in both the foreign language aptitude test and the native language phonology/orthography measures. In fact, the Orton-Gillingham group reached the skill level of the not-at-risk learners in the native language measures. Also the not-at-risk learners made significant gains in foreign language aptitude, thus still scoring much higher than the Orton-Gillingham group in the respective test. These comparisons showed that the Orton-Gillingham group made greater gains than the not-at-risk group in the phonological/orthographic measures. More importantly, both groups scored significantly higher than before in the foreign language aptitude test. Ganschow and Sparks (1995) concluded that direct and explicit teaching of the phonology and orthography of a target language benefited greatly students with language learning difficulties.

Language training adapted to learning style and foreign language aptitude

Wesche (1981) reported of a longitudinal language training project for federal public servants in Canada in the late 1970s. In the project, the trainees were divided into three teaching groups using different instructional approaches. The division was made based on the trainees' results in language aptitude tests and both interviews and questionnaires on their learning styles. The aim was to assure that each trainee would benefit as much as possible from the teaching. The goal of the study was to examine whether matching the trainees with the instructional approach assumed appropriate for them resulted in more effective learning than with the core instructional method. The target language was either French or English depending on the trainee's linguistic background.

The core instructional method was the Audio-Visual Method which was attended by the majority of the trainees. The method was inductive, proceeded by presenting linguistic structures from elementary to more difficult, and used, among other things, memorisation of tape recorded dialogues, oral drills, and illustrative slides. For those who found it hard to learn effectively using this method there were two alternative approaches. The Analytical Approach (L'Approche Traditionnelle) was aimed at trainees who were highly analytical, had strong first language skills, and often expressed perfectionist ambitions. Some of them had poor auditory or rote memory ability, which hindered their learning in the audio-visual method. The main idea of the analytical method was that the learning was made meaningful. The trainees were provided with a grammatical explanation in advance before any new material was presented to create a conceptual framework for learning. The material was presented in both spoken and written form and the trainees could rehearse reading, writing and aural-oral skills at the same time. Meaningful associations were created with techniques such as dictations, reading aloud, written exercises, and explaining the intonation patterns via live demonstrations. The method encouraged independent reading and learning activities. The context of all activities was made as close as possible to the trainees' every-day life in order to avoid artificial role-playing.

The Functional Approach (L'Approche Situationnelle) was developed for trainees who had fairly restricted proficiency in their native language, poor grammatical sensitivity but a good rote memory ability. These trainees needed the foreign language for limited and specific functions in their work. Thus, new linguistic material was presented to them combined with specific language uses and situations. In this way the trainees learned more effectively than by following a strict progression of linguistic structures. The method emphasised the use of role-plays, games, and conversations in teaching, together with contextual clues such as visuals, tables and graphs, illustrative objects, reading and writing. In other words, the functional approach concentrated on using the target language in communicative situations with others.

The number of trainees in the functional approach at any given time was too small to permit any statistical processing. However, a comparison between the analytical and the audio-visual approach was possible. In 1975, 464 trainees in the audio-visual approach and 43 trainees in the analytical approach took a comprehensive achievement test. No significant differences in achievement were found between the groups in any language areas. As the goal was to provide equal achievement to different types of trainees in different approaches, the project had apparently succeeded well. Furthermore, another experiment on attitudinal measures was conducted in 1975 with a group of trainees who had aptitude profiles appropriate for the analytical approach. Half of them were nevertheless placed, or mismatched, in the audio-visual approach. The appropriately placed trainees reported greater interest in foreign languages, more initiative to study the target language out of class, a more positive attitude towards the teaching approach used, and less anxiety in class than the mismatched trainees. They also succeeded better in listening comprehension and oral skills tests. Unfortunately, Wesche did not clearly state the number of trainees who attended this latter experiment.

Alternative assessment and teaching techniques

The Learning Disabilities Association (1994) conducted a project on foreign language teaching to learning disabled learners in the United States. The purpose of the project was to explore alternative assessment and teaching

techniques, and to determine whether they were useful in identifying learning disabilities and in teaching English to adult learners with learning difficulties. The project personnel used several different assessment tools to identify and determine a learning disability (e.g. the Phonics Inventory and the Learning Styles Inventory). A total of 13 subjects were selected for the project on the basis of their learning disabilities. The subjects were adults and came from varying educational backgrounds. The subjects represented several different native languages and cultures.

All subjects took a pre-test in letter-name and letter-sound to get a starting point for the intervention which aimed at building phonemic awareness. Each subject received two to three hours of special instruction each week, twice a week in pairs or one-to-one. The teaching method was a multisensory, repetitive, phonics-based approach. The tutor used several techniques to build the language by using all three major language processing pathways: kinaesthetic, auditory, and visual. The teaching included, among other things, verbal rehearsal, active listening techniques, taped materials, language experience, colour-coding, and sound packs. The same kind of supplemental devices were used in teaching spelling techniques, too. Teaching spelling was considered important as many learners with a learning disability have difficulties in spelling. A retest similar to the pre-test was conducted after the teaching intervention.

The project personnel felt that they succeeded fairly well in reaching the purpose of the study. The subjects made significant gains in phonemic awareness. The constant repetition and concentration on phonemic awareness helped the subjects to comprehend the structure of English and work on the unfamiliar English sounds (which did not exist in their native languages). Written work, oral skills and organisation skills improved. Furthermore, there was improvement in building symbol-sound relationships. One subject even developed his own learning strategy for remembering and encoding language material. The subjects seemed to benefit from small group work and gain new positive experiences. Increased self-esteem and the feeling of success were

visibly reflected in learning the language. Moreover, the teachers involved in the project reported on an increased awareness of learner differences.

Reading comprehension strategy instruction

Klingner and Vaughn (1996) conducted a study on the efficacy of intervention on reading comprehension of foreign language learners with learning disabilities. The study consisted of two related interventions that provided reading comprehension strategy instruction; one with co-operative grouping and the other with cross-age tutoring. The researchers focused on individual performances rather than group performances and attempted to determine which characteristics were most likely to contribute to success.

The subjects were seventh and eighth graders who spoke Spanish as their native language. The subjects, 26 in total, studied English as a foreign language and they all met the researchers' criteria for having a learning disability. First, all subjects participated in modified reciprocal teaching for 15 days, for 40 minutes a day. Then, they were randomly assigned for 12 days to one of the following groups: reciprocal teaching with co-operative grouping (n=13) or reciprocal teaching with cross-age tutoring (n=13). One of the reasons for including the groups in the study was to examine how the subjects applied the strategies when the teacher was not present.

The reciprocal teaching aimed at improving the subjects' reading comprehension by using a set of six strategies: predicting, brainstorming, clarifying, highlighting, summarising, and generating questions. At first, the teacher modelled the use of these strategies to the subjects. Then, after a text-related discussion and some rehearse on strategy use, the teacher gradually withdrew support giving the subjects more space to work on their own. As the subjects became more proficient in strategy use they took turns in acting as 'the teacher' and leading the sessions. In the second part of the study the subjects in the cross-age tutoring group tutored younger learners in comprehension strategies. In the co-operative group the subjects rehearsed the comprehension strategies together in groups of three to five learners. Both groups followed closely the method used in reciprocal teaching before.

Klingner and Vaughn used several different measures to determine the effectiveness of the interventions on the subjects' reading comprehension skills. The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups on any of the measures. However, the subjects in both groups made significant gains in reading comprehension. Furthermore, all subjects continued to show improvement in reading comprehension even after the adult support had been minimised. As for the characteristics contributing to success, the results showed that initial reading ability and oral language proficiency seemed related to gains in comprehension. Finally, Klingner and Vaughn suggested strongly the usefulness of teaching reading comprehension strategies for all kinds of learners, with and without learning disabilities.

Remedial teaching in an immersion program

Rousseau (1999) concentrated on studying the performance of learning disabled learners in French immersion programs in Canada. She organised a learning disabilities program which aimed at providing much-needed remedial services for learners who had encountered difficulties in French immersion. The aim of the two-year study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the remedial program as perceived by the learners, their parents and the teacher. It was expected that after the program the subjects would be able to return to regular French immersion classrooms.

The learning disabilities program consisted mainly of strategy instruction, developing awareness of one's learning style, and promoting self-esteem. The program could in practice be divided into four major components: strategy instruction, learning disabilities awareness sessions, English reading intervention and communication between school and home. The strategy instruction was based on each learner's needs and a strong emphasis was put on organisation, study habits, peer assisted learning, problem-solving and proof-reading strategies. The learning disabilities awareness sessions, where learners were encouraged to discuss their fears, feelings and questions regarding their difficulties, were held weekly. Flashcards, phonics, dictations and reading aloud were used, among other things, in the English reading intervention. Communication between school and home included, for example, a review of

the strategies used in class and suggestions how the parents could maintain strategy use at home.

A total of 13 subjects participated in the first year of study. During the second year one of the subjects moved to another town. As a result, only 12 subjects were noted in later measures. All subjects had English as their native language and were diagnosed with a learning disability according to the Edmonton Public School Board's protocol. The parents were interviewed for an hour about their perceptions of their children's experience in French immersion before and during the program. The teacher and the teacher assistant discussed their perceptions of the learners' experiences, behaviours, learning processes, learning styles and/or interaction styles with the researcher all along the study. Furthermore, the learners were interviewed twice individually for about 40 minutes on audio-tape. Observation was also used to clarify the learning context.

The parents were satisfied with the program and regarded highly the much-needed remedial help provided to their children. They felt that, among other things, small class size and provision of learning strategies created a better learning context. The parents also reported that their children felt more comfortable at school and both their self-perception and attitude toward learning improved. Most importantly, the parents talked about their children's increased awareness of what their learning disabilities were. The learners themselves reported improvement in school related tasks. Moreover, their overall attitude changed from negative to much more positive. They learned to differentiate between being 'stupid' and having difficulties in certain areas and strengths in others. The teacher and the teacher assistant agreed that the learners made significant progress in achievement and interest in school, social skills and dealing with their learning disabilities. Unfortunately, the article did not reveal how well the subjects' transition back to a regular classroom succeeded.

Remedial English with a poorly performing learner

Leinonen (2000) based her Master's Thesis on an educational experiment where she gave remedial teaching in English to a poorly performing fifth form pupil whose native language was Finnish. The aim of the study was to develop the subject's learning skills by trying out various teaching methods that differed from regular classroom methods and by guiding the subject in self-evaluation skills. The purpose of the study was to find out which teaching methods were useful for the learner who was struggling with her foreign language studies.

The instruction consisted of 24 hours of remedial teaching. The teaching methods included, among other things, communication games, English songs and rhymes, vocabulary cards, and tactile learning strategies. The vocabulary cards, for example, stimulated the use of multiple senses in learning. The subject's emotional problems and low self-esteem were taken into account by using encouraging teaching methods that created feelings of success. Field notes and tapes, private letters, and interviews with the subject, her mother, and her English teacher were used as data.

The results showed that the different teaching methods increased the subject's learning motivation and ability to concentrate. In the beginning, self-evaluation was hard and unpleasant. Gradually, the subject improved in self-evaluation skills. The subject's biggest problems lay in translating texts from English to Finnish, and in learning vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, using ready-made translations when going through text book passages was discovered to be a useful learning method for her. This way the subject's time and energy were reserved for actually practising the language. In the three and a half years following the study, the subject's school satisfaction, learning skills, and motivation improved. In addition, the subject's self-esteem increased significantly.

Remedial English with two learning disabled language learners

Beckett et al. (2002) reported on a study on meeting the special needs of learners with disabilities who were learning English as a foreign language in the United States. The study was conducted by special education interns under supervision and consisted of four individual cases, two of which had learning disabilities or language delays. In the following, I will concentrate only on these two cases for the purposes of the present study. The aim of the study by Beckett et al. was to find out how teachers could improve the learning outcomes of language learners with disabilities, and what the possibilities were of integrating principles from the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Data Based Instruction (DBI).

The first case was an 18-year-old female with learning disabilities that included visual-spatial perceptual difficulties, auditory memory deficits, problems with social perception, and difficulty in knowledge and use of vocabulary. Her goals in the Individual Education Program (IEP) were direct instruction in pragmatic language, social problem solving skills, and development of social insight. The instruction consisted of a series of four structured lessons where the main method was practising oral expression within a class discussion format. The method stressed sensitive error correction. The subject had to find independently the correct word or phrase to complete a sentence using work-related vocabulary. Afterwards, she generated key vocabulary and concepts related to the same vocabulary in a small group. Finally, she turned the words into questions which were written on small cards with the answers on the other side. Using these cards she played an oral game show in teams with the other learners. After the lessons she passed her language test successfully.

The second case was a female first grader with developmental delays in expressive language skills. She preferred to receive instruction through multisensory channels, including aural, visual, and tactile methods. She had a peculiar learning strategy for spelling: she practised spelling by writing words in shaving cream. The instruction consisted, again, of a series of four structured lessons where the main objective was to develop her expressive and receptive English language skills, for example, with the help of music. The method

stressed sensitive error correction, provided her with enough time to work, and used pictures and mental images as an aid. As a result, the subject began to recite poems and songs aloud, explore alternate ways of saying things, and she even started teaching recently learned language material to her younger siblings at home.

Both subjects were bilingual Spanish-English learners. The goals for the teaching were all directly related to the goals and standards in TESOL. Following the DBI approach, data of progress was collected all along the study and used in developing and modifying the instruction accordingly. The results showed that teachers could improve the learning outcomes of their learners by combining intentional language teaching and action research processes. Furthermore, using the TESOL standards, sheltered English techniques, and other language learning strategies allowed learners to be more successful communicators as well as to make progress toward achieving their IEP goals. Unfortunately, the report had been written in a very unorganised and incoherent manner. It lacked, for example, the IEP goals of the latter subject. In contrast, the report contained some details that seemed unnecessary for the study's purpose.

Comments

The problem with the work of Sparks et al. is, from the point of view of the present study, their preference for quantitative research questions and methods. Their numerous studies have concentrated on measuring quantitatively how learners with learning disabilities differ from "normal" learners in intelligence, language aptitude and so forth. What are missing are actual descriptions of the learning disabilities their subjects experience and explanations of how the subjects could be helped in their foreign language learning. Another problem lies in that their definition of learning disabilities is not entirely consistent with other definitions in the field. This problem, however, does not concern only Sparks et al. but is a constant problem among all researchers studying learning disabilities.

In addition to the variety in the definition of learning disabilities, the research area suffers from incoherence. There are no clear-cut lines of research when it comes to finding out what can be done in the class room to help poor language learners. There is a lot of research on what learning disabilities and difficulties are, but there seems to be only a handful of actual empirical studies both on the relationship between learning difficulties and foreign language learning, and on trying out different teaching methods for foreign language teaching for learners with learning difficulties.

3.2 Guidelines for teaching learning disabled and dyslexic learners

It is not enough for language teachers to have official definitions for their learners' difficulties. Undoubtedly, it is very important to have the knowledge available on the various language learning difficulties, but language teachers need more than that to be able to proceed with their work in the language classroom. Teachers need guidelines on how to teach foreign languages to learners who suffer from, for example, dyslexia. Fortunately, there are some guidelines available nowadays for language teachers on how to take learners' disabilities into account in the language classroom. In the end, however, it is up to language teachers to find the methods they consider most useful for their respective learners.

Educational needs of learning disabled learners

What learners with language processing disabilities need, is extra time (for language processing disabilities, see subsection 2.2.1). They usually take so much time in formulating their answers in the classroom that they end up being accused of low motivation and not doing their homework (Smith and Strick 1997:52). Foreign language teaching to learning disabled learners should use basic materials and vocabulary and provide enough time for absorbing information before new material is introduced (Learning Disabilities Association 1994). Special education support is essential, too. As conventional methods of teaching reading and writing do not work, special alternate materials are needed (Smith and Strick 1997:55). Different learning strategies

can be very useful when learning oral skills, reading, and writing (Lerner 1993). Using spoken language for giving and answering test questions is a helpful idea, as is teaching learners specific strategies for organising and remembering written and verbal material (Smith and Strick 1997:55). Learners with learning difficulties can benefit a lot from the latest computer technology. Use of a multisensory teaching method together with repetition and use of computers has been noted especially useful (Learning Disabilities Association 1994). As most poorly performing foreign language learners have difficulties with the phonological and syntactic coding ability, they could benefit from explicit and direct instruction in the phonology and syntax of the foreign language (Sparks et al. 1992a:153). Such a method, namely the Orton-Gillingham method, was examined more thoroughly in section 3.1.

Many of the teaching methods and materials that work for typical students are useless for learners with learning disabilities (Smith and Strick 1997:176-177). Teachers have to find alternative ways to make it possible for the learning disabled to learn, too. Collaboration between regular and special teachers is essential in finding an appropriate instructional program (Lerner 1993:155, 163-164). The main idea is to concentrate on the deficits the learners have and teach through the learners' strengths: for example, learners who have deficits in auditory perception and strengths in visual processing are to receive special training in auditory perception and be taught by using a method that stresses the importance of visual techniques (Lerner 1993:120). Such variables that the language teacher can control in favour of the learning disabled learner include difficulty level, physical setting, time, work load, extra stimuli, language of instruction, and the relationship between the teacher and the learner (Lerner 1993:126-128). Furthermore, all learning disabled learners need ongoing support both at home and at school to help them find efficient learning strategies (Smith and Strick 1997:125). Learners with learning disabilities do not have a repertoire of learning strategies and therefore they do not know how to learn (Lerner 1993:206). Parents and teachers also need to address the negative emotional consequences of learning disabilities (Smith and Strick 1997:131). The by-products can easily grow to be learning disabilities themselves.

Educational needs of dyslexic learners

Whole language instruction is one of the suggested teaching methods for learners suffering from dyslexia (Lerner 1993:387). It highlights the wholeness of language with its integrated forms that are closely linked together: oral language, reading, and writing. Whole language instruction also emphasises meanings and not the language itself, in authentic situations. In addition, the method avoids teaching separate nonmeaningful parts of language or the use of isolated exercises and drills (Lerner 1993:390). However, research shows that learners with learning disabilities need instruction specifically on their problem areas to overcome them (Lerner 1993). Teachers should assess learners' deficiencies in the various components of learning and attempt to remedy them rather than apparent basic disorders (Vellutino 1980:359). Thus, there is a noticeable conflict with the basic principles of whole language instruction.

Dyslexics need to be taught in two major elements of reading: word recognition and reading comprehension (Lerner 1993:393). Word-recognition skills will enable learners to recognise words and to have a way of figuring out unknown words. There are several strategies for word recognition that can be taught (Lerner 1993:394-398). Firstly, phonics is an essential part of reading. There the learner matches a sound to a written letter or letter combination. This is also called decoding or phoneme-grapheme connecting. Phonics can be taught by going either from isolated letters and their sound equivalents to whole words or vice versa. Secondly, use of sight words makes reading fluent. Sight words are words that one recognises instantly and without any hesitation or further analysis. Thirdly, context clues help learners to recognise a word through the meaning or context of a sentence or paragraph where the word appears. The best way to teach context clues is by actual reading; consistent practise will lead naturally to use of context clues. And lastly, in structural analysis learners use meaningful word units, such as prefixes, suffixes, and compound words, in analysing and recognising words. Learners with dyslexia should be encouraged to use all these strategies when faced with an unknown word in a text.

Learners need reading comprehension skills to understand the meaning of what they are reading (Lerner 1993:393). Learners with learning disabilities need to become actively involved in reading and develop metacognitive strategies to think about the reading process and to direct their own learning (Lerner 1993:403). Specific skills needed in reading comprehension are noting important facts and details, finding the main idea, and following directions. Learners should focus on building basic vocabulary and concepts, expanding vocabulary, training search and questioning strategies, rehearsing verbal skills, and self-monitoring their progress (Lerner 1993:419). Word webs and cloze procedures, for example, are useful methods for practising these special skills (Lerner 1993:421-422).

Some special remedial approaches have been developed to help in teaching learners with severe reading difficulties. The Reading Recovery -program stresses early intervention and contains an extensive amount of reading and writing through intensive one-to-one instruction (Lerner 1993:426). The Glass analysis -method concentrates on teaching decoding skills by having learners make their own generalisations of letter clusters within words. The method uses intensive visual and auditory training (Lerner 1993:427). Formed from the initials of Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile, the VAKT-approach relies on the stimulation of several sensory channels when teaching reading (Lerner 1993:424). A special teaching method that uses this approach is the Orton-Gillingham method (Lerner 1993:425-426). Here the initial activities focus on learning individual letter sounds and blending. Learners first use tracing techniques to learn single letters and their sound equivalents, and then combine these sounds into short words. The method emphasises phonics. Learners simultaneously write the letters, say the sounds of the letters in sequence, and also say the letter names (for the Orton-Gillingham method, see also section 3.1).

Vellutino (1980:360-362), too, mentions some points that would be useful in teaching dyslexic learners. Whole-word and analytic strategies for decoding words, as well as discussing the meanings of new words as they come up and their use in sentences could give dyslexics alternative means for decoding. In

addition, the teacher could spend some time on direct training of phonemic segmentation and awareness. Here letter sounds and their combinations are taught within the context of natural syllables which expands the learner's repertoire of morphological units and thus also generalising skills. General language enrichment, including, for example, teaching functional differences between content words and function words, could develop the learner's linguistic intuition. Other useful strategies for teaching dyslexics might include direct teaching of lexical interrelationships (e.g. synonyms, homonyms), and exercises that facilitate elaborated use of new words (see section 4.3.3).

Comments

There are a lot of very useful general guidelines for teaching learning disabled and dyslexic learners. The guidelines bring out several important aspects that teachers need to consider when teaching learners with learning difficulties. In addition, the guidelines include some specific teaching methods that have been shown to work well with these learners. Nevertheless, this is not enough. Teachers need more specific and detailed descriptions of exercises and teaching methods that would suite the learners who are struggling with learning difficulties. Moreover, the guidelines presented here are mostly written for teaching any subject at school, not just foreign languages. Therefore there is a serious need for more guidelines for teaching specifically foreign languages to learners with learning difficulties. I have not made a distinction here between learning difficulties and foreign language learning difficulties, as general learning difficulties usually affect foreign language learning, too.

3.3 Guidelines for teaching learning strategies

Language learners use either consciously or unconsciously various strategies that facilitate their foreign language learning. The use of different learning strategies is essential and useful in all areas of language acquisition. In order to achieve an acceptable level of proficiency in a foreign language, the learners must control their learning actively (Oxford 1990:201). As the amount of time reserved for foreign language teaching in the Finnish school system is very

limited, the importance of effective learning strategies grows even more (Kristiansen 1998:105). Especially learners with learning disabilities who lack a systematic way of learning, remembering, or directing their learning need instruction in learning strategies (Lerner 1993:121). When a learner fails to use learning strategies appropriately or at all, language learning is bound to be in difficulties. Thus the role of language teachers and strategy training becomes increasingly stressed.

There are general guidelines available for teachers on how to teach learning strategies to language learners (Oxford 1990:193-203). The first step is to identify the strategies the learners already have in use. This can be done, for example, by observing and interviewing the learner, or with the help of journals. After strategy assessment the language teacher will be better equipped for teaching new strategies to the learners and for improving old ones. The next step is strategy training itself. The key word here is practicality. There are at least three different ways of teaching language learning strategies (Oxford 1990:202-203). Firstly, learners can become aware of and familiar with learning strategies and how they can facilitate language learning through Awareness Training. Awareness training should not happen in lecture format, but should be fun, motivating and encouraging. Here, however, learners are not asked to use learning strategies in actual language tasks. Secondly, there is One-Time Strategy Training which involves learning and practising one or more strategies with the use of actual language tasks. In this training learners find out which strategies are valuable to them, when and how to use them, and how to evaluate the outcome. One-time training is appropriate for learners who have a need for particular and identified strategies that can be taught in a couple of lessons, for example, certain memory strategies. Lastly, Long-Term Strategy Training, too, involves learning and practising strategies with actual language tasks. It has the same objectives than one-time training and should be closely tied to the regular language learning program. Long-term training, however, covers a greater number of learning strategies and is suggested to be more effective than one-time strategy training.

There is, in addition, an eight-step model for strategy training which gives general directions for language teachers and is especially useful for one-time or long-term strategy training (Oxford 1990:204-208). Step 1 is determining learners' needs and the time available. Step 2 is selecting the strategies well. Step 3 is considering integration of strategy training. Step 4 involves considering motivational issues. Step 5 is preparing materials and activities. Step 6 means conducting completely informed training. Step 7 involves evaluating the strategy training and step 8 revising it. In practice, strategy training goes through three procedures: first, you diagnose the strategies learners already use; second, you adjust the class climate by giving learners a couple of language tasks and by asking them to explain the strategies they use; and third, you introduce new strategies and give learners a lot of practice (Oxford 1990:208). The point is to remind and encourage learners to use the new strategies in various other tasks and even outside the language classroom.

What learning disabled learners need is means of taking control of their own learning. By learning how to learn they acquire important skills needed in academic tasks, such as problem solving, and are able to overcome or lessen the effects of their learning disabilities (Lerner 1993:286). A widely used model for teaching learning strategies especially to learners with learning disabilities is the Strategies Intervention Model (SIM) (Lerner 1993:207). It aims at helping learners cope with the curricular demands of higher education in two phases (Lerner 1993:288-289). In the first phase, teachers should identify and determine the demands that learners are failing to meet. For example, learners could fail to identify and store important information needed for a test. In the second phase, teachers plan instruction that matches appropriate learning strategies with the failed demands. Thus the learners will acquire the skills they need at the moment as well as in the future. Following the previous example, instruction could include teaching learning strategies such as note-taking strategy, first-letter mnemonic strategy, and paired-associate strategy that help identify and memorise key information for tests. Central to SIM instruction is a series of eight stages for teaching a learning strategy that differ clearly from the eight steps mentioned previously (Lerner 1993:290-291). First, the teacher pre-tests learners and obtains a commitment

from them to learn. Second, the teacher describes the new learning strategy. Third, the teacher demonstrates the strategy. Fourth, the learners practise the strategy verbally. Fifth, the learners practice the strategy with controlled materials and obtain feedback. Sixth, the learners practise the strategy with advanced materials and, again, obtain feedback. Seventh, the teacher post-tests the learners to determine progress and commitment to generalise the strategy. Last, the learners generalise the learning strategy to the real world. The main goal is to teach learning disabled learners to become involved, active, and independent learners (Lerner 1993:291).

Generally speaking, there are some guidelines for teaching learning strategies both to learning disabled and normal learners (Lerner 1993:287-288). Background knowledge is very important so that learners have a solid foundation on which to build. Moreover, learners need to monitor their own progress and play an active role in learning. In addition, effective memory strategies and interaction with other learners lead to success, as does generating one's own questions when there are problems in comprehension.

Comments

The biggest problem with teaching learning strategies to any learners, with or without learning difficulties, is the fact that it requires a lot of time and energy from the teachers. Teachers are already overworked by the demands of the educational system. Since there is no time or resources reserved for strategy training in the regular curriculum, the extra work banishes the thoughts of concentrating on strategy teaching from any teacher's mind. Nevertheless, even though teaching learning strategies is a time- and energy-consuming method, it is very important, especially for learners with learning difficulties as they are the ones who already need more support with their studies than others. In addition, learners with learning difficulties often lack coping methods that other learners have and, thus, need strategy training for creating a supportive net that they can fall back on, in learning foreign languages or other subjects.

4 THE PRESENT STUDY

The initiative for the research project reported here came from the subjects themselves. They were students at the Jyväskylä Polytechnic who were experiencing difficulties in their foreign language studies. The subjects were especially worried about passing their obligatory language courses in English and in Swedish. They were looking for help via an organisation called Keski-Suomen Erilaiset Oppijat Ry which eventually brought them in contact with me. The result was an experimental study which aimed at providing the subjects the help they needed in the form of specific learning tips and strategies. In other words, the present study was initiated by a practical demand and the results aimed at filling real-life language learning needs.

Finding a theoretical framework for this study was not an easy task due to the lack of research tradition in teaching language learning strategies to learners with learning difficulties. There was a lot of research available on foreign language learning difficulties (see chapter 2) and some research on trying to teach foreign languages to learners with learning difficulties, some of which even combined language teaching with learning strategies (see chapter 3). However, there was practically no research to be found either on teaching foreign languages to dyslexics, or on teaching learning strategies, specific to foreign language learning or otherwise, to learners with learning difficulties. Thus, there was an even more urgent demand for a study like the one reported here.

After investigating the related literature and the subjects' language learning histories, I decided to create the theoretical background on foreign language learning difficulties with an emphasis on two areas: dyslexia, and individual differences causing problems in foreign language learning including learning disabilities. The subjects were diagnosed with mild dyslexia, which was the only official diagnosis they had for their learning difficulties. Consequently, dyslexia was given extra attention in comparison with other learning disabilities. This research report will attempt to describe shortly what kind of

learning difficulties the subjects had and how these difficulties affected their foreign language learning.

In the following, I will concentrate on presenting different aspects of the present study. Firstly, the research questions are discussed in section 4.1. Section 4.2 presents in detail the subjects of this study. Each of the learning strategies experimented with in this study is examined in section 4.3. The data collection methods are discussed in section 4.4 and the data analysis methods can be found in section 4.5.

4.1 Research questions

My interest in carrying out the present study was motivated by a question which foreign language teachers are faced with every day, namely, what can be done to help learners who have major difficulties especially in their foreign language studies. This is a vast research area and, as the time and resources for this study were limited, I needed to narrow down my point of view. I had previously conducted a small study on a memory strategy, and, in addition, the subjects themselves asked me for some special “tricks” or techniques which could facilitate their language learning. Thus, I decided to approach the question from the point of view of language learning strategies. The purpose of this study was to try and provide help for the subjects by introducing them some language learning strategies outside their regular foreign language curriculum.

The first step was to figure out the theoretical framework for the study. This meant going through the available research conducted on learning disabilities and their relationship with both foreign language learning and learning strategies. As I was reviewing the literature, I noticed that even though there were large amounts of studies on learning disabilities and learning strategies separately, there was a serious lack of studies on how learners with learning disabilities use learning strategies in foreign language learning. This was one of the reasons that contributed to the identification of the research questions

which usually are matters that arise from the everyday practise in education and involve uncertainty, difficulty and the search for a clear solution (Merriam 1998). In this study the initiative and idea for the research questions were based on two factors: the literature showed a clear lack of research on the areas previously mentioned, and the subjects themselves were looking for strategies to help them cope with their learning disabilities in foreign language learning.
The study consisted of an educational experiment where I introduced and taught three different language learning strategies to four subjects who had difficulties in their foreign language studies. The main interest in conducting such an experiment was to find answers to the following questions:

- **Did the subjects learn to use the strategies experimented with?**
- **What were the subjects' responses to the strategies experimented with?**
- **Did the subjects find the strategies useful for their foreign language learning?**

Due to the lack of previous empirical studies on the subject, that is, teaching learning strategies especially to learning disabled learners, it was even more interesting to attempt to answer these questions. However, since the present study is a case study, the findings cannot be generalised to all learners with foreign language learning difficulties. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the findings will provide useful ideas for trying out language learning strategies with other learners who struggle with their foreign language studies.

4.2 Subjects

There were four subjects in this study. They were all female, between the ages of 26 and 36. They were all studying to become occupational therapists at the school of health and social care of the Jyväskylä Polytechnic. They were all required to pass obligatory courses in English and in Swedish as part of their degree studies. In addition, they were required to read and use course material and books in English on other courses. They had all experienced difficulties in their foreign language studies and were afraid of not passing the required

courses, thus being unable to eventually graduate. The subjects felt that they did not get any help or remedial teaching at the Polytechnic in relation to their foreign language courses. Thus, they were desperately looking for ways of facilitating their foreign language learning and of passing the obligatory language courses.

Of the subjects, Arja was 27 years old. She was unmarried and had no children. She had received special education in comprehensive school and she claimed that she had been previously diagnosed with general learning disabilities and deficits in perceiving and calculating skills. Nevertheless, she did not have any official paperwork to back up this claim. During vocational training, however, she had received a statement from a speech therapist concerning her learning disabilities. The speech therapist diagnosed Arja with a clear case of dyslexia. She reported herself that her text production skills and aural memory were very poor which caused problems especially during lectures where she had to listen and make notes at the same time. In addition, she had difficulties in perceiving things, such as grammatical structures in foreign languages and getting an overall picture of an entity. She experienced difficulties in pronouncing words in English and Swedish even when given the accurate pronunciation a number of times. In reading she claimed to have no problems apart from reading long Latin words related to anatomy that were required in her education.

Eeva was 36 years old. She was married and had one child who was below school age. She had received only a little special education in comprehensive school. She had been diagnosed with dyslexia previously but she did not have any official document of the diagnosis. As a part of the present study, Eeva participated in a test for dyslexia where she was diagnosed with a mild case of dyslexia (see section 4.4). The statement showed that she had difficulties in vocabulary and grammatical aspects of the English language, both in producing and understanding texts in English. She reported herself that especially compound nouns created big problems for her. She said that she relied completely on guessing and did not have “an inner ear” for them. Reading formal texts was slow for her as she had difficulties in grasping the main idea of a text. She also experienced problems with understanding concepts and

accurate meanings of words. She stated that good skills in deduction had taken her where she was at the time. Grammatical structures had remained a mystery for Eeva. She had never truly understood grammatical concepts and relations which was creating problems in her foreign language learning. In her own words, she learned vocabulary and phrases in English by heart without understanding the grammatical rules behind them. She found it extremely difficult to formulate sentences and longer texts in English.

In contrast, Julia was 26 years old. She was unmarried and had no children. She had received special education in mathematics and in English during comprehensive school. She had not been diagnosed with any learning disabilities previously. As a part of the present study, Julia participated in a test for dyslexia where she was diagnosed with a mild case of dyslexia (see section 4.4). However, she did not want to receive a more detailed statement of the nature of her dyslexia. She reported herself that her disabilities affected mainly learning foreign languages and both understanding and remembering grammatical rules. Her creative text production skills in the native language had always been good, she had even won a scholarship for "expert in the Finnish language" on the ninth grade of secondary school. In addition to foreign languages, mathematics had always been problematic for her, especially formulas and verbal instructions for exercises. Her biggest difficulties lay, she claimed, in understanding and perceiving any entities that were complex in nature, such as complicated instructions for games and exercises.

Minna was 36 years old. She was divorced and had one child who was in elementary school. She had not received any special education in comprehensive school. However, she had been diagnosed unofficially with general learning disabilities, dyslexia, and writing deficits during previous education. As a part of the present study, Minna participated in a test for dyslexia where she was diagnosed with a mild case of dyslexia (see section 4.4). The statement showed that she had difficulties in vocabulary and grammatical aspects of the English language, both in producing spoken language and in understanding written texts in English. She reported herself

that her reading was really slow and awkward. Syllables and letters got confused when reading aloud. Her writing was full of spelling and grammatical mistakes. She said that her state of mind and level of tiredness affected a lot the amount of mistakes. Learning foreign languages, both written and oral aspects, had always been difficult for her. She said that new vocabulary did not stay in her memory and that she had difficulties in listening and reading comprehension exercises. However, she was very motivated to overcome her difficulties. She preferred to use oral language instead of written wherever it was possible. Her strength was in the ability to perceive entities easily and quickly.

The subjects themselves initiated the present study. They had visited *Lukibussi* which is a movable help centre for people with dyslexia. There they saw an advertisement of Keski-Suomen Erilaiset Oppijat Ry which organises special help groups for people suffering from various learning difficulties. The subjects contacted Irma Kakkuri who is the chairwoman of the organisation and a lecturer of special education at the University of Jyväskylä. Kakkuri promised to create a support group for them that would help them with their foreign language learning difficulties. She advertised the project on the email list of students of English at the university and, as I was looking for a theme for my Pro Gradu Thesis, I answered the email and finally got the job.

4.3 Learning strategies experimented with

The aim of this study was to introduce three kinds of learning strategies to four language learners with learning difficulties. The subjects reported that they had not used specific learning strategies prior to this study. However, as the study proceeded they realised that they just had not been aware of using some of them. They lacked the knowledge of what learning strategies were and how they were used. The type of strategy training used in this study was One-Time Strategy Training (see section 3.3). This type was selected because the time available for the study was limited, and thus the number of strategies to be taught had to be limited, too. The point was, however, to do more than

awareness raising. The subjects had plenty of practice on how to use the learning strategies and the practice followed the subjects' regular language learning program as much as possible. This was meant to maximise the benefits of the training for the subjects. The learning strategies of this study were selected quite randomly: they were meant to cover learning via more than one sensory channel; they aimed at requiring various mind processes; and they were all direct strategies in Oxford's (1990) categorisation. Direct strategies were selected because the subjects seemed to have most problems in that area of language learning according to their own statements; their strengths in learning seemed to be on indirect strategies. The three strategies were mainly based on memory strategies with some aspects incorporated from cognitive strategies as well. Oxford (1990:40) finds it curious that language learners rarely report using memory strategies. Is this because they simply do not use the strategies, or is it just that they are not aware of using them? Oxford does not have the answer (1990:40). Perhaps we will.

This study will follow Oxford's (1990) categorisation of learning strategies because it is clear in its division and its policies are compatible with the present study. The three learning strategies that were introduced to the subjects are examined in more detail in the following sections. First, the theoretical background of each learning strategy is explained according to Oxford's system of categorisation. And second, the main idea and the actual process of using each strategy are described.

4.3.1. Colour-note strategy

The colour-note strategy is based on three memory strategies in Oxford's categorisation (1990). Firstly, it creates mental linkages by grouping certain linguistic variables together. Grouping means classifying language material into meaningful units to make the material easier to remember. Groups can be based on type of word (as was the case in this study), topic, practical function, linguistic function, similarity, dissimilarity and so on (Oxford 1990:40). Grouping the target words requires deep processing from the learner. This has

been proven to enhance learning (Kristiansen 1998:71). Secondly, the colour-note strategy uses imagery in enhancing the use of memory with visual clues. This means relating new language information to concepts in memory by means of meaningful visual imagery (Oxford 1990:41). The image can be, for example, a picture of an object or a mental representation of the letters of a word. In this study, different colours were used as a visual aid. In fact, one way of making study materials more accessible to dyslexics especially is colour-coding (Farmer et al. 2002:173). Finally, the strategy employs action by combining physical movement with the learning session. Here the learners use techniques that involve moving or changing something that is concrete in order to remember new target language information (Oxford 1990:43). Some learners are reported to prefer aural (sound-oriented), kinaesthetic (motion-oriented) or tactile (touch-oriented) learning styles (Oxford 1990:40). In the present study, the strategy involved moving coloured notes physically into correct order which aimed at helping especially the kinaesthetic learners. Furthermore, according to Das (1998:16), dyslexic learners have difficulties in sequencing. Thus, they need exercise where they get to practise organising units of language in the correct order. The colour-note strategy certainly filled this need.

Oxford claims that it is very useful to combine the verbal with the visual in language learning (1990:40). The mind can store much more visual information than verbal material. Moreover, the most efficiently packaged information is transferred to long-term memory through visual images. These visual images may be most useful in recalling verbal material from memory. Furthermore, a large percentage of language learners prefer visual learning. All these reasons apply to the reading comprehension strategy, too, which also uses visual imagery as an aid and will be examined in the next subsection (4.3.2.).

The main idea of **the colour-note strategy** in this study was to create an understanding of how sentence construction and word order work in the English language. The aim was to store a mental picture of a grammatically correct sentence or phrase in memory which could be used as an example later on when creating sentences in the target language. In the following, the

strategy will be explained from the point of view of English as the target language, as this was the case in the present study. In addition, the example sentences will be simplified main clauses with the sentence constituents in the following order: subject, predicate, object, mode, space, time. This kind of clauses are the easiest ones to begin with when learning a new strategy. The colour-note strategy can be used for target languages other than English, for example, Swedish. It can also be adapted to learning the word order of a subordinate clause, or the word order in different kinds of phrases, such as long prepositional or verbal phrases, to mention just a few. The purpose of the strategy depends totally on the users' level of proficiency in the target language and on the possible grammar points creating problems for them.

The starting point is a simplified main clause in the target language that is divided into parts according to different sentence constituents. The constituents are separated from each other, for example, with vertical lines. Then, each sentence constituent is marked with a different colour, for example, by using coloured pencils. An example of this would be: *A young man* (subject, red) *was reading* (predicate, blue) *a book* (object, yellow) *quietly* (mode, green) *in the library* (space, pink) *yesterday* (time, brown). With practice the connection between the sentence constituent and its colour becomes familiar and is restored in memory. As, in typical main clauses, the constituents usually come in the same order, also the order of the colours becomes familiar and creates a visual image in memory.

Next, the learners take a simple Finnish main clause, identify its sentence constituents (subject, predicate, object, mode, space, time), and separate them from each other with vertical lines. Then, they translate each sentence constituent at a time into English and write the translation in the right colour on a piece of paper, here referred to as a note. The result is a pile of notes that have different coloured words written on them. Now, by arranging these notes in various orders the learners try to find the grammatically correct word order for a simple main clause. In addition to the visual image of the colours in the right order in their memory, the learners can take advantage of the Finnish memory trick SPOTPA which stands for Subjekti (subject), Predikaatti

(predicate), Objekti (object), Tapa (mode), Paikka (space), and Aika (time), respectively. They can attach the selected colours to the appropriate initials in the word, thus creating a mental image in their memory of the word SPOTPA with each letter written in a different colour.

As mentioned before, the colour-note strategy can be used for all kinds of sentences and phrases, not only for simple main clauses. The verb phrase *would* (modal, yellow) *have* (auxiliary, red) *wanted* (participle, blue) *to do* (infinitive, green) works as an example. The main thing is to choose colours for the phrases, words or even parts of words whose order needs to be learned and to practise a lot. Not only does the strategy help in learning the word order in English, it also gives plenty of practice in identifying different sentence constituents and word classes.

4.3.2 Reading comprehension strategy

The reading comprehension strategy takes advantage of as many as five specific learning strategies according to Oxford's categories: two memory and three cognitive strategies. Both memory strategies belong to the group that applies visual aids in language learning: they are using imagery and semantic mapping. The three cognitive strategies include taking notes, summarising and highlighting. These strategies help learners structure the massive foreign language input they receive into manageable chunks (Oxford 1990:45).

As discussed earlier in subsection 4.3.1., using imagery relates new language information to memory by visual means (Oxford 1990:41). Some learners may find it useful to draw a picture of the contents of a text and thus facilitate the understanding of the whole picture. This can be effective especially for older learners who are visually talented but suffer from language learning difficulties (Kristiansen 1998:191). Semantic mapping, in turn, means making an arrangement of words or ideas into a picture which has a key concept at the centre or at the top, and related words and ideas are linked to it with lines or arrows and so on (Oxford 1990:41). This strategy shows visually how certain

ideas relate to each other. Furthermore, grouping words and making semantic maps of them enhances vocabulary learning. Especially when learners are allowed to do the grouping themselves, the most effective results are reached (Kristiansen 1998:71). In addition, using hierarchies in the semantic maps helps learners see and understand the required material better (Kristiansen 1998:87).

The cognitive strategies that create structure are important especially in reading comprehension (Oxford 1990:47). Taking notes, for example, involves writing down the main idea or specific points of a text. Using a variety of emphasis techniques, such as highlighting, underlining, or colour-coding, help in focusing on important information in a passage (Oxford 1990:47). In reading comprehension the most important thing is to understand the text as a whole, that is, to get an overall picture of the matter at hand (Kristiansen 1998:172). Understanding a larger unit creates more memory keys which, in turn, facilitate the memory retrieval process (Kristiansen 1998:173). A highly essential part of understanding a whole text is to make a summary of the contents (Kristiansen 1998:174). When learners examine a text in order to understand its structure, they are nearly forced to process the text deeply and find, for example, cause and effect relations (Kristiansen 1998:186).

The main idea of the reading comprehension strategy is to help learners find and understand the main points of a text. By finding the essential content of a text, learners begin to view it as motivating and interesting, thus making the reading itself more beneficial (Halonen 2002:22). The reading comprehension strategy concentrates more on understanding the contents of a text rather than actual language learning. Still, the strategy is very useful as reading comprehension exercises and tests, similar to the one described below, are continuously used in the Finnish school system. Moreover, when using the strategy learners cannot avoid receiving language input on, for example, familiar and unfamiliar words, sentence structures etc. which, in turn, makes important traces in their memory. The reading comprehension strategy can be used for texts in any language, be it the learners' native language or a target language they are learning.

The reading comprehension strategy includes two different methods. Each learner can choose the method that seems to be most useful for them. In this study, the subjects learned and practised both of them. The methods can be used for the same text or, as was the case in this study, each method can be practised with a separate text. As a preparatory exercise, learners find and underline the most important word in every sentence. There is one word that is more important in meaning than the others in every sentence (Halonen 2002:22). The word is usually a noun or a verb that is surrounded by other words which link the word into a sentence. This way learners go through the whole text underlining the words that together form and contain the central message of the text.

In the first method, learners find and underline the most important sentences or phrases in each chapter of a text. It is useful to remember that not all sentences are equally important in meaning. By underlining more than just keywords learners begin to perceive relationships between different meaningful concepts in the text. Next, to make this even clearer, learners gather the underlined points together and draw a mindmap based on them. In a mindmap, the most essential point is written in a bubble in the middle of the paper and the other points surrounding it are attached to each other with lines in an order that shows the relationships between them. Nevertheless, depending on the learner's preferences, drawing a mindmap is not obligatory. The picture can take whatever shape or form the learner chooses, as long as it includes all the underlined points and shows both logically and in a structured way the relationships between them, for example, cause and effect, more and less important points and so on. The aim is that the picture makes the content of the text more easy to understand and remember as a whole.

The second method begins with learners underlining the most important sentence in each paragraph of a text. According to Halonen (2002:50), there is one sentence in each paragraph of a text that contains the most essential message of that paragraph. After underlining the sentences, they are gathered together on a separate paper so that the most important sentence is at the top and the other sentences come below it in an order that shows their reciprocal

relationships. Each sentence is written in a box and the boxes are linked to each other with lines or arrows. Again, the aim is to make the content of the text more easy to grasp as a whole and, as with the first method, to install a visual image of the content in memory.

4.3.3 Elaboration- and key phrase strategies

Elaboration strategy

Oxford (1990) has the elaboration strategy in the same category with the strategy of associating under the title of creating mental linkages. In these strategies new language information is related to concepts already in memory to create associations (Oxford 1990:41). These associations can be simple or complex, between two words or a more complicated network. The main point is that the associations are meaningful to the learner (Oxford 1990:41). Moreover, in Oxford's categorisation, the elaboration strategy is close to the memory strategy of placing new words into a context. Here a word or a phrase is placed in a meaningful sentence, conversation, or story in order to remember it (Oxford 1990:41).

Kristiansen (1998) has written extensively on elaboration. According to her, the core of the elaboration strategy is that learners process new information by combining and melting it together with their already existing knowledge of the issue at hand (Kristiansen 1998:32). However, learners do not only add new information to their mental system, but they revise and update it all the time (Kristiansen 1998:106). In regular language workbooks vocabulary is usually rehearsed through, for example, multiple choice exercises which treat words as separate elements. As a consequence, there is a lack of deep processing of the new vocabulary and the words are not preserved in the long-term memory (Kristiansen 1998:48). There are at least two benefits from the elaboration strategy when it comes to learning vocabulary permanently; firstly, elaboration creates multiple redundant retrieval routes to use when the usual route fails, and secondly, elaboration enables learners to conclude things that they cannot retrieve straight from memory (Kristiansen 1998:33). In fact, the use of

meaningful and rational sentences makes vocabulary learning more than five times faster when compared with studying words as separate consecutive elements, according to Kristiansen (1998:54). Even though elaboration leads to good results in learning vocabulary, it can be used well in studying, for example, grammar, discourse or reading comprehension, too.

The elaboration strategy starts with a word in the target language. First, learners make sure that they understand the meaning of the word. Then, learners produce a meaningful, simple main clause of their own in the target language around the target word. Learners are not allowed to use dictionaries or other language books, instead, the words and structures in the clause have to come from the learners' previous knowledge of the language. As learners produce the linguistic material themselves, they are forced to process and apply target language material (Kristiansen 1998:106). In addition, when learners try to produce coherent text from words that are not semantically linked with each other, they have to review large amounts of grammar points and words from different word classes in their heads (Kristiansen 1998:155).

Next, the strategy continues with learners producing a meaningful subordinate clause to be combined with the previously produced main clause. This serves two purposes; firstly, the learners simultaneously rehearse vocabulary and produce grammatical structures freely in their utterances, and secondly, the length and versatility of the utterances is increased. It has been pointed out that, at least in many cases, the longer and more complex the example sentences are, the better the retrieval from long-term memory (Kristiansen 1998, Craik and Tulving 1975). Learners can continue working with the clauses by either expanding them, linking them with other clauses, or even by creating a small dialogue based on them. By gradually varying and broadening the content of the clauses, the new information is integrated with the old. This creates a broader choice of contents where to use the new word or structure in future (Kristiansen 1998:34). Moreover, the use of meaningful contexts when dealing with new target language words helps in retrieving the words from memory later on. The elaborated sentences should include special semantic structures such as cause and effect (Stein and Bransford 1979).

Key phrase strategy

The key phrase strategy is based mainly on two memory strategies in Oxford's categorisation (1990) that relate to creating mental linkages and applying images and sounds. The first one is the strategy of using keywords. The basic idea is linking the target word of a target language with a similar sounding word in the learners' native language through a mental image where both words appear in their actual meaning (O'Malley and Chamot 1990:120). To illustrate, when native English speakers want to learn the Latin word *rana* ('a frog'), they pick the English word *rain* which sounds a lot like the Latin word. They then combine the words in a mental image where a frog is sitting in the rain (Takala 1989:3). The principle of recalling information from memory is that the keyword, that is, the native language word, reminds the learners of the created mental image, thus helping them in remembering the target word (O'Malley and Chamot 1990:230). The second memory strategy close to the key phrase strategy is a strategy where new words are linked with a context. This basically means that the target word is placed in a meaningful sentence, conversation or story to help with recalling it later on (Oxford 1990:41).

The key phrase strategy of this study is a memory strategy that I have myself used in foreign language learning. In other words, I have developed the strategy in practice myself. Of the various memory strategies categorised, none matched my strategy precisely in theory. The closest came the above mentioned keyword strategy and the strategy of linking words with a context. As a result, I built the theoretical background of my strategy on the basis of them and named it the key phrase strategy. I chose the name that, in my opinion, best reflected the main idea of the strategy. The key phrase strategy is especially suitable for learning vocabulary. It is most beneficial when learning long and complicated target language words. This kind of a strategy is useful especially for dyslexics as they can practise finding retrieval clues from new vocabulary which normally creates problems for them (Vellutino 1980). The strategy could also be adapted to learning, for example, grammar points. Nevertheless, in the present study the strategy was used only for vocabulary learning.

The starting point of **the key phrase strategy** is a word in the target language that needs to be learned and stored in memory. First, learners make sure that they understand the meaning of the word, possibly with the help of a dictionary. Then, they create a phrase, or a sentence, around the word. The phrase can be in the target or the learners' native language. It can also be a mixture containing words or features from both languages. The phrase does not have to be grammatically correct or a complete sentence with all the necessary sentence constituents. It does not even have to have any meaningful message. The phrase should, however, contain real words and have some kind of a sensible meaning. The meaning of the target word can change from the original, in other words, the target word can mean something else in the phrase than it does in normal language use. Learners can create the phrase basing it either on the pronunciation or on the written form of the target word. An example of a pronunciation-based phrase could be 'Ann tai Di, epäsiistejä molemmat' where the target word is *untidy* [epäsiisti]. An example phrase based on the written form could be 'Stringejä rivissä' where the target word is *string* [rivi, jono, sarja]. The structure and general impression of the target word have a huge influence on what kind of a phrase can be created based on it. The phrase should be constructed so that it reminds learners of one or more features of the target word. These features can be the word's meaning, with long and complicated words its written form, or how the word is pronounced. The main idea is that the phrase has some kind of a catch that helps learners to remember it and, when remembering the phrase, they remember the target word and its features. The catch can be, for example, a reference to a learner's private life or to a subject that usually causes excitement, such as sex. Especially using vivid and bizarre mental images when combining words together has been noted to increase memory retrieval (Kristiansen 1998:56).

4.4 Data collection methods

In the following I will describe the data collection for the present study and the methodological choices related to it. The study was a special educational intervention, the purpose of which was to provide help for four learners who were struggling with their foreign language studies. The intervention concentrated on letting the subjects try out a few language learning strategies in order to discover whether these strategies would provide the help they needed in their foreign language studies. In all interaction with the subjects, be it interviews, tests, or strategy training sessions, I followed and applied the guidelines explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3 to the extent it was possible and necessary.

The educational intervention was carried out in the spring term of year 2003. At the time of the intervention, the subjects were completing their first year at the Polytechnic of Jyväskylä. The intervention was carried out as remedial instruction outside the school. The premises were provided by Irma Kakkuri from Keski-Suomen Erilaiset Oppijat Ry. Even though she was the initiator of the research project, she did not interfere with the content of the meetings. I planned and carried out the meetings fairly independently, sometimes consulting her about the practical aspects of the project. I met the subjects several times during the spring term either as a group or individually depending on the content of the meeting and with making sure that the meetings did not interfere or overlap with the subjects' studies at the Polytechnic. The first few times we all met together to get to know each other and discuss the subjects' hopes and wishes for the intervention.

The majority of the data was collected via interviews, written tests, and my own notes. I gathered information of all the meetings I had with the subjects through keeping a diary with the help of my computer. In the meetings I wrote down all the important and relevant points in pen and paper, and at home I transferred the information to the diary on the computer as soon as possible to avoid forgetting anything. I used a computer to manage the huge amount of data as it was easier and faster to find information from organised data files on

the computer than from hand-written piles of paper. I did not ask the subjects to take notes or keep diaries during the intervention as they already experienced difficulties with writing due to their dyslexic background. I chose interviewing as the best method for collecting data on the subjects' background and responses to the strategies because I felt that the subjects were able to express themselves better in the spoken form. Furthermore, interviewing is the best method to use in intensive case studies with a few selected subjects when the aim is to get information on their feelings and how they interpret the world around them (Merriam 1998:72). All the information was collected and processed confidentially for my eyes only and the subjects were asked permission for using any piece of the data concerning them.

In this kind of case study, data collection is an interactive process involving the researcher and the subjects of the study. Therefore, it is important that a confidential relationship is formed between the researcher and the subjects. The nature of this relationship will determine whether the subjects are willing to share their thoughts, beliefs and feelings with the researcher. The subjects should not be treated as objects but as subjects who feel, act, and participate in the study (Syrjälä and Numminen 1988:9). In the present study, the relationship between me and the subjects became more collaborative and tutor-like as the research went on. I aimed to act in a respectful, non-judgmental, and non-threatening way in order to achieve a positive interaction with the subjects. Apparently they experienced our relationship as trustworthy and relaxed as they talked openly about their language learning difficulties and even painful school experiences.

Preliminary information form and diagnosis of dyslexia

Prior to our first meeting, Irma Kakkuri had asked the four subjects to fill in a preliminary information form which they handed to me. The forms included the following information: name, age, year of birth, occupation, education, possible previous special education, and possible diagnoses for learning disabilities. Kakkuri had also conducted a test for dyslexia with all four subjects at the Department of Special Education at the University of Jyväskylä. The test included the following sections: dictation, synonyms, multiple choice

test in sentence structure and spelling, free writing of own life story, and reading comprehension. All the subjects were diagnosed with mild dyslexia which they had overcome to some extent in the native language but which clearly affected their learning of any other languages. Of the subjects, Eeva and Minna received a written statement of their dyslexia for further use. Subject Arja did not want a statement as she already had an official statement of dyslexia from a speech therapist she had visited before. Subject Julia did not want to receive any statement of her dyslexia. In getting a preliminary picture of the subjects' learning problems I used the section of free writing of one's own life story from the test for dyslexia. It was the best source of the subjects' own descriptions of the problems they had had with their foreign language learning.

Background interview

The aim of the background interview was to gather information on the subjects' previous language learning history and experiences. In addition, there were questions about the subjects' current language studies and their feelings towards them. The interviews progressed chronologically, beginning from foreign language learning in elementary school to the latest language courses at the Polytechnic, followed by possible connections with foreign languages outside school. The interviews were semistructured, in other words, I used a list of predetermined questions to help structure the interviews and to help gather the same information from all the subjects (see appendix 1). I came up with the questions myself. I used the list merely as a guide and, when needed, I asked extra questions and, for example, the subject to clarify or expand her answer. The interviews were conducted in Finnish because the subjects were neither comfortable nor capable of using English in the interview situation. By using their native language the subjects were able to express their feelings and opinions freely and properly.

Each subject was interviewed individually. This way confidentiality was secured and the subjects were more willing to share their private thoughts with me. The interviews lasted on average for about two hours each. I used a tape recorder to tape each interview. This way everything that was said was

preserved for analysis. When tape recording, malfunctioning equipment and a subject's uneasiness with being recorded may cause problems (Merriam 1998:87). In this study, the subjects exaggerated their articulation and volume in the beginning probably because they were not used to being recorded. After some initial uneasiness subjects tend to forget they are being taped (Merriam 1998:87), as was the case in this study, too. Adding another problem, it is possible that the subjects' chain of thoughts was broken momentarily when I had to change tapes to a new one in the middle of an interview. Moreover, verbatim transcription was impossible due to the poor sound quality of the tapes. In addition, a lot of personal and private information on the subjects came up in the interviews which was not considered relevant for the purposes of this study. Thus, there are no transcriptions of any interviews as appendices in this report. Later on as I was listening through the tapes, I used an interview log where I carefully collected notes on the main statements and important ideas expressed by the subjects. These interview logs were then used as a basis for analysing and reporting the findings.

Test 1

The purpose of Test 1 was to gain an overall picture of the subjects' current skills in the English language (see appendix 3). The test consisted of four parts: grammar, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and oral test. The oral test and the listening comprehension test were done individually on tape as they both required the subjects to produce spoken language. Even though the grammar test and the reading comprehension test were done in a group, the subjects were not allowed to communicate with each other or use any language textbooks or dictionaries during the test situation. After the test I translated into Finnish all the unfamiliar words that the subjects had not understood in the test. In addition, I showed the subjects the correct answers for each part of the test. Especially in the grammar part, I explained in detail the grammar rules behind the correct answers and why the incorrect answers were, in fact, incorrect.

The grammar test was taken from the teacher's guide of the *Blue Planet: Laptop grammar book* (Silk et al. 1996). The test is originally meant for students beginning their language studies at upper secondary school. After

examining the results, I noticed that the test was clearly too demanding for the subjects in this study. The test consisted of three exercises. First, there was an English language text with numbered blanks in it. In each blank the subjects were asked to choose the correct answer from four ready-given alternatives. The multiple choices covered exhaustively grammar points at different difficulty levels. Second, there were five sentences in English, each of which had two blanks. The subjects were asked to fill in the blanks with verbs in their appropriate forms. Each verb was given in the right form in Finnish. And third, there were five interrogative clauses in Finnish which had to be translated into English.

The text for the reading comprehension test came from the course material of an English language course I had taken in Hartolan opisto in 1996. The text was followed by two sets of pictures. The subjects were asked to find the meanings of the pictures from the text. The exercise was formulated so that the subjects were able to answer each part using only one word. This way they did not have to produce whole sentences with which they had experienced trouble before. In addition, there were four open questions in Finnish about the contents of the text. I came up with the questions myself.

The material for the oral test was taken from the teacher's guide of the *English for you 3* –textbook (Käkelä 1999). The paper showed the life story of a man called Sean with the help of pictures and a few supporting words in Finnish. The subjects were then asked to tell about the man and his life in their own words in English. In case they did not know what to say, I helped with supporting questions. The test did not only test the subjects' speech production, it also tested their vocabulary and ability to find euphemisms for unfamiliar words.

The listening comprehension test came from the textbook *Get on! Communicative English for adult beginners* (Ervola et al. 1996). First, I went through the vocabulary for the listening comprehension together with the subjects. Second, we listened to the whole extract once straight through and then in short sections. Between the sections, the subjects had some time to

write down their notes. After listening, they had to answer a few questions concerning the contents of the extract. The subjects answered the questions orally in Finnish in order to avoid their low skills in both written and oral English interfering with the contents of the answers.

Strategy training sessions

Each strategy training session followed the same basic procedure. First, I introduced the strategy and explained its purpose for foreign language learning. Second, we discussed the learning situations where the strategy could be helpful. Then, we went through together the main idea of the strategy and how to use it. Next, we took a closer look at some clarifying examples and tried out the strategy on a few words or texts. As homework, I asked the subjects to practise the strategy, usually with some material I provided for them. At the next meeting, we went through the homework together. In addition, I interviewed the subjects on tape about their thoughts and responses to the strategy in question; what it felt like, if it was helpful, familiar or unfamiliar, easy or difficult, whether they would use it in the future, and so on.

Before training the colour-note strategy, we went together through the basic sentence constituents, namely the subject, the predicate, and the object, and the different ways of expressing mode, space, and time, with the help of some example sentences. In addition, we reviewed their usual order using the Finnish memory trick SPOTPA (see section 4.3.1). When needed, we also revised some grammatical terminology, such as main verb, auxiliary, preposition, conjunction, and so on. Every subject chose their own colours for each sentence constituent. This enhanced the preservation of the colours in memory as they contained a special meaning for the subjects. All the material and example sentences were created by me, the researcher. The material for the reading comprehension strategy came from the book *Oppimisen lukoista oppimisen avaimiin: opas aikuisten lukikuntoutukseen* (Halonen 2002). We examined one text from the book for each of the three methods. For homework, each of the subjects chose a piece of text in English from their current study materials at the Polytechnic and tried out the method that they felt suited them the best. Furthermore, when practising the elaboration and the key phrase

strategies, we took advantage of an English vocabulary list the subjects were supposed to learn for their courses at the Polytechnic. As homework, the subjects were asked to try out both strategies using the same vocabulary. At times, the subjects' weak foreign language skills interfered with the practice of the elaboration strategy so much that it seemed impossible for them to produce grammatically correct structures without my help. Nevertheless, I tried to avoid helping them as long as possible so that the outcome would be authentic.

The background interview was somewhat structured with previously prepared questions and it even included a couple of questions about the subjects' possible language learning strategies. The majority of information on the subjects' learning strategies came, however, from the casual conversations we had while practising the strategies. The conversations were not structured, on the contrary, they rose from the situations at hand. At the most, I merely lead the conversation unnoticed around to strategy use. Usually it was the case of a subject realising while practising a strategy that she had used the same strategy before without noticing it herself. These conversations were not taped as they were spontaneous and informal in nature. Thus, I wrote down in my notes the important points of these conversations and described the subjects' reactions to the strategies. After each meeting I added the notes to my diary as soon as possible, as well as the contents of the meetings and what we did. This way I could keep track of the study process and begin to analyse the information in my head.

Test 2

The aim of Test 2 was to examine whether the subjects had learned to use the learning strategies we had experimented with (see appendix 4). The test was not aimed at testing any changes in the subjects' foreign language skills. When evaluating the test results, I did not take into account any spelling or grammatical mistakes, because they were not the object of testing. Only in the part testing the colour-note strategy, I checked that the sentence constituents were appropriately in a grammatically correct order. As the test did not include any oral exercises, the subjects were able to do the test either individually or more than one at the same time depending on their own schedules. I was

present the whole duration of the test. Taking into account the subjects' learning difficulties, the test situation was stripped of all controllable elements that could interfere with the test, including noise or time limits. In addition, the subjects were allowed to use dictionaries during the test. Even though the test papers contained instructions in Finnish, I explained the most important points orally, too. The purpose was not to test the subjects' understanding of instructions, either in Finnish or in English.

The test consisted of three parts as there were three strategies to test. The first part tested the use of the reading comprehension strategy. It included a short text in English which the subjects were asked to read and underline the key points and concepts. Then, they were asked to gather the most important points into a picture, a mindmap, or boxes using the method that they felt most comfortable with. The text came from the subjects' study materials at the Polytechnic, namely *Activity analysis handbook* (Lamport et al. 1993). The text was purposefully selected to be a little demanding for the subjects which required them to process the contents and the structure of the text a bit more. Furthermore, it was hoped that processing the vocabulary would leave traces in the memory and thus be helpful in studies in the future. The second part of the test examined the use of the elaboration and key phrase strategies. The subjects were asked to choose four words from the text in the reading comprehension part that were unfamiliar and difficult for them. Then, they applied the elaboration strategy to two of the words, and the key phrase strategy to the two remaining words. The third and final part tested the use of the colour-note strategy. I had previously made up three test sentences in English which varied in level of difficulty and amount of sentence constituents. I divided the sentences into sentence constituents and wrote each constituent on a separate note. The result was three piles of notes each forming a complete sentence when put together. In the test, the subjects were asked to put the notes in the right order so that they would form grammatically correct sentences. Then, they were asked to write the sentences on the test paper using the appropriate colours for each sentence constituent. The subjects were given the notes one pile at a time in order not to confuse them. In addition, I reminded each subject

of the colours they had chosen during the strategy training session as the purpose was not to test whether they remembered the colours or not.

Final interview

The aim of the final interview was to gather information on the subjects' responses to the strategies experimented with and to the whole research project. Each subject was interviewed individually in Finnish and the interviews lasted about half an hour each. I used a tape recorder to tape the interviews. As with the background interviews, I used an interview log when transcribing the tapes because verbatim transcription was impossible due to poor sound quality. The interviews were semistructured, that is, I had some basic questions as guidelines written down for myself (see appendix 2), but the situation was closer to an informal, unstructured interview as I allowed the subjects to express and explain their feelings freely in their own words and order. The purpose was to give the subjects a chance to give any kind of feedback on the research project and to bring out all thoughts and feelings they had on the strategies experimented with.

4.5 Data analysis methods

In this section I will explain the steps I took and the principles I followed during the analysis of the research data. Most of the data elicitation methods used were qualitative in nature, and understanding the subjects' responses to the strategies experimented with was considered more important than measuring their language skills with quantitative methods. Some quantitative data were nevertheless included in the investigation, that is, some of the subjects' results from Test 1, to be precise. The type of qualitative research that came closest to the present study was a psychological case study (Merriam 1998:36). The focus was on the individuals and gaining an in-depth understanding of their behaviour. Since qualitative research usually focuses on process, meaning, and understanding, the product of a qualitative study is mainly descriptive (Merriam 1998:8). Words rather than numbers are used to present the information gathered on the phenomenon. Thus, descriptions of the

context, the subjects, and the activities essential to the study were included in the analysis. Moreover, data given by the subjects in the taped interviews was included to support the findings.

Sample selection in qualitative research is usually nonrandom and small, serving a special purpose, in contrast with the commonly large and random samples in quantitative studies (Merriam 1998:8). This study was a case study, involving four independent cases which all represented a common research problem. Even though Syrjälä and Numminen (1988:20) claim that in multiple case studies each case is deliberately selected in order to gain either similar or opposite results between cases, in this study the sample of the four subjects was self-evident as the initiative for the remedial teaching came from the particular subjects themselves. Merriam (1998:12) describes case studies as intensive and detailed descriptions and analyses of single units or bounded systems of phenomena. In educational research a case can mean a person such as a learner or a teacher, or a group such as a class or a whole school, to mention a few examples (Merriam 1998:27). The main point is that the case is bounded, that is, it can be limited clearly. As this study involved collecting and analysing data from several cases, it was called a collective case study (Merriam 1998:40). Because I investigated the strategy learning processes as four independent cases, it enabled the use of comparison and contrast in later analysis. Case studies in education are usually about some aspect or aspects in the everyday life of teachers and students (Syrjälä and Numminen 1988:17). The possible means of helping learners with learning difficulties in their language studies certainly fitted this description. Educational case studies aim both at activating the subjects to analyse and develop their work themselves and at improving and understanding educational practises and their circumstances (Syrjälä and Numminen 1988). As the present study progressed, the subjects began to analyse their own learning processes which was reflected in their responses to the strategies.

In qualitative research data collection and data analysis go hand in hand. The analysis of data while collecting it guides the process and facilitates the final analysis, thus excluding a lot of extra work from the behalf of the researcher

(Merriam 1998:162). In this study, the analysis process started to some extent already during the data collection, as I learned about the subjects' lives and language learning histories, and began to form tentative hypotheses in my mind. When I started to write this report, I formed a picture of the subjects' learning difficulties on the basis of their answers in the preliminary information form and in the test for dyslexia. In addition, I read through the interview logs from the background interviews, which gave me more information on the subjects' problems in foreign language learning. Their current skills in English were revealed as I evaluated the answers of Test 1. In the evaluation, I used the correct answers provided in the respective teacher's guides, and the oral test was evaluated based on my own experience as a language teacher and student. To be able to describe the subjects' responses to the strategies experimented with, I went through all the notes that I had collected along the strategy training sessions. I used the following questions as support as I arranged the notes for analysis: 1) was it easy or difficult for the subject to understand the use of the strategy, 2) was it easy or difficult for the subject to learn to use the strategy, 3) was the subject eager or reluctant to practise the strategy, and 4) how did the subject comment on the strategy? These questions were meant to clarify and give structure to the analysis.

The results from Test 2 were important for the analysis as they revealed whether the subjects had learned to use the strategies experimented with. The test results were not evaluated according to the amount of grammatical or spelling mistakes but from the point of view of whether the subjects used the strategies correctly in different exercises. The evaluation was based on my own experience as a strategy user and teacher. The analysis continued with reading through the interview logs of the final interviews. I used two questions as a guide in this: 1) what were the subject's thoughts and feelings of the strategies after the research project, and 2) did the subject find the strategies useful for her language studies in the future?. Finding the answers to these questions was a big step towards answering the research questions. In the within-case analysis, I tried to get as good a picture of each case as possible and convey an understanding of each individual case. As I was working on the cross-case analysis, I attempted to build general explanations that would fit each

individual case even though the cases varied in their details. In the analysis, I looked for similarities and regularities in the data, and made inferences bearing in mind the fact that most of the data consisted of the subjects' personal opinions and feelings. When I was making interpretations, I used my own life experience, common thinking, previous research knowledge, and field experiences. It was important to keep the conclusions rational and justifiable. In addition, I had to keep in mind the context where the data was collected and the method with which this was done. Some researchers claim that data should not include inconsistencies (Syrjälä and Numminen 1988:131). Nevertheless, sometimes inconsistencies are inevitable in qualitative data. In such cases, they can bring their own flavour to the interpretation.

5 RESULTS: FOUR CASES

The present study concentrated on four adult learners who had had difficulties in their foreign language studies. They each came from different backgrounds, influenced by their unique life situations and previous learning experiences. What they had in common was a search for means for facilitating their foreign language studies which they all had been struggling with the whole of their school years. They felt that they had learned only a little on language courses but had got through with the help of sympathetic teachers or memorisation techniques. Moreover, the subjects felt that they had never received any special educational support for learning from school. They explained that they needed sufficient skills in English in their studies for reading study material, dealing with grammar terminology, coping with written and oral assignments, and understanding complicated and fast speech in classroom situations. Failing to cope with the demands of language courses, the subjects were open to any suggestions that might ease their situation.

This chapter consists of four sections, each representing one of the subjects in this study. The findings are presented as four individual cases or "portraits". Each section has two subsections. Firstly, we concentrate on the subject's

language learning background and current skills in English. Language learning is discussed in a chronological order based on the subject's answers in the background interview. Current skills in English are revealed through examining the subject's results in Test 1. Secondly, we take a closer look at the subject's responses to the strategies experimented with. This subsection is based on the subject's comments during the strategy training sessions, her answers in the final interview, and on her results in Test 2. Chapter 6, the discussion, will then gather these findings together and offer a cross-case analysis using comparison and contrast.

5.1 Arja

5.1.1 Language learning history

Arja began her English studies in the third grade of elementary school. She had difficulties with studying English from the beginning on, but she claimed to have liked it anyhow. She described the teaching style as traditional: teaching phrases with the help of text books and role playing. Arja had problems with pronunciation and constantly compared her performance with others in the classroom. This left her with a feeling of being worse than others. In contrast, she did not have any problems with writing English. She did, however, experience problems with Finnish lessons. In fact, she received special education for Finnish and mathematics during elementary school, but not for English. In the rest of the subjects Arja succeeded well.

In secondary school Arja continued her English studies. She succeeded fairly well, her average grade being 7 (out of grades 4 to 10). She received a couple of special education sessions in English, but her motivation to learn went down as she felt she was not able to learn as much as she would have wanted to. At this point she had accepted the fact that she was worse than others in English. She could not understand how the others learned the grammar points and she did not. She even overdid the learning by trying to find cause and effect relations in grammar where there were none. Nevertheless, she was

conscientious in her language studies. She tried to learn grammar points by deducing meanings and saying them out loud. For vocabulary quizzes Arja practised with a friend. She felt that the boxes of grammar theory in text books and the exercises with blanks left the new information loose from practice. She would have preferred exercises that involved action and required learners to use their own wits.

Arja began her Swedish studies in the seventh grade of secondary school. She had practised basic phrases in Swedish beforehand, which is why she got frustrated already in the beginning because she learned nothing new. She describes the Swedish teacher as interesting, even though the teaching style was traditional and based on written exercises. She would have preferred more oral exercises involving real life situations. She also pointed out that the language teaching in both elementary and secondary school concentrated too much on grammar. She did not have the courage to try to speak in the classroom because her knowledge of grammar was so poor. Arja felt that while pronunciation and grammar were equally difficult in both foreign languages, learning vocabulary was easier in English than in Swedish. She succeeded well in other subjects than foreign languages and mathematics which still created problems for her.

Upper secondary school was not easy for Arja. Her motivation was low and she felt that the demands of school were too high for her to handle. Moreover, she did not see eye to eye with the Finnish teacher. She studied both English and Swedish but with poor results. She did not get any support for her studies from the English teacher who was called “The Black Death” among students. However, she took some lessons in French which went really well. Pronunciation was the only thing that created problems for her. After one year in upper secondary school, Arja was not moved up. As a result, she decided to quit school. Instead, she signed in on evening classes at an upper secondary school [iltalukio]. For reasons she cannot even remember, she did not continue her French lessons. She did, however, shine in her English lessons. She felt that she was better in English than others as her previous language studies were still fresh in memory unlike with some. She even dared to speak aloud during oral

exercises as she finally felt she was not the worst of the class. Still, practising grammar was difficult for her. Nevertheless, her motivation was much higher than in upper secondary school and she got the encouragement she needed from one of the English teachers.

Next, Arja studied to become a practical nurse. The school included a couple of obligatory courses in English and in Swedish. The main object of the courses was to learn basic nursing terminology. Arja claims that she remembers nothing from the Swedish courses. English, however, was easy for her as she was already familiar with the contents of the courses. The English teacher even asked her to be an example for the other students in the classroom which boosted her low self esteem. She thought the course exam was easy and it included an oral part as well. Her motivation was good as the course contents were familiar and easy to learn. Arja says she learned also the basic grammar terminology during the courses but has forgotten them due to lack of use.

The school for practical nursing included a practical training period of one and a half months which Arja spent in Tanzania with another Finnish girl. She was not afraid of going abroad when it came to using foreign languages. She found talking with the other trainees in English easy when the subject of a conversation was not too complicated. Nevertheless, she realised how poor her English skills were even though she had been studying the language for nine years. She would have wanted to be more fluent and know more vocabulary to be able to connect better with the locals. At first, she put extra effort in producing grammatically correct English. Then, she realised that the locals understood her better when she concentrated more on the message than on the grammar or pronunciation. This helped her relax and get more courage and self esteem to speak more. Arja even learned some practical phrases in Swahili from the locals. She found it fun and interesting, and she still claims to remember all of them.

Before studies at the Polytechnic, Arja worked at a kindergarten for two years. It was a Finnish-speaking kindergarten but some of the parents were foreigners who did not speak any Finnish. The staff used English and mime to

communicate with the parents. In fact, as some of the older staff members did not know any English, it was often up to Arja to do all the communicating. This, in turn, boosted Arja's self esteem. At some point, Arja also spent three weeks at a friend's house at Washington DC in the United States of America. She spent a lot of time wandering around the town alone where she was forced to use English. She would have wanted to speak more with people but felt that her English was not fluent enough and that she was not able to get her message across. She was not afraid of pronouncing words incorrectly but avoided using complicated words. She motivated herself thinking of all the people living in America who cannot speak English at all and still survive. Thus, she was not ashamed of her poor language skills as there were other people like her out there. Even though she misunderstood people at times, she was still able to have nice conversations and gain positive experiences.

At the time of the present study, Arja was finishing her first year of studies at the Polytechnic of Jyväskylä where she was studying to become an occupational therapist. The studies included a couple of obligatory courses in English and at least one obligatory course in Swedish which was still ahead. Prior to this study, Arja had attended one English course. The course did not use any textbook. The teaching style was traditional and it lacked oral exercise which was to come on later courses. Still, Arja found the teacher's examples interesting and they helped her realise some tricky points. The contents of the course included basic grammar and vocabulary. Arja tried to practise the contents mechanically with a friend but with poor success. The course exam was a written, grammar-based exam which Arja found difficult and demanding. She got the grade 4 in the exam (out of grades 1 to 5) but still felt that she did not know the contents well enough and was even sceptical about the principles used in the grading of the exam. She expressed the will to see her exam paper in order to find out what she really knew and did not know for self evaluation purposes and for future language courses. Overall, Arja was having problems in other subjects as well besides foreign languages. She found reading for exams and producing written text, especially academic text, too demanding and slow. Her motivation to learn was high as she did not want to quit another school. She really wanted to solve the problems she was having with learning

by attending lectures on “how to learn to learn” and by taking part in the present study, for example.

Arja did not have any friends with whom she could speak other languages than Finnish. Furthermore, she had not traveled much abroad. Sometimes when an exchange student at the Polytechnic or a tourist on the street asked for something she used English to communicate. Arja usually listened to music that had Finnish lyrics but sometimes she amused herself by trying to understand song lyrics in English or in Swedish. When watching the television she both read the subtitles and listened to the speech. Occasionally she even spotted mistakes in translations. She thanked for this the time she spent in Washington DC where she had to rely solely on the speech. The internet is full of information in English, but Arja tried to use Finnish internet pages as much as possible and to find readymade Finnish translations for useful English information.

Arja learned best through practice and preferred using action when learning. Heard information did not stick to her memory, but her visual memory was good even though mind mapping did not seem to work for her. She used neutral drawings as an aid in remembering things as she tended to remember the irrelevant instead of the relevant. In fact, when she created memory rules for herself, she usually remembered the rule better than the actual thing. She was not able to perceive and take in large entities of information. Moreover, she got frustrated and gave up very easily which was why she preferred to learn new things gradually in small portions. When she studied for an exam, she read the text aloud and made notes for herself. Sometimes she wrote the notes on small cards so that on one side of the card there was a question and on the other side its correct answer. For unfamiliar foreign language vocabulary she took advantage of imagery and tried to associate the unfamiliar word with a Finnish word that resembled it in either appearance or meaning. Arja had been forcing herself to study and try to learn for so long with poor results that she was really missing the feeling of success in learning. The only time she remembered of feeling successful in language learning was when she understood the use of the auxiliary do in interrogative clauses on the English course at the Polytechnic.

Current skills in English

Test 1 (see appendix 3) aimed at gaining an overall picture of the subject's current skills in English. The test consisted of four parts: grammar, reading comprehension, oral, and listening comprehension test. The tests were taken before we began training any of the strategies in this study. In the following, I will examine Arja's results in the different parts of Test 1.

Arja succeeded fairly well in the grammar test which consisted of three different exercises. It took her about a half an hour to finish the test. First, there was the multiple choice exercise which concentrated mainly on verb use. Here Arja scored 25 out of the maximum of 40. She made mistakes especially with tense but the mistakes did not follow any pattern, that is, she might get a tense right and then, in the next sentence, get the same tense wrong. The past tense was the only tense that seemed to cause her trouble repeatedly. Second, in the exercise where they had to fill in the missing verbs in their appropriate forms, Arja scored 6,5 out of the maximum of 10. She knew all the correct verbs in English so she did not have any trouble with vocabulary. However, she got only three tenses right out of the maximum of ten. Third, Arja translated five interrogative sentences into English. Here her score was 7 out of 10. She translated two of the sentences perfectly, and one of the sentences was grammatically correct but unfortunately not in the same tense as the original Finnish sentence. The remaining two sentences contained mistakes in verb use, such as in the use of the auxiliary *do* in interrogative sentences.

Arja spent only 20 minutes working on the reading comprehension test. First, she answered the questions based on pictures where she did not succeed very well, her score was only 4 out of the maximum of 16. Anyhow, she did better in the open questions and scored 6 out of 7. In total, this part of Test 1 did not go well for her, her total score being 10 out of the maximum of 23.

In the oral test, Arja revealed her language skills. She was very active in producing speech in English and she used versatile and varied vocabulary. Her speech was fluent and she was able to produce whole sentences including even subordinate clauses. In addition, her pronunciation skills were really good. She

went actively through all the pictures in the test paper and was able to talk about subjects also outside the pictures. She came up with something to say fairly quickly which reduced the amount of pauses between different subjects and the amount of supporting questions I had to make. There were, however, some grammar mistakes in her speech, mainly wrong verb forms and she repeatedly left out the *s* in the third person singular.

In the listening comprehension test Arja succeeded well, too. She scored 5,5 out of the maximum of 6. She said that she preferred answering the test questions orally in Finnish as formulating and writing the answers in English would have been really difficult for her and it would have demanded a lot of time.

All in all, Arja succeeded really well in Test 1. She shone in the oral and in the listening comprehension tests. In the grammar test, she gained variable success but still scored pretty high when considering the average scores in this study. The only area that called for improvement was reading comprehension.

5.1.2 Responses to the strategies experimented with

5.1.2.1 Colour-note strategy

The strategy training sessions for all the strategies followed the same procedure throughout the study (see section 4.4). After examining the colour-note strategy (see subsection 4.3.1) in detail, Arja chose the colours she wanted to use for marking the different sentence constituents and word classes. She chose the colours randomly, that is, she did not have any special reasons behind her choices. Her colours were as follows:

Subject – **blue**
Predicate: auxiliary – **green**
main verb – **red**
Object – **brown**

Mode – **yellow**
Space – **pink**
Time – **grey**
Conjunctions – **orange**

Then, Arja practised the colour-note strategy with the sentences below. She produced the sentences all on her own. I helped her correct all the gravest grammatical mistakes but I let occasional awkwardness of language remain as I did not want to loose the authenticity of the sentences.

I will go to Helsinki today. [Olen menossa Helsinkiin tänään.]
My sister has already travelled there last week. [Siskoni on jo matkustanut sinne viime viikolla.]
I would be happy if I got 5 from the exam. [Olisin iloinen, jos saisin 5 tentistä.]

I would have been happy if I had got 5 from the exam. [Olisin ollut iloinen, jos olisin saanut 5 tentistä.]
This house was built in the 20th century. [Tämä talo rakennettiin 1900-luvulla.]
I was surrounded by children in the park. [Lapset ympäröivät minut puistossa.]

Together with Arja we examined the example sentences in detail, looking at all the different sentence constituents and their places. Moreover, we went through the verb tenses and especially the passive voice as it seemed to cause difficulties for all the subjects in Test 1. In my opinion, Arja succeeded well in producing the example sentences, in dividing them into sentence constituents, and in colouring the words with the appropriate colours. In addition, she was able to put the words in the correct order when the coloured words were written on notes and shuffled. During strategy training, Arja seemed to grasp the main idea of the strategy and understand its use quite easily. Furthermore, she did not have any difficulties in learning how to use the strategy under my close guidance.

Unfortunately, on the next training session, Arja had not done the homework I had given her on the colour-note strategy. She said that she had not been able to form any reasonable sentences in English at home. This would suggest that she was somewhat reluctant to practise the strategy further. The colours seemed only to confuse Arja. They did not have any meaning to her and they were just one more extra thing to remember. She was not able to connect a colour to its sentence constituent in her mind or put the colours in the order she had learned. It did not help even though we tried putting several similar sentences with colours below each other on paper so that she could get a strong

visual image of the order of her colours and their repetition in different sentences. However, without the colours she found it easier to reorganise the shuffled notes in the right order. The fact that the sentence constituents were each on their own separate note that could be moved around and reorganised helped her perceive better the different variations of word order. When dividing the sentences into sentence constituents, she knew that a sentence constituent is not necessarily just one word but can consist of several words that together form a meaningful phrase (eg. preposition + indefinite article + adjective + noun).

Using the colour-note strategy was tested in the third part of Test 2 (see section 4.4, appendix 4). It took Arja 15 minutes to finish this part of the test. During the test, she first coloured the notes before reorganising them and writing the sentences on the test paper. In the last sentence, placing the conjunction *but* in its correct place seemed to cause her some difficulties but after a while she managed to get it right. All in all, Arja succeeded very well in this part of Test 2. She reorganised the notes correctly so that they all formed grammatically correct sentences. In the first sentence, however, she placed one of the adjuncts of time in the beginning of the sentence which did not follow the order of SPOTPA but was still grammatically correct. In addition, she had totally left out one of the adjuncts of space from the first sentence. Colouring the notes went also well for Arja. The only constituent that she coloured wrong was in the third sentence. She coloured the whole verb phrase *has rained* red even though the auxiliary *has* should have been green and only the main verb *rained* red. Later on in the same sentence, however, she coloured a similar verb phrase, *must walk*, correctly. (To see Arja's performance in Test 2, see appendix 6.)

Arja had not tried any learning strategy like the colour-note strategy before but after the research project she planned to try and use it in the future when practising word order both in English and in Swedish. Still, she was not going to use any colours with the strategy. She thought that writing the sentence constituents on separate notes and moving them around could help her understand the logic behind word order rather than just having to learn it by

heart. Moreover, she said that she preferred forming foreign language sentences visually on paper rather than in her head as on paper the words did not get as mixed up.

5.1.2.2 Reading comprehension strategy

When practising the reading comprehension strategy (see subsection 4.3.2), Arja managed really well in underlining the most important points in each text. Her way of making a mindmap was especially interesting (see appendix 5). The main subject was in a bubble in the middle of the mindmap. The other bubbles, or boxes in this case, were situated around it in a circle. The mindmap had only one level, that is, there was only one circle of boxes around the centre. The boxes contained only short straight facts about the subject and there could be several facts in one box. The headings were written on the lines connecting the boxes to the centre bubble. According to Arja, headings inside the boxes would only have confused her and made the mindmap look messy. All in all, her mindmap was visually very clear and contained all the important points of the text. Arja said that she occasionally used mindmaps when studying but only with short and clearly limited entities of information. If the subject grows too big, mindmaps will only confuse her even more.

Arja's opinion of the other reading comprehension method that involved categorising sentences inside boxes became clear as she examined the example picture I gave her. She said that the picture looked so confused that she did not even have the energy to read it to the end, let alone understand its contents as a whole. Nevertheless, as Arja tried the method herself, her picture was very logical (see appendix 5). She numbered her boxes from one to nine and placed them one below the other in that order. The boxes on the top with the smallest numbers contained general information on the subject and its history. The bigger the numbers grew, the more specific and detailed the information got. Arja did not take whole sentences from the text but rephrased the central ideas in her own words into the boxes.

Arja made a mindmap of the text she had for homework on the reading comprehension strategy. However, when we were going through her mindmap, she said that she should have used the method with the boxes. She had never used the box method before but said that it seemed much clearer and better than mindmapping. She felt that mindmaps just were not compatible with her learning style. She described mindmaps as confusing and visually scattered, whereas boxes helped her perceive the contents of a text better as a whole. In addition, Arja complained that the vocabulary in the homework text was too difficult for her which influenced her strategy use. She did not use underlining but collected the points that she understood and regarded as important straight to her mindmap. This way it is possible that she missed important points only because she did not understand them and, in contrast, collected less important points that she did understand.

The first part of Test 2 tested the use of the reading comprehension strategy (see section 4.4, appendix 4). Arja finished this part of the test in 22 minutes. She gathered the main points of the text in boxes which she, once again, numbered from one to seven and placed one below the other in that order. She put a heading inside box number one at the top and the other points in the boxes below it. She rephrased the underlined sentences into neat phrases in English that fit the boxes. She managed quite well in gathering the points from the text that she considered important and in making a clear summary of them. Still, there were some important points in the text that she left out from her summary. (To see Arja's performance in Test 2, see appendix 6.)

Arja was clear in her opinion of the different methods of the reading comprehension strategy. She agreed that underlining the important words and sentences from a text helped her in understanding the contents of that text. Gathering the underlined points into a mindmap, however, did not work for Arja at all. Because it did not help her study, she was not going to waste any time practising it in the future either. The method that she did like was the box method. She said that the boxes helped to hold the content in a clear and neat package that was easy to understand. She was going to use the box method in

her future studies, both in foreign language studies and in other subjects as well.

5.1.2.3 Elaboration- and key phrase strategies

The last of the language learning strategies that we experimented with were the elaboration- and key phrase strategies (see subsection 4.3.3). First, Arja read through the list of vocabulary in English that was related to her studies at the Polytechnic. Then, she chose two words from the list that she found hard to remember. I asked her to form two sentences in English around each word. She came up with the sentences quite easily and made only a few grammar mistakes. She said that she formed the sentences spontaneously, without any deeper thought. Next, I asked her to elaborate the sentences. Below are the words Arja chose and the long, elaborated sentences she formed around them. Notice that the sentences are in the exact form in which Arja produced them, that means, any possible mistakes have not been corrected.

1) *competent* [pätevä]
Are you competent to do this work although you haven't studied nursing? [Oletko pätevä tähän työhön vaikket ole opiskellut sairaanhoitoa?]
Our teacher is very competent in teaching about the history of Finland and she also tells us very interesting stories.
[Opettajamme on erittäin pätevä opettamaan Suomen historiasta ja hän myös kertoo meille mielenkiintoisia tarinoita.]

2) *suitable* [sopiva]
Do you think this dress is suitable for me or do you think I should take these pants?
[Onko tämä mekko mielestäsi minulle sopiva vai pitäisikö minun ottaa nämä housut?]
Have you found a suitable gift to your friend or do you have to go to another shop?
[Oletko löytänyt kaverillesi sopivan lahjan vai pitääkö sinun käydä vielä toisessa kaupassa?]

For trying out the key phrase strategy Arja chose three other words from the same vocabulary list as above. She created one key phrase for each of these keywords. She seemed to form the phrases quite effortlessly and quickly. Below are the key phrases Arja came up with and detailed examinations of the principles she used in forming them.

1) *commission* [prosenttipalkka]
'Tule missi suorittamaan tehtävä prosentilla.'
The phrase is based on the written form of the keyword. In the beginning of the phrase there are the Finnish translations of the syllables *com(e)* and *miss*, [tule] and [missi] respectively. The last word of the phrase [prosentilla] refers to the keyword's meaning.

2) *wages* [palkka]
'Wa ges sanoi saksalainen palkasta.'
The beginning of the phrase contains a reference to the German sentence "*Wie gehts?*" [Mitä kuuluu?] which is somewhat similar to the written form of the keyword divided into two. In addition, the content of the phrase refers to a German person speaking. The meaning of the keyword can be found at the end of the phrase.

3) *sick leave* [sairasloma]
'Lomalla sairaus lähtee.'
The phrase is based on the approximate Finnish translations of the two parts of the keyword, *sick* [sairaus] and *leave* [lähtee] respectively. The first word of the phrase refers to the meaning of the keyword.

As homework Arja chose two more words from the list that were difficult for her to learn. She created key phrases for both of the words and made two elaborated sentences, both of which contained both of the two words. The results of the homework are shown below.

1) *disease* [sairaus]
'Merisairaus.'
The phrase is based on the second syllable of the keyword, *sea*, which is in Finnish [meri]. This translation is combined with the translation of the whole keyword to form a short but practical phrase.

2) *progressive* [etenevä]
'Etenevä ohjelma.'
The phrase consists of two Finnish words. The first word contains the keyword's meaning and the second word, when translated into English, *program*, resembles the beginning of the keyword.

1) *Her disease was progressive.* [Hänen sairautensa oli etenevä.]
2) *How often this disease progress very fast?* [Kuinka usein tämä sairaus etenee todella nopeasti?]

Arja felt that the elaboration strategy did not help her to remember the target words. She said that in an elaborated sentence the target word disappeared among the other words in the sentence. In contrast, she claimed to remember the keywords and their phrases from the previous training session. She said that the key phrase strategy was easier to use and required less effort than the

elaboration strategy. Still, she stressed the fact that the phrases needed to be short and uncomplicated in order for the keyword to stand out and be remembered. She had used the key phrase strategy before when studying foreign language vocabulary but her phrases had tended to be too complicated and she had not remembered the actual keywords.

In the second part of Test 2 (see section 4.4, appendix 4) Arja got to practise the elaboration- and key phrase strategies again. It took her only ten minutes to finish this part. First, she formed four elaborated sentences around the target words. Three of the sentences had the required main and subordinate clauses and one sentence consisted only of a main clause but this was not the target of testing. Each sentence had a clear understandable content and the target words were placed appropriately inside the sentences. Even though there were some grammar mistakes in the sentences, they only told of poor level of language skills, not of poor command of the strategy. In addition to performing well in the elaboration exercise, Arja succeeded in forming short and accurate key phrases. The first phrase 'Defi istuu vajaasti.' began with the beginning of the keyword *deficits*. Then, Arja found a similar sounding English word *sits* for the end of the keyword and translated it into Finnish [istuu]. The meaning of the keyword was found at the end of the phrase. The second phrase 'Sopiva hakemuskaapeli.' had the meaning of the keyword *applicable* at the beginning which was followed by Finnish translations of the keyword divided into two: *appli* referring to *application* [hakemus] and *cable* [kaapeli] respectively. (To see Arja's performance in Test 2, see appendix 6.)

Arja noticed during the strategy training sessions that the key phrase strategy could not be used on all English words. Some words just were not suitable for being the basis of a phrase. Nevertheless, Arja said that she was going to use the key phrase strategy in the future for studying vocabulary in Swedish and for learning new complicated words in English. As the strategy did not take too much time from the actual studying, Arja felt that it was a very usable and workable strategy for her. However, she was not going to practise the elaboration strategy anymore because she simply did not find any use for it.

5.2 Eeva

5.2.1 Language learning history

As a child, Eeva was bilingual. The first years of her life she lived in Sweden with her Finnish-speaking mother and her Swedish-speaking father. She learned both Finnish and Swedish as she grew up amongst the father's family and her childhood friends who all spoke Swedish to her. She herself spoke a mixed language with words from both Finnish and Swedish. By the time Eeva started school, the family had moved to Finland and, because of lack of use, Eeva had begun to forget the Swedish language. When Eeva started her English studies in the third grade of elementary school, she was very excited. She was eager to learn and did not have any special problems in the language classroom. The teacher was nice and used role plays and reading aloud, among other things, as teaching methods. However, Eeva had difficulties with Finnish from the first grade on. When she learned to write, her problems with compound nouns, letters changing places and omitting letters became apparent. She got some special education in Finnish but no one ever explained to her why she could not study with the others all the time.

Eeva began her Swedish studies in the seventh grade of secondary school. She landed with a bad teacher who based language teaching mainly on grammar and written work. Eeva would have wanted to learn and especially remember the language she had used as a child but the teacher killed her motivation and her grades went down (5 or 6 out of grades 4 to 10). Eventually she gave up as she did not understand even the basic things. When she asked the teacher for help, the answer was so full of difficult grammar terminology that she did not understand a word. When Eeva chose her English level group in secondary school, she paid more attention to getting a good teacher who could help her with her problems. She chose the lower level group where she could shine and was among the best students. Her grades in English were quite good, varying between 8 and 9 (out of grades 4 to 10). The teaching method was traditional with text books, transparencies, and some oral exercises in the language studio.

The grammar rules were presented in a way that Eeva felt that she actually learned something.

Eeva continued her foreign language studies at a vocational art school after a few years. She succeeded quite well in both English and Swedish classes. Even her Finnish courses went well, apparently because the subjects of the essays they had to write were interesting. The foreign language lessons concentrated mainly on professional vocabulary and not so much on grammar or oral exercises. She still did not enjoy studying Swedish because of her previous bad experiences and low level of language skills to begin with. Next, Eeva attended a vocational school of handcrafts where most of the students were creative and artistically gifted but, according to Eeva, suffered from severe dyslexia. Thus, the foreign language lessons were quite easy, mainly involving making summaries of texts in English or in Swedish. The texts were taken from professional handcraft magazines and contained information that Eeva considered interesting, motivating and important for her future work. This motivation helped her overcome the difficulties she had in producing written text in a foreign language.

At the time of the present study, Eeva was finishing her first year of studies at the Polytechnic of Jyväskylä. Her studies included a couple of obligatory courses in English and at least one obligatory course in Swedish. She had not attended any of these courses prior to this study. She planned to take the language courses in different years in order not to confuse the languages with each other. Her main motivation in foreign language learning was just to pass the obligatory courses and eventually graduate. She said that she definitely did not plan to move abroad to work and in case she some day got faced with a client who did not speak any Finnish she could use body language to get her message across. All in all, Eeva did not regard foreign language learning as important or interesting at all.

Eeva did not have any friends that she would speak English with. She listened and understood fluently when her relatives from her father's side spoke Swedish but she did not speak much back. If a tourist came and asked her

something in the street, she was able to communicate via English and body language. She had not travelled much, but she preferred using a foreign language in an authentic situation, for example, on a trip abroad, rather than in a classroom where there was the option of giving up. Usually Eeva listened to music with English lyrics and tried to understand them. When watching television she both read the subtitles and listened to the characters' speech in English. Sometimes she even spotted incorrect translations and when the language was especially simple, such as in the daytime soap operas, she could follow the plot without seeing the screen just by listening to the speech. Occasionally Eeva watched Swedish programmes on television just to brush up her language skills. She did not use the internet a lot, only when she had to find information on a work related subject. Even then, she tried to avoid any internet pages in English that had only writing on them. If the page contained enlightening pictures, it was easier for her to perceive the content of the page.

Eeva described her learning style as kinaesthetic; while learning foreign language vocabulary, for example, she needed to move around and do something with her hands at the same time as repeating the words aloud. She preferred to get the language input through as many different sensory channels as possible in order to ensure that it was stored in the long-term memory. Especially enlightening pictures worked well as retrieval clues for her. Her tactile style was revealed when she learned the commands in a computer program in English. Her learning improved when she could combine the English command with an actual clicking of the mouse and seeing something change on the screen. Eeva was very creative and artistically gifted and she preferred to concentrate on one thing at a time. She had created and used a learning strategy of her own when studying word order and grammar in foreign languages. She wrote foreign language words on small pieces of paper and attached them on the wall. Then, she moved them around to form grammatically correct and meaningful sentences (note similarity to the colour note strategy, subsection 4.3.1).

Eeva claimed that she had never experienced a feeling of success in foreign language learning. Naturally she was proud of herself if she could direct a

tourist to the right place in English, but she had never considered foreign languages important or necessary. She added that Finnish had always created, and still did, too many problems for her in every part of life, especially in studying. However, she had revised Swedish vocabulary and grammar at home just out of curiosity. In addition, she liked reading easy texts in English if she had some background knowledge on the subject at hand.

Current skills in English

Eeva's current skills in English were revealed through her results in Test 1 (see appendix 3). She took the test before we began training any of the strategies in this study. In the following, I will examine Eeva's results in the different parts of Test 1.

The first part of Test 1 concentrated on grammar use. Eeva completed this part fairly quickly, in 20 minutes. Firstly, she scored 16 out of the maximum of 40 in the multiple choice exercise. On the one hand, she made mistakes especially on verb tenses, but on the other hand, she got many verb tenses correct, which means that her mistakes did not follow any pattern. Secondly, she was asked to fill in missing verbs in their appropriate forms. Her score was 4,5 out of the maximum of 10. She got nine verbs out of ten correct, so she did not have any difficulties with basic vocabulary. However, every single one of the tenses was incorrect which decreased her score quite noticeably. Thirdly, she scored 3 out of the maximum of 10 in translating interrogative sentences into English. She seemed to be totally lost when it came to forming interrogative sentences in English, using the auxiliary *do*, and getting the word order right. All the verbs were in an incorrect tense and form.

It took Eeva 35 minutes to finish the second part of Test 1 which tested reading comprehension skills. Her total score was 13,5 out of the maximum of 23. When compared, she succeeded almost equally well in both parts of the test; she scored 9 out of the maximum of 16 in the questions based on pictures, and 4,5 out of the maximum of 7 in the open questions. However, when looking at the amount of effort and trying she put in the answers, she did better in the open questions.

In the third part of Test 1 Eeva was required to produce speech in English in which she managed quite fluently. She was able to produce whole sentences with main and subordinate clauses. Moreover, she pronounced words correctly and used good and versatile basic vocabulary. She talked about all the pictures in the test paper and was able to talk about subjects outside the pictures, too. Nevertheless, she made some grammatical mistakes in her speech, such as wrong verb tenses and mixing up *he* and *she*, *his* and *her*. In addition, she took long pauses between sentences, so I had to ask her some supporting questions about the pictures.

The last part of Test 1 was the listening comprehension test. Here Eeva succeeded quite well, scoring 4 out of the maximum of 6. She said that the test was not very difficult because it consisted of slow, simple English. She seemed to understand quite well what was said on the tape, but a few times she did not concentrate enough on reading the question properly but answered something a little beside the point. In fact, she complained that her brain got tired and missed many difficult but important words while listening to the tape for so long. She preferred to answer the questions orally, and would have liked even more if there had been pictures to support the tape.

Generally speaking, Eeva succeeded best in the oral and the listening comprehension tests. Her score in the reading comprehension test, and especially in the grammar test, revealed a true need for improving her language skills.

5.2.2 Responses to the strategies experimented with

5.2.2.1 Colour-note strategy

The strategy training began with examining the colour-note strategy in detail (for colour-note strategy, see subsection 4.3.1; for strategy training sessions, see section 4.4). Next, Eeva chose the colours she wanted to use for marking the different sentence constituents and word classes. She chose the colours

randomly, that is, she did not have any special reasons behind her choices. Her colours were as follows:

Subject – **green**
Predicate – **blue**
Object – **brown**
Conjunctions – **pink**
Mode – **yellow**
Space – **red**
Time – **orange**

Then, Eeva produced two sentences in English and practised the colour-note strategy on them. The sentences are shown below.

I was eating ice cream a while ago. [Minä söin jäätelöä hetki sitten.]
I would come by bike if it wasn't broken. [Tulisin pyörällä jos se ei olisi rikki.]

We examined the sentences above in detail and went through the different sentence constituents and word order with the help of SPOTPA (see subsection 4.3.1). Following Eeva's wishes, we concentrated especially on the predicate and its different forms and tenses. We took the sentences above as a basis and went through together a variation of other basic tenses changing only the verb forms in each sentence. In addition, Eeva wanted to practise the colour-note strategy on Swedish sentences, but these sentences are not included here as they are not relevant to this study. During strategy training, Eeva seemed to understand the use of the strategy quite easily, but her problems lay more in producing whole sentences on her own and in perceiving abstract concepts, such as some sentence constituents. Nevertheless, she was very eager to practise the strategy in both English and in Swedish.

At home, Eeva had struggled with the homework I had given her. She said that she simply was unable to produce any proper, meaningful sentences in writing. It had helped a little when she had tried to produce the sentences saying them aloud, but she still had not done the homework. She did, however, remember the use of SPOTPA and considered it a useful key for breaking the code of the coloured sentence constituents. For practice, we went through again the use of

the strategy with some example sentences that Eeva produced herself. We especially examined closely the sentences below as Eeva seemed to have lots of difficulties in determining the sentence constituents in them.

It is a fine weather outside. [Ulkona on kaunis ilma.]
It is foggy outside. [Ulkona on sumuista.]
It is snowing. It is raining. [Sataa lunta. Sataa vettä.]
There are two girls in the shop. [Kaupassa on kaksi tyttöä.]

Eeva found it quite hard to perceive different sentence constituents even in Finnish, let alone in English. She relied on guessing them most of the time. The subject was the only constituent she usually recognised but if the subject was an abstract concept or otherwise complex, she could not determine it. The following sentence has a good example of a subject that was semantically too complex for Eeva. *That blue car between the red and the yellow car hit our fence yesterday.* She was not able to say which of the cars was the subject in the sentence. Her problems seemed to lie more in understanding the semantic content of a sentence rather than in understanding individual words.

As Eeva had difficulties in recognising different sentence constituents, she was not able to colour her notes without my help. Moreover, she said that she had not had enough time or energy to memorise her colours properly. Nevertheless, she seemed to remember the order of her colours in SPOTPA. When I gave her piles of notes that had already been coloured by me, she started to put them in the correct order almost mechanically and was even able to tell me which sentence constituent was on each note. In addition, when she reorganised a pile of ready-made notes without the colours, she knew the correct order after some effort. This suggested that the colour-note strategy would not work for her if she had to make and colour the notes herself. During strategy training, Eeva expressed feelings of frustration as she realised that the strategy was not suitable for her. Her motivation was also low because she had never considered sentence constituents or word order needful to know at all.

Eeva got to practise the colour-note strategy again in the third part of Test 2 (see section 4.4, appendix 4). She finished this part in 20 minutes. In the first sentence she coloured the notes correctly, but as she reorganised them she had some difficulties with the adjuncts of time and space. The final order of the adjuncts was space, time, space, and time which did not follow the principles of SPOTPA and was linguistically awkward, too. The second sentence had clearly caused some trouble for Eeva. The notes were otherwise coloured correctly, only the adjunct of mode had the colour of the predicate, and she had also used it as a predicate in the latter clause. The notes had been reorganised in a way that the resulting sentence did not have any kind of sensible meaning. The objects had changed places between the clauses and there were two predicates in the first clause. The problem seemed to have been in the adjunct of mode and generally in perceiving the semantic content of the sentence. In contrast, the third sentence was reorganised perfectly. There were still two mistakes in colouring, namely the subject in the first clause had been coloured as a predicate and the adjunct of space had been coloured as an object. All in all, Eeva had some difficulties both in colouring certain sentence constituents and in reorganising them. Naturally, some mistakes in reorganising could result from her not understanding the meaning of the words. (To see Eeva's performance in Test 2, see appendix 8.)

Even though Eeva struggled with the colour-note strategy, she believed that given time she might learn to use it properly. Puzzle-like thinking had always suited her and she liked the fact that she could move the notes around instead of just writing the words on a paper. She was especially fond of the memory rule SPOTPA and said that it would be useful for her future studies. Nevertheless, she was not sure whether she was going to try and use the colour-note strategy as a whole in her foreign language studies. She thought that the strategy was too slow to be used in producing longer texts but it might help in practising word order in English.

5.2.2.2 Reading comprehension strategy

As we were practising the reading comprehension strategy (see subsection 4.3.2), Eeva found it quite easy to underline the most important points in the texts because she had used the same strategy in studying before. She had also tried making mindmaps in the traditional way with bubbles and lines but she had noticed that it did not work for her. Thus, during the mindmap exercise, Eeva drew a picture of the contents of the text and wrote the most important points inside and around the picture (see appendix 7). She used a clear logic when placing the points in the picture. The text talked about elephants in general, so Eeva drew an elephant. Points related to memory were placed in the head of the elephant, points related to eating in the stomach, points related to feelings near the heart, and so on. The things that had something to do with the elephant itself were written inside the picture and the points concerning the elephant's relationship with the world around it were written outside the picture. The picture contained all the important points of the text and was clear, interesting, and inventive.

Next, Eeva practised the method where the most important sentences of a text were underlined and collected to boxes. Eeva seemed to understand the use of the method but she did not want to use any boxes. Instead, she collected the sentences one below the other on a paper (see appendix 7). Moreover, she did not write whole sentences but only their beginnings as she said that she would have wanted to rewrite the sentences in her own words. The sentences were gathered in a logical order but, as a whole, the paper looked messy and did not serve its purpose, that is, to show a clear summary of the content of the text. Eeva claimed that the box method did not raise her interest at all which was why she was a bit reluctant to learn to use it properly and to practise it.

The same tendency continued with the homework. However, this time the problem seemed to be more in the text than in the strategy itself. Eeva had not done the homework because she said that the text was too difficult for her to understand. She had understood approximately the general content of the text because she had some background knowledge of the subject. Still, the

individual technical terms and their meanings caused her so much difficulties that she was not able to underline any points from the text, or make any kind of summary of the content, mindmap or otherwise. Instead of reading a difficult theoretical text, Eeva would have preferred, for instance, acting out real-life example situations of the subject.

In the first part of Test 2, Eeva was supposed to practise the reading comprehension strategy we had experimented with (see section 4.4, appendix 4). She read the text, underlined it, and made her summary in 40 minutes. Her summary, however, did not follow the principles of either mindmap or box method. She put a heading on the top and collected and rephrased the most important sentences under it in Finnish. She organised the sentences with small circles and indicated their reciprocal hierarchy with indentation. Even though the summary was made more like a written text than a picture-like summary, it was visually very clear and coherent. In addition, it contained all the important points from the original text. (To see Eeva's performance in Test 2, see appendix 8).

Eeva felt that the reading comprehension strategy did not work for her. She did not like making visual summaries, such as mindmaps, boxes, or pictures. She did not even want to try using them. Although the elephant picture she drew during the strategy training session was functional and inventive, she would still not use it as a help in studying that particular text. She described mindmaps as ugly and confusing with all the bubbles and lines. She also felt that reading the different bubbles around the paper required too much movement from the eyes and the head. Moreover, she did not see any point in using whole sentences inside boxes because it did not help her learning at all. Eeva preferred the strategy she used in Test 2, with short phrases placed hierarchically one below the other and marked with small circles. Thus, she was not going to use the reading comprehension strategy we experimented with in the future.

5.2.2.3 Elaboration- and key phrase strategies

The last of the language learning strategies that Eeva experimented with were the elaboration- and key phrase strategies (see subsection 4.3.3). First, she chose two words that were difficult for her to learn from the English vocabulary list. Next, I asked her to form two sentences around each word. Then, she elaborated the sentences with a subordinate clause or some adjuncts. The first sentence of word number two below was the only sentence Eeva did not want to elaborate because, in her opinion, it was a short and pithy phrase suitable to be used in future work situations. Eeva found it quite hard to come up with the sentences and especially to elaborate them because her vocabulary in English was so inadequate. Below are the words Eeva chose and the elaborated sentences she formed around them. Notice that the sentences are in the exact form that Eeva produced.

1) *finge benefit* [luontaisetu]
In my job finge benefit is important because I like it.
[Minun työssäni luontaisetu on tärkeää koska pidän siitä.]
Lunch is finge benefit for everyone in the kitchen.
[Lounas on luontaisetu kaikille keittiössä.]

2) *suitable* [sopiva]
How about suitability?
[Entäs sopivuus?]
Writing isn't suitable to me because I'm lazy.
[Kirjoittaminen ei sovi minulle koska olen laiska.]

Next Eeva took a closer look at the key phrase strategy. She knew the strategy from before and had used it in her previous studies. Thus, she did not have any difficulties in practising it. She chose four words from the same vocabulary list as above and began creating phrases on their basis. She seemed to be fulfilling her creativity and came up with clever phrases in no time at all. Below are the keywords Eeva chose and the phrases she created with detailed examinations of the principles she used in forming them.

1) *environment* [ympäristö]
'En Viroon mene.'
The phrase is entirely based on the written form of the keyword. The three successive Finnish words in the phrase sound similar to the keyword divided into three parts respectively. The meaning of the keyword cannot be found in the phrase.

2) *competence* [pätevyys]
'Kompuroi ei pätevä.'
The phrase begins with the same sound combination as the keyword. The last word in the phrase refers to the meaning of the keyword. The phrase has a meaningful content of its own.

3) *wages* [palkka]
'Veit siis palkan pankkiin?'
The two Finnish words in the beginning of the phrase [veit siis] refer to the pronunciation of the keyword. The keyword's meaning can be found in the middle of the phrase.

4) *terms* [ehdot]
'Terminaalihoito on ehdoton loppu.'
The written form of the keyword can be found in the beginning of the phrase. The adjective [ehdoton] in the phrase refers to the meaning of the keyword.

On the next strategy training session, we went through everything that Eeva had produced at home. As homework, she had chosen as many as five words from the same vocabulary list as before and created phrases around each of them. She said that it was really easy and natural for her to come up with the phrases. She read the phrases aloud for me to demonstrate how also intonation and rhythm played a part in them. However, Eeva had not done the homework on elaboration. It had simply been so difficult and strenuous for her to try to produce longer sentences in English that she had given up completely. In addition, she stressed the fact that she remembered the key phrases from our previous session but not the key words from the elaborated sentences. In other words, she did not consider the elaboration strategy useful enough. The key phrases that Eeva created at home are presented below.

1) *leisure* [vapaa-aika]
'L. ei sure vapaa-ajalla.'
The written form of the keyword has been divided into three to form three meaningful words in Finnish that make the beginning of the phrase. The last word in the phrase contains the meaning of the keyword.

2) *aim* [tavoite]
'Taimella tavoite.'
The written form of the keyword can be found inside the first word of the phrase [t*aim*ella]. The second word is the Finnish translation for the keyword.

3) *reference* [suositus]
'Suositan, referoi rensselit naulaan!'
The phrase begins with a reference to the meaning of the keyword. The next two words in the phrase are based on the pronunciation of the keyword. The beginnings of the words correspond to the keyword divided into two in the following way; *refe-* [refe(roi)] and *-rence* [renss(elit)] respectively.

4) *competence* [pätevyys]
'Komppaa Peten setä pätevästi.'
The written form of the keyword is divided into three; *com* / *peten* / *ce*. The beginning of the word [komppaa] refers to the first part *com*. The word [Peten] is exactly similar to the second part *peten*. The beginning of the word [setä] corresponds to the last part *ce*. The last word in the phrase refers to the meaning of the keyword.

5) *suitability* [sopivuus]
'Suit abin lättyä.'
The first two words in the phrase correspond to the beginning of the keyword. The last word in the phrase is a Finnish word that sounds similar to the end of the keyword. The meaning of the keyword cannot be found in the phrase.

Eeva practised the elaboration- and key phrase strategies once more in the second part of Test 2 (see section 4.4, appendix 4). She finished this part in only 10 minutes. In the first exercise she was asked to choose two words from a text and produce two elaborated sentences on each word, that is, four sentences altogether. Still, Eeva produced only one elaborated sentence per word. It is impossible to know whether this was because she misunderstood the instructions or did not have the energy to produce any more sentences. However, the two sentences were elaborated appropriately and they both contained a main clause and a subordinate clause. There were some grammar mistakes in the sentences but that was not the purpose of the testing. The sentences had a clear and understandable content and the keywords had been placed correctly. In the first sentence Eeva had even inflected the keyword correctly on her own. The second sentence was good as well, but Eeva had checked the word class of the keyword incorrectly from the dictionary which influenced the content of the sentence a little.

Next in Test 2, Eeva was asked to choose two more words from the text and form a key phrase on the basis of each of them. She succeeded well in this part

of the test, too. Her phrases were functional and inventive. The first phrase ‘Apua Proach lähestyy mua!’ was based on the keyword *approach* [lähestyä]. The first word in the phrase began with the same sound combination as the keyword. The second word corresponded exactly to the end of the written form of the keyword. The third word contained the meaning of the keyword. The second phrase ‘Esseen tilalle olennaisesti muuta.’ began with two Finnish words that resembled the written form of the keyword *essential* [olennainen]. The meaning of the keyword could also be found in the phrase. What was more important, the content of the phrase had a special meaning for Eeva as it expressed her personal opinion of language teaching at school. (To see Eeva’s performance in Test 2, see appendix 8.)

All in all, Eeva enjoyed using the key phrase strategy. She described it as fun, almost play-like but meaningful strategy that did not require too much effort. She pointed out that the strategy was especially suitable for words that were long and complicated. In addition, she stressed the fact that the key phrases had to come from the user herself, otherwise they would not be stored in the long-term memory. In contrast, Eeva struggled with the elaboration strategy. Even though she understood completely the use of the strategy, her low skills in English prevented her from producing full sentences. Moreover, she felt that the sentences she had produced did not help her to remember the keywords but confused her even more. In the end, Eeva said that she was not going to practise the elaboration strategy anymore but was definitely going to use the key phrase strategy in her future language studies.

5.3 Julia

5.3.1 Language learning history

Julia began her English studies in the third grade of elementary school. In the beginning, she got good grades and did not have any difficulties with learning simple phrases and vocabulary. At some point during elementary school, as the grammar got more complicated, Julia got into trouble with her language learning. Her motivation went down because she did not understand everything in the language lessons anymore, which led to lower grades in exams. She liked the fact that her teacher used a lot of pictures as an aid in teaching, in addition to singing and acting small plays in English. Nevertheless, Julia felt that she did not get the support she needed from her teacher, even though she received special education a couple of times during elementary school. In other subjects Julia succeeded well, except in mathematics which always caused her trouble.

Julia started learning Swedish in the seventh grade of secondary school. These language studies began in the same way as with English before. The beginning felt easy and motivating, and she succeeded well in exams. In the eighth grade she fell behind because she could not grasp the more difficult grammar points. However, she pulled herself together in the ninth grade and improved her grades noticeably. She even said that she felt occasional feelings of success during this time. In her English studies in secondary school, however, her success was not so good. Mostly, she blamed the teacher's incompetence for this. During lessons, they usually did exercises and checked them immediately from transparencies. Being a slow learner, Julia did not have enough time to do the exercises herself so she had to write the correct answers straight from the transparencies to her language books. This did not advance her learning in any way. Moreover, all new language material was written on the blackboard where Julia copied it to her notes without understanding a word. She would have needed someone by her side all the time helping her and explaining the material in detail. Unfortunately, the teacher did not do anything about this during the lessons. Julia's motivation was really low because she felt like she

had to give up trying to learn and just copy everything in order to keep up with the pace. She even said that she felt stupid and useless during English lessons. She did, however, receive some special education in English from a special needs teacher which helped her learning a lot as there was finally someone there who concentrated solely on explaining things to her. Julia would have preferred more real-life language using situations and oral exercises with students on the same language level to help her gain courage to also speak English. In other subjects, except mathematics, Julia succeeded well. In fact, she even received a honourable mention for her Finnish skills.

After some vocational studies with no foreign language courses, Julia worked as a classroom assistant for one year. During this time, she taught English to a young boy who suffered from ADHD (see subsection 2.2.1). Still, the main purpose was more to get the boy to co-operate with a teacher than to help him learn a foreign language. After the year, Julia continued her studies in child care. The studies included a short obligatory course both in English and in Swedish. Her motivation was low and she rather would not have attended either of the courses. She said that she was especially afraid of making mistakes and looking like a fool in the classroom. Luckily, the courses were quite easy. The course in Swedish concentrated on child care vocabulary and the course in English on oral exercises. Julia enjoyed the English lessons where she could talk in English alone with a partner who had similar language skills. Because the teacher did not listen to their conversations, there was no pressure to succeed. Nevertheless, the course finished with an oral exam where Julia was so much in panic that she froze and almost cried in front of the teacher. Apparently the teacher felt sorry for her and passed her even though she could not utter a word. During these studies Julia also took one optional course in German but she gave it up quite quickly because she felt that the language was too difficult for her.

After working for some time, Julia began her studies at the Jyväskylä Polytechnic. At the time of the present study, Julia was finishing her first year of studies to become an occupational therapist. The studies included a couple of obligatory courses in English and at least one obligatory course in Swedish.

She had not attended any of the English courses prior to this study but she was on the Swedish course simultaneously with this study. The course in Swedish concentrated on grammar and the teacher used the same teaching method that had failed Julia before, that is, writing new information on the blackboard without explaining or going through it in detail. The course revised the basics of the language much too quickly and the teacher did not have any time for the slow, low-skilled learners like Julia. She felt extremely tired from trying her best to understand and still failing. By this time Julia felt that the threshold to learning was getting too big for her to get across. She would have preferred a clearer and more detailed style of teaching with more oral exercises and less essay writing. She had no motivation to learn foreign languages, the only thing that made her attend the course was the prospect of graduating some day. Moreover, she was afraid that her language skills were on such rudimentary level that she could never reach the requirements of the Polytechnic, neither in Swedish nor in English.

Outside school, Julia had used foreign languages while travelling in Greece and in Sweden. She had survived well with simple English phrases and had even been able to sort out a situation in English where she had been in a severe accident in Greece. Surprisingly, her low self esteem in languages did not prevent her from dreaming about working abroad. She was interested in finding a summer job in Sweden, but she was still a bit hesitant and feared that she would not pass the obligatory language requirements. She had been practising speaking English with some friends of hers. There was a man from India in her floorball team and she had a friend who was originally from Germany. She did not describe her conversations with them as anything close to fluent but the main point was that they were authentic situations where everybody understood each other despite language flaws. Julia preferred to listen to music with Finnish lyrics and she considered melody more important than the lyrics. Moreover, she had singing as a hobby and difficulties with the lyrics prevented her from singing songs in English. When watching tv, Julia usually read the subtitles but sometimes she only listened to the speech of the characters, especially in daytime soap operas that used simplified English. On the few occasions she used the internet, she tried to avoid all internet pages and e-mails

in English. Especially the English commands in computer programs caused problems for her. Once, Julia attended a lecture in English at the Polytechnic where she understood amazingly lot in her own opinion. Still, she had to concentrate so hard the whole time that she considered it extremely strenuous. She was motivated to learn to use the language in contact with other people and to understand what was said in television programs and on lectures but she feared she was too hopeless to learn.

Julia described her learning style as tactile and visual. She learned best when she had time to think about the new material herself and discuss it with someone. She preferred hands-on learning where she could physically do something in relation to the material. It was best if the material was somehow connected to practice, for example, she picked up English phrases from television programs and used them correctly in real-life situations. In addition, she needed to see the material to be learned, preferably supported with enlightening pictures or summarised in visually clear diagrams. She claimed to have a visual memory which she used in exams by remembering the required information via seeing the spread from the text book it was on in her head with the help of the pictures on that spread. In contrast, Julia had problems with learning through the auditory channel. She was not able to decode the English input quickly enough so she had trouble remembering oral instructions and longer spoken passages in listening comprehension exercises, for example. In addition, she was a slow learner and reader. Especially complicated texts full of information were extremely difficult for her to read. She preferred getting new information in small amounts at a time, clearly explained and with lots of repetition. All in all, Julia's foreign language learning had always been shadowed by the thought that she was never going to understand or learn anything, that it simply was impossible for her. The feeling was so overwhelming that it frustrated her to the point where she just cried and gave up instead of having the energy to keep trying.

Julia did not want to receive a statement of the diagnosis of dyslexia because she did not believe that dyslexia was the reason for her language learning difficulties. In her opinion, her problems were caused by her slow learning

style, poor memory, stress, and lack of motivation and sleep. Nevertheless, she was eager to find learning strategies that might help her language learning. She had not used consciously any language learning strategies before.

Current skills in English

Before training any of the language learning strategies in this study, Julia took part in Test 1 (see appendix 3) the purpose of which was to gain an overall picture of the subject's current skills in English. The test consisted of four parts: grammar, reading comprehension, oral, and listening comprehension test. In the following, I will examine Julia's results in the different parts of Test 1.

The grammar test proved to be quite difficult for Julia. It took her a whole hour to finish the test and still she left some questions unanswered because at that point she felt too tired to continue trying. First, she did the multiple choice exercise about verb use where she scored 14 out of the maximum of 40. She left eight questions unanswered. She seemed to have more problems with some basic verbs, such as the verbs *be* and *have*, than with more rare and complicated verbs. Second, Julia filled in the missing verb forms, scoring 4 out of the maximum of 10. She got only one of the ten tenses correct. Moreover, there were gaps in her basic vocabulary. She did not remember words such as *send* or *spend*. Last, Julia translated five interrogative sentences into English. Here she scored 2,5 out of the maximum of 10. All the points she got came from proper vocabulary use. She had not used the auxiliary *do* in any of the sentences and the word order was incorrect in every sentence. In addition, all the verbs and their tenses were wrong. She really seemed to have difficulties forming interrogative sentences in English.

The second part of Test 1 concentrated on reading comprehension skills. Again, it took her quite a long time to do the exercise, 55 minutes in total. Her final score was 12 out of the maximum of 23. Her visual learning style did not help her with the questions based on pictures as she scored 6 out of the possible 16. Nevertheless, she succeeded much better in the open questions, scoring 6 out of 7.

The next part of Test 1 examined Julia's oral skills in English. She seemed a little distressed about the test situation and the use of the tape recorder which at times caused her to forget words and shut down completely. In addition, she got really frustrated when she had a lot to say but could not remember the words and express her thoughts in English. She doubted her performance in the test all the time and seemed to focus her attention mostly on the mistakes she made. Julia kept a lot of pauses in her speech which interrupted the fluency of her sentences. In fact, she did not utter whole sentences but put one word after another to get her message across. She struggled with forming even the most basic sentences. As her speech did not flow fluently, I needed to ask a lot of supporting questions in English about the test pictures. Still, she did not always understand these questions. Julia used basic English vocabulary but quite often switched the language to Swedish, thus speaking in a language that consisted of English and Swedish words mixed together. Moreover, she used a lot of Finnish when she was not able to express herself in the other languages. However, she succeeded very well in one area. Her English pronunciation was excellent.

The last part of Test 1 tested listening comprehension skills. Julia's score was 2,5 out of the maximum of 6. She said that answering orally in Finnish made it easier for her to express what she really had understood from the tape. If the task had been to answer in English, either orally or in writing, it would have been impossible for her. Even though Julia described the English on the tape as understandable and simple, she could catch only a few words after the first listening. While she tried to translate those words into Finnish in her head, she missed everything that was said in the meanwhile. She would have needed to hear the tape many times more, preferably with the help of a dictionary.

Even though Julia used a lot of time and effort in doing the test, the effects of her unfortunate language learning history could clearly be seen in her performance. All in all, Test 1 revealed that Julia's skills in English needed improvement urgently if she aimed at passing the language requirements at the Polytechnic.

5.3.2 Responses to the strategies experimented with

5.3.2.1 Colour-note strategy

The first strategy that Julia learned and practised was the colour-note strategy (see subsection 4.3.1). The strategy training sessions followed the procedure explained in section 4.4. In the beginning, Julia chose the colours she wanted to use for marking the different sentence constituents and word classes. For this, she created an example sentence that she could use when trying to remember her colours visually. The example sentence was *I am looking at the sun* [Minä katson aurinkoa]. She took advantage of mental images as she chose the colours for this sentence. In addition, she chose colours randomly for such sentence constituents that were not present in this sentence but were a part of other examples we used later on. Below are Julia's colours and explanations of the mental images she used in choosing them.

Subject – **red** (*I* – my heart – red)
Predicate – **blue** (*am looking* – my eyes – blue)
Prepositions, conjunctions – **pink** (*at* – small meaningless word – plain colour)
Object – **yellow** (*the sun* – yellow)

Mode – **orange**
Space – **green**
Time – **brown**

With some subjects, like Julia, we separated prepositions from their main words and gave them their own colour when we divided the sentences into sentence constituents. This depended on the subject's own wishes during the training and on her previous knowledge of word classes and sentence constituents. After choosing the colours, Julia practised their use with the following sentences that she created herself.

Linda reads her books quietly. [Linda lukee kirjojaan hiljaa.]
Saara was sitting at the cafe yesterday. [Saara istui kahvilassa eilen.]
Pekka is trying to do the exam but the text is very difficult. [Pekka yrittää tehdä koetta mutta teksti on hyvin vaikea.]

Together we examined the sentences in detail, divided and coloured them, and talked about sentence constituents in general. Julia seemed to understand and learn to use the strategy but she needed me to be there by her side all the time guiding and helping. When we went through the principles of SPOTPA, Julia had some difficulties in perceiving its main idea. After some practising, though, she began to understand its use and even said that it might be very useful for her language studies in the future.

As homework Julia had created four more sentences in English and practised the colour-note strategy with them. She said that especially the adjunct of mode *with somebody* had caused difficulties for her. Below are the sentences Julia formed at home.

I have breakfast with my children. [Syön aamupalan lasteni kanssa.]
I go to a pub with my friends. [Menen pubiin ystävieni kanssa.]
My sister lives in Sysmä. [Siskoni asuu Sysmässä.]
Linda gets up at eight. [Linda herää kahdeksalta.]

Even though Julia created an example sentence of her own to remind her of the colours she had chosen, she really had trouble remembering them. She said that she needed to have the example sentence on paper in front of her in order to be able to colour other sentences. In addition, she did not remember which sentence constituent each of the colours represented. She had had difficulties in both dividing the sentences into sentence constituents and deciding which sentence constituent was which. Moreover, Julia did not remember the use of SPOTPA anymore and described it as one more extra thing to remember. Nevertheless, after some persuasion, she began to remember its main idea and what each of the letters represented. She said that, when doing the homework, she first created a sentence and then checked its correctness by dividing it into sentence constituents and colouring them. She still felt that the strategy was too difficult for her because there was too much to remember with all the sentence constituents, colours, their meaning and correct order. She would have preferred using ready-made notes, with or without the colours, in practising how to form grammatically correct sentences. Julia's difficulties with this

strategy stemmed from two basic things; she did not recognise different sentence constituents and she did not remember the colours she had chosen for them. This made using the strategy quite impossible.

Julia tried using the colour-note strategy once more in the third part of Test 2 (see section 4.4, appendix 4). It took her 45 minutes to finish this part of the test. Surprisingly, Julia succeeded really well both in colouring the notes and in reorganising them into grammatically correct sentences. In the first sentence, she had some difficulties in deciding whether *at the party* was an adjunct of space and whether *the music* was the object in the sentence. After some consideration, she made the right decisions and ended up with the correct sentence. The adjunct of mode *like crazy* in the second sentence caused some more trouble for her. She coloured it with the colour of the predicate and placed it as a predicate in the latter clause. Thus, she was left with the two actual predicates which she placed after each other in the first clause of the sentence. The rest of the sentence was correctly placed and coloured. The third sentence consisted of three different clauses joined together with conjunctions. Julia coloured and formed the clauses quite quickly but it took her a really long time to decide the order of the clauses and the places for the conjunctions. Finally, she managed to get the sentence right. (To see Julia's performance in Test 2, see appendix 10.)

Julia described the colour-note strategy as a funny strategy that forced one to learn sentence constituents and word order or it simply did not work. Having said this, she confessed that the strategy did not work for her because she doubted her skills in producing sentences in English and in dividing them into sentence constituents. Moreover, she still did not remember the colours she had chosen. However, Julia found two positive sides to the strategy; she said that reorganising ready-made notes helped her to perceive word order better and SPOTPA helped her to remember the grammar terms related to it. All in all, Julia did not regard this strategy as useful for her future language studies. She found the strategy too complicated and demanding, and said that it would benefit learning only after lots and lots of practice. Thus, she was not going to use the strategy in the future.

5.3.2.2 Reading comprehension strategy

The second strategy that Julia experimented with was the reading comprehension strategy (see subsection 4.3.2). She had used underlining and mindmapping before when writing essays and studying for exams. She preferred to underline whole sentences instead of just important words because of her meticulous nature. In addition, she had a clear opinion of how people choose what needs to be underlined. She said that a person's personal wishes and preferences, background knowledge, and point of view influence strongly what they consider important enough to be underlined. As Julia was working on her mindmap (see appendix 9), it was interesting to see that she noticed an aspect in the text that none of us others had observed, that is, most of the text concerned Asian elephants and not elephants in general. This could be seen very clearly in her mindmap. Actually, her mindmap looked like an ideal textbook example of a mindmap. It was logically organised according to themes and it was visually clear and neat. In the centre of the mindmap was the subject of the text. Around it were several levels of bubbles connected to each other with lines. There was one fact inside each bubble and the bubbles were organised in strings. In fact, there was a clear logical plot that one could follow when reading the strings of bubbles around the paper. Even though she succeeded really well in making the mindmap, Julia did not have the motivation or the energy to try out the box method. It was clear that she was living a very stressful period in her life outside school.

On the next training session, Julia had not done the homework I had given her. Her reason was that if she had tried to do it, she would have had to check almost every word from a dictionary which, in turn, would have taken so much time and energy that she could not see the point in it. She admitted that her reading was really slow but, in her opinion, it was more due to lack of motivation and concentration than to dyslexia. Thus, we began to work on the homework exercise together. Julia did all the work and I helped her whenever she needed help. Already in the beginning I noticed that it would have been impossible for her to do the exercise alone. It took a really long time for her to read and understand the English text, even with my help and a dictionary.

Especially longer sentences with complicated vocabulary caused her to totally loose her sense of sentence structure. Moreover, she forgot in an instance the translations she had just checked from the dictionary. It took Julia a long time to make the summary, as well. She did not make a mindmap but gathered the important points from the text in writing. She rephrased the points in her own words into whole sentences and gathered them one below the other under different headings. When the summary was finally finished, it covered reasonably well the contents of the text.

Julia was not able to comment on the box method as she never even tried using it, but she said that mindmapping seemed like a nice learning strategy. The fact that her mindmaps gathered similar points visually close to each other helped her to remember them better. Moreover, she suggested that using colours in mindmaps would make them even more clear visually. Each string of bubbles could have their own colour, or all the bubbles with sort of a heading inside could be coloured similarly. The downside in making summaries from English texts was that Julia had to translate each and every sentence into Finnish to get an overall picture of the contents of the text.

The first part of Test 2 concentrated on the reading comprehension strategy (see section 4.4, appendix 4). The text in the test, however, turned out to be too difficult for Julia. She spent about half an hour trying to read and understand the text with the help of a dictionary. Finally, after trying her best, she confessed to me that she did not understand at all what the text was about. Thus, in principle, she failed this part of the test. Because of her low self esteem with foreign languages, I decided to help her to finish the exercise so that she would not be left feeling like a loser. I helped Julia a lot in translating words into Finnish and in understanding the contents of the text. In addition, I guided her in seeing the structure of the text. Her summary consisted of short, rephrased facts in Finnish written one below the other. The general heading was placed inside a box on the top. Originally she meant to make a mindmap but felt that it was easier and more suitable for her to gather the points like this. The summary was logical and quite clear visually. In addition, it contained all the important points from the text. All in all, the summary seemed to be very

good. The only problem was that she could not have made it at all without my help. The text was much too difficult for her but when I helped her to understand it, she was able to use the reading comprehension strategy and make a good summary of the contents. This means that, in principle, she failed the test but the reason for this was not that she could not use the strategy but that the text I had chosen was much too difficult for her. (To see Julia's performance in Test 2, see appendix 10.)

Julia preferred gathering the important points of a text by rephrasing them and writing them on a paper below each other. She said that she felt like she was a bad learner because she did not use underlining or mindmapping very often like all the other learners at school. I explained to her that learning styles and strategies were very personal and that they could not be ranked in any order. Julia planned to use underlining also in the future when studying for exams. She described mindmapping as a good and functional strategy but said that it just did not feel suitable for her. However, she was going to use mindmaps in the future when planning written essays. Julia did not have any comments on the box method as she never tried using it. In consequence, she did not plan to try using it in the future, either.

5.3.2.3 Elaboration- and key phrase strategies

The last of the language learning strategies that Julia experimented with were the elaboration- and key phrase strategies (see subsection 4.3.3). First, Julia had a closer look at the elaboration strategy and chose two words from the vocabulary list in English I had given her. Then, I asked her to create two sentences in English around each word. The next task was to elaborate these sentences, for example, with subordinate clauses or by adding adjuncts. Julia did not seem to have any difficulties in producing the sentences, even though there was some linguistic awkwardness to be seen. Below are the words that Julia chose and the longer, elaborated sentences that she created around them. Notice that the sentences are in the exact form in which Julia produced them, that means, any possible mistakes have not been corrected.

1) *salary* [kuukausipalkka]
I want much more salary because I have to live!!!
[Haluan paljon enemmän palkkaa jotta pystyn elämään!!!]
At the end of month I give all my salary to my man.
[Kuun lopussa annan kaiken palkkani miehelleni.]

2) *qualifications* [pätevyysvaatimukset]
When I go to work qualifications are high.
[Kun menen töihin ovat pätevyysvaatimukset korkealla.]
Show me your qualifications in paper that I can see that you are perfect worker to us.
[Näytä minulle pätevyytesi paperilla jotta näen että olet täydellinen työntekijä meille.]

After making the sentences, Julia began to ponder on the word *qualifications* and the reasons for it sticking to her memory. She said that because the word began with the rare letter *q* and had a long and complicated written form she remembered it best by saying the word aloud just like it was written with a clear rhythm and stress on the letter combinations *qu*, *li*, *ca*, and *ons*. This made a nice transition to the key phrase strategy that Julia experimented with next. She chose two more words from the same vocabulary list as before and created key phrases around them. She was surprised to notice that she had used a similar strategy when studying foreign language vocabulary before, by adding a key word's meaning to an image in her head. Below are the key phrases Julia created and detailed examinations of the principles she used in forming them.

1) *sick leave* [sairasloma]
'Sairas lepää, jättäytyy sairaaksi.'
The phrase begins with two Finnish words that begin with the same letters as the keyword. In addition, the meaning of the keyword *sick* can be found in the beginning and in the end of the phrase. The word [jättäytyy] reflects the meaning of the keyword *leave*.

2) *compulsory* [pakollinen]
'Kompressori pakottaa ilman renkaisiin.'
In the beginning of the phrase there is a Finnish word that is similar to the written form of the keyword. The second word in the phrase is based on the meaning of the keyword. The phrase forms a meaningful sentence on its own.

As homework, Julia chose two more words from the same vocabulary list as before and created one elaborated sentence on each of them. In addition, she made key phrases on three more words from the list. Below are the elaborated sentences and the key phrases with explanations that Julia had created at home.

1) *to complete a course* [suorittaa kurssi loppuun]
I have to complete a course if I want to go to work.
[Minun täytyy suorittaa kurssi loppuun jos haluan mennä töihin.]

2) *to graduate* [valmistua]
Pekka has to graduate as tradenom because without that our lives stop.
[Pekan täytyy valmistua tradenomiksi koska ilman sitä elämämme loppuu.]

1) *preschool* [esikoulu]
'Siitä se persiillään istuminen alkaa.'
The third word in the phrase is based on the beginning of the keyword. The order of the letters has been changed to cause a humorous effect. The phrase forms a meaningful sentence on its own.

2) *resit* [rästitentti]
'Resite on todella rasite.'
The last word of the phrase is a Finnish word that sounds similar to the written form of the keyword. The keyword has been changed a little and placed in the beginning of the phrase to create a repetition of the sounds. The meaning of the keyword cannot be found but it is implied in the meaning of the whole phrase.

3) *wages* [palkka]
'Wage lähtee vege, jos on työtön.'
The third word in the phrase is a Finnish slang word that sounds similar to the written form of the keyword. The keyword has been changed a little and placed in the beginning of the phrase to create a repetition of the sounds. The meaning of the keyword can be deducted from the meaning of the whole phrase.

Julia said that she did not have any difficulties in creating the elaborated sentences at home but she doubted strongly that they would help her in remembering the keywords. She had not used the elaboration strategy prior to this study but the key phrase strategy was familiar to her from before. Julia said that creating the phrases at home did not require very much effort from her. In fact, she said that she had had fun creating the phrases and some of her productions had even amused her. The key phrase strategy seemed to fit her learning style naturally. Julia claimed that she remembered some of the keywords from the previous training session but that she had forgotten all the elaborated sentences and key phrases around them. In her opinion, the key phrase strategy helped the memory retrieval of foreign vocabulary better but the elaboration strategy was more suitable for long and complicated words or phrases, such as *qualifications* or *to complete a course*. Julia felt that it was quite difficult to create a short and functional phrase on a complicated word and, in such cases, preferred using whole sentences instead.

The second part of Test 2 concentrated on the elaboration and the key phrase strategies (see section 4.4, appendix 4). It took Julia only 20 minutes to finish this part of the test. First, she was asked to choose two words from a text and create two elaborated sentences around each of them. She had some difficulties in producing the sentences which could be seen in the amount of grammar and spelling mistakes she had made but that was not the focus of the testing. Julia produced the asked number of sentences, three of which consisted of a main and a subordinate clause and one only of a main clause. The sentences had meaningful contents and the keywords had been placed appropriately in the sentence structures. All in all, she used the strategy correctly but her low language skills were reflected in the sentences. Second, she was asked to choose two more words from the text and create one key phrase on each of them. Julia was full of excitement and enthusiasm when she worked on the phrases. Her first phrase 'En Viroon ment (sano savolainen), on niin huono ympäristö' was based on the keyword *environment* [ympäristö]. The beginning of the phrase was a statement in Finnish slang that consisted of the written form of the keyword divided into three. The meaning of the keyword could be found at the end of the phrase. The phrase itself had a clear and meaningful content. Julia's second phrase 'Rikkautes edellyttää rahaa' began with a Finnish word that was similar to the written form of the keyword *require(s)* [edellyttää]. The meaning of the keyword was found in the second word of the phrase. To sum up, Julia succeeded really well in using the key phrase strategy by creating two meaningful and functional phrases. (To see Julia's performance in Test 2, see appendix 10.)

Julia preferred basing her key phrases on the written form of the keywords. She described the key phrase strategy as natural, easy, and fun, and said that it was very useful in learning foreign language vocabulary. Nevertheless, Julia stressed that both the key phrase strategy and the elaboration strategy required lots of practice and especially the phrases needed to contain some kind of a twist to make them easy to remember. She felt that the elaboration strategy was a little more difficult to use than the key phrase strategy. Julia said that she might use the elaboration strategy when learning long and complicated words

in the future but she was definitely sure of using the key phrase strategy in her future foreign language studies.

5.4 Minna

5.4.1 Language learning history

Minna had a very difficult childhood which affected her whole learning history. She was taken into foster care at the age of five. When it was time to go to school, she felt that she was forced to start school a year too soon as she was born in December. She was not mature enough to start school and her life was a total mess at the time. Nobody asked her opinion or examined her maturity for starting school. She said that all the years she spent in elementary and secondary school were awful, and that she had to fight to keep up with the pace of the teachers and the other pupils.

Minna began her English studies in the third grade of elementary school. She felt awful starting a new language when she had had major difficulties in all the other subjects before. She had not learned to read or write properly prior to this which, naturally, was reflected in her English studies. Especially learning grammar was unbearable for her. She was afraid of the English teacher who punished her by making her stand next to her desk with all the other pupils staring if she did not know the correct answer to her question. Minna could even now remember the overwhelming feeling of shock and embarrassment she felt then. She did not get any support for her learning, neither from the teacher nor from her foster parents. She never received any special education in English. Even though she struggled with all the subjects at school, she managed to move up on each grade. Minna said that she never studied for any exams or learned any of the grammar points taught in lessons. Instead, she relied on her visual memory and tried to visualise in her head the pages in the textbook that had covered the question at hand. The elementary school left her with a phobia about speaking in public in a foreign language. She had been forced to speak in English and humiliated in front of class too many times.

Minna started her Swedish studies in the seventh grade of secondary school. She was faced with the same problems as when starting with English before. She did not like studying Swedish at all. She just sat quietly in class and dreaded the moment when it was her turn to answer the teacher's questions. Minna also continued her English studies in secondary school. She did not like studying English any better. Her personal life was still a mess and she was very shy and scared of talking to anyone at school. She did not have any motivation to study foreign languages but could not avoid the obligatory courses. She had difficulties in pronouncing words in English. She could not understand why a string of completely understandable letters were pronounced in an unpredictable and odd way when combined together as a word. Moreover, the teaching did not concentrate on practising pronunciation. The learners were supposed to practise pronunciation on their own at home with no further instructions, only with the written forms of the words in their notebooks. One more thing that caused problems for Minna was studying grammar. She did not understand the use of inflections in English, for example. Only when she realised their use in Finnish was she able to start learning them in English. She avoided speaking in the classroom and just copied mechanically all she could manage from the transparencies during the lessons. She did not have any interest in studying anything extra, like English vocabulary, for example. Her essays were short and consisted of just separate words put one after the other. Minna claimed that she would have succeeded better if there had been another teacher by her side helping her all the time. She desperately needed support for her language studies but was forced to face the difficulties on her own. The school preserved special education for the troublemakers and not for the learning disabled. She did not receive any support from the foster home, either. Nobody ever even suggested that she would need special education in foreign languages. Minna remembered that she did not get any positive feedback ever from her teacher who only concentrated on the mistakes. The teaching method did not take into account the different skill levels of the learners and, as the class was full of difficult cases, the teacher used to flee from the classroom and from the responsibility of helping those who would have needed help in their language studies.

In vocational school Minna's personal life took a turn upwards and she became more independent. She had motivation to learn the things she needed for her future occupation and this could be seen also in her foreign language studies. She did not have any major difficulties on either English or Swedish courses which mostly dealt with professional vocabulary and basic grammar. Minna continued her vocational studies on child care in another school where she did not have to study Swedish at all. The English lessons were, however, agonising for her. The only language used on the lessons was English and Minna struggled to keep up with the others as she did not have the necessary language skills or vocabulary. Mostly she kept quiet and, when asked, was only able to utter a few words in English. Still, she managed to pass the course.

Next, Minna got married and found herself moving to Sweden. She did not want to use Swedish at all so her husband did all the talking. She said that she usually understood what the others were talking about but could not take part in the conversation herself. She survived the culture shock with the help of Finnish-speaking relatives and friends. She did not attend any Swedish courses offered to her because they did not have much money and did not plan to stay in the country for very long. When Minna had to go to the doctor's, for example, she had a hired interpreter with her. Simple everyday actions, such as shopping for groceries, made her feel stupid as she was not able to tell the shop keeper what she wanted to buy. She constantly compared herself to her husband whose language skills were not so good either but who had the courage to try and manage with the foreign language. Nevertheless, she applied for a job at a Finnish-speaking kindergarten. To the job interview, Minna took a friend along to act as an interpreter. Unfortunately, when they phoned from the kindergarten to tell her that she got the job, Minna did not understand what they were saying and lost the job.

At the time of the present study, Minna was finishing her first year of studies at the Polytechnic of Jyväskylä. Her studies to become an occupational therapist included three obligatory courses in English and three obligatory courses in Swedish. She had not attended any of these courses prior to this study. She planned to take the courses on different times to avoid any overlap. In addition,

her studies included learning anatomical vocabulary in Latin. She was afraid of this as Latin was another new language for her and she knew that she would not manage just by learning everything by heart. Moreover, her motivation was low because she felt that knowing Latin was not necessary for her future occupation. Minna's general learning motivation was quite high as she wanted to get the necessary qualifications for the profession of her choice but she feared the language courses because of her previous experiences. Nevertheless, her main aim was only to pass the courses and not push herself to the limit as her personal life was in such a stressful situation that even the doctor had prescribed her with bed rest. She felt that knowing vocabulary was much more important than grammar but was afraid that her low language skills would prevent her from learning anything new.

Minna had been diagnosed with dyslexia already in foster care but, apparently, no one ever informed her, her school, or her teachers about it or did anything to help her with it. It was only when Minna was an adult herself that she got to read about the diagnosis from her files. This had affected her whole learning history. She had survived by finding ways of learning so that no one noticed that she had to work twice as hard as the others. She had learned ways of going around any difficult spots and avoiding noticeable mistakes. This way she had gone through previous schools without anyone noticing that she might have dyslexia. She stressed that she did not want anyone to know about her dyslexia because she did not want to get pity or unequal treatment from her teachers.

Even though Minna had resorted to it many times, she detested learning things by heart as she wanted to understand everything she learned in order to be able to apply and use it later on. For example, such grammar rules that did not have any clear logic behind them confused her. However, she was eager to learn new learning strategies, especially to be used when studying foreign languages. She had tried learning vocabulary by repeating them aloud and by using cards that had a word on one side and a picture of its meaning on the other side. In addition, she had used the key phrase strategy of this study (see subsection 4.3.3) but it had not worked properly because she had used it on too many words and, then, forgotten most of them. Minna had tried out the different

learning strategies with her 10-year-old child who was also learning English at school. In fact, Minna said that it was the child who helped her with translating and pronouncing and not the other way round. Minna did not have any English-speaking friends and she did not travel much abroad. When listening to music, she preferred Finnish lyrics. When watching tv, she read the subtitles and did not listen to the characters' speech. She avoided using the internet and, when forced, used only Finnish pages. She managed to use computer programs in English with the help of little notes that had Finnish translations of the commands on them.

Minna's learning history was not full of feelings of success. Her school years were filled with bad experiences and she had had to struggle and work really hard to keep up with the others. She did not have any adults to rely on and was forced to survive on her own. The lack of support resulted in an overwhelming feeling of phobia about foreign languages that could be seen even today.

Current skills in English

Test 1 (see appendix 3) aimed at gaining an overall picture of Minna's current skills in English. The test consisted of four parts: grammar, reading comprehension, oral, and listening comprehension test. Minna took the tests before she began training any of the strategies in this study. In the following, I will examine Minna's results in the different parts of Test 1.

The first part of Test 1 concentrated on grammar, especially on verb use. It took Minna about 40 minutes to finish this part of the test. The first exercise was a multiple choice exercise where she did not succeed very well. Her score was 9 out of the maximum of 40. Her mistakes did not follow any special pattern. The second exercise did not go any better. Here Minna was asked to fill in the missing verbs in their correct forms. None of the verbs were in the correct form and only three of the ten verbs were translated correctly. She missed such basic vocabulary as *find*, *send*, *visit*, and *travel*. Her final score was 1,5 out of the maximum of 10. In the last exercise Minna translated five interrogative sentences into English. Her score was 0 out of the maximum of 10. She did not know how to form interrogative sentences in English, did not

use the auxiliary *do*, the word orders and all the verb forms were incorrect, and there were words missing from the sentences.

The next part of Test 1 tested Minna's reading comprehension skills. She worked about 50 minutes on this part. Her final score was 9,5 out of the maximum of 23. She succeeded better in the written open questions, scoring 4,5 out of 7, than in the questions based on pictures where she scored 5 out of 16. What was noticeable was that Minna put a lot of effort in answering the questions and tried her best, leaving only one question unanswered. At least she tried to guess the correct answer while the other subjects tended to leave more blanks.

In the oral test Minna tried to overcome her anxiety to speak English in public and on tape. Surprisingly, she managed quite well in this. She answered my support questions actively and energetically. Moreover, she understood all the questions I asked in English. Her basic vocabulary was quite good but she used a lot of Swedish words in the middle of her speech. Interestingly, she did not seem to notice herself at all that she switched from English to Swedish and back. Her pronunciation was fairly good even though she sometimes pronounced English words according to the rules of pronunciation in Swedish. Her speech production was not very fluent; she merely put one word after another without any thought on forms or inflections. In consequence, she produced whole sentences but they were full of grammar mistakes.

The last part of Test 1 was about listening comprehension. Minna struggled with this part of the test and scored 1 out of the maximum of 6. She said that the moment the tape began, she was filled with panic and disgust towards the language. She was not able to concentrate and doubted her own skills. She claimed that she could distinguish which words on the tape were most important, but when she tried to remember their meaning she missed everything that was said on the tape in the meanwhile. She blamed her lack of vocabulary for failing this part and said that with repetition she might start to understand something from the tape. Minna preferred answering the questions orally in Finnish.

All in all, Minna did not succeed very well in Test 1. She had major difficulties in the grammar and the listening comprehension tests. She succeeded a little better in the reading comprehension test. What was positive was that she overcame her fear of speaking English in public in the oral test.

5.4.2 Responses to the strategies experimented with

5.4.2.1 Colour-note strategy

The first strategy that Minna practised was the colour-note strategy (see subsection 4.3.1). The strategy training sessions followed the procedure explained in section 4.4. At first, Minna chose the colours she wanted to use for marking the different sentence constituents and word classes. For this, she created an example sentence that she could use when trying to remember her colours visually. The example sentence was *Minna reads an exam book with a school friend at the library today* [Minna lukee tenttikirjaa koulukaverin kanssa kirjastossa tänään]. She took advantage of mental images as she chose some of the colours for this sentence. Below are Minna's colours and the reasons why she chose them.

Subject – **blue** (cold, plain colour)
Predicate: auxiliary – **yellow** (glad colour, ignites the red)
main verb – **red** (flammable, hot colour)
Object – **green** (plain colour but on the other end of predicate than subject)

Mode – **brown**
Space – **black**
Time – **pink**
Conjunctions – **orange**

Then, Minna practised the use of the strategy and the colours with the following sentences. She came up with the sentences all on her own. I helped her with some basic grammar points but did not affect the content of the sentences.

I changed tires to my car yesterday. I didn't change tires to my car yesterday.
[Vaihdoin renkaat autooni eilen. En vaihtanut renkaita autooni eilen.]
I have learned to sing. I have not learned to sing.
[Olen oppinut laulamaan. En ole oppinut laulamaan.]
Lissu had drunk alcohol on Mayday. Lissu had not drunk alcohol on Mayday.
[Lissu oli juonut alkoholia vappuna. Lissu ei ollut juonut alkoholia vappuna.]

Minna practised dividing the sentences into sentence constituents and colouring them with appropriate colours. She examined how word order works in English and especially wanted to learn how turning an affirmative clause into a negative clause affected the structure of the sentence. In addition, she wanted to revise the basic verb forms and tenses. Minna seemed to enjoy practising the colour-note strategy a lot and said that it really opened her eyes to the structure of the English language which had always been a mystery to her.

Minna had done her homework on the colour-note strategy conscientiously. Below are the sentences she had produced at home and practised the strategy with. Notice that the sentences are in the exact form in which Minna produced them. We corrected the mistakes together as we went through the sentences later on during the training session.

Good day, Matti come here two o'clock.
[Hyvää päivää, Matti tulee kahteen mennessä.]
I come from Lahti, where do you come from?
[Minä tulen Lahdesta, mistä sinä tulet?]
What is your by professions?
[Mikä on sinun ammattisi?]
Santa Claus comes from Finland.
[Joulupukki tulee Suomesta.]

Minna said that she had had difficulties at home with dividing the sentences into sentence constituents. Thus, we practised the strategy with two more sentences. Minna produced the sentences herself, I helped her to translate them into English, and she did the dividing and the colouring on her own. She succeeded really well in all of this. The only thing that caused her difficulties was recognising the long object in the main clause of the first sentence. Minna

said that it was much easier for her to use the strategy when she did not have to translate the sentences into English on her own. Below are the two example sentences.

> *Marianne has a big English-English dictionary but she doesn't bring it to school.*
> [Mariannella on suuri englanti-englanti -sanakirja, mutta hän ei tuo sitä kouluun.]
> *Heikki drives a red loud motorcycle too fast around the town at nights and he gets a lot of tickets.*
> [Heikki ajaa kovaäänisellä punaisella moottoripyörällä liian kovaa ympäri kaupunkia öisin ja hän saa paljon sakkoja.]

Minna had not used any learning strategy similar to the colour-note strategy before but she took a fancy to it when we practised it together with simple short sentences. However, when she tried to use it at home with longer and more complicated sentences, she noticed that the strategy was quite difficult. She said that there should have been someone beside her all the time guiding and helping. She had difficulties especially with forming English sentences. In addition, she did not like using the colours and never took the time to learn them. Nevertheless, Minna found also positive sides to the strategy. She learned a lot about sentence structure and constituents, and gained new insights into some basic grammar rules, such as how to use prepositions in English. Moreover, she was enthusiastic about using SPOTPA with basic sentence structures. She had never even heard of SPOTPA before and thought it was extremely useful for her foreign language studies.

The third part of Test 2 examined the use of the colour-note strategy (see section 4.4, appendix 4). It took Minna 30 minutes to finish this part of the test. She coloured the written names of the colours on the test paper before she started to work on the sentences. In the first sentence, she told me that she was using the principles of SPOTPA. All the words were placed correctly but there were some mistakes with the colours. Minna had coloured the adjunct of mode with the colour of conjunctions and one of the adjuncts of space had been coloured as if it were an adjunct of mode. The same pattern continued in the second sentence. The words were placed in a grammatically correct order even though Minna had the adjunct of mode in the first clause and I had planned it to

be in the second clause. The problem was that the main verb in the first clause had the colour of an auxiliary, the object in the first clause was coloured with a main verb's colour, and the adjunct of mode was coloured like an object. Moreover, Minna had some trouble in getting the words in the correct order in the last sentence that consisted of three clauses. Finally, after several different versions, she managed to get them right. There were, still, some problems with the colours. Both the adjunct of time and the adjunct of space had been coloured like objects. All in all, Minna did not seem to have any major problems with placing the words in the correct order. Her difficulties lay more in recognising different sentence constituents and colouring them. It was obvious that the colours did not work for her in this strategy. (To see Minna's performance in Test 2, see appendix 12.)

In the final interview Minna said that the colours did not work for her at all. They were just one more extra thing to remember. Nevertheless, she liked SPOTPA a lot and said that it would come in very handy in a situation where she had to produce English sentences on her own. Minna felt that she had not learned to use the colour-note strategy to its full advantage yet but she was not going to give up on it so quickly. She planned to practise it in the future, though without the colours, to see if it fit her learning style. In addition, she was going to keep practising the use of SPOTPA.

5.4.2.2 Reading comprehension strategy

Next, Minna took a closer look at the reading comprehension strategy (see subsection 4.3.2). As she did the exercise on underlining the most important words in a text, she underlined words from almost every sentence. In the next exercise, however, she managed to concentrate more on the actual content of the text. Her mindmap had the subject of the text in a bubble in the middle of the mindmap (see appendix 11). The important facts were gathered around the subject so that general information was placed inside bubbles on the left side and more detailed information on the right side of the mindmap. There could be more than one fact in each bubble. There were several levels of bubbles and

the bubbles were connected to each other with lines. The mindmap was clear and functional, and it contained all the important points in the text. When Minna practised the box method, where she was supposed to underline the most important sentences in each paragraph of a text, she seemed to underline the first sentence in each paragraph. As she gathered the sentences into her summary (see appendix 11), she rephrased them to make them shorter. She placed three headings above the three branches of the boxes in the summary to mark different areas of content. All in all, the summary was quite functional. It was visually clear and logically categorised.

Minna had struggled with the English text she had had for homework. She had tried to translate it into Finnish with the help of a computer program but the program did not recognise the professional terminology used in the text. Thus, Minna was forced to translate the text herself with the help of a dictionary. She said that she had to check almost every word from the dictionary which took a lot of time and effort. She had some background knowledge on the subject of the text thanks to her previous education which helped her to place the text in a context. Nevertheless, she did the summary based on the text and not on her previous knowledge. Minna loved to do the summary but described it as a strenuous, challenging, and interesting task as the text was so difficult to translate. In her own opinion, she could not have made the summary in English. Basically, she rephrased and gathered the important points from the text under four different headings. It was closer to a written summary than a mindmap or a summary with boxes.

Minna had used underlining when studying for years. She usually underlined the first sentence or the whole beginning of each paragraph as she believed that that was where the most important message of each paragraph was summarised. She did not usually make summaries of texts. She preferred writing the important points on a separate piece of paper which she could use later on when studying for an exam, for example. However, she admitted that, sometimes in an exam, she used a mindmap to visualise the content of her answer before writing it. She felt that it was easier to perceive the hierarchical relationships between things when they were drawn on a paper. Minna said that

both mindmapping and the box method seemed to be useful and interesting strategies. The problem with her was that understanding the contents of a text was more challenging and strenuous for her than making the actual summary.

Minna practised the reading comprehension strategy again in the first part of Test 2 (see section 4.4, appendix 4). It took her 30 minutes to read the text and make her summary on it. She worked really hard and put a lot of effort in understanding the text with the help of a dictionary. Unfortunately, the combination of low language skills in general and checking every word from the dictionary which occasionally offered several different translations for one word caused her to totally misunderstand the contents of the text. However, she gathered the points that she considered important from the text into a written summary. She translated the points into Finnish and wrote them one below the other under one heading. She did not underline anything when reading the text. Even though she did not use mindmapping or the box method, her summary was visually clear, logical, and functional. The problem was that the contents of the summary did not match the contents of the text at all. Minna did not fail at using the reading comprehension strategy properly, in other words, at making a functional summary, but she failed at translating and understanding the original text. (To see Minna's performance in Test 2, see appendix 12).

Minna seemed to like both mindmapping and using the boxes but she was not quite sure that they would work for her. She admitted that summaries would probably be very useful when studying for exams or writing the thesis or other longer essays. She especially stressed the fact that visual summaries, such as mindmaps, helped her to perceive the cause and effect relations between different things. In the end, she did not know whether she was going to use summaries in her future studies or not.

5.4.2.3 Elaboration- and key phrase strategies

The last of the language learning strategies that Minna experimented with were the elaboration- and key phrase strategies (see subsection 4.3.3). First, Minna read through the list of vocabulary in English that was related to her studies at the Polytechnic. Then, she chose two words from the list that were difficult for her to learn. I asked her to create two sentences around each of the words. Next, she elaborated the sentences with, for example, a subordinate clause or another main clause. For some reason, Minna wanted to elaborate only one sentence per each word. Below are the words Minna chose and the longer, elaborated sentences she produced around them.

1) *curriculum vitae* [ansioluettelo]
My curriculum vitae is not very long but it is very good.
[Minun ansioluetteloni ei ole kovin pitkä mutta se on todella hyvä.]
How long is your curriculum vitae?
[Kuinka pitkä on sinun ansioluettelosi?]

2) *paternity leave* [isyysloma]
Paternity leave is two weeks long and maternity leave is ten months long.
[Isyysloma on kaksi viikkoa pitkä ja äitiysloma on kymmenen kuukautta pitkä.]
Father has paternity leave when the baby is born.
[Isä pitää isyysloman kun lapsi on syntynyt.]

After going through the principles of the key phrase strategy, Minna chose two more words from the same vocabulary list. Then, I asked her to create one key phrase for each word. She had used a similar strategy before in her studies and worked really enthusiastically on creating the phrases. Below are the keywords Minna chose and the phrases she created with detailed examinations of the principles she used in forming them.

1) *suitability* [sopivuus]
'Suit sukkeluus on sopivuus.'
The phrase begins with a Finnish slang word created from the first four letters of the written form of the keyword. The phrase is based on the repetition of sounds. The second word in the phrase begins with the same sound combination as the first word. In addition, the second word sounds similar to the meaning of the keyword which is placed at the end of the phrase.

2) *competence* [pätevyys]
'Komppania on pätevästi tenssissä.'
The keyword has been divided into two. The first part *comp(e)* can be found in the beginning of the first word of the phrase, and the second part *tenc(e)* is found in the beginning of the last word of the phrase. The meaning of the keyword is in the middle of the phrase.

Minna liked using the key phrase strategy and said that it helped her to remember vocabulary in foreign languages. The problem was that she seemed to use it so much that she did not remember all the phrases anymore. She stressed that there should only be a limited number of phrases per each learner because too many phrases began to confuse the memory retrieval and work against the goal. In addition, the key phrase strategy could be applied only to certain words that were suitable for being the basis of a phrase. Minna was excited about using mental images in learning vocabulary and continued to work hard also at home. For homework, she chose four more words from the same vocabulary list as before. For two of the words she produced two elaborated sentences for each word. For the remaining two words she created one key phrase per each word. The elaborated sentences and the key phrases that Minna created at home are presented in the following. Notice that they are in the exact form in which Minna produced them. We went through the mistakes later on together.

1) *daily allowance* [päiväraha]
Unemployed I way daily allowance because I am been att work.
[Työttömänä saan päivärahaa koska olen ollut töissä.]
Daily allowance is littel.
[Päiväraha on pieni.]

2) *shift work* [vuorotyö]
Plans for the future no does he need do sift work.
[Tulevaisuudensuunnitelmissa hänen ei tarvitse tehdä vuorotyötä.]
Shift work is slendor tree trunk, it corsu me persons.
[Vuorotyö on rankkaa, se kuluttaa ihmistä.]

What happened here was that Minna checked the meaning of the word [rankka] from the Finnish-English dictionary but, because of her dyslexia, spelled the

word wrong and checked the word [ranka] instead, thus getting the completely wrong translation *slender tree trunk* which she misspelled as well.

1) *training* [harjoittelu]
'Treeniä, treeniä, harjoittelua, harjoittelua.'
The phrase is based on repetition. First, a Finnish slang word derived from the keyword is repeated twice. Then, the meaning of the keyword is repeated twice.

2) *sick leave* [sairasloma]
'Sik, sik elämä.'
The phrase begins with the first word of the keyword pronounced twice. The word [elämä] (en *life*) refers to the pronunciation of the second word of the keyword *leave* which, in Minna's opinion, is similar to the word *live* [elää].

When Minna was working on the homework, she took advantage of a computer program that translated Finnish words into English. The problem with the program was that it sometimes translated the words wrong because it did not take into account the context in which the word was. In addition, the point of the homework was that Minna produced the elaborated sentences herself. Nevertheless, she said that when she tried to make the sentences herself it required so much time and effort that she never would have finished them in time. In other words, both problems with the vocabulary and the sentence structure prevented her from producing any kind of sensible sentences in English. In a way, this ruined the basic idea of the elaboration strategy.

The elaboration strategy was a new learning strategy for Minna and she described it as a strenuous and difficult strategy that was impossible for her because she could not produce grammatically correct sentences in English on her own. However, she was really excited about the key phrase strategy. She seemed to create the phrases quickly and easily with no effort at all. She said that she actually had fun when thinking of the phrases and preferred to base them on a concrete physical movement in her head. Minna said that the key phrase strategy helped the memory retrieval of the keywords much better than the elaboration strategy. Nevertheless, the key phrases needed to be repeated and practised several times before they were stored in long-term memory.

The second part of Test 2 examined the use of the elaboration- and the key phrase strategies (see section 4.4, appendix 4). It took Minna 20 minutes to finish this part of the test. First, she was asked to choose two words from a text and create two elaborated sentences around each of them. She put a lot of effort into this and managed to create all the four required sentences with main and subordinate clauses. She used the dictionary a lot when doing this. Unfortunately, her sentences did not make any sense at all. The first sentence had an obvious content but it was practically impossible to understand the meaning of the three other sentences. The sentences were full of grammar and spelling mistakes. Since it was unclear what Minna had meant with the sentences, it was impossible to say whether she had placed the keywords correctly in the sentences or not. She simply was not able to produce sensible and correct sentences in English because of her low language skills. This prevented her from using the elaboration strategy properly. Second, in Test 2, Minna chose two more words from the same text as before and created one key phrase around each of them. Her first phrase, 'Minä proo, minä perr, minä tiss, minä omistan.' was based on the keyword *properties*. Once again, she based the phrase on repetition. She divided the keyword into three and combined each part with the Finnish word [minä] (en *I*). The word [minä] was repeated altogether four times in the phrase. The meaning of the keyword could be found at the end of the phrase. The second phrase 'Rekku haukkuu useasti vaatien.' was a meaningful sentence on its own. The phrase began with the Finnish name [Rekku] which resembled the beginning of the keyword *require(s)*. The last word in the phrase [vaatien] revealed the meaning of the keyword. All in all, Minna succeeded quite well in making up the key phrases. Apparently, repetition created a rhythm to her phrases and helped her to remember the keywords better. (To see Minna's performance in Test 2, see appendix 12.)

Even though Minna struggled with using the elaboration strategy, she felt that it would be very useful in foreign language learning if she only had better language skills and vocabulary to begin with. She said that the elaboration strategy would enhance foreign language learning in a number of ways because not only did it require practising vocabulary but forced her to think about

sentence structure. The only thing was that she would always need someone to check the correctness of her sentences so that she would not practise with incorrect ones. In the end, she did not plan to use the elaboration strategy in her future language studies because of her low language skills in general. However, she definitely planned to use the key phrase strategy in the future. She thought that the strategy was easy to use, felt natural, and did not require too much energy from her in the stressful situation she was in with her personal life. Minna said that the strategy needed lots of practice but it seemed to work well for her.

6 DISCUSSION

This study concentrated on four foreign language learners who had been struggling with their language learning difficulties for all their learning history. The subjects experimented with three different learning strategies in search for ways to facilitate their foreign language learning. Chapter 5 examined in detail how the subjects responded to each strategy. The present chapter will compare the subjects' responses to each other and discuss also other changes that came as a result of this study. First, the emotional effects of the subjects' learning difficulties are discussed shortly. Second, there is a cross-case analysis of the subjects' responses to the strategies experimented with. Third, the effects of this study to the emotional side of the subjects are discussed with comparisons to the results of the previous studies examined in section 3.1. Fourth, the subjects' opinions on foreign language teaching in general are expressed as this seemed to be very close to their heart and they wanted to get their feelings across. Last, there is the evaluation of the present study in its entirety.

Emotional effects of the learning difficulties

There was one continual theme that came up during every phase of data collection in this study. The theme was the subjects' difficulties in learning foreign languages and how they affected their emotional and mental health. During every strategy training session and every interview, it became more and

more obvious that the learning difficulties the subjects experienced did not only affect their language learning processes but their whole lives. Some of the subjects responded to the difficulties more strongly, others suffered from milder symptoms. Nevertheless, all the subjects were touched by the repercussions of learning difficulties on their emotional life. The strongest of all seemed to be low self-esteem. It has been found that bad educational experiences can damage the self-esteem especially of dyslexics (Farmer et al. 2002:61). In addition, dyslexics may have excessive fears about being able to cope with academic life (Farmer et al. 2002:61). In this study, what was even more worrying was that the self-esteem of the subjects was lowered not only in relation to school success but also in relation to coping in life overall. The subjects felt that they did not have much hope for passing the courses at school and some even doubted their ability to manage in their personal lives. They seemed depressed and suffered from stress and anxiety. Dyslexic learners usually give more attention and attach more significance than other learners to negative feedback and criticisms which increases their level of anxiety (Farmer et al. 2002, Hoy et al. 1997). This could clearly be seen especially in the performance of Julia and Minna. They went as far as trying to hide their learning difficulties from others and to cope without extra support or understanding in fear of pity and special treatment. This is one of the unhealthy coping strategies that dyslexics may use in educational situations (Farmer et al. 2002:61). All the subjects in this study suffered from stress and fatigue, too. This was caused by the extra work they had to put in to keep pace with other learners.

Cross-case analysis

Because of their difficult language learning background which affected almost every aspect of their lives, the subjects were extremely eager to find ways of facilitating their foreign language learning. According to Oxford (1990:10), learning strategies require initiative and active interest from the language learner in order to be successful. In this study, the subjects certainly did not lack motivation to learn and practise new learning strategies. Still, the question ‘did the subjects learn to use the strategies experimented with’ has not been

answered clearly yet. In addition, the subjects' responses to the strategies and their opinions on the usefulness of the strategies have not been examined yet.

It seemed fairly easy for all the subjects to understand the use of **the colour-note strategy**. Learning to use the strategy, however, was another matter. All the subjects managed to use the strategy properly when we practised it during the strategy training sessions. Still, they needed my help and guidance all the time while practising the strategy. I did not give them any answers or translations directly but rather guided them into finding the answers and vocabulary from their own passive language skills. It felt as though they needed my presence there in order to have the courage to explore the language and to rely on their own knowledge. In consequence, as the subjects practised the strategy alone at home, they were all faced with major difficulties. Two of the subjects could not use the colours at all and did not remember their meaning. Two subjects had major difficulties in producing sentences in English and in dividing them into sentence constituents. Moreover, two of the subjects were not able to recognise which sentence constituent was which. This suggested that the subjects had not learned to use the colour-note strategy. The results in Test 2, however, showed more variation among the subjects. Arja succeeded really well in using the strategy. She placed all the words correctly and coloured only one word wrong. Eeva had some problems both with colouring and reorganising the words. It was clear that the strategy did not work for her. Julia, in contrast, did really well in the test. One adjunct of mode was the only thing that caused her some trouble. Minna had no problems with reorganising the words into the correct order but she failed in recognising and colouring the sentence constituents correctly. All in all, the colour-note strategy seemed to be too demanding for the subjects as it required something that the subjects did not have, that is, basic language skills for sentence production and some knowledge on basic sentence structure and constituents.

The subjects responded to the colour-note strategy in different ways. Two of them were very eager to practise the strategy even though they were faced with the previously mentioned difficulties. In contrast, two of the subjects practised the strategy quite reluctantly and did not do any more work than what was

specifically asked, one did not even do the homework. Interestingly enough, the reluctance to practise the strategy was not necessarily combined with a negative attitude towards the strategy. Arja, who was reluctant during practice, thought that the strategy was quite clear, functional, and suitable for rehearsing word order in English because of the possibility to physically reorganise the notes. The only thing that she criticised and did not understand about the strategy was the use of the colours. In contrast, Julia, who was also reluctant to practise the strategy, said that it did not work for her at all. She felt that the strategy required her to learn and remember too many things, such as the meaning and order of both the colours and the sentence constituents. Thus, it was too difficult and demanding for someone on her language skill level. Eeva and Minna, who both were eager to learn about the strategy, also had a different response to it. Minna was fascinated by the strategy even though the use of the colours did not work for her and she had difficulties in producing, and translating sentences, and in dividing them into sentence constituents. Still, she enjoyed learning about sentence structure. In spite of eager practice, Eeva just was not interested in the strategy. She said that it did not work for her because she could not produce sentences in English or recognise any sentence constituents. Nevertheless, both Eeva and Minna fell in love with SPOTPA and planned to use it in the future, as well. Julia stated clearly that she was not going to use the colour-note strategy in her future language studies. However, the remaining three of the subjects planned to try using it for practising word order in English. Still, they all underlined that they were not going to use the colours.

The reading comprehension strategy included two specific methods, mindmapping and using boxes. All the subjects understood the use of the mindmaps quite easily. Understanding the use of the boxes, however, was a problem for one of the subjects and another one did not even try to learn their use. In the mindmap exercise, all the subjects managed to make a clear and functional summary of the contents of the text. Still, only two of them used the shape and form of a traditional mindmap with bubbles and lines. The other two subjects adapted their mindmaps to better suit their own learning styles, one with boxes and the other one with a graphic picture. The exercise on the box

method was not as successful. Julia did not do the exercise at all. Eeva did the exercise but ignored totally the principles of the box method when she made her summary. Arja's summary with boxes was clear and worked well for her even though it was a bit different from the example summary. Minna was the only one who used the box method properly in her summary. At this point, it became clear that all the subjects had learned to use the basic principles of mindmaps even though the visual layout differed between the subjects. One of the subjects had learned how to use the box method and another one had learned to adapt the method to her own needs. The remaining two did not learn to use the boxes at all. Thus, it was very interesting to see that, in Test 2, none of the subjects made a mindmap from the contents of the text. Furthermore, only one subject adapted the principles of the box method in her summary. The other three made their summaries in written form in Finnish, organised the points marked with lines or circles one below the other and put a heading on the top. Sometimes it is easier for learners to make the summary in their native language, thus releasing more memory space for the actual content of the text (Kristiansen 1998:173). However, the text in the test turned out to be very difficult for the subjects which affected the contents of their summaries. Nevertheless, when looking only at the strategy they used, the reading comprehension strategy in this study did not seem to work for them. Three of the subjects preferred to do the summary in their own way and only one adapted the strategy we experimented with to fit her own style.

Overall, the reading comprehension strategy did not gain much success among the subjects. On the one hand, three of the subjects were eager to practise the use of mindmaps. On the other hand, their responses to the mindmaps were less flattering. Arja said that they were confusing and did not work for her. Julia suggested that using colours would make mindmaps clearer visually. Eeva, who was reluctant to make any mindmaps as she was convinced that they did not suit her learning style, described them as ugly and confusing. When we began going through the principles of the box method, two of the subjects showed real interest in learning how to use it and participated eagerly in the exercises. They described the method as visually clear, interesting, and useful for reading comprehension. Both of them did the required homework

conscientiously even though the text was extremely difficult for them. In contrast, one of the subjects practised using the box method very reluctantly and another one even refused to try learning it at all. In addition, these two subjects did not do their homework because the text was too difficult and time-consuming. In the end, only one subject planned to use mindmaps sometimes when writing essays even though she said that the method was not exactly suitable for her. The others reported as well that mindmapping did not work for them and, thus, were not going to use it in the future. Furthermore, only one of the subjects liked the box method and planned to use it in her future studies, both for foreign languages and other subjects. Minna described the box method as useful but was not sure that making summaries in general was an effective learning strategy for her. Eeva reported that she had no interest at all in visual summaries and was not going to use either mindmapping or boxes in the future. Julia had no opinion on the box method as she never even tried using it.

Understanding the use of **the elaboration- and key phrase strategies** was really easy for all the subjects. Three of the subjects reported that they had used key phrases before in their previous studies. Moreover, none of the subjects seemed to have any difficulties in learning how to use the strategies. There was still one thing that caused trouble for two of the subjects. Their low language skills prevented them from producing fluent sentences in English when practising the elaboration strategy. This could be seen in Test 2, too. The elaborated sentences that Eeva created were good but, for some reason, she did not produce the required number of sentences. Minna put a lot of effort into elaborating all four sentences but her low language skills were reflected strongly both in the structure and the content of the sentences. Julia and Arja both produced the required number of well-elaborated sentences with Julia making some milder grammar and spelling mistakes in her sentences. Since all the subjects learned easily the use of the key phrase strategy, they all succeeded extremely well in producing good key phrases in Test 2.

Not surprisingly, all the subjects were more eager to practise the key phrase strategy than the elaboration strategy. They all created a varying number of key phrases and responded enthusiastically to the challenge. In addition, all the

subjects produced key phrases as homework. Arja and Julia were quite eager to practise the elaboration strategy, as well. They were both able to produce sentences in English and do the homework properly at home. Eeva was more reluctant to use elaboration because her low language skills made it difficult for her to produce long sentences in English. This was the reason why she did not do the required homework, either. Furthermore, Minna experienced difficulties with producing elaborated sentences because of her low language skills. She tried to do the homework but, unfortunately, resorted to using a linguistic computer program which resulted in non-authentic sentences and ruined the idea of the strategy. Both Eeva, Minna, and Arja felt that the elaboration strategy did not work for them. They described the strategy as strenuous and difficult and stated that it demanded too much work. Arja added that elaboration did not help in remembering the keywords. In contrast, Julia liked the elaboration strategy and said that it was ideal for practising long and complicated words. The key phrase strategy, in turn, gathered compliments from all the subjects. They all enjoyed making the key phrases and described the strategy as fun and play-like. They came up with the phrases easily and without too much effort. Eeva felt that the strategy was motivating and meaningful and stressed that the phrases had to come from the learner herself, otherwise they would not be stored in the long-term memory. Minna said that the strategy was really helpful in the memory retrieval of the keywords. Julia and Arja noticed that the strategy was especially suitable for certain, short words. In addition, two of the subjects expressed that both the elaboration- and the key phrase strategies needed a lot of practice. Three of the subjects stated that they were not going to use the elaboration strategy in their future language studies. Eeva and Arja did not think that the strategy helped their language learning whereas Minna considered the strategy very useful but not suitable for her because of her low language skills. Julia was the only one who said that she might use the elaboration strategy when learning long and complicated words in English. In contrast, all the subjects said that they were definitely going to use the key phrase strategy in their foreign language studies. The strategy seemed to work well for them and creating short and pithy phrases helped them in learning unfamiliar and difficult foreign language words.

Outcome and comparison to previous studies

In addition to learning useful learning strategies for foreign language learning, this study resulted in also other positive changes in the subjects' lives. The results of the study by Wesche (1981) showed that matching the teaching style with the learners' learning style led to positive outcomes, such as greater interest in foreign languages, more initiative to study the target language out of class, a more positive attitude towards the teaching style used, and less anxiety in class. All the subjects in this study reported of a higher self-esteem in relation to foreign language learning. They realised that they were not as bad language learners as they had thought before and that there was still hope for them to pass the obligatory courses. English grammar seemed less impossible to learn but required a lot of practice. Furthermore, Arja stated that knowing new learning strategies gave her more confidence in succeeding on the obligatory language courses. Julia was not as afraid as before of the courses and said that her attitude towards foreign languages had improved a lot. All the subjects reported of positive feelings similar to the outcome of Rousseau's study (1999). Her subjects felt more comfortable at school and both their self-perception and attitude toward learning improved after the project. Moreover, their overall attitude changed from negative to much more positive. They learned to differentiate between being 'stupid' and having difficulties in certain areas and strengths in others. Of the subjects in this study, Eeva added that her language learning motivation was much higher now than before the study. She described that when one feels extremely insecure about learning languages even the smallest obstacle can seem unbearable and ruin everything. That was why she considered healthy self-esteem so important for language learning. Leinonen (2000) talked about self-esteem, too, when she found out that using teaching methods that matched the learning style of a learner with foreign language learning difficulties increased the learner's self-esteem and learning motivation. In the present study, matching the learning strategy with the learner's learning style seemed to result in similar changes. Minna, for example, was pleased that she had participated in this study because it had given her the opportunity to try out different ways of learning and because she had learned many new things about English and language learning in general during the study. Furthermore, the study reminded Minna that she needed to

concentrate more on language learning and try to get as much English input as possible, for example, from the television or magazines. In her opinion, knowing vocabulary was the key to successful language learning. Beckett et al. (2002) also found that using language learning strategies allowed learners to make progress toward achieving their language learning goals.

As a result of this study, Julia realised that she had been using learning strategies unconsciously before and that learning strategies were actually really helpful in language learning. She also found confidence to trust her initial instincts more when it came to language using situations. What was even more significant was that Julia had experienced feelings of success during this study which encouraged her to keep trying to learn languages even though she had struggled with them a lot in the past. The study by The Learning Disabilities Association (1994) reported of increased self-esteem and feelings of success and hope after their research project, too. Furthermore, this study helped Eeva and Julia to reflect on their own language learning and discover the learning styles that were most suitable for them. Especially Julia dwelled on finding out what was the ultimate reason of her learning difficulties. One good thing about this study, according to the subjects themselves, was that it forced them to be in contact and work with the English language which they normally tried to avoid as much as possible. Still, Eeva pointed out that the time reserved for this study was too short. She would have preferred practising the strategies in everyday learning situations over a longer period of time. Unfortunately, this was not possible in this study. Nevertheless, Eeva was highly motivated to try using the new learning strategies in practice independently now that the obligatory language courses were soon ahead.

One aspect that affected the eagerness and motivation of the subjects in this study to practise and use the strategies was that the teaching was made meaningful for them. Learning the strategies was motivated by the prospect of succeeding on the language courses and eventually graduating from the school. Part of the learning material was meaningful for the subjects as it related to their studies at the Polytechnic. The key phrase strategy raised the subjects' interest because it was fun, easy, and took advantage of humour. Only

Wesche's (1981) report mentioned that learning was made meaningful for the subjects by creating meaningful contexts for the material before teaching it. None of the other studies examined in section 3.1 took into account the meaningfulness of the learning material in relation to learning achievements. In addition, none of the studies in 3.1 reported that the initially low language skills of the subjects with learning difficulties had any effect on the success rate of the foreign language teaching experiments. In this study, however, it was obvious in some cases that the subjects' low language skills hampered or even prevented the proper use of a learning strategy even though the teaching was adapted to each subject's language skills. Since I wanted to offer the subjects an opportunity to find a learning strategy that would fit their own learning style, the strategies were selected so that they touched different areas of language learning and took advantage of several different sensory channels. Using multisensory ways in both teaching and using language learning strategies had been discovered to be a useful and productive method (Sparks and Ganschow, The Learning Disabilities Association 1994, Leinonen 2000, Beckett et al. 2002). One of the aims of this study was to facilitate the subjects' reading comprehension by introducing some reading comprehension strategies to them. Similar to the study of Klingner and Vaughn (1996), the strategy training helped the subjects with learning difficulties to perceive texts as a whole and to understand their contents better. Moreover, Klingner and Vaughn (1996) recommended that reading comprehension strategies should be taught to all learners, not just learners with learning difficulties. What they did not mention was that the strategies should match each learner's learning style which was one of the findings of this study.

Subjects' opinions on foreign language teaching

The subjects in this study complained that foreign language teaching in general did not take into account different learning styles. In addition, teaching specific learning strategies was not a part of the regular curriculum. Learners were not given enough time to find out which method of learning was most suitable for them. In this study, the subjects appreciated the fact that their individual learning styles were taken into account during the strategy training sessions and that the pace of teaching was slow enough for them to keep up with.

Moreover, they described this study as more intense, clear, interesting, and personal than their usual language courses. They considered it very important that I was there by their side all the time during the study helping, guiding, and answering any questions they might have. What seemed to be most important for all the subjects was that the teaching in this study was adapted to each subject's own level of language skills.

As we have seen, learners vary considerably in the way they take in and process new information. Some prefer visual aids, some want to learn through physical action. These differences in learning styles can lead to problems in the classroom if they are not properly taken into account. Spolsky (1989) claims that learners vary in their preference for learning style and, as a result, learning is most successful when teaching matches the learner's preference. When the language teacher does not acknowledge learners' individual learning styles but prefers to concentrate on the method that suits him or herself best, the result may be mediocre performance or a sense of incompetence among learners (Kinsella 1995:170). Such learning conditions that are suitable for one learner may be totally inappropriate for another (Wesche 1981:125). The ideal would be to acknowledge the learning characteristics each individual learner prefers and plan teaching so that each learner could benefit as much as possible from the lessons. Unfortunately, teachers often do not have the time or interest to vary their teaching methods enough, thus leaving learners whose learning styles do not match the teaching methods to survive on their own. All the subjects in this study were very worried about this and expressed the following wishes for foreign language teaching at any school systems. Teachers should take into account more the different learning styles their learners have. Furthermore, teachers should treat all their learners equally and remember that possible learning difficulties do not mean that the learner is stupid. There should be more streaming in language classrooms. Additionally, smaller class sizes would enable more personal teaching and guiding. Teachers should give more positive feedback to their learners to keep up their self-esteem. Moreover, teachers should give slow learners enough time to keep up with the others. Teaching should not concentrate so much on mistakes. In addition, the subjects hoped for less stress on theory and grammar and more on practical use of the

target language. Teaching should be made more motivating with the help of authentic language using situations, such as having pen pals or chat friends who share the same study subject, making field trips, or watching videos without subtitles. Language testing should not be solely based on written exams but include also oral instructions, oral testing, or tests with practical exercises. This would enable the learners to show their strengths and reduce the concentration on grammar mistakes. These are all good notions that the educational systems all over the world should concentrate on more; to remember that language classes are full of individuals who all learn in their own way and that even dyslexic learners differ from each other in their learning styles.

Evaluation of the present study

Even though I tried to take every measure to assure that the study was conducted properly, there are still some aspects that need to be pointed out and criticised. There was a serious lack of previous studies on teaching language learning strategies to foreign language learners with learning difficulties. In consequence, both building a theoretical background for this study and comparing the results of this study to the previous studies were extremely difficult. Furthermore, when describing the learning difficulties of the subjects, I had to rely solely on the subjects' own descriptions during the interviews and training sessions. There were no other sources of data available. The diagnosis of dyslexia was the only, more official, source of information on the difficulties. As the study project aimed not only at providing research data for the present study but also at giving remedial teaching to the subjects on the specific areas of foreign languages each of them needed, I had to adapt each strategy training session to fit the demands of each subject. This did not, however, affect any of the material or examples I used when teaching the strategies. The strategies were used to learn different linguistic contents depending on each subject's needs.

The training sessions in this study took place outside school in the subjects' free time. Occasionally this affected the subjects' eagerness to participate in the study. Their energy level was already low to begin with because of the

difficulties they were experiencing in their studies at the Polytechnic. Finding the energy to get seriously involved in the present study on top of their regular studies seemed to be too much for them at times. As participating in the study was completely voluntary, I could not expect the subjects to do all the exercises or homework but had to leave it up to them to participate according to their own strength and will. Moreover, the time reserved for this study was too short. If there had been more time, the subjects could have had more practice with the strategies and, in consequence, might have learned to use them better. This might have resulted in a more positive attitude towards both the strategies and using them in the future. However, after only a short period of practice, the subjects seemed to form a strong opinion on whether each strategy was suitable for them or not. Thus, more practice might not have influenced their opinion after all.

The interviews in this study could not be transcribed for two reasons. First, the sound quality of the taped interviews was extremely poor. The subjects' speech was so quiet and unclear that it was impossible to transcribe word-for-word. Second, the subjects revealed some very private details of their lives during the interviews. These details were not relevant to the purposes of the present study which, in part, influenced my decision not to transcribe the tapes. Test 1 and Test 2 deserve some criticism, as well. The second exercise in the grammar part of Test 1 (see appendix 3) might have been confusing for the subjects. The lines on which the subjects were supposed to fill in the missing verbs are too short and they do not show how many words are expected on each line. This kind of small details can distract learners with dyslexia or other learning difficulties so much that they cannot perceive the correct answer even though they would know it. Furthermore, it seemed that Test 2 was too difficult for the subjects with regard to vocabulary (see appendix 4). The text in the first exercise which tested the use of the reading comprehension strategy turned out to be much too difficult. One of the subjects failed this part of the test because she could not make any sense out of the text. Another subject used the strategy properly but totally misunderstood the contents of the text. In addition, the second part of Test 2 required a lot of vocabulary from the subjects. Having to

produce long elaborated sentences revealed the low level of vocabulary some of the subjects had.

Despite the above, several important aspects were taken into account when planning and conducting the present study. This kind of qualitative study is always subjective both from the side of the researcher and the subjects. Nevertheless, throughout the study I did my best to remain as neutral as possible and not to influence the results or the subjects' responses in the interview situations in any way. As Merriam (1998:84) points out, an interviewer should assume neutrality with regard to the subjects' knowledge and avoid any kind of arguing, debating, or otherwise letting personal views to show. In addition, I tried to achieve a coherence of data by making sure that all the strategy training sessions and interviews followed the same procedures, the tests were exactly the same for all the subjects, and all the subjects participated in all the required parts of the study. The subjects' privacy was taken into account throughout the study. The interviews were conducted in a closed classroom with only the interviewer and the interviewee present. The interviewer was the only one who had access to the interview tapes. The private details that were revealed during the interviews were not included in the research report in any way. Moreover, the subjects were not allowed to see each other's test results. In the actual writing of the report I took extra care to protect the subjects' anonymity by changing their names and writing as neutrally as possible.

Both Merriam (1998) and Syrjälä and Numminen (1988) discuss two criteria that are of great importance when evaluating qualitative research. Firstly, there is the question of **validity**. Validity in qualitative research relates to the extent to which the results match the reality that was studied (Merriam 1998:201, Syrjälä and Numminen 1988:136). They continue to divide the concept into two more specific definitions. Inner validity measures whether the research report truly describes the participants' views and definitions of the study's object, and whether the researcher has influenced the data collected (Syrjälä and Numminen 1988:136). The data in this study consisted mainly of the subjects' own comments in the interviews and during the strategy training

sessions. As two of the research questions were based on the subjects' own feelings and opinions, the answers could be found from the interview logs. The first research question was answered by looking at the results of Test 2. The test was designed to test as accurately as possible whether the subjects had learned to use the strategies experimented with or not. The test was not aimed at finding out any changes in the subjects' English language skills. Designing the test was quite difficult as, in general, it is very subjective how each learner learns to use learning strategies. Nevertheless, the test was considered efficient enough for revealing how the subjects used the strategies. Moreover, as mentioned before, I tried to remain as neutral as possible during the data collection. Outer validity, or external validity as Merriam (1998:207) calls it, measures how useful and easy it is to generalise the results of the study (Syrjälä and Numminen 1988:142). In order to achieve outer validity, the research report must contain detailed descriptions of the research process and the methods used (Syrjälä and Numminen 1988:143). In this study the goal was to explain the four particular cases. As the sample was so small, the findings can hardly be generalised. However, in case studies understanding each case is more important than generalising the results.

Secondly, qualitative research can be evaluated from the point of view of **reliability**. Reliability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be replicated (Merriam 1998:205). This is, however, not always probable or even possible in qualitative case studies. Here the question could rather be whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam 1998:206). It is often claimed that reliability is more of a problem with qualitative study than validity (Syrjälä and Numminen 1988:143). In my opinion, I was able to create a relaxed and confidential relationship with the subjects. The study was not a competition or a test of their language skills, but an experiment on whether the learning strategies suited their learning styles or not. Thus, the subjects did not have any reason to lie or misrepresent the information or comments they gave me. In the research report I tried to describe the research process as thoroughly as possible to offer a reliable basis for comparison with other similar studies. Syrjälä and Numminen (1988) criticise case study research for producing results that are both biased and do not tell the truth. However, the results in this

study revealed inner meanings that were relevant for the subjects themselves. Furthermore, the present study led to useful self-reflection on the part of at least two of the subjects and, perhaps, this study gave some new ideas for other researchers to work on.

7 CONCLUSION

The present study concentrated on teaching three different language learning strategies to four learners who were struggling with foreign language learning difficulties. The subjects practised the strategies during strategy training sessions and, at the end of the project, were tested on their strategy use. The research report tried to find answers to three different research questions. The first question asked whether the subjects learned to use the strategies experimented with. The subjects did not quite learn to use the colour-note strategy without my guidance. Learning to use and adapt mindmaps as a reading comprehension strategy seemed easy enough for the subjects but the box method was not as successful. Only half of the subjects learned to use the boxes during the strategy training sessions and only one subject used them in the final test. In contrast, all the subjects learned to use both the elaboration- and the key phrase strategies. Still, low language skills caused difficulties in elaboration for two of the subjects. The second research question asked what the subjects' responses were to the strategies experimented with. The subjects did not like the use of the colours in the colour-note strategy. In addition, they thought that the strategy was too difficult for them as it required producing English sentences and both knowing and recognising sentence constituents. In response to the reading comprehension strategy, the subjects described mindmaps as confusing and unclear whereas boxes were clear and functional according to two of the subjects. All the subjects loved the key phrase strategy and said that it was fun, easy, effortless, and useful. The elaboration strategy was not liked as much because it was strenuous, difficult, and demanded too much work. The third and last research question asked whether the subjects found the strategies useful for their foreign language learning. Three of the

subjects planned to try using the colour-note strategy in the future without the colours. Moreover, two subjects said that they were going to use the reading comprehension strategy in their future studies; one planned to use mindmaps rarely and the other planned to use boxes for studying all subjects, not just languages. All the subjects reported that they were definitely going to use the key phrase strategy in the future, but only one planned to use the elaboration strategy in learning long and complicated English words.

The present study had also other consequences than just teaching new learning strategies to the subjects. There were visible changes in the subjects' emotional life. After the research project, the subjects reported of higher self-esteem, higher motivation to learn foreign languages, improved attitude towards languages, increased feelings of hope, and less anxiety in relation to foreign language learning. In addition, the subjects began to self-reflect more and think about their individual learning styles. Hopefully they were also encouraged to start searching for other learning strategies that might be helpful in their foreign language studies. Minna, at least, planned to take advantage of the diagnosis of dyslexia when asking for alternative ways of doing exams at the Polytechnic. All in all, we can say that learners with learning difficulties can learn to use learning strategies as an aid in their studies. Which learning strategy they learn depends on several things: the learners' learning styles, the level of their language skills, and whether the learners find the strategy meaningful, to mention just a few. Especially such strategies that require a lot from memory and are difficult to learn and use are not suitable for learners with learning difficulties, in my opinion. The colour-note strategy, for example, which required a lot of background knowledge on grammar rules, did not seem to work at all for a learner whose knowledge of even the most basic grammar was poor. The key phrase strategy, in contrast, seemed to be fun and, thus, meaningful for all the subjects.

Sparks et al. (1992a:153) have claimed that teaching language learning strategies provides only short-term assistance because the long-term phonological and syntactic deficits remain unaddressed. Thus, it would have been interesting to study after a longer period of time whether the subjects

actually began using the strategies in their everyday language learning and whether this improved their language skills in any way. Unfortunately, this was impossible due to the limited time available for this study. Furthermore, because the results of this study cannot be generalised, we need more studies on finding out which learning strategies could help foreign language learners with learning difficulties to succeed better in their studies. There is a lot of research available on learning difficulties and learning disabilities as they relate to foreign language learning. However, there are two points of view that desperately need more studying: firstly, there is the question of how dyslexia, the specific reading disability, affects foreign language learning; and secondly, there is the largely unknown relationship between learning strategies and foreign language learners with learning difficulties. The present study has tried to shed some light on the latter matter. Since this study was conducted, there has emerged a very useful book on teaching foreign languages to learners with learning difficulties. This book by Moilanen (2002) is currently being used in teacher training at universities all over Finland with good results. Nevertheless, as the number of learners with learning difficulties grows constantly, the educational world is in a desperate need for ways of helping its learners to cope with the demands of learning foreign languages. Studying learning strategies in relation to foreign language learning difficulties might just give them the answers they need.

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THE QUESTION LIST FOR THE BACKGROUND INTERVIEW **Appendix 1**

KIELENOPPIMISTAUSTAA

Ala-aste: englanti

- miltä tuntui aloittaa vieras kieli?
- helppoa/vaikeata, perustele?
- millainen opettaja oli? Saitko tarvitsemaasi apua tai tukiopetusta?
- miten pärjäsit muissa oppiaineissa?

Yläaste: englanti, ruotsi

- opiskelitko myös muita kieliä?
- miltä opiskelu tuntui?
- helppoa/vaikeata, perustele?
- millaisia opettajat olivat? Saitko tarvitsemaasi apua tai tukiopetusta?
- oliko kaikki kielet yhtä vaikeita? Vertaa.
- millaisia tehtäviä tunneilla oli? Suullisia harjoituksia? Tuntemukset.
- oliko opetus enemmän kirjallista? Kalvoja ja kirjallisia tehtäviä? Tuntemukset.
- oliko koetilanteet kirjallisia? Tuntemukset.
- millainen motivaatio opiskella?
- miten pärjäsit muissa oppiaineissa?

Ammattikoulu

- mitä kieliä opiskelit? Millaisia kielten kursseja?
- miten opetettiin? Oppitunnin kulku? Tuntemukset.
- oliko suullisia harjoituksia?
- koetilanteet kirjallisia/suullisia? Tuntemukset.
- millaisia opettajat olivat? Saitko tarvitsemaasi apua tai tukiopetusta?
- millainen oli opiskelumotivaatio? Tunsitko tarvitsevasi kieliä missään?
- helppoa/vaikeata, perustele?
- vertaile eri kielten opiskelua, jos useampi

Ammattikorkeakoulu: englanti ja ruotsi pakolliset kurssit

- millainen opiskelumotivaatio nyt?
- oma mielipide miksi vaikeuksia kielten opiskelussa nyt
- millaista opetus ja harjoitukset ovat? Entä koetilanteet? Kirjallista/suullista? Tuntemukset.
- mikä opiskelussa helppoa/vaikeata, miellyttävää/epämiellyttävää? Perustele.

Koulun ulkopuolinen kielenkäyttö

- onko sinulla vieraskielisiä ystäviä?
- kerro tilanteista joissa olet joutunut puhumaan vieraita kieliä
- puhutko paljon matkustellessasi ulkomailla?
- miltä tuntuu puhua vieraita kieliä koulun ulkopuolella? Pakkopullaa vai kivaa käyttää kieltä aidossa tilanteessa?
- kuunteletko vieraskielisiä ohjelmia radiosta? Kuunteletko vieraskielisten laulujen sanoja? Helppoa/vaikeata?
- luetko internetissä vieraskielisiä sivuja? Helppoa/vaikeata? Miten koet englanninkielisen tiedon paljouden netissä?
- katsotko paljon vieraskielisiä ohjelmia televisiosta? Luetko suomenkieliset tekstitykset ja/tai ymmärrätkö vieraskielisen puheen?
- missä muualla olet tekemisissä vieraiden kielten kanssa koulun ulkopuolella? Tuntemukset.

Yleistä

- mitä osaat itse kertoa oppimistyylistäsi?
- millaiset opetusmenetelmät ovat miellyttävimpiä/pahimpia? (kirjalliset, kalvot, kuvat, ääni, liike jne.)
- jos kalvolla on esim. kielioppiasia kirjallisesti ilmaistuna mutta visuaalisesti korostettuna, auttaako oppimista? Perustele.
- milloin koit onnistumisen tunteen kieltenopiskelussa? Milloin epäonnistumisen tunteen?
- mikä sinun mielestäsi meni pieleen kieltenopetuksessasi?
- onko sinulla erityisiä kikkoja joiden avulla opettelet asioita kotona/koulussa?

THE QUESTION LIST FOR THE FINAL INTERVIEW Appendix 2

Pohdi tätä kevättä, tätä oppimiskokemusta

- millaiset tuntemukset on nyt? Miten koit tämän kokeilun?
- minkälainen oppimiskokemus oli?
- huomasitko mitään eroa kouluopetukseen? Mitä eroa? Vertaa kouluaikojen kieltenopetukseen ja nikseihin.
- vaikuttiko kokeilu opiskelumotivaatioon? Miten?
- pelottaako tulevat pakolliset kielten kurssit? Oliko kokeilusta mitään apua? Millaista apua?
- kerro mitä olet oppinut? Oletko oppinut mitään? Oletko oppinut itsestäsi mitään uutta?
- keksitkö uusia opiskeluniksejä kokeilun aikana?
- luuletko että kokeilemistamme nikseistä on sinulle hyötyä tulevaisuudessa?
- tuletko käyttämään niksejä tulevaisuudessa?
- mitä mieltä olit lopputestistä (testi 2)?

Anna kaikenlaista palautetta kokeiluun liittyen, mielipiteitä, kommentteja, tuntemuksia jne. Sana on vapaa!

Iso kiitos kaikille osallistuneille!

TEST 1 - Grammar test **Appendix 3**

Blue Planet. **LAPTOP GRAMMAR** Kokeet

Monistepohja

Lähtötasokoe

A. Valitse lauseyhteyteen sopivin muoto. Vastaa eri paperille.

In a world where it is important to stay young, healthy, and beautiful, the possibility of getting seriously ill could ___ (1) catastrophic – especially to a 9-year-old.

However, I ___ (2) learned this past summer that disease ___ (3) mean the end of the world. In August I ___ (4) surrounded by boys and girls, ages 9–18, who had cancer. In spending time with them, I was ___ (5) to learn that out of so much sickness can come so much caring and love.

I ___ (6) traveled to Yamhill, Oregon, to be a volunteer counselor at Camp Ukandu, a week-long retreat for ___ (7) with cancer and for ___ (8) sisters and brothers. This camp serves as a "vacation" for parents who focus on special care during the year. It's also a special time for the rest of the family, some of whom somehow ___ (9) "responsible" for what ___ (10) happened, the tragedy in the family.

How much ___ (11) such a camp cost? Actually, all the services were ___ (12), including those of doctors and nurses. In fact, a leading pediatric oncologist from Portland also volunteered. When I ___ (13) these wonderful people, I could see that this camp had a great foundation. We all went through an intensive day's training to make ___ (14) ready for the week. But I soon found out that no amount of training would ___ (15) me for the experience I was about to get.

1a. have
1b. seems
1c. feeling
1d. be

2a. –
2b. am
2c. was
2d. did

3a. don't have to
3b. doesn't have to
3c. mustn't
3d. don't need to

4a. –
4b. were
4c. was
4d. get

5a. surprise
5b. surprised
5c. surprising
5d. been surprised

6a. was
6b. have
6c. did
6d. had

7a. child
7b. child's
7c. children
7d. children's

8a. they
8b. they're
8c. their
8d. theirs

9a. feeling himself
9b. feels oneself
9c. felt themselves
9d. feel

10a. have
10b. has
10c. is
10d. are

11a. is
11b. does
11c. do
11d. –

12a. donated
12b. been donated
12c. donating
12d. donate

13a. was met
13b. met
13c. meet
13d. meeting

14a. we
14b. our
14c. ours
14d. us

15a. prepared
15b. had prepared
15c. has prepared
15d. have prepared

16a. searching
16b. searched
16c. search
16d. searches

17a. was
17b. were
17c. had
17d. are

18a. was
18b. were
18c. has
18d. did

19a. It's
19b. It
19c. Its
19d. That's

20a. wouldn't
20b. hadn't
20c. didn't
20d. doesn't

21a. them
21b. ours
21c. mine
21d. my

22a. taught
22b. thought
22c. though
22d. fought

23a. she's
23b. he's
23c. his
23d. her

24a. help
24b. help's
24c. helps
24d. helping

25a. –
25b. is
25c. has
25d. must

26a. flush
26b. to flush
26c. been flushed
26d. to be flushed

27a. will be
27b. would be
27c. was
27d. were

28a. mean
28b. meant
28c. meaning
28d. was meant

29a. take part in
29b. taking part in
29c. took part in
29d. taken part in

On the first regular day of camp, cars streamed in, and parents and campers were frantically ___ (16) for their counselors. The counselors, of course, ___ (17) busy running back and forth to make sure that everyone ___ (18) properly settled in. ___ (19) looked much like a regular camp that day. Even though some campers were bald and others had arm or leg amputations, I ___ (20) say they were low in spirit: in fact, the campers were more positive than any I had ever seen.

On the first day one of ___ (21) campers informed me that after lunch she needed to "have her Hickman flushed". I smiled and said okay, but I ___ (22), "What in the hell is a Hickman?" Well, after lunch we walked off to the nurse's office, where she took off ___ (23) shirt. I noticed that she had a large tube sticking out from the chest. Then I learned that a Hickman ___ (24) in the administration of chemotherapy without a needle. The tube ___ (25) placed in the chest, and it guides the medicine into the bloodstream. It has ___ (26) from time to time to keep it clear.

I felt sure that if we counselors ___ (27) in these kids' shoes, we wouldn't be half as brave.

Otherwise the camp was quite ordinary, which ___ (28) a lot of fun. Every day we attended arts and crafts and ___ (29) hiking and canoeing, and archery, and many games. The campers participated with great enthusiasm, but made the expected moans and groans when it came to eating "camp food".

From day one, ___ (30) a buzz of excitement about Wednesday night. That was the time of the camp dance. Although my girls said they hated boys, ___ (31) at the dance heavily perfumed and brightly made up. Everyone ___ (32) great! Everyone danced: the stronger counselors helped support those with amputations as the dance ___ (33) more and more lively. It was a night of celebration. Everyone ___ (34) something to live for.

30a. it was
30b. it had
30c. there was
30d. there were

31a. did they arrive
31b. were they arriving
31c. they arrived
31d. they will arrive

32a. looked
32b. were looking
32c. looked like
32d. looks

33a. became
33b. came
33c. becomes
33d. were getting

34a. had
34b. was
34c. get
34d. done

The morning after, the effect of the dance was still clear. Couples ___ (35) together; ___ (36) planned future activities, and I seemed to be ___ (37) out my phone number to a lot of 10-year-old boys enjoying their first crush.

35a. were walked
35b. walked
35c. was walking
35d. was to walk

36a. man
36b. peoples
36c. people
36d. ones

37a. give
37b. gave
37c. given
37d. giving

At the closing ceremonies, I realized that the camp experience would help most of these kids make it through their next year. And I began to cry as I understood that perhaps I, too, ___ (38) made a difference in their lives. In just one short week I'd become so close to the kids, sharing sleepless nights with sick campers, confiding with questioning teenagers, and sharing my experiences and questions with the head counselor.

38a. was
38b. did
38c. had
38d. were

I plan to return to Camp Ukandu next year. I know I will benefit from the energy and understanding it ___ (39) already given me. I have realized that we are all the same inside, no matter what we look like or what troubles afflict us. It is a wonderful irony that I would learn such a valuable lesson from people who ___ (40) so positively with what clearly seems a negative force. These campers were simply the best influence on my life so far.

39a. is
39b. has
39c. have
39d. –

40a. is dealing
40b. deals
40c. deal
40d. has dealt

B. Kirjoita puuttuvat sanat vihjeiden mukaan.

1. If I ___ a chance, I ___ to work on a children's camp. (:lla olisi; menisin)
2. I ___ my summer in Sweden if I ___ a job there. (olisin viettänyt; olisin löytänyt)
3. I ___ to Canada to see my aunt if she ___ me an invitation. (lennän; lähettää)
4. If my bank account ___ so empty, I ___ New York. (ei olisi; voisin vierailla)
5. If my English ___ this year, I ___ anywhere! (ei parane; en pysty matkustamaan)

C. Kirjoita kysymykset englanniksi.

1. Mitä teidän koiranne yleensä syö?
2. Milloin Tom ja Ann ostivat itselleen veneen?
3. Miksi he ovat myyneet talonsa?
4. Millaisesta musiikista nuoret naiset pitävät?
5. Kenet Bob oli nähnyt huoneessaan?

TEST 1 - Reading comprehension test

So, waving the hand means goodbye, right? Wrong, as *Jack Seward* discovers when he looks at ...

Gestures IN JAPAN

Unless you are proficient in the Japanese language, it is certain you will have a communications problem should you visit Japan. Just how serious this problem will be depends on where you go and how long you stay and whether or not you travel in the company of a Japanese-speaking friend. But no matter what you do, you will have this problem, at least to some extent.

So what should be done? Give up your plans to visit Japan? No, that would be going too far, since Japan is a marvellous experience. Try to learn the Japanese language? Well, for the sake of a two or three-week visit, it would not be reasonable to spend months trying to pick up some conversational ability in Japanese, but you might arm yourself with a phrase book and memorize a few handy expressions to help out in a difficult spot

What else can you do? Why, use some gestures!

But wait. Are these gestures universal? Or, more to the point, are they used by the Japanese?

Unfortunately, no. Japanese gestures are a world of their own, just as their language is. They seldom coincide in meaning with the gestures of any other country. You must resign yourself, therefore, to learning entirely new gestures, but be not dismayed. It's a lot easier to learn the gesture than it is to pronounce and remember the phrase you would have to use to convey the meaning of the gesture.

Let's review some basic Japanese gestures first:

Form a circle with the thumb and index finger of your right hand. To us, this would mean everything is O.K., it's all right, but to a Japanese this finger-formed circle is a standard reference to money.

Now quickly memorize one more gesture. Wave your open hand back and forth in front of you, as if you were chasing a mosquito away from your nose. (Your hand can be right up against your nose or it can be held ten or twelve inches away from your face.) This is the sign for No, none, not, negative, I haven't any, I don't want any.

Clench your fist tightly. If you shake that clenched fist at an American, he would know you are angrily threatening him. To the Japanese, however, you are making the sign for someone who is stingy with his money. In fact, this should be easy to remember since we have the expression "tight-fisted" that means the same thing.

Traditionally, the Japanese have regarded the stomach as the abode of the spirit or soul (not the region of the heart), but they have felt that the nose is the entrance leading eventually to the lower abode. Accordingly, when referring to themselves, they will often point to their noses.

If you are talking about someone and crook your index finger at the same time, you are saying that the person has the unfortunate habit of taking objects not rightfully his. The little finger pointing straight up in the air originally meant a baby, but nowadays it is more commonly used to mean girlfriend, or wife. The right thumb held straight up in a similar manner means boyfriend, father, husband, or master. The first two fingers of the hand tapped lightly against the lips is a reference to kissing.

Now this next gesture is very useful but is one you must be careful about. We often signal goodbye by extending our right arm straight to the front and waving the fingers up and down, but the Japanese have a similar gesture which is used when they want to call someone to their side. The only difference is that in the Japanese gesture the fingers are moved while pointing at a slight downward angle and not held straight out.

When a Japanese rapidly crosses his two index fingers, he is telling you there is bad blood between the two people being discussed. The thumb rubbed against the side of the nose means a card game called *hana*, the name deriving from the pictures of flowers on the backs of the playing cards. *Hana* is the word for nose as well as for flower.

Cupping the left hand just below the level of the mouth with the right hand going through the motions of using chopsticks, is a readily understood reference to food or to eating.

Pointing the forefinger at one's ear or temple and making a circular motion with it has two meanings, depending on the direction of the finger movement. If the forefinger moves anti-clockwise, the gesture refers to a perverse, eccentric, or mentally unstable person. Moving the finger in the opposite direction, or clockwise, equals vanity.

If one holds his stiff right hand in front of his face with the palm facing to the left, he is asking indulgence for crossing the path of another or for passing between two persons. Accompanied with a slight bow of the head, this is a very frequently used gesture and should stand you in good stead in crowded Japan.

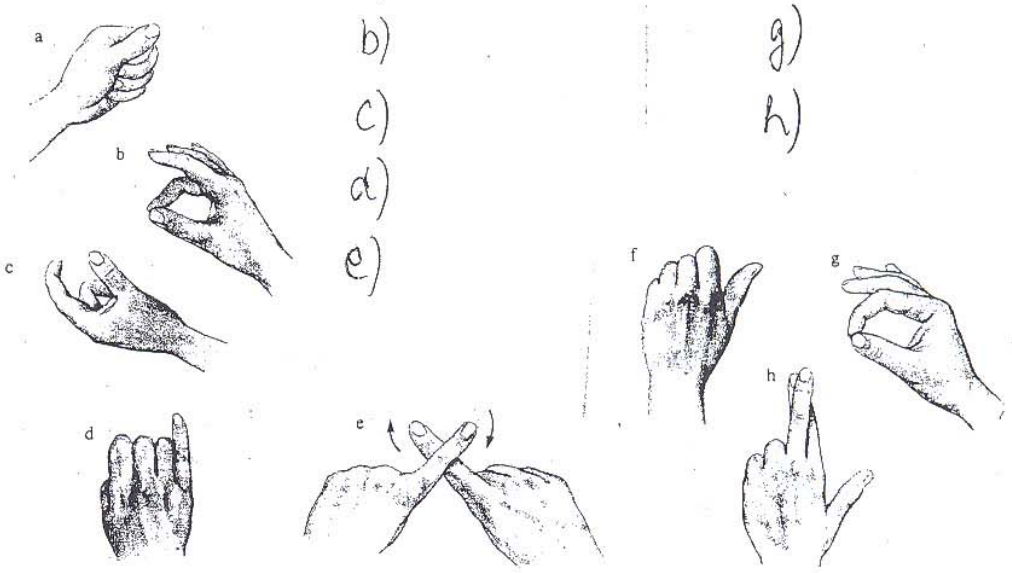
Reproduced by kind permission of Jack Seward from an article in Wings of Gold

LUETUNYMMÄRTÄMINEN

NIMI _____

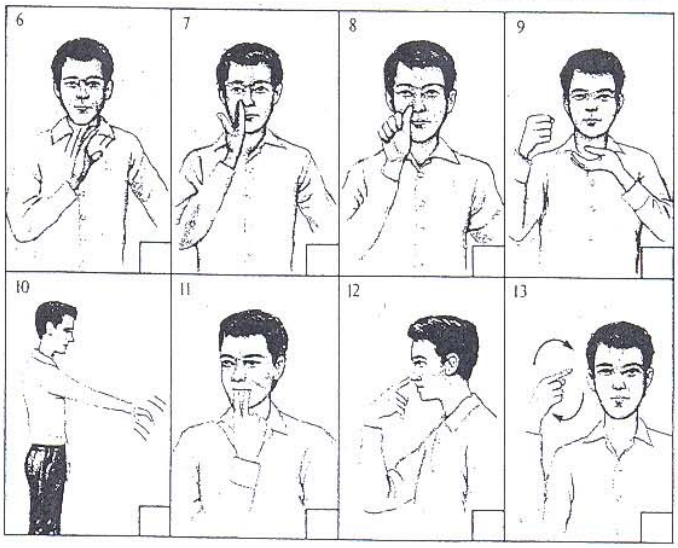
What do the following gestures mean?
(vastaa suomeksi)

a)
b)
c)
d)
e)
f)
g)
h)



What do the following gestures mean?

6)
7)
8)
9)
10)
11)
12)
13)



LUETUNYMMÄRTÄMINEN

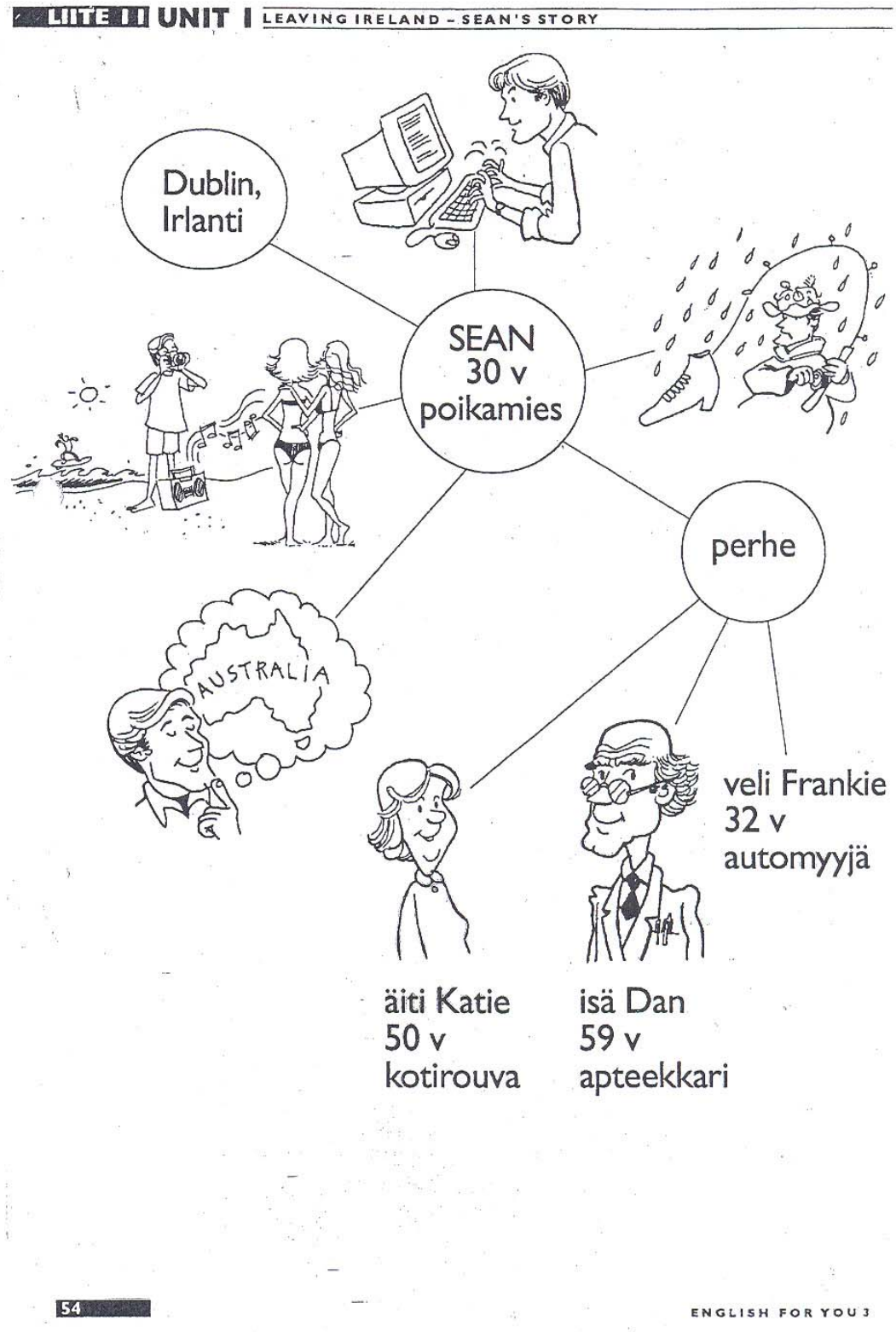
1. Mainitse 3 (kolme) asiaa, jotka vaikuttavat siihen, miten vaikea kommunikointiongelma tulee olemaan matkailijalle Japanissa?

2. Mitä ongelman välttämiseksi kannattaisi tehdä? (2 asiaa)

3. Miksi japanilaisten eleet ovat vaikeita ymmärtää?

4. Missä japanilaiset uskovat sielun sijaitsevan?

TEST 1 - Oral test



TEST 1 - Listening comprehension test

LC (p. 173)
Tape Script:

Liisa, a 45-year-old Finn:
My worst language learning experience was at grammar school way back in the 1960's. My Swedish teacher was terrible! I hated her and she probably hated me. We had to go to the blackboard to write down the sentences we had translated at home. It was all grammar and extremely difficult translations. We seldom said anything in Swedish. But we had to take turns in reading aloud from our textbooks and that was the worst of all. I froze every time when I was waiting for my turn to come. Sometimes there was a feeling of total panic in the air.

All the grammar and translation that we did gave me a solid background for reading and writing Swedish, though. And that is how languages were taught at that time. My teacher probably wasn't as bad as all that either! As for speaking Swedish I still freeze whenever somebody approaches me in that language.

Sheila, a 39-year-old English woman:
I learnt French at school for five years. We had a lot of written work and grammar to do. Verb tables still make me want to cry! We worked mainly from textbooks. Somehow, I guess that is necessary but I find it easier to learn French from real conversations with French people. In the end, I went and lived in France and I felt that I learnt to speak French fairly quickly that way.

Somehow the fact that you simply have to speak in order to survive seems to be the only motivation for me. It wasn't enough to know that not being able to recite your irregular verb forms by heart meant humiliation in class. I personally got used to that!

Judy, a 45-year-old American:
I've been living in Finland for about five years. I feel that as the structure of Finnish is so difficult I need a lot of time to internalize it. Somehow I don't seem to get the chance to do that! The Finns are too quick to change into English when they speak to me. Maybe they aren't used to foreigners mutilating their mother tongue and want to stop me doing it.

When children are learning their mother tongue there are always people to help them. They are entitled to look for words and stop to think. They are allowed to make mistakes. They are even praised for creating language which is hardly like the language of adults. My problem is that Finns never give me the chance that they give to their little children. I want to have time. I want to have help. I want to have the opportunity to speak Finnish and make mistakes. I want to learn by the natural method – please, do give me the chance.

Vocabulary for LC

by heart [bai hɑ:t]	*ulkoa*	**mother tongue** [mʌðə tʌŋ]	*äidinkieli*
conversation [kɔnvə'seiʃən]	*keskustelu*	**mutilate** [mju:tileit]	*runnella*
entitled [in'taitəld]	*oikeutettu*	**real** [riəl]	*todellinen*
experience [ik'spiəriəns]	*kokemus*	***speak** [spi:k]	*puhua*
***freeze** [fri:z]	*(tässä) jähmettyä*	**structure** [strʌktʃə*]	*rakenne*
French [frentʃ]	*ranskan kieli*	**Swedish** [swi:diʃ]	*ruotsin kieli*
grammar [græmə*]	*kielioppi*	***teach** [ti:tʃ]	*opettaa*
grammar school [græmə sku:l]	*(läh. vast.) oppikoulu*	**textbook** [tekstbuk]	*oppikirja*
hate [heit]	*vihata*	**translate** [træns'leit]	*kääntää*
language [læŋgwidʒ]	*kieli*	**verb** [və:b]	*verbi*
mistake [mi'steik]	*virhe*	**worst** [wə:st]	*huonoin* (***bad – worse – the worst***)

LC

Fill in the table for each speaker.
Täytä taulukko kunkin puhujan osalta.

	Method **used** *miten opetettiin*	Method **preferred** *miten olisi halunnut oppia*
Liisa:		
Sheila:		
Judy:		

TEST 2 **Appendix 4**

LOPPUTESTI NIMI _____

Lue allaoleva teksti. Alleviivaa tekstistä mielestäsi tärkeimmät asiat ja käsitteet. Kokoa ne yhteen käyttäen mindmappia tai muuta Sinulle sopivaa tapaa (esim. laatikointi, piirros tms.).
- saat käyttää sanakirjaa - - valitse itse kummalla kielellä teet kokoamisen -

SUMMARY

Occupational therapists need to learn how to use purposeful activity as part of their therapeutic intervention. The multilevel approach used in this text encourages the student to become aware of many different activities and their essential properties. It asks the student to break down activities into steps to identify the specific actions involved in performing them. It requires the student to examine the skills needed to perform those actions, as well as the context in which the activity takes place. Finally, it has the student look at a specific individual's functional deficits and choose an activity that has meaning to the client and that will facilitate occupational performance. Throughout this process, the impact of environment and temporal factors, such as age and disability status, are considered. This approach is applicable to any activity used in occupational therapy and to any intervention setting.

LOPPUTESTI NIMI _____

Poimi edellisen tehtävän tekstistä 4 sanaa, jotka ovat sinulle uusia ja vaikeita. Tarkista sanojen merkitys sanakirjasta.

_____ = _____

_____ = _____

_____ = _____

_____ = _____

Valitse näistä 2 sanaa ja keksi kummankin sanan ympärille 2 eri virkettä, jotka sisältävät päälauseen ja sivulauseen. (eli yhteensä 4 virkettä)

Ota 2 jäljellä olevaa sanaa ja keksi kummallekin sanalle muistamista auttava fraasi käyttäen kokeilemaamme tekniikkaa.

LOPPUTESTI NIMI _____

Saat lapuilla valmiiksi sanoja, joista muodostuu englanninkielinen virke. Laita laput oikeaan järjestykseen, jotta niistä muodostuu kieliopillisesti oikea virke. Kokoa virkkeet paperille kirjoitettuna ja väritä sanat "omien" väriesi mukaan.

värit:

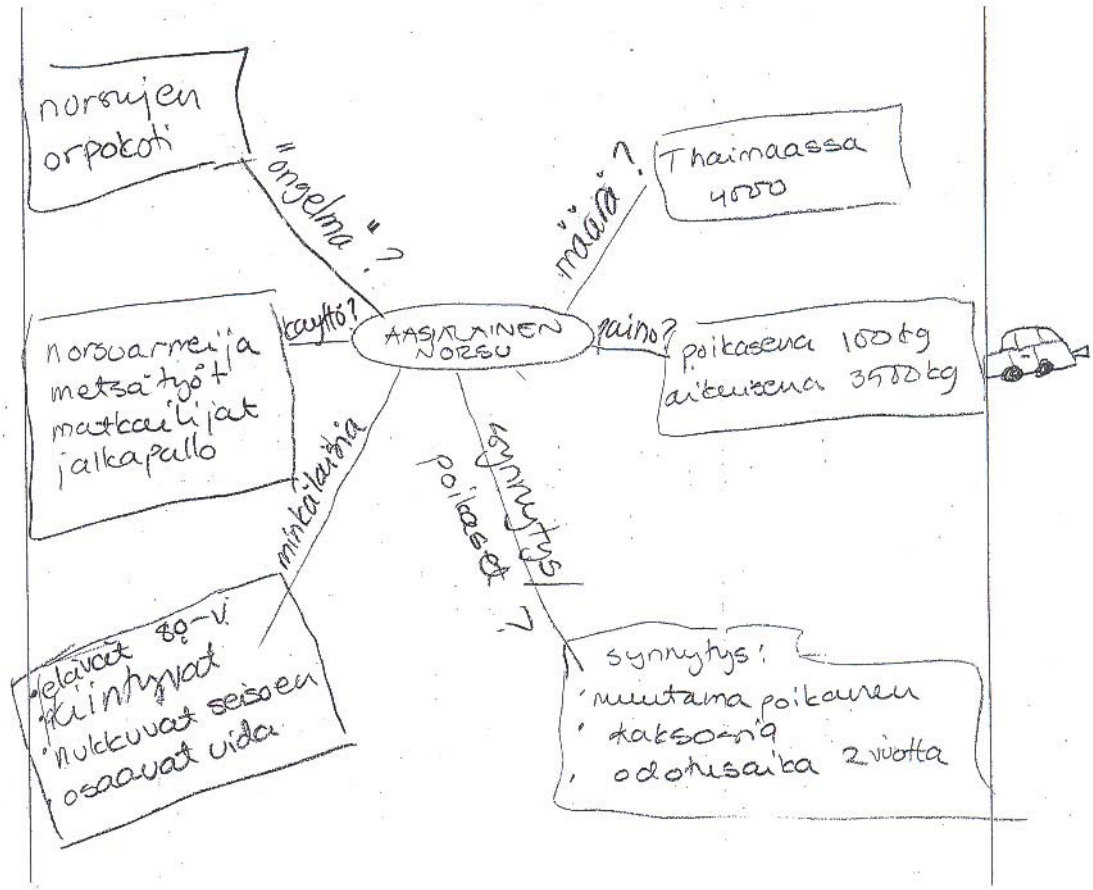
- konjunktiot = pienet sanat jotka yhdistävät lauseita = vaalean-punainen
- objekti = tekemisen kohde = keltainen
- aika = ruskea
- predikaatti = tekeminen = sininen
- paikka = vihreä
- tapa = oranssi
- subjekti = tekijä = punainen

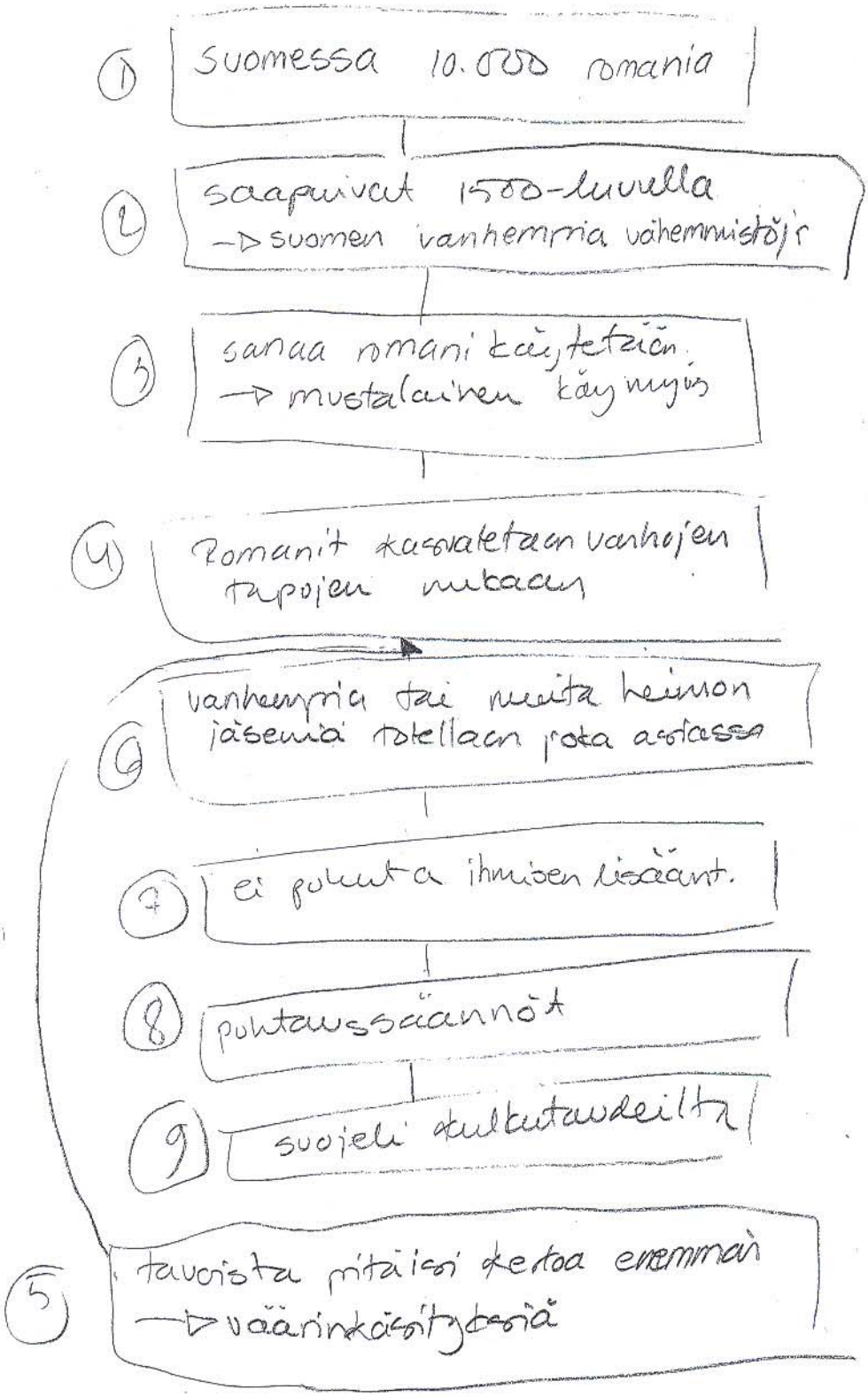
THE DJ	PLAYED	THE MUSIC	TOO LOUDLY
AT THE PARTY	IN LUTAKKO	ON FRIDAY	LAST WEEK

MR HILL	WRITES	SCIENCE FICTION	AND
PEOPLE	LIKE	HIS BOOKS	LIKE CRAZY

IT	HAS RAINED	ALL MORNING	BUT
I	MUST WALK	TO WORK	BECAUSE
SOMEBODY	STOLE	MY BICYCLE	

ARJA AND THE READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY **Appendix 5**




1 Suomessa 10.000 romania
2 saapuivat 1500-luvulla
-> suomen vanhempia vähemmistöjä
3 sanaa romani käytetään
-> mustalainen käsitys
4 Romanit kasvatetaan vanhojen
tapojen mukaan
6 vanhempia tai muita heimon
jäseniä otetaan pois arvossa
7 ei paluuta ihmisen lisääntymiseen
8 puhtaussäännöt
9 suojeli kulttuurilta
5 tavoista pitäisi kertoa enemmän
-> väärinkäsityksiä

ARJA'S ANSWERS IN TEST 2 **Appendix 6**

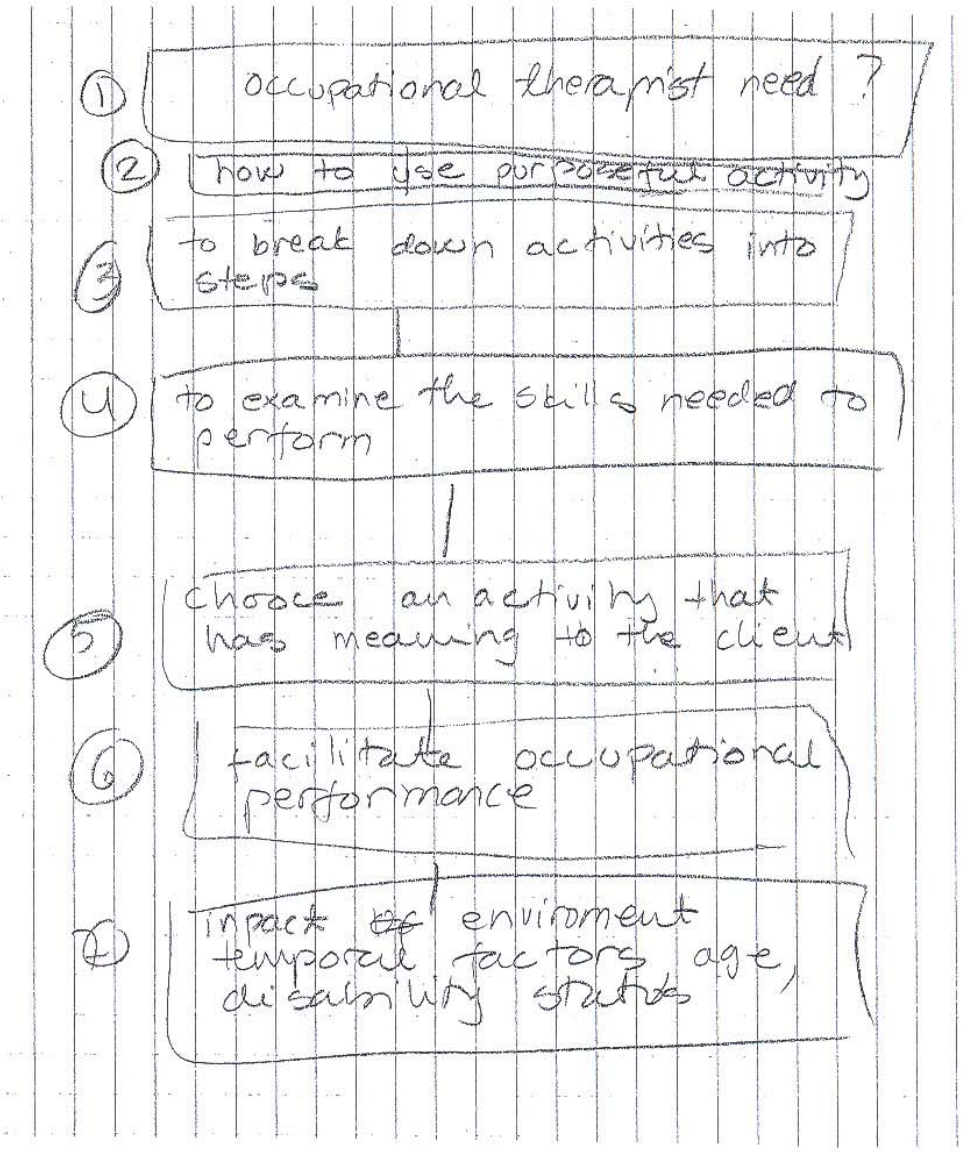
LOPPUTESTI NIMI ARJA

Lue allaoleva teksti. Alleviivaa tekstistä mielestäsi tärkeimmät asiat ja käsitteet. Kokoa ne yhteen käyttäen mindmappia tai muuta Sinulle sopivaa tapaa (esim. laatikointi, puurros tms.).
- saat käyttää sanakirjaa - - valitse itse kummalla kielellä teet kokoamisen -

SUMMARY

Occupational therapists need to learn how to use purposeful activity as part of their therapeutic intervention. The multilevel approach used in this text encourages the student to become aware of many different activities and their essential properties. It asks the student to break down activities into steps to identify the specific actions involved in performing them. It requires the student to examine the skills needed to perform those actions, as well as the context in which the activity takes place. Finally, it has the student look at a specific individual's functional deficits and choose an activity that has meaning to the client and that will facilitate occupational performance. Throughout this process, the impact of environment and temporal factors, such as age and disability status, are considered. This approach is applicable to any activity used in occupational therapy and to any intervention setting.

involved = innokkuus asiaan liittyvä



deficits = Defit istuu "vajaasti"
vajaus

applicable = sopiva hakemuskaapeli
sopiva

LOPPUTESTI NIMI ARJA

Poimi edellisen tehtävän tekstistä 4 sanaa, jotka ovat Sinulle uusia ja vaikeita. Tarkista sanojen merkitys sanakirjasta.

deficits	=	vajaus
essential	=	olennainen
facilitate	=	helpottaa
applicable	=	soviva

Valitse näistä 2 sanaa ja keksi kummankin sanan ympärille 2 eri virkettä, jotka sisältävät päälauseen ja sivulauseen. (eli yhteensä 4 virkettä)

Ota 2 jäljellä olevaa sanaa ja keksi kummallekin sanalle muistamista auttava fraasi käyttäen kokeilemaamme tekniikkaa.

1) I think this is not essential thing, when we have to decide where we go.
2) Important and essential word this test is occupational therapist.
3) I hope that will facilitate you work, because it's so hard.
4) These practice will facitate me when I have to study english.

→

LOPPUTESTI NIMI ARJA

Saat lapuilla valmiiksi sanoja, joista muodostuu englanninkielinen virke. Laita laput oikeaan järjestykseen, jotta niistä muodostuu kieliopillisesti oikea virke. Kokoa virkkeet paperille kirjoitettuna, ja väritä sanat "omien" väriesi mukaan.

värit:

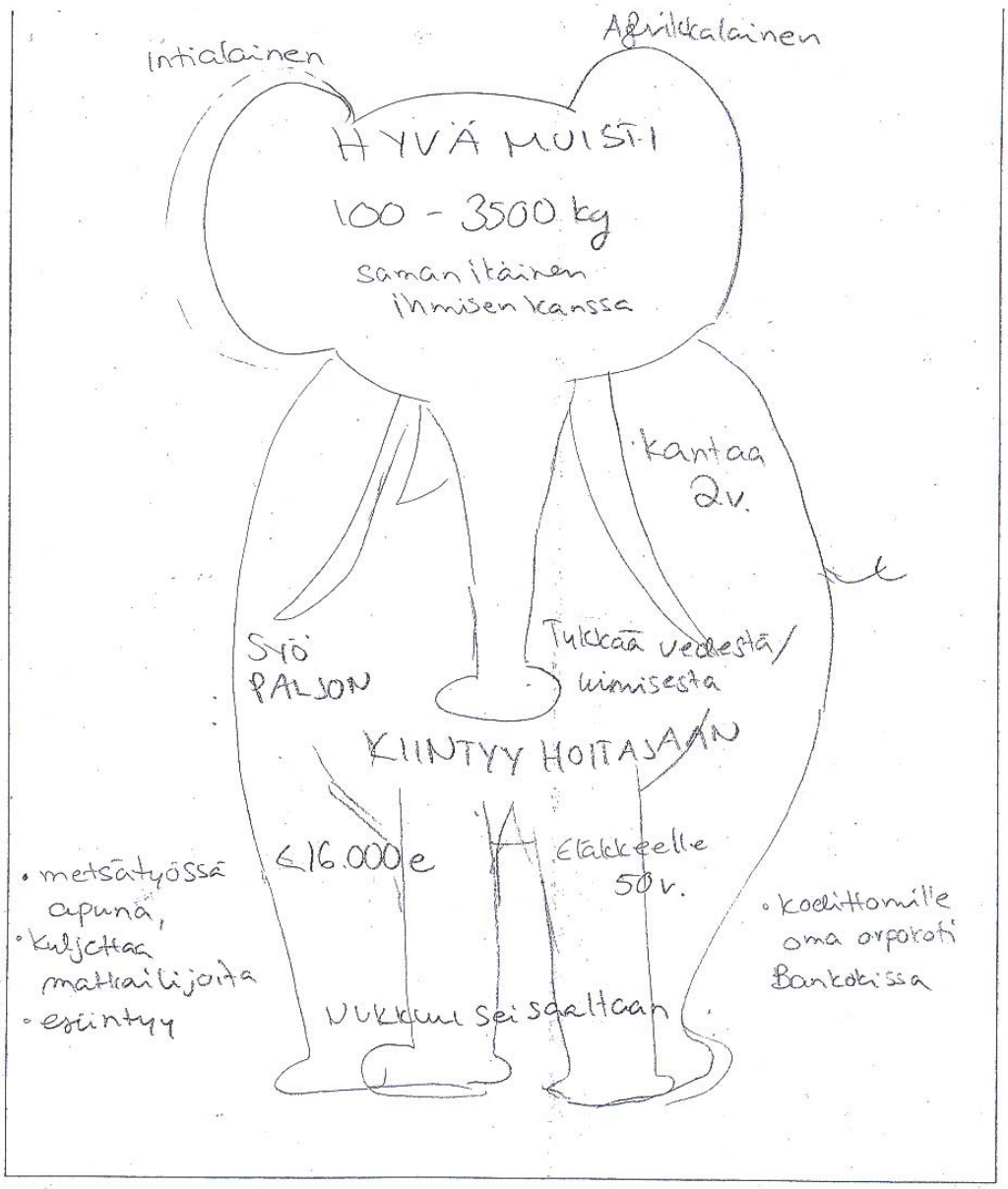
- konjunktiot = pienet sanat jotka yhdistävät lauseita = oranssi
- objekti - tekemisen kohde = ruskea
- aika = harmaa (lyijykynä)
- apuverbi = vihreä
- paikka = vaaleanpunainen
- tapa = keltainen
- pääverbi = punainen
- subjekti = tekijä = sininen

① Last week on, friday the DJ played the music too loudly at the party

② Mr Hill writes science fiction and people like his books like crazy

③ It has rained all morning but I must walk to work because somebody stole my bicycle

EEVA AND THE READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY **Appendix 7**



EEVA

Romanit saapuivat Suomeen jo 1500-l . . .

Suomessa on n. 10000 romania

Sanaa romaani käytetään virallisesti . . .

Romanien yhteiskunta on vahva

Meidän tavoistamme pitäisi kertoa enemmän . . .

Toisaalta monet meidän tapamme ovat sellaisia . . .

Silloin vasta lapsi huomaa, että omassa . . .

On lapsen etu, kun osaa arvostaa omaa . . .

Moni vanhempiin on unohtanut alkuperäisen . . .

Esimerkiksi romaaniperheissä ei puututa mistään . . .

Myös romaanien puhtaussäännöt . . .
Puhtaus pohjeli kulkulaudoilta
[illegible]

EEVA'S ANSWERS IN TEST 2 **Appendix 8**

LOPPUTESTI NIMI EEVA

Lue allaoleva teksti. Alleviivaa tekstistä mielestäsi tärkeimmät asiat ja käsitteet. Kokoa ne yhteen käyttäen mindmappia tai muuta Sinulle sopivaa tapaa (esim. laatikointi, piirros tms.).
- saat käyttää sanakirjaa - -valitse itse kummalla kielellä teet kokoamisen -

SUMMARY

Occupational therapists need to learn how to use purposeful activity as part of their therapeutic intervention. The multilevel approach used in this text encourages the student to become aware of many different activities and their essential properties. It asks the student to break down activities into steps to identify the specific actions involved in performing them. It requires the student to examine the skills needed to perform those actions, as well as the context in which the activity takes place. Finally, it has the student look at a specific individual's functional deficits and choose an activity that has meaning to the client and that will facilitate occupational performance. Throughout this process, the impact of environment and temporal factors, such as age and disability status, are considered. This approach is applicable to any activity used in occupational therapy and to any intervention setting.

Toiminta terapeutin tulee huomioida
- toimintaan tarvitsemat vaatimukset
  - asiakkaan kunnon, taidon sekä ympäristön mukaan.
- valita sopivia toimintoja
  - joka kuntouttaa asiakasta/potilasta
  - josta asiakas/potilas on kiinnostunut
- näin voidaan tutkia mitä toimintaa tarvitsee

LOPPUTESTI NIMI EEVA

Poimi edellisen tehtävän tekstistä 4 sanaa, jotka ovat Sinulle uusia ja vaikeita. Tarkista sanojen merkitys sanakirjasta.

Facilitate = luontevaa

Approach = lähestyä

Essential = olennainen

purposeful = päättäväinen

Valitse näistä 2 sanaa ja keksi kummankin sanan ympärille 2 eri virkettä, jotka sisältävät päälauseen ja sivulauseen. (eli yhteensä 4 virkettä)

I try learning english purposefully, because I want get out of School That isn't Facilate to me, If I can't use myways of learning.

Ota 2 jäljellä olevaa sanaa ja keksi kummallekin sanalle muistamista auttava fraasi käyttäen kokeilemaamme tekniikkaa.

APPROACH = lähestyä A Pua proach lähestyy mua.

ESSENTIAL = olennainen Esseen tilalle olennaisia sanoja

LOPPUTESTI NIMI EEVA

Saat lapuilla valmiiksi sanoja, joista muodostuu englanninkielinen virke. Väritä lappujen sanat "omien" värien mukaan. Laita laput oikeaan järjestykseen, jotta niistä muodostuu kieliopillisesti oikea virke. Kokoa virkkeet vielä paperille kirjoitettuna ja merkitse sanat väreillä.

värit:

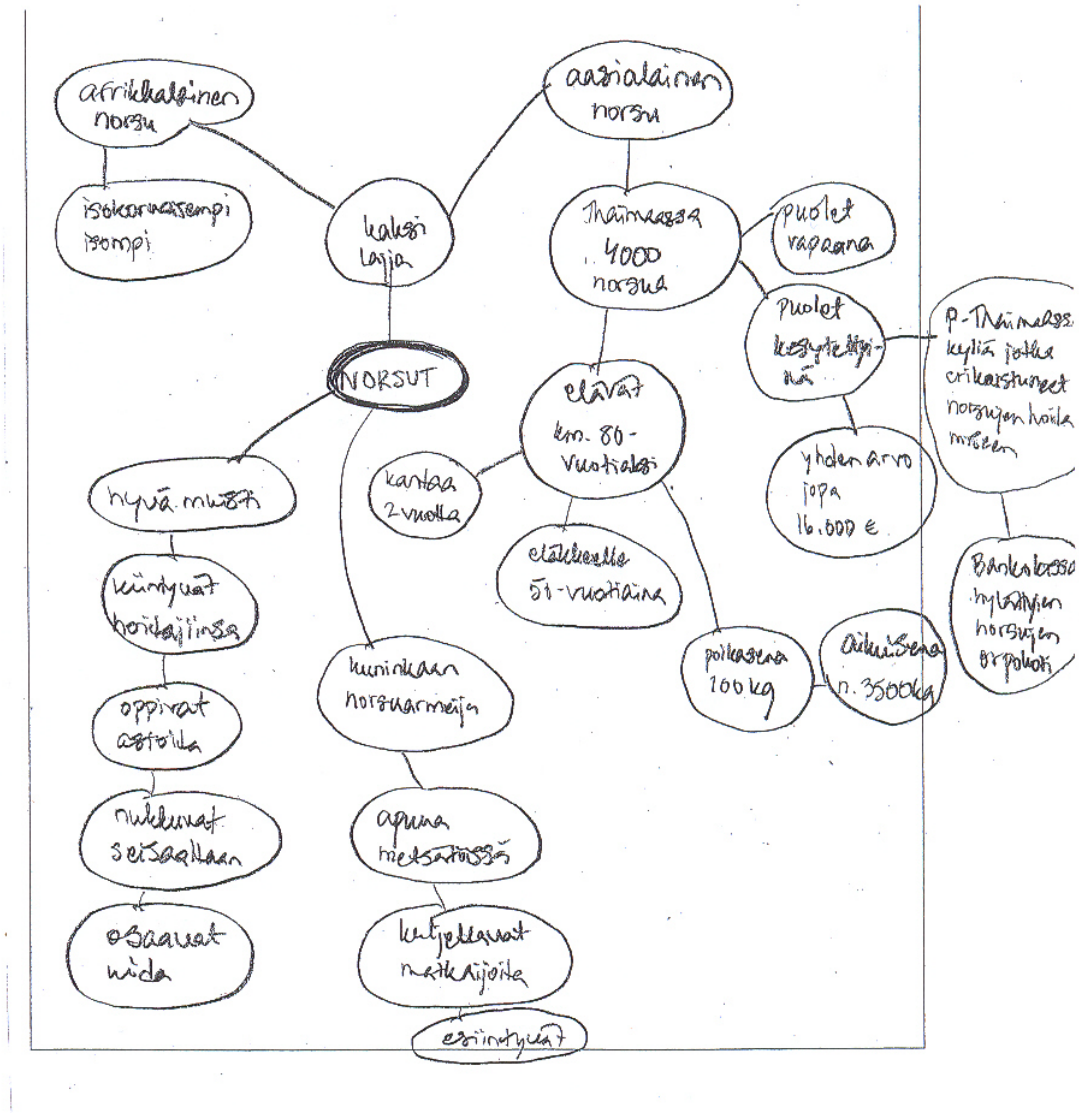
- konjunktiot = pienet sanat jotka yhdistävät lauseita = vaaleanpunainen
- objekti = tekemisen kohde = ruskea
- aika = oranssi
- predikaatti = tekeminen = kirjava
- paikka = punainen
- tapa = keltainen
- subjekti = tekijä = vihreä

The DJ played the music too loudly at the party on friday in Lulaka last week.

Mr Hill like writes his books and people like crazy science fiction

It has rained all morning But I must walle to work because somebody stole my bicycle.

JULIA AND THE READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY **Appendix 9**



JULIA'S ANSWERS IN TEST 2 **Appendix 10**

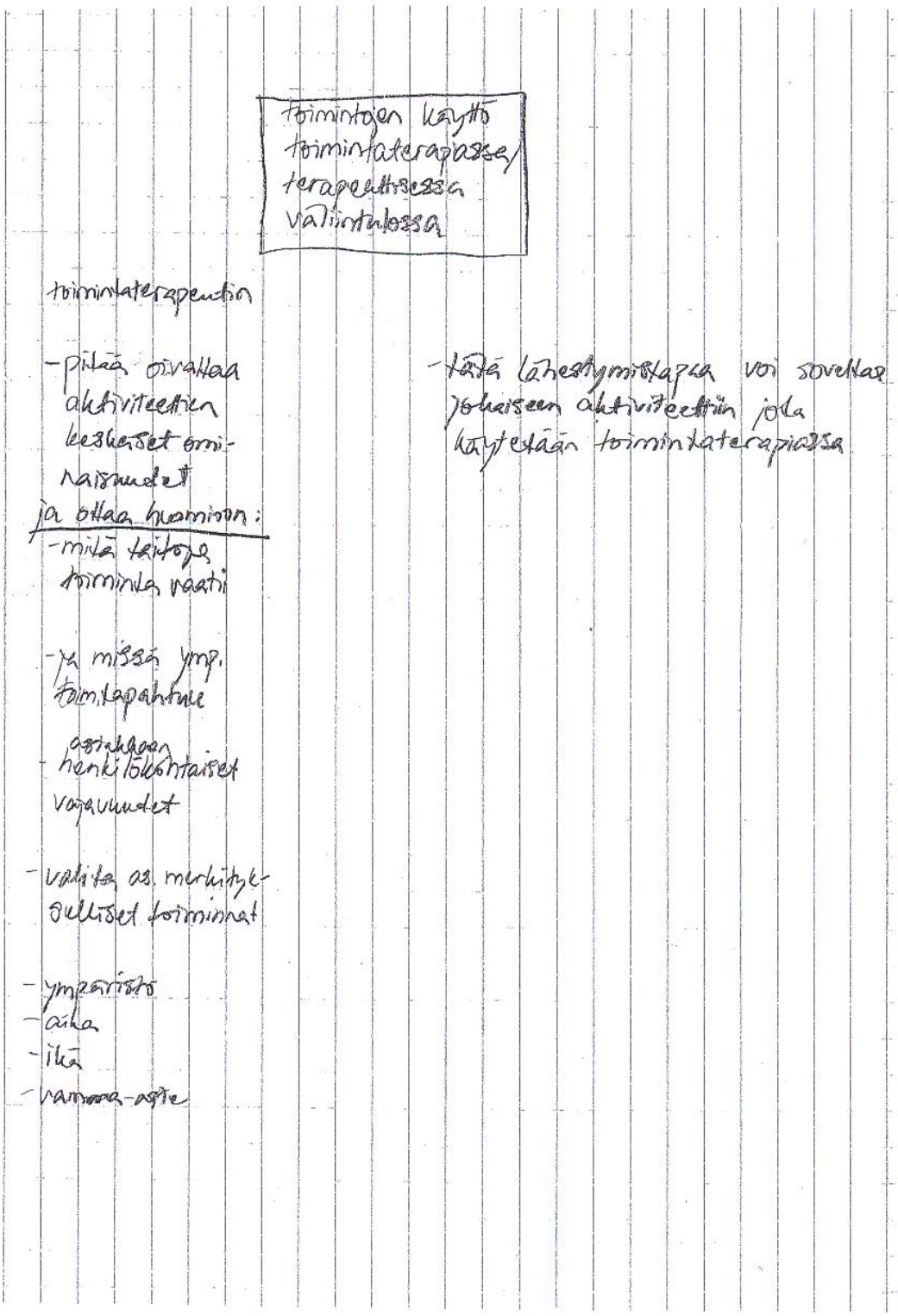
LOPPUTESTI NIMI JULIA

Lue allaoleva teksti. Alleviivaa tekstistä mielestäsi tärkeimmät asiat ja käsitteet. Kokoa ne yhteen käyttäen mindmappia tai muuta Sinulle sopivaa tapaa (esim. laatikointi, piirros tms.).
-saat käyttää sanakirjaa-

- valitse itse kummalla kielellä teet kokoamisen-

SUMMARY

Occupational therapists need to learn how to use purposeful activity as part of their therapeutic intervention. The multilevel approach used in this text encourages the student to become aware of many different activities and their essential properties. It asks the student to break down activities into steps to identify the specific actions involved in performing them. It requires the student to examine the skills needed to perform those actions, as well as the context in which the activity takes place. Finally, it has the student look at a specific individual's functional deficits and choose an activity that has meaning to the client and that will facilitate occupational performance. Throughout this process, the impact of environment and temporal factors, such as age and disability status, are considered. This approach is applicable to any activity used in occupational therapy and to any intervention setting.


toimintojen käyttö toimintaterapiassa/ terapeuttisessa välitilanteessa
toimintaterapeutin
- pitää osata aktiviteetin keskeiset ominaisuudet
ja ottaa huomioon:
- mitä taitoja toiminta vaatii
- ja missä ymp. toimintapaikoissa
- asiakkaan henkilökohtaiset vajavuudet
- valita as. merkityksellisiä toimintoja
- ympäristö
- aika
- ikä
- vanhempi-aspekti
- tietä lähestymistapaa voi soveltaa johonkin aktiviteettiin jota käytetään toimintaterapiassa

LOPPUTESTI NIMI JULIA

Poimi edellisen tehtävän tekstistä 4 sanaa, jotka ovat sinulle uusia ja vaikeita. Tarkista sanojen merkitys sanakirjasta.

approach = lähestymistapa

environment = ympäristö

requires = edellyttää

facilitate = helpottaa

Valitse näistä 2 sanaa ja keksi kummankin sanan ympärille 2 eri virkettä, jotka sisältävät päälauseen ja sivulauseen. (eli yhteensä 4 virkettä)

Ota 2 jäljellä olevaa sanaa ja keksi kummallekin sanalle muistamista auttava fraasi käyttäen kokeilemaamme tekniikkaa.

approach = lähestymistapa - My teatcher tteli, allways talking any kind of approach, and that is wery boring.

- This approach tell me, what I have to do in my job.

facilitate = helpottaa - I go to toilet, and wery soon facilitate.

- My work is to Facilitate my customers situations.

environment = ympäristö "en viroon ment, (sano sevolainen) on niin huono ympäristö."

requires = edellyttää "rikkautes edellyttää rahaa".

LOPPUTESTI NIMI JULIA

Saat lapuilla valmiiksi sanoja, joista muodostuu englanninkielinen virke. Laita laput oikeaan järjestykseen, jotta niistä muodostuu kieli-opillisesti oikea virke. Kokoa virkkeet paperille kirjoitettuna ja värittä sanat "omien" väriesi mukaan.

värit:

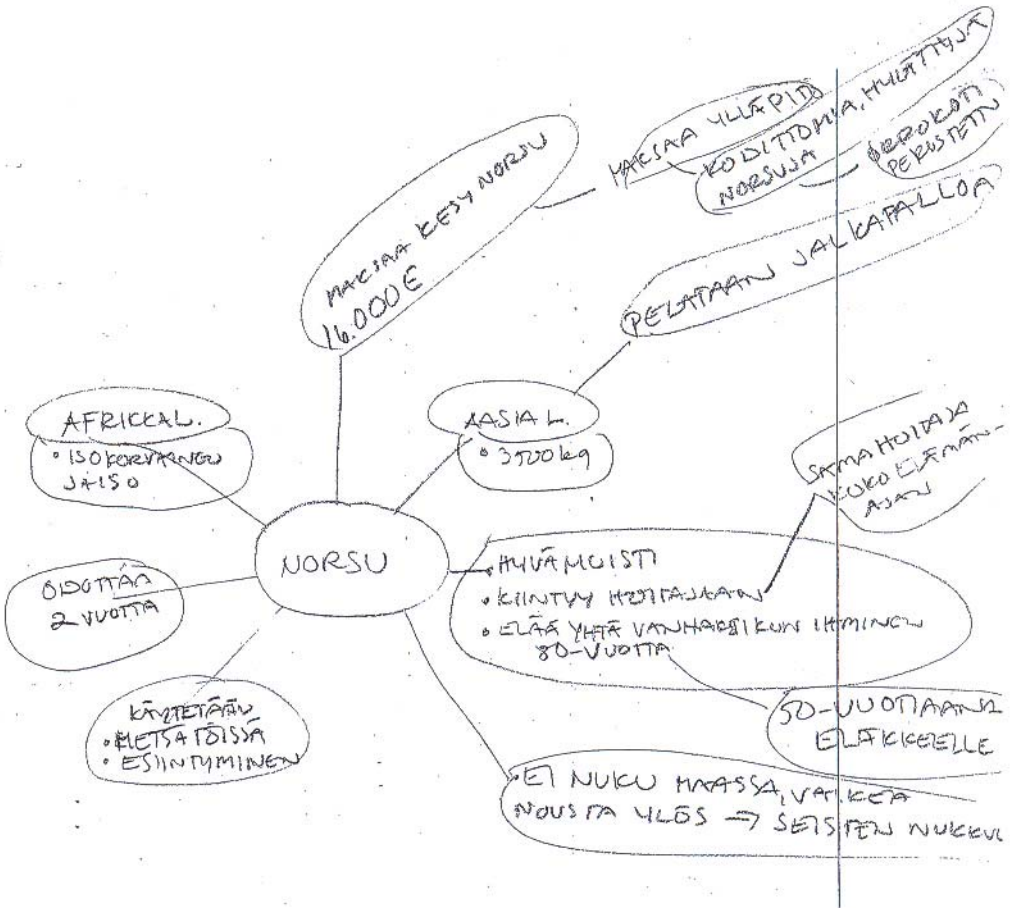
- konjunktiot = pienet sanat jotka yhdistävät lauseita = vaalean-punainen
- objekti = tekemisen kohde = keltainen
- aika = ruskea
- predikaatti = tekeminen = sininen
- paikka = vihreä
- tapa = oranssi
- subjekti = tekijä = punainen

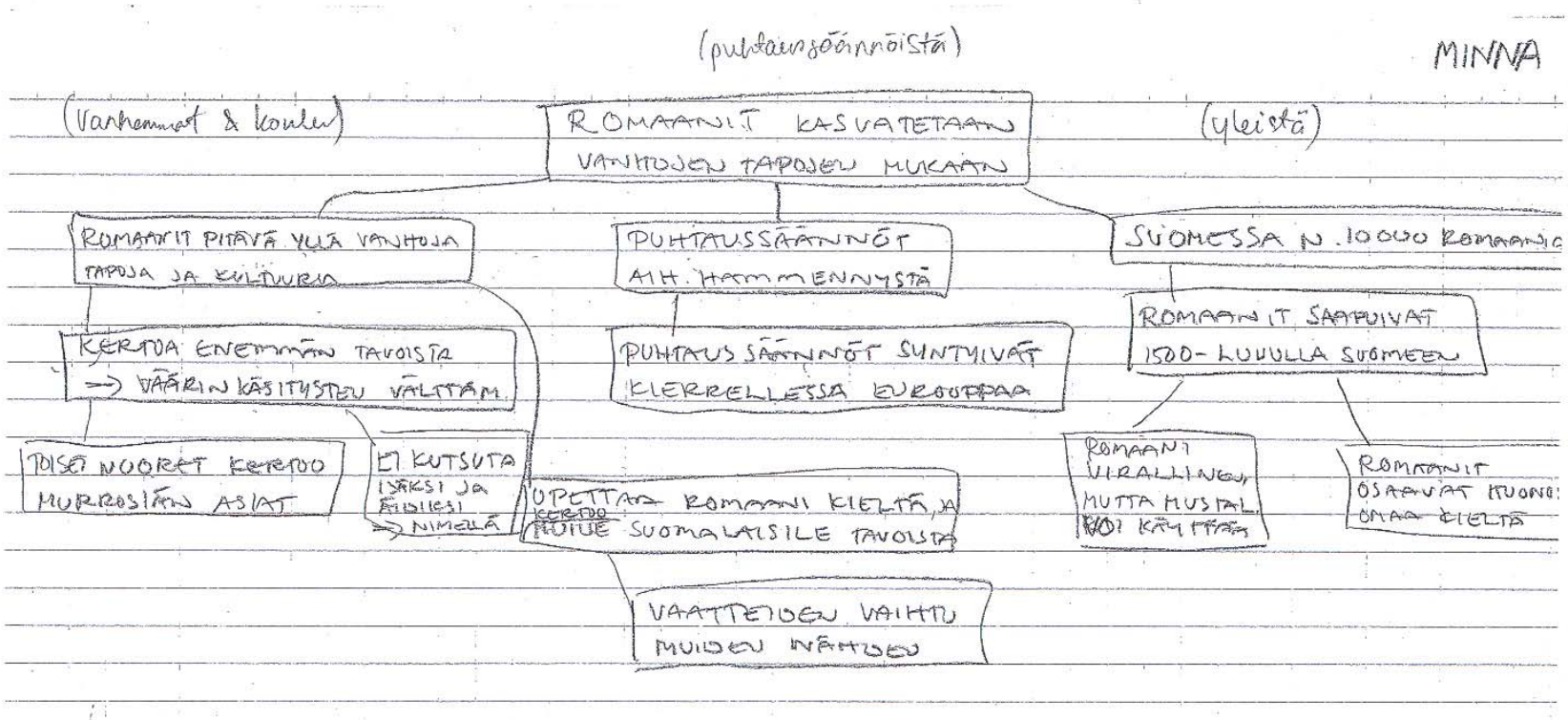
The DJ played the music too loudly at the party in Lutakko on Friday last week.

Mr Hill like writes science fiction and people like crazy his books.

It has rained all morning but I must walk to work because somebody stole my bicycle.

MINNA AND THE READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY **Appendix 11**




(puhtaussäännöistä)
MINNA
(Vanhemmat & koulu)
ROMAANIT KASVATETAAN VANHOJEN TAPOJEN MUKAAN
(yleistä)
ROMAANIT PITÄVÄ YLLÄ VANHOJA TAPOJA JA KULTUURIA
PUHTAUSSÄÄNNÖT AIH. HAMMENNYSTÄ
SUOMESSA N. 10000 ROMAANIC
KERTOA ENEMMÄN TAVOISTA → VÄÄRIN KÄSITYSTEN VÄLTTÄM.
PUHTAUSSÄÄNNÖT SYNTYIVÄT KIERRELLESSÄ EUROOPPAA
ROMAANIT SAAPUIVAT 1500-LUVULLA SUOMEEN
TOISET NUORET KERTOO MUUTOSTEN ASIAT
EI KUTSUTA IÄKSI JA EHDOTTOMASTI → NIMELLÄ
OPETTAA ROMAANI KIELTÄ, JA KERTOO MUUT SUOMALAISILE TAVOISTA
ROMAANI VIRALLINEN, MUTTA MUSTAL. EI KÄYTETÄÄN
ROMAANIT OSAAVAT HUONO OMAA KIELTÄ
VAATTEIDEN VAIHTU MUIDEN NÄHDEN

MINNA'S ANSWERS IN TEST 2 **Appendix 12**

LOPPUTESTI NIMI MINNA

Lue allaoleva teksti. Alleviivaa tekstistä mielestäsi tärkeimmät asiat ja käsitteet. Kokoa ne yhteen käyttäen mindmappia tai muuta Sinulle sopivaa tapaa (esim. laatikointi, piirros tms.).
- Saat käyttää sanakirjaa -
- Valitse itse kummalla kielellä teet kokoamisen -

YHTEENVETO

SUMMARY

Occupational therapists need to learn how to use purposeful activity as part of their therapeutic intervention. The multilevel approach used in this text encourages the student to become aware of many different activities and their essential properties. It asks the student to break down activities into steps to identify the specific actions involved in performing them. It requires the student to examine the skills needed to perform those actions, as well as the context in which the activity takes place. Finally, it has the student look at a specific individual's functional deficits and choose an activity that has meaning to the client and that will facilitate occupational performance. Throughout this process, the impact of environment and temporal factors, such as age and disability status, are considered. This approach is applicable to any activity used in occupational therapy and to any intervention setting.

YHTEENVETO

- toiminta terapiassa tavoitteen
  opetella merkityksellistä terapiaa
- monta tapaa lähestyä, syventyä, opiskelemalla aktiivisesti olennaisesti omaksuna asioita
- tietoa voidaan pilkkoa osiksi helpommille
- tämä on vaativa opiskelu
- lopuksi opiskellaan asiakas lähtöisyyttä terapeista, tiedosta vapaudutaan ⇒ asiakas on tärkeä
- ei katsota ikää, ammattia, ympäristöä, statuksia
  ⇒ kaikki samanarvoisia
- tämä on toim. terapian lähtökohta
  ⇒ kaikki samanarvoisia

LOPPUTESTI NIMI MINNA

Poimi edellisen tehtävän tekstistä 4 sanaa, jotka ovat sinulle uusia ja vaikeita. Tarkista sanojen merkitys sanakirjasta.

Summary	=	yhteenveto
skills	=	taito
properties	=	omistaa
requires	=	vaativat

Valitse näistä 2 sanaa ja keksi kummankin sanan ympärille 2 eri virkettä, jotka sisältävät päälauseen ja sivulauseen. (eli yhteensä 4 virkettä)

Ota 2 jäljellä olevaa sanaa ja keksi kummallekin sanalle muistamista auttava fraasi käyttäen kokeilemaamme tekniikkaa.

① This summary is difficult, but this is rewarding Studing can do summary, if look my studing

② Swiming is skills domain, so that lifesaving skills is skills, but that hold studing.

③ minä proo, minä perr, minä tiss, minä omistan

④ Tekstin hankkeen useasti vaativan

LOPPUTESTI

NIMI MINNA

Saat lapuilla valmiiksi sanoja, joista muodostuu englanninkielinen virke. Laita laput oikeaan järjestykseen, jotta niistä muodostuu kieliopillisesti oikea virke. Kokoa virkkeet paperille kirjoitettuna ja värität sanat "omien" värien mukaan.

värit:

- konjunktiot = pienet sanat jotka yhdistävät lauseita = oranssi
- objekti - tekemisen kohde = vihreä
- aika = vaaleanpunainen
- paikka = musta (lyijykynä)
- subjekti = tekijä = sininen
- tapa = ruskea
- predikaatti = tekeminen → apuverbi = keltainen
  päämerbi = punainen

THE DJ PLAYED THE MUSIC TOO LOUDLY AT THE PARTY IN LUTAKKO ON FRIDAY LAST WEEK

MR HILL WRITES SCIENCE FICTION LIKE CRAZY AND PEOPLE LIKE HIS BOOKS

IT HAS RAINED ALL MORNING BUT I MUST WALK TO WORK BECAUSE SOMEBODY STOLE MY BICYCLE