

GROOVING ‘N’ MOVING ENGLISH:

A material package for language showering
in sports focused kindergarten

Master’s Thesis

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| <p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Sanaston oppiminen on tärkeä osa-alue vieraan kielen oppimisessa. Koska sanaston oppiminen vaatii motivaatiota, huomiota ja persoonallistamista, jotta uudet sanat siirtyvät muistiin pysyvästi, tulisi erilaiset oppijat ottaa huomioon opetuksessa. Oppimistyyleistä erityisesti kinesteettinen oppimistyyli jää nykyisissä opetusmateriaaleissa vähälle huomiolle, samoin vahva toiminnallisuus kielten opetuksessa. Näiden huomiointi edistäisi erityisesti varhaista kielenoppimista sekä sanaston oppimista.</p> <p>Tämä tutkielma pyrkii kehittämään opetusmateriaalia varhaiseen kielenoppimiseen käyttämällä metodina kielisuihkutusta ja kohderyhmänä päiväkotikäisiä lapsia. Varhaisen kielenoppimisen tulisi olla lapsille luontaisella tavalla toteutettua oppimista, ja siksi siihen soveltuu hyvin leikkiminen ja liikuntapainotteisuus. Leikin ja toiminnan varjolla uusia sanoja oppii kuin huomaamatta.</p> <p>Oppimateriaali on suunniteltu käytettäväksi liikuntapainotteisessa päiväkodissa, 3–6-vuotiaiden lasten ryhmässä, englannin kielisuihkutukseen liikkuen ja leikkien. Myös tavallisessa englannin opetuksessa alakoulussa oppimateriaalia voi käyttää muun opetusmateriaalin ohella. Materiaali koostuu 40 aktiviteetista, jotka on jaoteltu viiteen kategoriaan. Jokaisessa kategoriassa on oma painotuksensa: rentoutuminen, toiminta, taitojen kehitys, tanssi ja mielikuviutus. Sanastoteemoina ovat mm. värit, numerot, eläimet, kehonosat ja toimintaa ilmaisevat verbit. Kuvat ja symbolit ohjaavat materiaalin käyttöä sanallisten ohjeiden tukena.</p> | |
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1 INTRODUCTION

Learning vocabulary is an essential part of reaching a good competence in second language and a great deal of research has focused on this area of language learning. According to Nation (1990:2), “both learners and researchers see vocabulary as being a very important, if not the most important, element in language learning.” He continues that not having enough vocabulary causes many learners problems with their language use. However, many teachers still lay a greater importance on teaching and learning grammar than on vocabulary acquisition even though learning words produces greater possibilities for communication than any grammar rules without words. David Wilkins sees vocabulary learning even more crucial than grammar: communication lacking vocabulary is lacking more than communication without grammar. (Thornbury, 2007:13). This suggests that increasing vocabulary knowledge instead of focusing too much on grammar might result in more useful language skills and better communicative competence. Thornbury (2007:160) also points out that there might be dependence between grammar and vocabulary in which case an insufficient vocabulary might interfere with learning grammar rules. Moreover, Nation (1990:2) sees that it is also important to make learners use the vocabulary that they have.

Since vocabulary learning – as any learning – requires motivation, attention and personalising, teaching and learning vocabulary through individual learning styles could improve learning results and make vocabulary learning more approachable and meaningful. In addition, if the learners are young, the methods of teaching vocabulary should be especially connected to their experience world. Playing and moving are natural ways for young children to increase their knowledge of the world and more fun they have the better they seem to learn. Connecting vocabulary learning to playing and moving makes learning fun and easy for every kind of young learner and it possibly enhances remembering of the new words. Thus, such teaching material should be easily available to language teachers of young children.

When it comes to young children learning foreign languages, there are issues that need to be taken into account. European Commission (2011:14) has given good guidelines to early language learning. It should be informal and awareness-raising, and the foreign language is used as a tool of communication in everyday situations. The benefits of early language learning include: the possibility to use young children’s natural language learning abilities that lead to

more native-like skills (especially in pronunciation and intonation), the positive effect it has on cultural and linguistic awareness and also on the cognitive development of the child. (European Commission, 2011:14). Language showering is one of the possible methods to offer an early contact to foreign language already before formal language teaching. Early language learning in language showering could be very beneficial since the learning is different than in a classroom due to it being informal and connected to meaningful everyday situations. Language showering has potential to use all sensory channels and different learning styles and also learning new things in a fun, playful way.

The purpose of the present material package is to offer language showering material for kindergarten teachers and English teachers, since there are not yet many ready-made materials available for language showering and teaching English to Finnish children aged 3–6. In addition, the present material package aims at bringing a more functional side to teaching foreign languages by including a great deal of movement and taking different learning styles into account. The goal of the activities in the material is learning English words by moving, playing and having fun at the same time. The target group of the activities is children aged 3–6 that attend sports focused kindergarten. The methods chosen are kinaesthetic for getting the maximum use of the natural learning process of young children. The material focuses on content words, such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, since they carry high information load and their number in a language is not limited. They are also easy to connect with concrete objects and kinaesthetic activities that suit early foreign language learning.

Next, the present report discusses the research behind the material package. The theory background includes information about learning second language vocabulary, young children's learning, learning styles, why movement should be combined with language learning and the guidelines to early language learning. Then, the report moves on to discuss the language showering as a method, and how the theory background can be seen in the choices made in the material package. The aims and target group are also presented and how the material is organised. Finally, the report includes a discussion where the present material package and report are evaluated and suggestions for further study and development of similar materials.

2 LEARNING SECOND LANGUAGE VOCABULARY

In this chapter I will discuss what learning a second language vocabulary means and requires, and how vocabulary is learned and taught.

2.1 Learning task

First I will discuss what kind of task vocabulary learning is and what kind of vocabulary a second language learner needs to learn. According to Thornbury (2007:2), a learner has to develop enough vocabulary knowledge to understand and produce language, remember words and recall them when needed, and also know how to deal with unfamiliar vocabulary. Thornbury (2007:20) also points out that a second language learner and a native speaker differ greatly in their potential vocabulary size. He suggests that an educated native speaker knows around 20,000 words or word families, whereas an adult second language learner can possibly reach a vocabulary of around 5,000 words or more after studying the language for many years – this is basically a question of exposure to the language input. According to Bauer and Nation (1993:253), a word and its derived and inflected forms that can be understood by knowing the base word make a word family; however, sharing a similar meaning is necessary.

Researchers (see for example Nation 1990, Thornbury 2007, Nation & Yongqi Gu 2007:2–5, 22) have seen frequency counts as a good basis for choosing what kind of vocabulary second language learners need. Words can be divided into four groups: high frequency words, low frequency words, academic vocabulary and technical vocabulary. Academic vocabulary is important for learners in upper secondary school and technical vocabulary, which occurs in specialised texts, should be learned with the particular subject content. (Nation 1990:19).

Nation & Yongqi Gu (2007:2) suggest that 80 to 90 percent of words in a text are high frequency words and the majority of high frequency vocabulary consists of content words, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, whereas a smaller amount of high frequency words are function words, such as articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, numbers, auxiliary verbs and adverbial particles. For learners it is crucial to learn the high frequency words first since they can make very little use of a language without this basic knowledge (Nation & Yongqi Gu 2007:4). When considering how many words a second language learner

needs, Thornbury (2007:21) suggests that learning “a core vocabulary of 2,000 high frequency words as soon as possible” would be a good goal. He also points out that it is the minimum and 3,000 word families is the recommended amount among most researchers.

According to Nation (1990:19), language teachers should concentrate on the high frequency words and teaching learning strategies, for example guessing from context, for dealing with the low frequency words. In addition, Nation & Yongqi Gu (2007:22) state that spending time on the high frequency words is worth the teaching and learning time that it takes to master them since the learners will meet and use those words often. However, the same does not concern the low frequency words since there is such a large amount of them, and therefore, they do not deserve much teaching time.

2.2 Word knowledge

Knowing a word is more complex than just knowing its rough translation in one’s first language. According to Thornbury (2007:15–16), at the very basic level knowing a word means knowing its meaning and written and/or spoken form. Other levels include knowing grammatical function, derivations, collocations, connotations, frequency and register of a word. Moreover, Nation (1990:30–33) makes a difference between receptive and productive knowledge of a word since it affects what aspects of a word need to be learned for different types of use. Thornbury (2007:22) also recognises the different depths of vocabulary knowledge. He points out that there are the degree of knowing (receptive and productive knowledge) and also “the degree of control over word knowledge” (readily accessible or prompting required). In addition, Thornbury (2007:15) states that our receptive knowledge is larger than our productive knowledge and usually understanding develops before production.

Moreover, it is important to know how our word knowledge is organised in our mind. According to Thornbury (2007:16–17), the word store in the brain is often called a mental lexicon. It is a system that is highly organised and has a large amount of connections. When searching for a word, both meaning-based and form-based lexicons are activated simultaneously. Activation of a word might also cause an interconnected word to become activated: this happens usually with words that share similar sound structure or meaning. In addition, Thornbury suggests that the word search begins with meaning-based lexicon since it takes less time than a search that starts with the form and leads to many unrelated words.

However, he also emphasises that the two systems work at the same time and that “words are stored as ‘double entries’” in the mental lexicon. What is more, Thornbury states that world knowledge and memory are linked to the mental lexicon, making knowing a word a great deal more than knowing its basic meaning – it can also involve personal experiences and thus make two individuals’ knowledge of a word different. (Thornbury, 2007:17).

What a teacher needs to consider is the learning burden of a word – in other words “what needs to be taught about a word” (Nation 2008:99). This basically means thinking about which aspects the learners would find difficult in learning the word and whether they have previous knowledge of languages that could be helpful. According to Thornbury (2007:27), following aspects could contribute to the learning burden of a word: pronunciation, spelling, length and complexity, grammar, meaning, range, connotation and idiomaticity. In addition, Nation (1990:43) suggests that teaching can also affect the learning burden of a word. For example, teaching opposites such as *long* and *short* at the same time can cause some learners to cross-associate the words, and thus, make the learning more challenging for them. The effort needed to learn the meanings of the opposites becomes greater because the similarities of the words make the association strong and the differences cause interference. The same applies to words that share a similar word form. The solution to the problem of cross-association is that the words should be taught separately – first establishing one meaning-form link and then the other one. Furthermore, there should be some time between teaching the words that are associated with each other and also presenting the words in different contexts make the learning burden smaller. (Nation, 1990:45–49). However, teaching words in semantic pairs or group has also its supporters.

2.3 How is vocabulary learned

In this chapter I will discuss the principles of vocabulary learning. According to Thornbury (2007:144–145), good vocabulary learners pay attention to the following aspects of words: spelling, pronunciation, constituents, stress, similarities and differences in meaning, connotations, style and associations. Good learners also make good guesses with the help of context, use coping strategies, do repetitive practice, and use dictionaries and memorising techniques. All this suggests that they work with words independently and teaching learning techniques might help learners that do not do this automatically. Moreover, Nation & Yongqi Gu (2007:92–93) suggest that teachers should teach learning strategies to enhance learner

autonomy since managing their own learning can be challenging for learners. Individuals also differ in this respect; individual learning styles and personality affect self-management. According to Nation (2001:394–395), attitudes, awareness and capability are factors that the development of learner autonomy depends on.

Nation (1990:2) states that there are two types of vocabulary learning, direct and indirect (also referred to as intentional and incidental learning). Direct learning concentrates on vocabulary itself, whereas indirect learning focuses on something else, for example understanding a text. According to Nation (1990:3), both are important parts of vocabulary acquisition, but indirect learning should be given much more time than deliberately learning vocabulary.

Another important distinction is whether the vocabulary is learned for receptive use or for productive use. “Receptive learning involves being able to recognize a word and recall its meaning when it is met. Productive learning involves what is needed for receptive learning plus the ability to speak or write needed vocabulary at the appropriate time“ (Nation, 1990:5). Speaking and writing activities enhance the productive learning and the aim should be the quality of the gained vocabulary. Reading and listening, on the other hand, enrich the receptive vocabulary and the amount of words acquired is a desirable outcome. Moreover, “meeting the words in a variety of contexts and having to use some of them to express new ideas” is important for successful vocabulary learning. (Nation, 1990:5–6).

Furthermore, one of the key factors in vocabulary learning is memory – remembering and recalling the words when needed. Memory is usually divided into systems with different functions: the short-term store, working memory and long-term memory (Thornbury, 2007:23). According to Thornbury (2007:23), the role of the working memory in vocabulary learning is important since it is where we process and manipulate information which leads to learning and understanding. Also, the articulatory loop and mental sketch pad have their part in vocabulary acquisition as they contribute to the functions of the working memory. The phonological representation of a word keeps repeating in the articulatory loop and it makes it possible to hold a word in the working memory. Thornbury suggests that the length of the loop could predict the ability to learn languages. The mental sketch pad deals with images and it can be utilized by using visual mnemonics. (Thornbury, 2007:23).

When discussing remembering and recalling words we are mostly concerned with how to get the words permanently into our long-term memory and how to not forget the words that we have stored there. Thornbury (2007:24–27) sums up some of the principles involved in learning and remembering a word as follows: repetition, retrieval, spacing, pacing, use, cognitive depth, personal organising, imaging, mnemonics, motivation, attention/arousal and affective depth. Repetition and retrieval are key factors in learning vocabulary, and Thornbury (2007:24) and Nation (2008:103, 1990:43–45) both emphasise the fact that words need to be encountered many times in order for them to be learned and remembered. The encounters should not be very far apart at first, but later they should be spaced with increasing intervals. Moreover, Nation (2008:113) states that distributing the learning like this is more effective than learning a word intensively.

What is more, learning and remembering a word is also personal. Thornbury (2007:24–25) suggests that individual differences and learning styles affect memorising and processing of words and there should, therefore, be opportunities for learners to do it at their own pace. In addition, personal organising and making cognitive decisions about a word makes it easier to remember: for example, using new words to make up own sentences or deciding on the part of speech of a word. Making emotional decisions about words can also affect how memorable they are – if the emotional load of a word is strong, recalling the word is then easier. Furthermore, there are memory ‘tricks’ that could be used for learning words, such as visualising or connecting a mental picture to a word. These memory leads are more effective when self-generated. (Thornbury, 2007:25–26).

However, forgetting is also inevitable. According to Thornbury (2007:26), “It has been estimated that up to 80 per cent of material is lost within 24 hours of initial learning, but that then the rate of forgetting levels out.” Insufficient recycling and subsequent learning might be reasons behind this, and Thornbury suggests that reviewing the learned words in different ways or in different contexts and not teaching words with similar meanings together might reduce the problem of forgetting. Also, learners need to use the words in addition to encountering them (Nation, 1990:6; Thornbury, 2007:25).

2.4 Teaching vocabulary

Next, I will discuss what should be considered when teaching vocabulary, the role of teaching vocabulary and how vocabulary could be presented. Furthermore, I will present some task types for vocabulary teaching.

Firstly, Nation (2008:104–105) suggests that when planning vocabulary teaching, possibilities for both incidental and intentional learning should be considered since they complement each other and are not exclusive. Moreover, before the learners have good enough language skills to do incidental vocabulary learning while reading and listening, they benefit from intentional vocabulary learning. In addition, Nation's (2001:2–3, 390) approach to language teaching and deliberate teaching of vocabulary consists of four strands that should be balanced across the teaching: language-focused learning, meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output and fluency development. Language-focused learning strand includes direct teaching of vocabulary and the focus of learning is on the words, for example their meaning, form and use. Meaning-focused input means learning from listening and reading, whereas meaning-focused output comes through communication and writing activities, which strengthens the productive knowledge of words. With both meaning-focused input and output, the focus is on the message, understanding and noticing and they need to be comprehensible for the learning to occur: this means that there should not be too much unknown vocabulary or otherwise the learning becomes language -focused. Moreover, fluency development means practicing with familiar items so that the usage becomes more fluent when the words are actually needed. What is more, time should be equally divided between the four strands; deliberate learning of words and focus on vocabulary itself should only take about 25 per cent of the class time. Vocabulary needs to be rehearsed also through the three other strands that support incidental learning.

According to Nation (2008:97), learners benefit most from vocabulary teaching when it is relevant and useful to them, especially when doing message-focused activities. The teacher also needs to decide which words deserve teaching time. High frequency words are useful and, therefore, deserve to be focused on, whereas it is enough to quickly give attention to the low frequency words when needed so that the activity does not get disturbed. Some ways of doing this are, for example, using an L1 translation, synonym, simple definition, demonstration,

picture, or give the meaning of the word parts. (Nation, 2008:97–98,103). The teacher should also consider the learning burden of a word and concentrate on the difficulties the word brings to the learners (Nation 2008:113). In addition, avoiding interference is also important. Nation and Yongqi Gu (2007:123–124) suggest that cross-association, failure to remember the words and lack of fluency of access might relate to interference. To avoid or reduce interference the learners are experiencing, the teacher can teach and establish one of the cross-associated items first and then introduce the other. Mnemonic techniques and emphasising the syntagmatic relationship could also be helpful (Nation and Yongqi Gu, 2007:124).

However, teaching vocabulary deliberately has its limitations. According to Nation (2008:97), intentional vocabulary teaching can only provide a small amount of information about a word at a time. Also, extensive reading and listening that are sources of incidental learning share this limitation to some extent. Moreover, word knowledge has a cumulative aspect to it and it increases with the amount of encounters with the word: teaching can only start this cumulative process and more encounters are needed. Nation (2008:97) suggests that meaning-focused input and output, fluency development and deliberate study create possibilities for following encounters. Furthermore, Nation and Yongqi Gu (2007:118) also emphasise the importance of meeting the words often and in a variety of contexts since the context strengthens learning and knowledge of the word.

As already discussed, vocabulary knowledge has many layers and remembering words depends on repetition and retrieval. Thus, presenting a word for a first time and reviewing old words and learning more about them are both important parts of vocabulary teaching. According to Nation (1990:6–7), establishing vocabulary is very important since otherwise the effort spend in increasing vocabulary will be of no use when the words are forgotten. Also, further attention to known words makes it possible for learners to learn more about the words and relate the new knowledge to the old. The first introduction of a word does not have this benefit. When a part of the word is mastered, for example the meaning or one of the meanings, the learner can then focus on other features such as collocations of the word. (Nation, 1990:6–7).

When presenting vocabulary to the learners, there are many aspects that should be considered (Thornbury, 2007:75–77). Firstly, there is a decision whether to present the meaning or the form first. If the meaning is presented first, there is a need for the form and the mind is then more efficient in processing the presentation and remembering it. If the form is presented first,

preferably in a context, it allows the learners to come up with the meaning. Secondly, the teacher needs to decide how the meaning and form are presented. Thornbury (2007:77) suggests that meaning can be presented through translation, real things, pictures, actions, gestures, definitions and situations. He acknowledges that translation is the most used and direct way of communicating meaning to a monolingual group of learners, but he also points out that it is important that learners develop their second language lexicon so that it does not rely on the first language lexicon. In addition, if no effort is needed for learning the meaning, it might make the word less memorable.

Other options that Thornbury (2007:78–79) suggests for presenting meaning – and also reviewing it – could include visual aids such as flashcards or drawings, for example, since those are helpful to memorisation. In addition, using words to explain and define the meaning of a new word is another alternative, which can also be used with the other ways of presenting meaning. Verbal presentation can involve for example contextualising the word by giving an example situation, which would be even more memorable if the learners or the teacher have self experienced it. Furthermore, example sentences can be used for presenting meaning since then the new word occurs in a typical context where it is used. Using example sentences gives the learners an opportunity to have many repetitions of the target word and to use induction, especially if the sentences are cumulative. What is more, the learners receive information about the variety of the contexts where the word is used and also of its form and grammar. Presenting meaning can also be done by giving a synonym, antonym or superordinate term of the new word and they do not require much time, whereas elaborate definitions that are not as effortless have the advantage of providing information about the different meanings of the word. (Thornbury, 2007:81–84). On the other hand, Nation and Yongqi Gu (2007:116) suggest that short, simple and clear definitions are best for teaching children.

Presenting the form of a new word includes deciding whether to present the spoken form or the written form and which one should be presented first (Thornbury, 2007:77). Considering how words are stored in our mental lexicon and remembered, teachers should direct learners' attention to the sound structure, stress and shape of a word, and this could be done by using listening drills and oral drills. As mentioned, the articulatory loop plays a part in memorising words, and thus, teachers can take it into consideration by allowing learners to have some time to process the new word that they have heard before they repeat it. In addition, boardwork can also be used for giving attention to word form, for example by using phonemic script or

marking the primary stress when discussing pronunciation of a word. (Thornbury 2007:84–86). Furthermore, Nation and Yongqi Gu (2007:75) state that if the spoken and written forms of a word are well established in the mental lexicon, it enhances the learning of the word and learners are more confident in using the word productively. It is, therefore, relevant to direct some focus on the spelling-pronunciation relationship. Teachers can do this by asking learners to spell a new word after they have heard it or try to pronounce it when they see it written, for example. What is more, Thornbury (2007:87) suggests that meaning of the word might be easier to recognise from the written form than it is from the spoken form. Thus, presenting the written form in addition to the spoken form helps learners to remember the meaning of the word.

Since learning vocabulary needs involvement from the learner, teachers should take this into consideration also during presentation of new vocabulary. Elicitation has many advantages: for example, learners are more active and attentive, their speaking opportunities increase and the teacher can check the learners' understanding. Also, personalising new words activates learners and enhances memorisation. This could be done by making association networks or other personally relevant tasks. Furthermore, the teacher can use peer teaching to activate the learners. For example, when doing information gap exercises, the learners need to teach each other. (Thornbury, 2007:87–89).

Nation and Yongqi Gu (2007:54–55, 67–68, 70) suggest some task and activity types that vocabulary learning could include: experience tasks, classifying items, and shared tasks. Firstly, experience tasks rely on stimulating learners' previous experience and preteaching. Linked skills activities could be used for executing experience tasks: the topic stays the same, whereas the skills needed in the task vary (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The approach takes advantage of previous knowledge making the last task an experience task. This basically means that the vocabulary is already familiar to the learner at the last stage. Vocabulary learning benefits from experience tasks since there are opportunities for guessing from the context, repetition, encounters in different contexts, and establishing word knowledge. Secondly, in classifying activities learners classify or reorganise words. These tasks contribute to vocabulary learning by strengthening several aspects of word knowledge according to the task at hand, for example form and meaning. Thirdly, a shared task means that learners work with each other when doing the task: understanding and learning increases since sharing creates possibilities for explaining ideas and negotiating the meaning in the group. Other

advantages are repetition and enhancing productive use of target words. In addition, according to Nation and Yongqi Gu (2007:49), vocabulary learning also benefits from extensive reading: there are opportunities for indirect learning, familiar words are strengthened, and better reading skills and fluency can be gained.

Thornbury (2007:93–101) also discusses activities and tasks suitable for vocabulary learning. He points out that it is important to integrate new knowledge to the old to ensure learning and remembering of new words, and therefore, he recommends integration tasks such as decision-making and production tasks for vocabulary learning. Firstly, decision-making tasks require different amount of cognitive processing: some examples include identifying, selecting, matching, sorting, and ranking and sequencing. All of the above mentioned task types could be used on same words to enhance learning and remembering. However, making decisions in these task types requires mostly receptive knowledge, and Thornbury suggests that production tasks such as sentence and text completion tasks (gap-fills) and creation tasks could be used to incorporate new words into learners' productive knowledge, either orally or in writing. In creation tasks learners make their own sentences or stories where the target words are used, for example, creating a context for the words.

Comparing these suggestions to the task types suggested by Nation and Yongqi Gu (2007: 54–55, 67–68, 70), one can see that they share similarities and all of them emphasise repetition and using different skills in doing the activities. In addition, games are one historical task type used for vocabulary learning (Thornbury, 2007:102). Games that require recalling of words (at speed) or making-multiple decisions about them are the most useful ones for learning purposes, but teachers should consider the amount of games used since they usually do not provide opportunities for deep processing and meeting words in their normal context.

To sum up the teaching aspect of vocabulary learning, according to Thornbury (2007:22), the teacher has an important role in supporting motivation for vocabulary learning and in teaching learning strategies so that learners can become more independent. Furthermore, Thornbury (2007:159–160) suggests that time spend on vocabulary teaching at the beginning of language learning leads to later language proficiency, and therefore, teachers should not feel bad about spending time on it. He also proposes that even learning the grammar rules might be dependent on having enough vocabulary.

3 YOUNG CHILDREN AND LEARNING

3.1 Learning styles

According to Prashnig (2000:29–31, 45), there is a need for research evidence that there is no “best way” to learn. People could learn anything if the teaching style matches their preferred learning style and they feel more motivated when the individual differences are taken into account in learning situations since it decreases stress and frustration. She also states that successful learning is a result of knowing one’s strengths and using them. However, traditional teaching methods do not suit all pupils, which makes them feel unintelligent and lose their motivation.

More research on learning styles is needed, but defining what they are is challenging. According to Dörnyei (2005:122–124), they are not the same as learning strategies, which demand more consciousness, and not quite like innate abilities, but rather something in between. Also, learning styles interact with situations without being dependent upon them; they are more stable than learning strategies but can be shaped by educational experiences. Furthermore, there is a connection between learning styles and personality dimensions. These aspects cause the use of different terms when referring to learning styles. Defining learning styles is hard since they are related to all the aspects that are also involved in learning: perception, cognition, affect, and behaviour. (Dörnyei, 2005:122–124).

Our society emphasises seeing and hearing and almost all of the current teaching methods are based on these sensory channels. However, most children prefer kinaesthetic and tactile learning styles, and visual and auditory learning styles develop later (Prashnig, 2000:157, 191). Prashnig suggests that the best way for the brain to process information is when many sensory channels are used, preferably more than two. If pupils become aware of their preferred learning styles, they have the opportunity to use the information to choose ways that lead to success in learning and they avoid frustration of not knowing what to do to be successful (Prashnig, 2000:199, 201). Especially pupils with low self-esteem due to previous failures to learn may benefit greatly from knowing their strengths and preferred learning styles.

Prashnig (2000:135) suggests that self-knowledge and understanding learning styles might be the only way to solve problems that many schools are experiencing all over the world. Moreover, flexibility and self-knowledge are the most important traits in the future considering the fast changing world and the changing nature of work (Prashnig, 2000:397). In addition, it is important to remember that learning styles are personal preferences and are not as such indicators of success or intelligence; it is merely a question of individual differences. However, all learning styles do not match equally well the surrounding setting, which makes the concept of learning styles less value-neutral. (Dörnyei 2005:122).

Information that learning style research of over twenty year has provided can be used in teaching by matching teaching styles to pupils' learning styles or teachers can guide pupils to utilize the strengths of their preferred learning styles. According to Prashnig, mismatch of teaching and learning styles is most apparent when pupils have kinaesthetic or tactile learning styles, whereas successful learners usually share their teacher's learning styles. Moreover, Prashnig states that matching the teaching and learning styles leads to better interaction atmosphere in the classroom and better learning results. Also, learners become more creative, they remember better, their motivation and sense of responsibility increases and learning becomes enjoyable. This is possible if the teachers are flexible with their teaching methods and strategies. (Prashnig 2000:267–269, 289, 409).

It is important for a teacher to know what makes the pupils succeed or fail to succeed and how they could reach their full learning potential. If teachers do not take individual differences into account, many pupils will stay as underachievers and consider themselves as failure. Learning style research has shown that there is a difference between the learning styles of successful students and the learning styles of underachievers and school drop-outs. (Prashnig, 2000:107, 141).

In addition, music could be used for remembering difficult concepts since it enhances quick assimilation of information and storing it in the long term memory (Prashnig, 2000:241). Many pupils and students benefit from background music since they think and remember things better, but some people need silence in order for them to concentrate and learn difficult new things. However, they also benefit from music when checking learning and strengthening it (Prashnig, 2000:243).

3.2 Learning by doing: a link between motoric and linguistic skills

For children, using body is a natural way of expressing emotions and interacting with adults (Saarinen, 2014:26). The co-operation of different sensory channels and motoric skills creates a basis for language learning and learning in general and especially tactile and kinaesthetic sensations have a great importance when it comes to children. If a child has problems in the motoric development, there will be problems on other areas of learning as well. (Pulli, 2001:21–22; Karvonen, 2009:85). Thus, motoric and language skills are connected in an important way. Especially children with speech and perceptive challenges need to use their bodies when learning about languages. Movement and functionality helps them learn and understand the meaning of terms and concepts by making them more concrete (Pulli, 2001:111–112). In addition, different learning styles can be taken into account when giving instructions for moving: the instructor can use pictures or photos, lights, shadows, sounds, music, speech, conversation, concrete miniatures, and show example. (Pulli, 2001:49).

According to Ahonen et al. (2005:22-24), studies show that motoric and linguistic functions and development are connected. It has been discovered that cerebellum not only controls motoric functions but also has tasks in linguistic functions, visual observations and processing and remembering spatial information. In addition, the left hemisphere that is usually associated with linguistic functions has neural networks that are connected to producing serial motoric functions and perception of speech sounds. This suggests that motoric and linguistic functions are anatomically linked. Moreover, in their theoretical review Moser and Wenger (2005:61) also state that the assumption of this connection is theoretically justified and the empirical data confirms a link between physical exercise and the functioning level of language.

Combining sensations received through one's own body with visual and auditive information adds concrete and touchable aspect to learning. This can be achieved by using tactile-kinaesthetic channel in teaching. Functional teaching helps children find "processes" that promote their cognitive learning and thinking. (Huisman and Nissinen, 2005:37, 46). Moreover, Pulli (2001:5–6) suggests that concrete experiences help children learn about their bodies and emotions and support the development of their thinking and learning to learn. Playing and moving provide great possibilities for these experiences, since moving is a natural way for children to familiarise themselves with the environment, to interact socially, and to learn about themselves. Pulli (2001:21) also adds that since children learn mostly through

sensory channels and motoric skills, they need learning methods that are based on moving and functionality.

According to Pulli (2001:18), **moving as a learning method** means learning situations where children learn, for example languages, while running, jumping, throwing, rolling, climbing, crawling, or otherwise use their whole bodies when they are learning new things. In addition, another term is also useful in this context: **functional learning**. It means learning situations where children are active agents and they use different kinds of concrete objects and have an opportunity to move in the space where the learning occurs. These two learning methods overlap but they also have a bit different perspectives. Pulli (2001:20) also points out that moving while learning creates a fun and motivating learning environment, which is a good basis for positive and encouraging atmosphere that enhances learning. What is more, Karvonen (2009:87) states that the joy of moving has a profound influence on self-esteem, memories and healthy life.

Learning process is affected by not only personal learning styles but also self-esteem and emotions. Pulli (2001:5–6) states that the basic needs that children have are love, care, feeling of being accepted and support for their growth. In addition, Huisman and Nissinen (2005:25) suggest that physical exercise helps children learn about themselves, directions, distances, concepts, limits, location, sizes, quantities, shapes, colours etc. These are basics also in linguistic learning and therefore the possibilities of exercise as a functional teaching method should be emphasized. (Huisman and Nissinen, 2005:25). According to Sura (as cited by Huisman and Nissinen, 2005:31), functional teaching methods suit everyone, but especially boys whose thinking is directed by strong need for action. Something learnt in theory can be practiced with exercise, which promotes understanding. (Huisman and Nissinen, 2005:33).

Anttila (1994:14–17) suggests that children do not classify or choose sensations like adults, but are more open to them. It is natural for them to experience sensations with sensitivity, depth and comprehensiveness. Moreover, organisation of observations is enhanced by concentrating on the sensations that movement produces. This is important since children receive a great deal of information through body movement, and in order to transfer this information into verbal form by using cognitive concepts, it is crucial that structuring actions and observations in the mind is developed. By using many sensory channels in multiple ways, this development is supported. Comprehensiveness of dance is a great way of addressing this. In addition, dancing

helps children familiarise themselves with their bodies and gain more control over it, which leads to a more positive self-image. Other developmental benefits of dancing include for example ability for spatiotemporal orientation, cognitive progress, learning concepts, becoming more social and tolerant, and creativeness. These aspects are also very important in learning languages. (Anttila, 1994:14–17). What is more, the ability of hearing language and word rhythm is enhanced if children hear, observe and act according to different rhythms. (Saarinen, 2014:28).

According to Anttila (2013:42–43), embodied learning (based on sensations, observations and experiences produced by movement and action in the body) can take place anywhere: home, in hobbies, in school etc. Embodied learning can be guided or self-guided, but the focus is on the bodily experiences and sensations, functionality and reflection. Verbalizing the experiences, working in a group and being creative and active supports embodied learning. In her study of integrating dancing into the school life as a form of embodied learning, Anttila (2013:179) found out how the teachers saw embodied learning after the experience of “a dancing school”. The teachers felt that embodied learning was motivating, it has a positive connection to memory and other cognitive functions, and it has possibilities to support every kind of learning in any school subject.

In addition, a key aspect in young children’s learning is repetition that many times includes also imitation. Gaining control of their bodies and the environment is what inspires this repetition. Adults can easily wake up the desire for repetition by using a small clue that the children transforms with their creativity into something that excites them. (Karvonen et al., 2003:80–82). Saarinen (2014:15, 17) also states that children are naturally eager to learn new things, enjoy repetition, and use all of their senses when learning. The more the new things are related to children’s world of experience and children are excited about the activity, more they learn. Using crafts, drama, dance, music and other artistic experiences has an enormous potential to create intensive learning situations where children’s natural abilities are part of the learning process and they can be excited at the same time. In addition, when all the senses are involved in learning, the memory traces are stronger. Thus, it is important to consider these aspects when planning learning situations for children.

3.3 Playing and learning new things

Recent research has shown that learning is most effective when it is fun. Learning should include passion, flow, commitment, play and games – things that motivation psychology, positive psychology, neuroscience and mind philosophy have proven to be key factors in understanding information, learning new skills and creating long-lasting learning experiences. (Järvilehto, 2014:18). According to Karvonen et al. (2003:66–67, 69), research has also shown that children who start their learning through play are more successful in later life since connecting play and teaching has a profound meaning to learning and development. Children's social, cognitive, emotional and psycho-motoric development are all affected by play. It also helps the development of transferring to the level of inner operations supported by speech. The development of thinking and motivation has a crucial need for play. For example, imagination has an important role in growth and life long learning and its meaning has long been underestimated, although it is a basic process that other developing processes lean on. (Karvonen et al., 2003:66–67, 69). Thus, imaginative play is greatly important for developing children.

Moreover, playing is connected to all three sources of inner motivation: autonomy, competence, and a sense of belonging. In addition, it promotes flow experiences, and this intensive concentration leads to more consistent activation of the brain and creating new methods of doing things. Playing is a necessity for well-being and a great basis for creative thinking and efficient learning. (Järvilehto, 2014:113–114, 120). The results of *Tarinan kertojat* -project (Karvonen, 2009:34) suggest that comprehensive learning based on moving and playing is an inspiring and developing way of practicing language skills for 5–6-year-olds, including children who have linguistic problems or lack of motivation. According to Karvonen (2009:37), children with motoric restlessness, concentration or linguistic challenges benefit from adding moving and use of pictures to teaching style that is mainly auditive since then everybody can do the same things and play together using their own competence. Karvonen also found out that children became more positive and had more fun while learning new things, and general calmness in the group situations increased when there was more moving and playing involved.

Karvonen et al. (2003:73–77) states that play creates opportunities for experimenting different kinds of movements and acting in different physical situations. Learning from peer group has

also a big role in children's development and children themselves create their own peer and play culture. Moreover, children learn already from a very early age by watching and imitating each other. Play rituals are usually functional and non-verbal and communication happens through expressions and sounds. In addition, play includes a great deal of humour and physical activity. The variety of physical experiences that play creates supports for example the development of body awareness and control. Karvonen (2009:86) also suggests that using equipment while moving is also beneficial for children's development since it promotes co-operation of different senses and hands and feet. It also helps children to observe space and directions, and control use of force. In addition, using equipment might encourage children who are more timid to move and try out new things.

3.4 Early contact with foreign languages

Most children command the speech sounds and grammatical core structures of their first language before they go to school (Ketonen et al., 2004:33). That is why there is no concern in bringing foreign language learning to children at an earlier age. European Commission (2011:6) defines early language learning as follows:

'Early Language Learning (ELL) at pre-primary level' means systematic awareness-raising or exposure to more than one language taking place in an early childhood education and care setting in a pre-primary school context.

According to European Commission (2011:7–9), early language learning creates a basis for learning languages throughout life and shapes the attitudes towards foreign languages and cultures with awareness of cultural diversity. Moreover, since young children's foreign language learning have similarities with their first language acquisition, it is beneficial to start learning early in order to gain native-like skills, especially in pronunciation and intonation. Since young children have natural abilities to learn intuitively through listening and imitating, early language learning is a great way of developing skills in oral production and understanding of foreign language input. What is more, starting language learning early tends to lead to higher proficiency later in life. In addition, the overall cognitive development of the children can benefit from language learning and the processes it creates in the brain.

Foreign language learning is affected by motivation, linguistic ability, learning strategies, attitude towards the language, and personal characteristics such as self-confidence. (Pitkänen et

al., 2004:81). Researchers in a project *Early Language Learning in Europe* (ELLiE), funded by a European Commission grant, studied whether an earlier start affects language skills in several European countries, the factors contributing in the process, the learner experiences and the learning contexts. The participants were primary school pupils aged 7–8 and there were over 1,400 of them from seven countries. The data about motivation and progress was collected with both qualitative and quantitative methods (case studies, interviews, observations, questionnaires, tasks) and the researchers visited the schools several times. (Enever, 2011:1, 9, 12–13).

One of the findings of the ELLiE project was that in the beginning of foreign language learning young children found learning new vocabulary motivating and it also adds to their confidence of using the language. What the children preferred as a method of learning were games and singing. The sense of achieving new things was important for young children. Moreover, the attitudes when starting to learn a foreign language were very positive and later on they were affected by the knowledge of personal preferences when it comes to the learning process. Young language learners also progress with their metalearning skills and thus are quite early aware of their needs while learning a foreign language. (Enever, 2011:44–46, 58–59, 100, 142).

The findings of the ELLiE project suggest that learner differences affect language learning and achievement significantly and also that this impact grows stronger when the learners become older. In addition, the teacher plays an important role in the early years of foreign language learning. A successful teacher contributes to the positive and safe learning environment, directs the focus and task-involvement of the learners, and also enjoys teaching and finds early language learning beneficial. Other things that affect early language learning and achievement are parents and exposure to the language. (Enever, 2011:44–46, 58–59, 100, 142).

According to European Commission (2011:11), the methods of early language teaching should not be formal, but rather try to raise the awareness of the children so that they understand that there are such things as different languages and they can become interested in finding out more about the similarities and differences between them. European Commission (2011:14) suggests specific criteria for early language learning activities: the foreign language should be used as a communication tool in meaningful contexts (everyday and playful situations) and the teacher should create an engaging environment and support the spontaneous learning of the children.

4 FRAMEWORK OF THE MATERIAL PACKAGE

4.1. Language showering as a method

Language showering is one possibility to offer an early contact to a foreign language. According to Bärlund (2012), language showering consists of short sessions with foreign language input, which makes it different from high level input of immersion. Another aspect that separates immersion and language showering is that in immersion only one language is used, whereas in language showering both the first language of the children and a foreign language are used. Language showering should not be only effortless and included in the daily routines, but also systematic and regular to be called as such. Moreover, the person giving language showering sessions does not have to be a foreign language teacher. Anyone who has knowledge of foreign languages is capable of giving language showering. In addition, one important aim of language showering is to familiarise children with foreign languages and cultures in a fun way through music, play and being together with others. (Bärlund, 2012).

According to Kuutti (2010), even a small encounter with foreign language can leave a positive image of the language and a memory trace for later learning to the children's minds. For example, Näätänen (as cited by Kuutti, 2010) states that hearing speech sounds of a foreign language in early childhood helps language learning at later age. Doing language showering when children are under six year olds takes advantage of this biological aspect of language learning. Moreover, Pirttinokka (2012) brings out that hearing foreign language even without understanding develops awareness of differences between languages. Another positive aspect of language showering, as suggested by Kuutti (2010), is that language showering can be utilised as a first step for taking part in immersion programmes that some kindergartens and schools offer.

Language showering can take place for example in an after-school club, and it is a popular setting to use language showering as a method. Pirttinokka (2012) studied second graders in primary schools that attended an after-school club by reflecting her own pedagogy and interviewing some of the children. The maximum number of children in a language club was 14 and the club was held once a week. The languages used were French, German, Spanish, English, and Swedish. Playing, crafts and music were used as methods in the language

showering. In her study, Pirttinokka (2012) found out that an after-school language club was a nice place to learn foreign language in the second graders' opinion. Voluntary attendance and playing made the learning fun and motivating for the children. The results of the study suggest that the after-school club with foreign languages created a desire to study languages later on, which means it is a good way to affect second grader's language choices in school setting. According to Pirttinokka (2012), after-school club with foreign languages is very important in waking up and developing children's language awareness and motivating to find an interest towards foreign languages and cultures.

In Finland, language showering has been tested in many places: for example in Jyväskylä, Helsinki, Saarijärvi, Kokkola and Mikkeli, but also in smaller places. (Kuutti, 2010). Since 2010, the city of Jyväskylä has offered language showering in different languages for the children in primary schools. Foreign language students of University of Jyväskylä and even students of sports education have been able to participate in a language showering course. During this course the students plan and execute a language showering programme for primary school pupils on first to third grade when the pupils attend an after-school club. The experiences with language showering in Jyväskylä have mostly been only positive, and functionality has been a key aspect to create these experiences. (Bärlund, 2012).

Furthermore, many students have written articles about their language showering projects on the website of *Kielikoulutuspolitiikan verkosto*. From her own experience on doing language showering in Jyväskylä, Pynnönen (2010) reports that the games and plays she used did not have to be complex to be interesting to the children. The simplest ones were usually the most fun and then the language was also better stored in the memory. Moreover, Kallonen (2011) reports having similar experiences during her language showering sessions. Activities combining moving and action with the language worked the best and the learning became effortless and meaningful for the children. As Kuutti (2010) expresses it, children are like sponges that absorb the language and their excitement is very infectious, and therefore, we should utilize this period when their learning ability and desire are at their best.

In 2009–2011 language showering was one of the methods used in *Kielitivoli*, a project created to develop the teaching of foreign languages in comprehensive schools in Finland. One of the objectives of *Kielitivoli* was to look at the possibilities to start foreign language learning earlier than it normally does in Finnish schools, and language showering was one interpretation to

target this aim. When considering actions that should be kept after the project, language showering was ranked the third highest (marketing and collaboration took the first two places) by the co-ordinators and administrative contact persons of the first stage participant communities. The second stage co-ordinators estimated the language and culture showers even higher than marketing. In addition, material for language showering was made during this project in the schools that participated, but it was mostly done for the pupils' use. Furthermore, there were suggestions for further development which included moulding language learning and teaching more strongly towards emphasizing oral communication, functionality and practicality. Motivating and integrating school subjects should also have a bigger role. Moreover, language showering was strongly supported by the co-ordinators and it could begin already before preschool. Language clubs should also get their own national core curriculum to make planning easier at the local level. (Tuokko et al., 2012:47, 49, 71-73, 78).

Kokkola has been chosen here as an example of using language showering in a kindergarten setting because of its relevance to the present material package. The city was mentioned in the *Good practices* part of the project report: they had native Spanish and Russian speakers that took part in the daily life of the kindergarten, which provided a great opportunity for the children to acquire the foreign language in a similar way to their first language. It was reported that the children, the parents and the kindergarten staff were all excited to take part in the language showering. Moreover, also other units that took part in *Kielitivoli* were interested in this type of language learning while doing everyday things such as playing. Positive experiences with language showering have also been reported in other cities – mostly involving pupils in the lower grades of comprehensive school. (Tuokko et al., 2012:92).

4.2. Combining vocabulary learning and movement

The present material package takes into consideration many aspects of vocabulary learning research as well as knowledge on how young children learn. The aspects that the material specifically targets are concreteness, children's world of experience, creating a fun learning situation, using all sensory channels, remembering words, repetition, and supporting the overall development of the children. Next, these will be discussed in the light of the choices made in the material package.

Firstly, concreteness is taken into consideration by the use of content words, such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, in the vocabulary of the material package. As Nation & Yongqi Gu (2007:2) state it, content words form the majority of high frequency words that cover up to 90 percent of the words in texts. Thus, it is very useful to focus on those words. Moreover, content words are easy to combine with movement and functional teaching, and movement adds a great deal to the words becoming more concrete for the children. (Pulli, 2001:111–112). Secondly, the chosen vocabulary and activities relate well to the children's world of experience. Colours, numbers, body parts and animals are things that interest small children also in their first language, and therefore it is natural to start learning a foreign language with the same words that the children are already interested in. In addition, playing is very important for children, and since it includes humour and movement as Karvonen et al. (2003:73–77) state it, the material also has these elements of children's world.

Thirdly, having fun while learning leads to good learning results, and this is why the material emphasises the fun aspect of the activities. If the children are not enjoying the activity, there is little point in doing it. Recalling a word also becomes easier if fun learning situation adds to the emotional load of the word. (Thornbury, 2007:25–26). Moreover, the activities that were chosen are adapted from activities that literature suggests for kindergarten teachers and others who work with children. Thus, they already are meant for the target group that this language showering material is made for and are most likely suitable for them. Moving and having fun during the activities enhances learning by creating a positive and encouraging atmosphere. (Pulli, 2001:20). Thornbury (2007:22) states also that supporting motivation for vocabulary learning is important.

In addition, the adults' role is important while doing the activities, since children are masters of imitating other people and in many of the activities the adult is the one setting the example for the movement that concretises the English word. Besides performing the example movements themselves, the adults can also use pictures and real objects of the meaning of the words, as instructed in the material package. According to Thornbury (2007:77), it is important to develop the second language lexicon not to be too much dependent on the first language lexicon. The decision that movement and pictures are used for giving the meaning of the words in the activities of the material package agrees with Nation and Yongqi Gu's (2007:116) suggestion that short, simple and clear definitions are best for teaching children.

What is more, the material package takes into consideration all sensory channels and learning styles; for example, the English words are said aloud and pictures and example movements are used to convey the meaning of the word. Also, the kinaesthetic learning style has been given a great role in the material, which some other materials for teaching foreign languages clearly lack. According to Prashnig (2000:157, 191), this is an excellent decision, since kinaesthetic and tactile learning styles are preferred by most children when visual and auditory learning styles develop later, and also if many sensory channels are used, the brain processes the new information better. Moreover, Saarinen (2014:15, 17) points out that the memory traces become stronger if all senses are involved in the learning process. Creativity, memory and motivation increase by the use of different learning styles, and thus, all the activities include movement and use of all senses.

When discussing memory and its role in vocabulary learning, the articulatory loop and mental sketch pad were introduced earlier (Thornbury, 2007:23). By giving the oral form of the word (pronunciation) and using pictures or example movements (explanation of the meaning), these two parts of working memory are activated in doing the activities of the material package. Remembering words long term also benefits from the use of music which also enhances quick assimilation (Prashnig, 2000:241). In the material package some activities are especially directed towards using music and movement together, but the user has the freedom to determine if they want to add music to the other activities as well.

According to Thornbury (2007:24) and Nation (2008:103, 1990:43–45), repetition and retrieval are very important for vocabulary learning. Also variety of contexts where the word is met should be taken into consideration when repeating learned words. (Nation and Yongqi Gu, 2007:118). Thus, the material package focuses on only a couple of vocabulary themes (e.g. colours, numbers, body parts, animals) and then the themes are repeated in different kind of activities. What is more, there are also a couple of activities in the material that could be used for revision of different vocabulary themes. In addition, the repetition and its importance are also mentioned in the instructions on how to use the material package and its activities. Since children naturally enjoy repetition (Saarinen, 2014:15, 17) there should be no problem with motivating the target group to repeat activities that have been done previously.

Finally, the overall development of the children can be supported with this material package. According to Baker (2000:1-5), thinking is definitely affected by knowing more than one

language well. More flexible and creative thinking might be the result of knowing several words for one idea and this helps to develop better language awareness one may find useful when learning also other languages. In addition, motoric and linguistic functions and developments being connected in the brain (Ahonen et al., 2005:22-24), it is well justified to combine early language learning and functional, movement based teaching of English words, as has been done in the material package. Moreover, Huisman and Nissinen (2005:37, 46) point out that children's cognitive learning and thinking benefits from the finding of mental processes that functional teaching can help to discover.

Activation of language learning processes and the foreign language lexicon in the brain at an early age might have a memory trace that can become helpful later in life, making early language learning a great opportunity to utilise the natural adaptability of the children. Also, Thornbury (2007:159–160) suggests that time spend on vocabulary teaching at the beginning of language learning leads to later language proficiency. Even learning the grammar rules might be dependent on having enough vocabulary. Thus, the present material package is based on knowledge provided by different areas of research and combines the knowledge into easy, ready-to-be-used form for a teacher.

4.3 Aims and target group

This material is designed to be used in a Finnish kindergarten setting and its target group is more specifically children aged 3–6 that attend sports focussed kindergarten. The target user of this material is a kindergarten teacher who does not necessarily have qualifications to teach English, but who wishes to include foreign language input in the daily life of a kindergarten without much extra effort for designing material that suits the purpose. In addition, focussing on sports is an aspect that creates a specific need for activities including a great deal of movement, which makes this material package ideal for both language learning and physical exercise at the same time.

The purpose of this material is to offer a collection of low input language showering activities that could be used separately from each other and are easy to use when it comes to including them in the daily life of a kindergarten. The short attention span of the target group is also taken into account, since most of the activities take only about 5 to 15 minutes. The short amount of time required makes it also possible to have the language showering session

whenever it best suits the timetable of the kindergarten. Moreover, the equipment that some of the activities include are easily available to kindergartens and usually kindergartens already have, for example, beanbags.

However, there is a great deal of options to use this material for many types of groups that wish to learn English vocabulary. By changing the activities slightly one could use them with different age groups and with different vocabulary. The only limit is one's imagination. Also, different uses are encouraged. English teachers can pick suitable activities to enrich their regular teaching and the activities could be used, for example, in a workshop setting in schools as a way of combining PE and English.

The main goal of the activities is learning English words by moving, playing and having fun at the same time. Moreover, the material aims at developing children's language awareness, knowledge of foreign languages, rehearsing their oral production and pronunciation of English words and improving their listening skills in both Finnish and English. This material as a package offers the user a great opportunity for creating a setting of systematic foreign language input that enriches the daily life of young children without any formal teaching and learning.

The methods for vocabulary learning in this material package are kinaesthetic for getting the maximum use of the natural learning process of young children. Playing, having fun, learning by doing and using their whole body is normal for children and incorporating these aspects to vocabulary learning makes the learning motivating, effortless and enjoyable. Repetition when using the activities is also encouraged by giving several activities for each vocabulary group to enhance vocabulary learning and memory traces.

4.4 Organisation of the material package

The material package consists of five parts: how to use the material, an example letter to the parents, an activity list with guiding symbols, the activities and instructions, and the sources used for creating the activities. *How to use the material* explains the idea of the package, the basic principles behind designing it, and also its organisation.

There are 40 individual activities in the package for learning words such as colours, numbers, animals and body parts. The activities are divided into five different categories: *Just relax, Fun*

work out, *Skills lab*, *Get the groove on*, and *Creating images*. Activities for relaxing and calming down are found in *Just relax* section, *Fun work out* includes activities with more action, and motoric skills can be developed with activities in *Skills lab* part of the material. Music and dancing are presented in the *Get the groove on* activities, and *Creating images* support the imagination of the children. As can be seen from above, the material package has a variety of different type of activities for specific vocabulary groups, and thus, creates possibilities for repetition and making memory traces stronger with different kinds of movements.

In addition, there is a list of the activities with symbols representing each vocabulary group. This should make it easier for the user to flip through the pages of the activity instructions and see with a quick glance what kind of activity is in question without reading the instructions. For example, an activity that has a symbol of a hand includes body parts in the target vocabulary. If one finds this activity on a page marked with a symbol for *Get the groove on* (the dancing penguins), the activity has something to do with music, dancing and learning the body parts. The activity list itself can be used as a help when planning the entire path of the language showering, since it gives a good idea of the different types of activities that could be used for learning colours or numbers, for example.

On the instruction pages every activity includes vocabulary that is meant to be used while doing the activity, what that specific activity aims at, how long it approximately takes, materials that are needed, how many children can participate at a time, and instructions on how the activity should go. Some activities also include pictures for clarifying some of the movements or the idea of the activity. However, if the user finds the explanation inadequate, there is no problem in interpreting the instructions as the user sees fit. In fact, modifying the activity according to the situation and participants is very much advisable – the material package can also be seen as rough guidelines.

At the end, there is a list of sources included to give credit to the original designers of the activities, from which the activities of the present material package have been adapted. The sources that have been used have a great deal of good and similar type of activities to be used in a kindergarten setting, and it is encouraged to have a look at these options if the user wishes to do so.

5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter I will discuss the process of creating the material package, its strengths, and its limitations. Furthermore, I will suggest how the material package could be developed and areas of further research.

The process of creating the present material package started with reading previous research on second language vocabulary learning and making decisions about the perspective of the material package itself. There is an existing need for teaching materials that take the kinaesthetic learning style and learner differences into account without excluding anyone from group activities. The ultimate idea for the material came from a very practical place: from working in a sports focused kindergarten with children aged 3–6. Seeing how much fun the children had while playing together and how much they learned from it made it apparent that they would be excellent in learning English words if it was done in a way that was effortless and suited them naturally.

Having experience in doing language showering activities one summer for first and second graders with a focus on movement, I already knew the challenges of creating suitable activities for the purpose I had in mind. What is more, the method of language showering was familiar to me, and since there was a great deal of positive experiences with using it, I decided to use it in the present material package as well. The decision to use movement while learning English vocabulary was very natural. The target group has a short attention span and it is very difficult to keep them still and focused if they are not allowed to move. Therefore, the moving became a great part of the activities and because it makes the words more concrete, it suits the target group extremely well. I also have a very strong background in dancing, and I decided to use this strength to enhance the material package even further.

The purpose of the present material package was to create easy to use teaching material for English language showering in sports focused kindergarten. There has been a great need for teaching materials for early language teaching and teaching that takes into consideration also kinaesthetic learning style. Combining these aspects to vocabulary learning offers a new perspective to teaching materials of English as a foreign language. Moreover, the person using the material package does not need to be an English teacher, but having some specific skills on

working with young children, such as the main target group of the material, would be very beneficial. Furthermore, one of the strengths of the material package is its adaptability and flexibility. The activities can be used separately, since they are not dependent on each other. For example, an English teacher in primary school can use them as an extra material in addition to the books and other materials that are used. Also, if there is a need to combine PE and English lessons, these activities are very suitable to that purpose as well.

Since memorisation is a key aspect in vocabulary learning, the present material package offers a memorable way to learn new words. The activities naturally enhance remembering of the new words and it is fun at the same time – which is something that many current materials are lacking when it comes to teaching vocabulary. Moreover, the recycling of the words in different activities supports the memory traces, and so does the repetition and revision that is built in the material package. Attaching fun and personal emotions to doing the activities strengthens the learning of the new words. Thus, the material package is supported by the well known facts about second language vocabulary learning.

However, there are some limitations to the material package as well. The activities as such have not been tested, although the basis of the activities strongly lies on activities that have already been made for the target group with a slightly different perspective. This would suggest that the activities work well for children aged 3–6, but the learning results of the English words after the language showering should be tested before gaining more credibility as a teaching material of a foreign language. Another limitation is that the material package focuses only on learning words in specific themes (colours, numbers, body parts etc.). More material should be created for other vocabulary themes, grammar, and speaking. The choice to use these themes was based on the thought that they work well as a starting point for foreign language learning, the target group would find them interesting, and they also go along the stage of development of the target group. To continue the vocabulary learning after using these activities, more teaching material should be created. In addition, the comprehensiveness of the background theory could be improved. Although bringing different perspectives to the table, the depth could be better and the background theory could rely more on different types of sources. However, the choices made in creating the material package followed the guidelines of the theory quite well.

Considering the strengths and limitations of the present material package, I suggest that more similar materials should be made for language teaching. Since language showering as a method is still finding its form, more research on it is needed. Furthermore, different age groups and language skills should have their own teaching materials developed with the focus on functionality. I would also suggest that the future research should study the use of movement in language teaching and learning. The existing research seems very promising on its benefits to the learner – and especially to different types of learners.

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APPENDIX

GROOVING 'N' MOVING ENGLISH

Language showering
in sports focused kindergarten

Teacher's material

Created by:
Tiia Härkönen



CONTENTS

How to Use the Material Package

A Letter to the Parents

Activity List

Activities and Instructions

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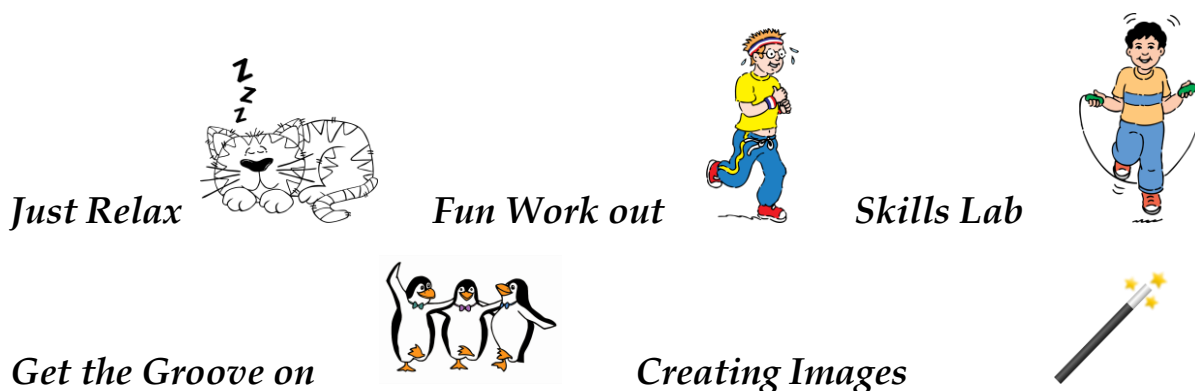


HOW TO USE THE MATERIAL PACKAGE

Dear Teacher,

This material package offers you fun activities that you can use for **teaching English words** to Finnish kindergarten children. Small children naturally enjoy playing and learning new things by doing and using their whole body, which is perfect for trying out language showering in a kindergarten setting. Language showering means offering small amounts of foreign language input in natural situations of everyday life. Since playing is a part of children's life, it's a good method to introduce new things to them. Having fun is very important for motivation to learn, and a positive attitude towards languages and learning can be reached with activities where moving, music and other people are essential parts of new exciting games and plays.

In this material package there are **40 different activities** for learning words such as colours, numbers, body parts and animals. The activities are divided into five categories:



Just relax includes activities for relaxing and calming down, *Fun Work out* is all about action, *Skills Lab* gives practice to some specific motoric skills, like throwing, *Get the Groove on* activities include dancing and music, and *Creating Images* support the imagination of the children. In the activity list you can find the target vocabulary for each activity listed on the right. There is no particular order for the activities, so you can choose which one suits the daily routine of the kindergarten or the children's mood at the time you want to use the activities. Notice that the activities listed as *revision* can be used for repeating words that the children have already learned.

As a tip for supporting language learning specifically, I suggest introducing the activities first in Finnish – meaning playing them without the English. This could help the younger children to understand what the activity is about and then it is easier to introduce the new language as a new aspect to the familiar activity. Also, there is no need for doing the activities every day, but to keep the learning of the new words continuous, repetition is needed. A suitable pace could be one or two new activities per week, every week. However, you know your kindergarten's children the best, so assess how the pace is working for your group. Concentrating on one vocabulary group, like colours for example, at a time could also be a good idea. You could use different colour activities during the first month and then move on to another vocabulary group, like animals. Remember to repeat the activities a lot, children enjoy it and it helps the learning of the words.

On the next part of the material, you can find a list of aims of the material, a list of the English words that is used in the activities, and what every activity includes. In case you want to inform the parents about the language showering sessions, there is also an example letter included in the material. At the end you can find a list of sources used when planning the activities.

The pedagogy behind the activities includes using different sensory channels (visual, auditive, kinaesthetic), functional learning, playing and moving, making new things concrete, having fun together with others and including everyone, repetition, not introducing too many new things, and embodied learning. What is also important when using these activities is to give possibilities for succeeding. It is not about the efficiency of learning but **the excitement and interest towards new things!**

I hope you will find this material package delightful and easy to use. Being enthusiastic yourself makes it easier for the children to get excited as well. Have a great time with the activities!

Kouvola, February 2nd 2015

Tiia Härkönen

Target Group:

- Sports focused kindergarten, 3-5 year-olds

Aims of the material:

- Learning English vocabulary by dancing and doing kinaesthetic activities
- Developing language awareness and knowledge of foreign languages
- Rehearsing oral production and listening skills
- Trying out pronunciation
- Creating opportunities for systematic foreign language input

Vocabulary:

- **body parts:** head, eyes, nose, mouth, ears, shoulders, arms, elbows, hands, fingers, legs, feet, toes, back, tummy, bum
- **animals:** cat, dog, horse, pig, duck, cow, bunny, fox, bear, mouse, bird, elephant, lion, zebra, giraffe, monkey, frog, snake
- **colours:** red, yellow, green, blue, black, white, pink
- **numbers:** 1-10
- **verbs:** jump, crawl, run, roll, stop, walk, listen, look, step, twist
- **adjectives:** tall, small, fast, slow, big, small, short, long
- **seasons:** winter, spring, summer, autumn
- **activities:** skating, biking, swimming, mushroom picking, playing football, playing ice hockey
- **vehicles:** rocket, plane, car, ship

Every activity includes:

- vocabulary
- aims of the activity
- how much time the activity approximately takes
- material you need for the activity
- how many children can participate
- instructions on how the activity goes

A LETTER TO THE PARENTS (example)

Hyvät vanhemmat,

Tarjoamme tänä syksynä kaikille lapsille mahdollisuutta osallistua englannin kielisuihkutukseen päiväkodissamme. Aktiviteetit ovat liikunnallisia ja kestoltaan noin 10-20 minuuttia kerran viikossa. Sanastoteemoina ovat esimerkiksi värit, numerot, eläimet ja kehonosat. Kielisuihkutuksen tarkoituksena on oppia englannin sanoja leikin ja liikkeen avulla, lapselle ominaisella tavalla. Kielisuihkutuksessa lapset tutustuvat vieraaseen kieleen ja sen äänteisiin, ja tavoitteena on luoda positiivinen asenne kielten oppimista kohtaan myös tulevaisuudessa. Toivomme, että lapsenne nauttivat aktiviteeteista ja saavat uudenlaista iloa päiväkodin arkeen.

Syysterveisin,

Päiväkodin henkilökunta

ACTIVITY LIST



Just relax

Vocabulary

Symbol

1. Relaxing Body

Body parts



2. Gentle Touch

Body parts



3. Lifting String

Body parts



4. Drawing

Body parts



5. Rock Massage

Body parts



6. Silhouette

Body parts



Fun Work Out



7. Follow the Leader

Action verbs



8. Hoop the Number

Numbers



9. Move Like an Animal!

Animals

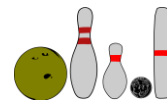


10. Run to It!

Revision

11. Tall, small, ball

Adjectives



12. Animals on the Run!

Animals



13. Body Part Tag

Body parts

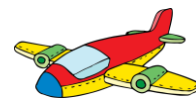


14. Picture Circle

Revision

15. Funny Vehicles

Vehicles



16. What's in Your Nest?

Colours



17. Feeding Baby Birds

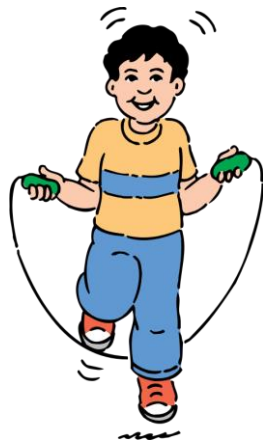
Colours



18. Let's Go to Africa!

Animals





Skills Lab

19. Colour Islands with a Twist

Colours



20. Bouncing Numbers

Numbers



21. Activities of the Season

Seasons, Activities



22. Plate Frisbee

Revision

23. Rocks in the Pond

Colours/Numbers



24. Bottle Bowling

Revision

25. Clapping Numbers

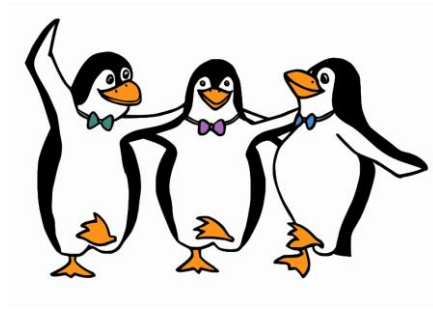
Numbers



26. High Five!

Colours





Get the Groove on

27. Dancing Colours

Colours



28. Body Part Dance

Body parts



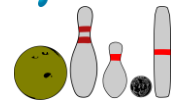
29. Across the Space

Action verbs



30. Fast and Slow

Adjectives



31. Glued Together

Body parts



32. Scarf Dance

Colours



33. Dancing with the Animals

Animals



34. Dance around the World!

Revision

Creating Images



35. The Magic Gate

Animals



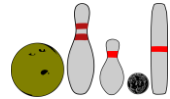
36. Zoo Sculptor

Animals



37. Bed

Adjectives



38. Cat's Morning Yoga

Body parts



39. Christmas is Here!

Action verbs



40. Swimming Dolphins

Numbers





JUST RELAX

1. Relaxing body



Vocabulary: head, arms, hands, back, bum, legs, toes

Aim of the activity: to learn body parts, relaxing and concentrating

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: 4 small balls

Number of children participating: 6

How it goes: This is a pair exercise where half of the group lies on their stomach on the floor and the other half is holding a small ball in their hand. The adult moves the ball by rolling it to different body parts of another adult or a child and says the names of the body parts at the same time. The children listen to what body parts are mentioned and move the ball accordingly on their partner's body.

2. Gentle touch (adapted from Tanssien läpi lukkarin)



Vocabulary: head, eyes, arms, tummy, back, legs, toes

Aim of the activity: to calm down, to focus on pronunciation and listening skills

Time: 5 minutes

What you need: -

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Everybody sits in a circle eyes closed. The adult says a body part, e.g. head, and the children touch their head gently and repeat the word. There should be a small pause after each body part. You can go through the body from head to toe and after this focus a little while on breathing. Afterwards everybody should feel calm and relaxed.

3. Lifting string (adapted from Anttila:35)



Vocabulary: shoulder, elbow, nose, leg, tummy, bum

Aim of the activity: to learn body parts, to relax

Time: 10 minutes



What you need: a triangle

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Everybody lays on the floor relaxed. The adult says a body part that is 'attached to a string which is connected to the ceiling', e.g. an elbow, shoulder, nose etc. Then the adult plays the triangle and the named body part starts to rise like the string is pulling it. The rest of the body should be relaxed. When the children are on their toes, the string snaps and they fall back to the floor relaxed. Then another body part starts to rise.



4. Drawing (adapted from Anttila:41)



Vocabulary: nose, shoulder, arm, elbow, finger, leg, toes, bum

Aim of the activity: to learn body parts, to wake up the body

Time: 5-10 minutes

What you need: instrumental music in the background

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Adult says a body part that starts to draw in the air, e.g. shoulder draws first little circles and then bigger ones. This continues until another body part is said. The drawing can include lots of different shapes and the adult gives an example that the children can imitate if they don't know how to invent their own 'drawings'.



5. Rock massage (adapted from Karvonen et al.:171)



Vocabulary: head, arms, hands, back, bum, legs, feet

Aim of the activity: to relax, learn body parts

Time: 10-15 minutes

What you need: beanbags, relaxing music

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Children form pairs. Half of the group lies on their stomach and the other half places beanbags on their body according to the body parts that they hear the adult say. After the whole body is covered with the beanbags, the pair switches places.

6. Silhouette (adapted from Joutsenvirta:16)



Vocabulary: head, arm, leg, toes etc.

Aim of the activity: to relax, to learn body parts, to wake up body awareness

Time: 5 minutes

What you need: relaxing music, beanbag

Number of children participating: 4-6

How it goes: Children lie on the floor and listen to the music eyes closed. The adult draws the lines of the body with a beanbag one child at a time and says the body part that touches the beanbag (e.g. head, arm, leg, toes, etc.). If there are more adults participating, there is more time to draw silhouettes and more children can participate.



FUN WORK OUT

7. Follow the leader



Vocabulary: jump, roll, run, crawl, walk, stop etc.

Aim of the activity: to be able to recognise and perform verbs of movement

Time: 20-30 minutes

What you need: an obstacle course of your choice

Number of children participating: 6-10

How it goes: Children walk in line after the adult across a series of obstacles. Adult says e.g. "Jump/run/roll" and performs the action and the children need to do the same action. After a couple of rounds one of the children gets to be a leader and be the first one in line when the adult says the action word.

8. Hoop the number! (adapted from Karvonen:79)



Vocabulary: one, two, three, four, five

Aim of the activity: to learn numbers

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: as many hoops as there are children, cards with numbers on them, music

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Put the hoops on the floor. The children start moving when the music is playing and when it stops the adult shows a card and says the number on it. The correct number of children should go stand inside one hoop. Music starts playing again and now the children should move with the hoop around them until the music stops again and a new number is said.

9. Move like an animal!



Vocabulary: cat, dog, horse, mouse, bear, elephant, lion, monkey, snake, frog

Aim of the activity: to learn animals, to have fun imitating their movement

Time: 10-15 minutes



What you need: -

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Adult asks the children what animals they know and how these animals move. Then the adult says what those animals are called in English. One animal at a time, everybody repeats the animal's name and moves like it at the same time until another animal is chosen.

10. Run to it! (adapted from Karvonen:70)

Vocabulary: the words you want to practice

Aim of the activity: to recognise the meaning of the words said by an adult, to revise known words

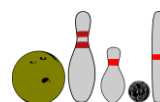
Time: 10 minutes

What you need: pictures of the words you want to use

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Pictures are put on the walls of a room (the maximum number of picture cards depends on the size of the room and the number of children participating since there is running involved). Then the adult says a word and the children run to the picture of the word in question.

11. Tall, small, ball (adapted from Karvonen:91)



Vocabulary: tall, small, ball

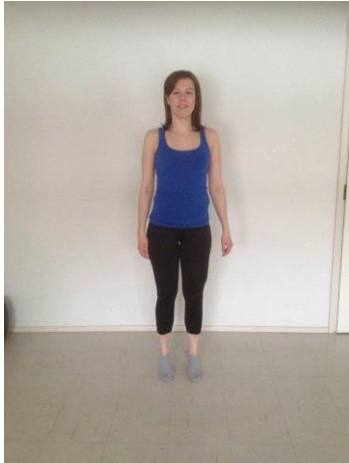
Aim of the activity: to learn adjectives *tall* and *small*, to play with similar sounds

Time: 5 minutes

What you need: -

Number of children participating: All

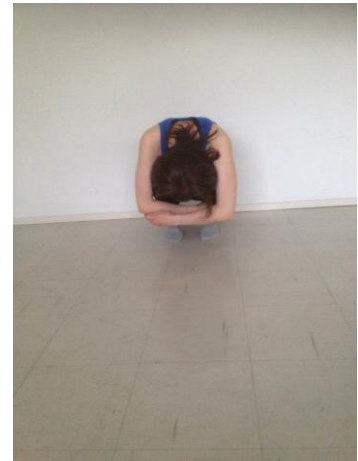
How it goes: Adult says one of the words 'tall', 'small', or 'ball'. The children will stand on their toes (=tall), crouch (=small), or try to be as round as a ball according to the word that is said. To add some difficulty, the adult can say some other word that might fool the children to act even though the word isn't one of the game words. The children need to focus and pay close attention to the sounds of the word.



Tall



Small



Ball

12. Animals on the run! (adapted from Karvonen et al.:152)



Vocabulary: animal words according to the toys being used

Aim of the activity: recognising animals and improving listening skills

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: stuffed animals (or other animal toys) that are the same as the learned animal words

Number of children participating: 6-12, or how many animal toys can be used

How it goes: Everybody stands in a circle and holds one of the animal toys. Adult says an animal and the child holding that particular animal has to run around the others in the circle and come back to their own place. If you want to add difficulty, two animals could be named at the same time or more than one child is holding the same animal, which leads to more than one person running every round.

13. Body part tag (adapted from Tanssien läpi lukkarin)



Vocabulary: arm, hand, leg, back, tummy, bum, shoulder etc.

Aim of the activity: to learn body parts

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: -

Number of children participating: All



How it goes: This is basically normal tag but with a twist. The children are divided into pairs. One of the pair is a tag and adult says the body part that the tag has to touch when they catch their partner. After one round the roles change.

14. Picture circle (adapted from Karvonen:68)

Vocabulary: the words you want to practice

Aim of the activity: to revise known words

Time: 10-20 minutes

What you need: Picture cards of your words, music

Number of children participating: 5-7

How it goes: Pictures of animals/numbers/colours/body parts are put in a circle on the floor. The children crawl or run outside of the circle and music plays on the background. When the music stops, every child also stops and takes the nearest picture. After this they can tell the others what is on the picture, e.g. a monkey. When everybody has shown their card and heard the word describing what's on the picture, music is put back on and another round starts. You can have as many rounds as the children seem to be able to focus on. If you want, you can also add extra movement to the activity by combining it to a pantomime.

15. Funny vehicles (adapted from Karvonen et al.:147)



Vocabulary: rocket, plane, car, ship

Aim of the activity: to learn words *rocket, plane, car, ship*

Time: 5-10 minutes

What you need: -

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Adult says one of the four vehicles and the children need to take a position that describes that vehicle. Positions for the words are: 'rocket' (standing, hands in the air), 'plane' (standing on knees, hands like wings), 'car' (crawling position), and 'ship' (on stomach, hands and legs in the air).



Rocket



Plane



Car



Ship



16. What's in your nest? (adapted from Joutsenvirta:16)

Vocabulary: red, yellow, green, blue

Aim of the activity: to learn colours

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: lots of beanbags in different colours, as many hoops as there are children

Number of children participating: 6-10

How it goes: The beanbags are spread around the room. The children place their hoop ('nest') somewhere near the walls of the room and stand next to it. Then the adult says a colour and the children need to run and get a beanbag of that colour to their nest.

After one round the adult checks if the colours are correct and if they are wrong the children get to go and change their beanbag into the right colour. This activity continues until all the beanbags are collected into the nests and then the children can count how many beanbags they got.

17. Feeding baby birds (adapted from Karvonen et al.:237)



Vocabulary: red, yellow, green, blue, pink, black, white etc.

Aim of the activity: to learn colours

Time: 20 minutes

What you need: different coloured ropes or strings

Number of children participating: All (teams of five)

How it goes: This activity is great to have outdoors, preferably in a forest. The ropes represent worms that birds eat and they are spread around in a restricted area. Every team has five children and each child has their own colour. Each team is assigned a place that is their 'nest'. This activity is a relay and the children in a team take turns as 'the mother bird' who feeds their babies with worms of particular colour. 'The baby bird' that is waiting for the worm shouts their own colour (e.g. "Red, red, red!") while 'the mother bird' runs out of the nest and tries to find a 'red worm' for them. When the correct colour is found, 'the mother bird' returns to the nest. Now the shouting bird turns into a mother bird who tries to find, for example, a blue worm for the next baby bird. When every child in a team has a different coloured rope, the team is done.



18. Let's go to Africa! (adapted from Joutsenvirta:21-23)



Vocabulary: plane, elephant, lion, bird, zebra, monkey, giraffe, frog, snake

Aim of the activity: to learn names of animals

Time: 20 minutes

What you need: African style music

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: First everybody flies to Africa in a plane (sitting with arms spread like wings, also standing with one leg and moving the body like the plane is making turns). There are lots of different animals in Africa and the adult asks what the children see there. For example, they can see elephants (moving very heavily) and everybody tries to imitate their movement. Other animals and movements: lions (walking on fours head held high), birds (arms moving like wings), zebras (galloping around), monkeys (jumping around), giraffes (standing on toes, trying to be as tall as possible), frogs (jumping up from the ground), and snakes (slithering on the floor). When the children see snakes, they get scared and want to fly back home where they rest after the long trip by lying on the floor. Then the adult pulls them by the hands to the door one at a time.

SKILLS LAB

19. Colour islands with a twist



Vocabulary: red, yellow, green, blue, hand, leg etc.

Aim of the activity: to learn colours and body parts

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: colourful pieces of paper or something similar that are different shapes preferably. The size should be big enough for a 5-year-old to stand on.

Number of children participating: 7





How it goes: Adult says the colours aloud and shows the paper of that colour at the same time. Then the adult asks children to stand on “a blue island” or to touch “a red island with one hand”.

20. Bouncing numbers (adapted from Karvonen:80)



Vocabulary: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten

Aim of the activity: to learn how to count to ten, to practice hand-eye coordination

Time: 5 minutes

What you need: as many balls as there are participants

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Everyone has a ball that they bounce and they count at the same time to ten as they bounce the ball. After ten bounces, the ball needs to be put on the ground and then it's the children's turn to bounce ten times by jumping up and down. The activity can go on as long as the children want to do it.

21. Activities of the season (adapted from Pulli:120-121)



Vocabulary: winter, spring, summer, autumn, skating, biking, swimming, mushroom picking, playing football, playing ice hockey etc.

Aim of the activity: to learn seasons and some typical activities

Time: 30 minutes

What you need: 12 hoops, picture cards of the activities used (e.g. skating), a big dice with pictures of the seasons

Number of children participating: 8

How it goes: Divide the room into four seasons and put the 12 hoops in a big circle to present the months so that each season has 3 hoops. Put the picture cards next to the hoops according to the seasonal activity. Every season should have three activities to choose from. The activities could include biking (= lay on your back, feet in the air doing cycling motion), swimming (= swimming motion on your stomach on the floor), mushroom picking (= picking up small items around the room and counting them), skating (= skating on the floor in woollen socks) etc. First, everybody walks through the year and the seasons together and discusses the activities of the season. On the



second round, everybody jumps through the hoops and counts the months. Then the children will jump the hoops in pairs. The pair will throw the dice and get a picture of a season that they need to search for in the circle of hoops. They'll try to remember the word for the season and tell it to the adult and other children. The pair can choose any of the three activities of the season they got from the dice and perform it to the others. The adult can tell the name of the activity in English while the children are doing it. Then it's the next pair's turn to throw the dice and get an activity to perform. The activity goes on as long as all the pairs have performed at least two activities or as long as the children are having fun.

22. Plate Frisbee (adapted from Pulli:128)

Vocabulary: animal words, numbers, colours etc.

Aim of the activity: to revise known words, rehearse throwing

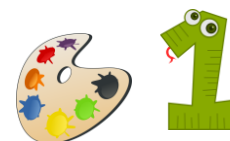
Time: 15–20 minutes

What you need: paper plates, hoops or something else that can serve as a target, pictures of the words you want to rehearse

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Every target should have a picture of a word on it. The adult says a word and the children try to remember what it means. Then the children take turns in trying to throw the paper plates to the target that has a picture of the word. If you want, you can count the scores and see who gets most points.

23. Rocks in the pond (adapted from Karvonen et al.:172)



Vocabulary: Red, yellow, green, blue, 1-10

Aim of the activity: to learn colours/numbers

Time: 15 minutes

What you need: hoops and beanbags, colour cards/number cards

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Colour-coded/Numbered hoops are put on the floor within different distances from the place the children can throw the beanbags and try to hit the correct hoop with it. Adult asks the child who is throwing which colour/number they got if



they hit a hoop. This activity continues as long as every child has hit a hoop at least once. Taking scores is optional.

24. Bottle bowling (adapted from Karvonen et al.:194)

Vocabulary: the words you want to practice

Aim of the activity: to revise known words (e.g. animals, numbers, colours)

Time: 10-15 minutes

What you need: a ball, bottles or milk cartons with pictures of the words

Number of children participating: All (teams of four could be used)

How it goes: Children try to knock out correct words in teams of four. The adult says five words to each team and they need to recognise which pictures are their targets.

First team to get all their targets is the winner.

25. Clapping numbers (adapted from Karvonen et al.:186)



Vocabulary: one, two, three, four, five, six

Aim of the activity: to learn numbers

Time: 5-10 minutes

What you need: a big dice

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Everybody gets their turn to throw the dice and tell which number they got. Then the thrower can decide which body part they clap for as many times as the dice tells. Everybody claps with the thrower.

26. High five! (adapted from Pulli:44)



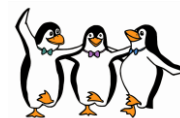
Vocabulary: red, yellow, blue, green, pink, black white, hands, feet

Aim of the activity: to learn colours

Time: 10-15 minutes

What you need: pictures of hand prints and foot prints in different colours, tape

Number of children participating: 4-6



How it goes: Tape the pictures on a wall and use different levels so that the children need to squat or jump to reach them. The children form a line behind a starting point and the adult gives the first one in line a colour which they need to go and touch with their hands or their feet. The children run to the wall and after touching a correct picture they come back behind the line and get a new colour from the adult for the next round. This activity can continue as long as the children are having fun with it.

GET THE GROOVE ON

27. Dancing colours (adapted from Karvonen:74)



Vocabulary: red, yellow, green, blue, jump, roll, dance, run etc.

Aim of the activity: to learn colours, verbs of movement

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: colour cards, music

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Everybody decides together which movement and which colour go together. For example, red means jumping up and down, blue means rolling on the floor, and green means dancing on the spot. The children start to move freely in the room. Then the adult says a colour and everybody should perform the correct movement. After a couple of rounds you can also switch it around a bit and let the children say the colours when the adult shows the card and then perform the movement.

28. Body part dance (adapted from Tanssien läpi lukkarin)



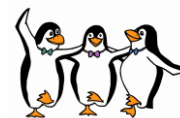
Vocabulary: head, mouth, nose, arms, fingers, legs, toes, tummy, bum

Aim of the activity: to learn body parts, to have fun dancing, to practice basic isolations

Time: 5-10 minutes

What you need: music

Number of children participating: All



How it goes: Adult says a body part and only this body part is allowed to move when music is playing. The children try to dance with only this body part and when the music stops everybody freezes to their place.

29. Across the space (adapted from Anttila:38)



Vocabulary: run, jump, roll, stop

Aim of the activity: to learn action verbs, to practice basic movements

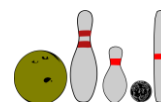
Time: 10 minutes

What you need: a drum

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: The children form a line at a corner of a room. The adult plays the drum and gives the children the movement they should perform while going across the room, e.g. first round: 'run'. One at a time the children run to the other side of the room and wait for the next round. The activity has at least four rounds and each round the number of movements increases. The second round could include movements 'run' and 'jump'. Then the children run first and jump before they reach the other side of the room. The round three includes movements 'run', 'jump' and 'roll'. The children perform these movements in order while going across the room. The fourth round has four movements and 'stop' is added to the other movements. If the children are enjoying the activity and want to continue, more rounds (with different order of movements) and even a couple of movements (e.g. leap, crawl) could be added to the activity.

30. Fast and slow (adapted from Joutsenvirta:48)



Vocabulary: fast, slow

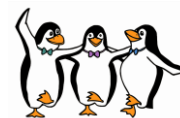
Aim of the activity: to learn adjectives *fast* and *slow*

Time: 5 minutes

What you need: drum

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Adult plays the drum and gives either a fast or slow rhythm. When the adult says 'fast' and drums an up-beat tempo, the children move alone walking very



fast around the room. When the adult says 'slow' and starts drumming very slowly, the children find a partner and together they move around slowly, in a manner they choose. This switching between fast and slow can continue as long as the children can focus and enjoy the activity.

31. Glued together (adapted from Anttila:59)



Vocabulary: head, nose, shoulder, elbow, arm, hand, back, tummy, bum, leg

Aim of the activity: to learn body parts

Time: 5-10 minutes

What you need: a drum

Number of children participating: All, even number is preferable

How it goes: The adult plays the drum and the children walk freely in the room.

When the drumming stops, the children form pairs and the adult gives a body part that 'glues the pair together'. Then they try to move attached to their partner before the drumming starts again and they can walk by themselves until another body part is chosen. Every time the children should find a new partner to glue themselves together with.

32. Scarf dance (adapted from Karvonen et al.:180)



Vocabulary: red, yellow, green, blue, pink, black, white etc.

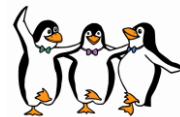
Aim of the activity: to learn colours, to find the joy of moving to the music

Time: 5-10 minutes

What you need: scarves in different colours, (instrumental) music

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Every child gets a scarf and dances to the music moving the scarf at the same time. When adult says a colour, only the children who have a scarf of that colour continues to dance and others stop and stay still until the adult says 'everybody dances'. This activity can last for example one or two songs.



33. Dancing with the animals (adapted from Karvonen et al.:222)



Vocabulary: cat, dog, bunny, bear etc.

Aim of the activity: to learn animals, to get creative with movement

Time: 5-10 minutes

What you need: stuffed animals, music

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: The children dance with the stuffed animals when the music is playing.

Then the music stops and the adult says an animal that shows a dance movement to the others and they try to imitate it. When the music starts again, free dancing continues. Try to get the children to use different levels in their movements: high, low and middle level.

34. Dance around the world! (adapted from Lasten tanssimatka)

Vocabulary: jump, toes, fast, leg, partner, snake, shoulders, hands, step, head, arm, twist, body, horse, lasso, air guitar, cat, table

Aim of the activity: revision, learn something about the dance styles of different countries (Ireland, India, America, Caribbean)

Time: 30 minutes

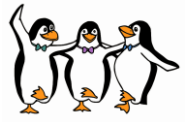
What you need: music (Irish, Indian, rock'n'roll, merenque), costumes

(e.g. Ireland: something green, India: beautiful scarves, America: cowboy hats,

Caribbean: something colourful, long skirts for girls, feathers)

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: You can create a story around the countries and pretend that you are travelling around the world by plane for example. The music is very important in this activity. Everybody dances: adults show the moves and say an instruction word for every move and children try to imitate them. Here are some dance moves that represent the country in question (instruction vocabulary in bold):

**Ireland:**

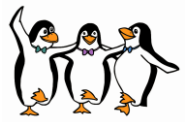
- Make a circle and everybody **jumps** to the music hand in hand
- Make two rows that are facing each other and point your **toes** in front of you (first one foot, then the other)
- Add jumping to the toe-pointing and do it a bit **faster**
- Lift your ankle in front of the other **leg** (about knee-high, both legs in turns)
- Toe-pointing (**toes**)
- Toe-pointing with jumping (**fast**)
- Take a **partner** and jump around arm in arm, change direction
- Make two rows and throw your leg **high** in the air (both legs in turns)
- Make a circle again and **jump** hand in hand
- Repeat in this order or change it



Toes



Leg

**India:**

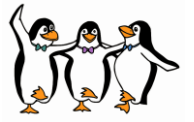
- Slither like a **snake**: start from the ground and when you're as tall as you can, squat really fast and start again
- Put your arms next to your body, palms of the hands facing the floor, and jiggle your **shoulders** up and down
- Cross your arms so that your wrists almost touch and do a move with your hands like you're screwing a light bulb, then move your **hands** from down to up and do a continuous tap with one **leg** at the same time
- Shoulder-jiggle, add a side **step**
- Put your palms together in front of your face and peek from both sides of the **hands**
- Move your hands (palms still together) up and move your **head** from side to side
- Shoulder-jiggle
- Kneel down and do a wave movement with one **arm**, then change the arm



Shoulders



Hands



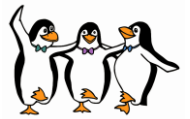
Hands



Head



Arm



America (dancing cowboys and girls):

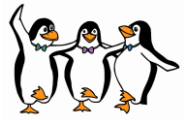
- Do a **twist** with your legs
- Do a twist and move your upper **body** up and down
- **Step** your heels in front of you
- Gallop like a **horse**
- Wave your hand in the air like you've got a **lasso**
- Play some **air guitar**
- Do the heels again
- Do the twist
- Gallop
- Wave your lasso
- Add gallop and the lasso together



Twist



Step

**Caribbean:**

- Make a circle where you walk while doing the dance moves
- Wave your **hands** in the air while walking to the beat of the music
- Twirl your hands in front of you like a swimming **cat**, move the hands up and down
- Wave your hands in front of your waist like you're wiping a **table**
- Walk small steps on your toes but very **fast**, lean your upper body forward
- **Shake** your chest
- Wave your hands
- Wipe the table
- Do the swimming cat
- Two adults put their arms together up high so that the others can dance under them



Hands



Cat



Table



CREATING IMAGES

35. The magic gate (adapted from Karvonen et al.:175)



Vocabulary: cat, dog, horse, mouse, bear, lion, elephant, monkey, frog, snake etc.

Aim of the activity: to learn animals, to inspire creativity

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: one hoop

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Adult holds the hoop so that the children can crawl through it one at a time. When the children are crawling through, the 'magic gate' changes them into an animal of their choice (they should name the animal or repeat it after the adult while going through). Then they move like that animal does. This activity can continue as long as the children have fun with it.

36. Zoo Sculptor (adapted from Tanssien läpi lukkarin)



Vocabulary: cat, dog, horse, mouse, elephant, lion, bear, monkey etc.

Aim of the activity: to learn animals

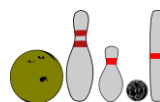
Time: 10-20 minutes

What you need: -

Number of children participating: Even number, 6-10

How it goes: Children work in pairs: the other is a sculptor and the other is clay that their partner molds. The adult gives every pair an animal by whispering it so that the other children don't hear it and then the sculptor tries to create the animal by molding "the clay". When the sculptures are ready, the other sculptors try to guess what animals they present. After this the pair changes roles.

37. Bed (adapted from Joutsenvirta:19)



Vocabulary: big, small, short, long

Aim of the activity: to learn adjectives *big, small, short, long*

Time: 5 minutes



What you need: -

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: Children are asked to picture a bed on the floor and to lie down on it.

Then adult says an adjective, e.g. 'big', and they try to cover a big part of the bed with their body (e.g. spreading arms and legs wide).

38. Cat's morning yoga (adapted from Soronen:70-71)



Vocabulary: toes, fingers, back, hands, arms, cheeks, leg, tail

Aim of the activity: to learn body parts

Time: 20-30 minutes

What you need: music, triangle, cat tails for everybody

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: First everybody moves around the room like cats while music is playing in the background. Then the yoga starts and the 'cats' take their own place on the floor. This activity includes five exercises.

1. First one is called '**warm little toes**' and the children sit on the floor and wiggle their toes. Then they reach their fingers to touch the toes and to see if they are warm. After this the children lie on their back and lift their legs towards the ceiling and back down a couple of times.
2. The second exercise is called '**flexiback**' and now the children go on all fours and bend their back up and down like cats.
3. The third exercise is '**funny cats**'. First everybody tries to be '**a big cat**': they stand on their toes and reach to the ceiling with their hands. Then they are '**a small cat**': they squat down, hands on the floor, and try to be as small as possible. The next one is '**a fat cat**': arms are opened to the sides and cheeks are puffed out as big as possible. The last one is '**a skinny cat**': the children stand on one leg, arms close to the body and the cheeks are like two dents.
4. The fourth exercise is '**wagging the tail**'. Everybody has got a tail attached to their waist. The children go around on all fours and try to wag their tail as much as possible. When the music stops, they stop on the spot and lift their legs one at a time and straighten them like they were stretching like a cat.



5. The fifth exercise is '**snatching a bird**': Adult plays the triangle and the children creep silently around the room and when the adult stops, the children jump like they are trying to snatch a bird nearby.

39. Christmas is here! (adapted from Soronen:73)



Vocabulary: eyes, listen, stop

Aim of the activity: to relax and calm down

Time: 5 minutes

What you need: Christmas music, a little bell, a triangle

Number of children participating: All

How it goes: This activity can be used after a faster activity to calm down. The children are little elves moving in the room and when the adult says 'stop' they freeze on the spot because a cold North wind froze them. When they hear a triangle, a warm South wind melts them and they sink slowly to the floor, close their eyes and listen to beautiful Christmas music. The little bell wakes them up again.

40. Swimming dolphins (adapted from Karvonen:78)



Vocabulary: numbers

Aim of the activity: to learn numbers

Time: 10 minutes

What you need: cards shaped like dolphins that have a number on it (1-10)

Number of children participating: All (everyone should have a card)

How it goes: The cards are placed on the floor and everybody has a turn when they pick one card and invent a movement for that dolphin. Then everyone imagines that they are dolphins and performs the movement as many times as the number in the card says.

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Writer's note:

These sources have a lot more activities that you might find interesting, so have a look!

Photos:

<https://openclipart.org/detail/83479/cartoon-elephant-by-14thwarrior>

<https://openclipart.org/detail/190977/hand-open-heavy-outline-by-schplook-190977>

<https://openclipart.org/detail/4421/aquarela-colors-by-valessiobrito-4421>

<https://openclipart.org/detail/71095/animal-number---one-by-horse50>

https://openclipart.org/detail/722/jogging-boy-by-johnny_automatic

<https://openclipart.org/detail/7736/-by--7736>

<https://openclipart.org/detail/193970/airplane->

[%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-by-osfor.org-193970](https://openclipart.org/detail/193970/airplane-%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-by-osfor.org-193970)

<https://openclipart.org/detail/83863/magic-wand-by-jhnri4>

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