FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING:

A material package for primary education

Master's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Toiminnallisuus ja toiminnalliset työtavat ovat Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteiden (2014) mukaan tärkeitä opetusmenetelmiä alaluokilla. Toiminnallisuus on paljon esillä nykyajan suomalaisessa pedagogisessa kirjallisuudessa, mutta sen teoriatausta ja sovellusmahdollisuudet käytännön opetukseen jäävät usein vähälle huomiolle. Näin ollen toiminnallisuudesta on useita erilaisia tulkintoja. Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteiden (2014: 219) mukaan vieraiden kielten opetuksessa on käytettävä "vaihtelevia ja toiminnallisia työtapoja". Näitä työtapoja ei kuitenkaan määritellä tarkasti, joten kieltenopettajien voi olla haastavaa toteuttaa opetussuunnitelman tavoitteita työssään.

Tämä materiaalipaketti sisältää Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteiden (2014), kokemuksellisen oppimisen ja funktionaalisen kielikäsityksen periaatteisiin pohjautuvan tulkinnan toiminnallisuudesta. Tavoitteena on tarjota toiminnallisia tehtäväkokonaisuuksia alaluokkien englannin opetukseen. Lähtökohtana on merkityksellisten kokemusten kautta oppiminen ja oppilaan rooli aktiivisena toimijana. Materiaalissa on erilaajuisia tehtäväkokonaisuuksia, joista opettajat voivat valikoida omille ryhmilleen parhaiten soveltuvat. Tehtäviä voi vapaasti muokata oppilaiden tarpeiden mukaan. Materiaali pyrkii yhdistämään konkreettisen kokemuksen ja toiminnan sekä tiedon abstraktin kognitiivisen prosessoinnin oppilaslähtöisesti. Tarkoituksena on rakentaa yhteyksiä englannin kielen rakenteiden, sanaston ja fraasien sekä niiden konkreettisten käyttötarkoitusten välille. Materiaali on kohdennettu 5-6-luokkien englannin opetukseen, mutta sitä voi soveltaa myös muiden ikäryhmien opetukseen.

Teoriaosassa avaan toiminnallisen oppimisen käsitettä kokemuksellisen oppimisen ja toimijuuden teorioihin perustuen. Käsittelen toiminnallista kieltenoppimista ja -opetusta funktionaalisen kielikäsityksen teorioiden ja Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteiden (2014) näkökulmista. Tarkastelen toiminnallisuuden erilaisia määritelmiä ja suhdetta kieltenoppimiseen ja -opetukseen myös pedagogisen kirjallisuuden ja Eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen (2003) pohjalta. Lisäksi pohdin syitä sille, miksi toiminnallisuutta on vaikea määritellä. Teoriataustan perusteella muodostan oman määritelmäni toiminnallisuudesta ja toiminnallisesta kieltenoppimisesta ja -opetuksesta. Määritelmässä painottuvat oppilaan kokonaisvaltainen aktiivinen toimijuus, konkreettisen kokemuksen kautta oppiminen, tiedon rakentaminen sekä kielen oppiminen sen käytön avulla.

Asiasanat – Keywords toiminnallisuus, functional working methods, foreign language learning and teaching, learner agency

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1   INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the focus in language learning and teaching has shifted from input matters more towards the things learners do and say in the language classroom. Kohonen (2001: 29) states that the more traditional approaches to teaching have emphasised reflective skills and concept formation, whereas the shift to more learner-centered approaches to teaching has made concrete experimenting of the subject being learnt a more important factor in learning. In other words, learners have obtained a more important role in language learning, and learning itself is treated more as an active process than passive acquisition of input presented by the teacher. This shift in the focus of language learning has brought about the popularity of more learner-centered approaches to language teaching.

Toiminnallisuus or 'functionality' as a learning and teaching method is widely discussed in today's pedagogical literature in Finland. One of the major reasons for the popularity of the method is arguably the new National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCC) that came into effect in August 2016. In the NCC, the learner is seen as an active agent and learning is understood as a result of the learner's personal engagement in the learning process. Accordingly, the role of the functional approach to learning is very significant in the NCC (2016) and it is discussed as a required teaching method in all primary level teaching:

> Experiential and functional working methods, the engagement of different senses and the use of movement increase the experiential nature of learning and strengthen motivation (NCC 2016: 31).

Functionality has an important role specifically in foreign language learning and teaching because, according to the NCC (2016: 236), functional working methods increase learner motivation and make language learning more diverse. However, the NCC (2016) does not give examples of what these functional working methods are in the context of language learning and teaching. This problem also occurs in other publications that discuss the functional approach to learning and the term itself is often left undefined. Moreover, the theory of language as functions is often confused with functionality as a learning and teaching approach because the terminology used is very similar. According to Halliday (1994), the theory of language as functions sees language from the point of view of its use and emphasises language function over form. The functional approach to language explains the structure of language by studying language use. Even though similar terms are used in these

two theories, I argue that they are not entirely the same phenomena. For example, according to the NCC (2016), functionality as an approach to learning and teaching applies for other domains than language teaching as well. However, when it comes to functionality in language learning and teaching, the theory of language as functions can be seen as an important theoretical background for it because it emphasises the aspects of language use and doing things with the target language. Due to the defective definition of functionality, the term can be understood in various ways, which brings about the difficulty to determine what can be counted as functionality and what cannot. Therefore, using the theory of functionality as a pedagogical approach is rather challenging and requires interpreting and combining different works that discuss it.

The changes in the pedagogical view in the current NCC (2016) bring about a need for introducing more functional working methods in language teaching. Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia (2009: 404) state that the need for functional language teaching is manifested by both research on language learning and practical language pedagogy, but practical realisations of the theory are few. Therefore, it is evident that concrete and practical functional language teaching material is needed. This material package sets out to respond to this need by providing functional teaching material for primary level English teaching and more specifically to grades 5-6. In this material package, I seek to explore the term *toiminnallisuus* or 'functionality' and, firstly, to examine the principles of functionality by determining the extent to which they can be seen as grounded in theories of language as functions, agency and experiential learning. Secondly, my goal is to provide primary school level English teachers with a material package that contains concrete teaching material in the form of learning activities that are based on the theoretical framework of functionality. My aim is to realise the theory of functional learning in practice as practical and concrete learning activities that promote learner agency and learning through personal experience. The activities of this material package also seek to implement goals for foreign language learning expressed in the NCC (2016) such as communication and cooperation, the use of ICT in learning, authentic real-life contexts and using the learners' communicational needs as the basis for language teaching. Applying and adapting the main principles of the experiential learning cycle (see Figure 1, Section 3.2), this material package aims to encourage language teachers to use activities that let the learner discover and construct information and develop their own thinking skills.

The first part of this thesis consists of a theoretical framework for the material package and focuses on exploring different conceptualisations of functionality. Referring to different sources that discuss functionality or other theories or approaches to learning very similar to functionality, I construct an interpretation of its meaning and theoretical background. Chapter 2 explores the functional approach to language and its applications to language learning and teaching that I see as significant theoretical frameworks for functionality. In that chapter, functionality is discussed both from the points of view of language as functions and functional learning. At the end of the chapter, I make an attempt to define the ambiguous term and provide an interpretation of it that is used as the method in this material package. In Chapter 3, I discuss in more detail the core concepts of functionality that I argue to be learner agency and experiential learning. Using the Lewinian Model of Experiential Learning from Kolb (2015: 32), I explain the experiential learning cycle that can be seen as overlapping with the functional learning process. Chapter 4 presents functionality from the points of view of curriculum texts, that is, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR 2001) and the NCC (2016).

The final part of this thesis is the concrete material package. It sets out to transform the theory of functionality into activities that can be used in primary level language teaching. In some activities, the aspect of physical activation of learners that is often very strongly linked to functionality is emphasised. In others, communication and social interaction are more salient means of learning and physical activation of the learners is not the most emphasised feature of the activity. The overarching idea is that language is seen from the perspective of its function and use and the learners are self personally and actively engaged in the learning process. Information is constructed together with other learners and room is left for the learners' own ideas, insights and experiences. Experiential learning plays an important role in each activity and the goal is that learning happens through meaningful personal experience that the learners reflect on.

2 LANGUAGE, FUNCTION AND FUNCTIONALITY

In this chapter, I first briefly introduce the functional view on language and summarise some of its main aspects. Second, I discuss the concept of functional learning and explore different ways of understanding and conceptualising it. By presenting different definitions for functionality and its role in learning, I point out its ambiguous nature and reflect on the possible reasons why it is often left undefined in academic sources that discuss it. I move on to explain and define what is meant by functionality and functional language learning in the present material package and make an effort to conceptualise the ambiguous term. Third, I discuss the functional approach to language in terms of language learning and teaching. I summarise its core elements and describe how they are based on the functional view on language. Finally, I explore critical points of view on the functional approach to language learning and teaching and suggest some ways of overcoming the challenges this approach may bring about.

2.1 Language as functions

Language as a system is rather hard to define or theorise because of its complex and contextual nature. According to van Lier (2004a: 23) language is such a tremendous and intricate concept that there is not one theory that can comprehensively cover all aspects of it. Therefore, theories of language tend to focus on some specific feature or part within the larger system and simplify it in order to make it more comprehensible (van Lier 2004a: 23). Over time, different theories of language and language learning have emphasised varying aspects of language which has in some cases made them mutually exclusive or discordant. As van Lier (2004a) argues, these theories should be seen in the wider context of language as a multidimensional system and understood as only partly explaining its whole entity. Theories of language have also had a significant effect on the ways in which language learning and teaching has been theorised and what kind of methodological features have been popular in the course of time. One of these theories of language is called the *functional approach to language*. I argue that the functional view on language is one of the most influential theories on which functionality as a language teaching method is based and, therefore, serves as an important theoretical framework to this material package.

The theory of functional language can be argued to have its origins in the works of M.A.K. Halliday. He treats language as "a system of making meaning", where all the components of the complex system can be explained by their function in the system (Halliday 1994). Halliday (1994) argues that the functional view on language focuses more on the function than the form of language and considers language from the point of view of its use. He states that every linguistic structure is formed and evolved in the course of time by the needs of language users and becomes the way it is because of the contexts it is used in. He explains that the main purpose of all language use can be divided into two components: "(i) to understand the environment (ideational), and (ii) to act on the others in it (interpersonal)". Thus, people use language for reflective and active purposes and as a means of social interaction. (Halliday 1994). According to this theory, language is seen as usage-based and all linguistic structures should be studied through their use in concrete social and communicational situations (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009: 407; Llinares 2013: 30). Therefore, language form, function and use cannot be separated from each other and need to be studied together. Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia (2009: 407) explain this connection between form, function and use by stating that in the language learning process, the learner's need to use language first guides language learning after which learning linguistic forms helps the learner to express meanings and to function in the language.

The functional approach puts language use to the centre of observation. Biscoff and Jany (2013: 1–2) state that the functionalist approach explains why language structure is the way it is by examining language use. Functionalism focuses on spontaneous and natural language use and explores communication patterns used in these situations (Bischoff and Jany 2013). As Bischoff and Jany (2013: 1) put it, functionalism "depends on studying real language use rather than abstract representations of language". Therefore, the core argument of functionalism is that language form and structure "can only be understood as embedded in function" (Harder 2013: 72). In other words, the functionalist approach sees language as a contextual and social phenomenon, in which structure becomes meaningful when it is considered from the point of view of its function and in its contexts of use. According to the functionalist view, the purpose of language is to enable people to express and do things with it and language structure and form are needed for these linguistic actions. Accordingly, the functional view on language emphasises the meaning of language and linguistic items. From this point of view, meaning is the core of language and expressing socially and culturally

contextualised meanings the goal of language use. Language is thus seen as a functional tool that is used to exchange information, experiences and knowledge in social situations. This approach to language contradicts the formal view on language that considers language more as a system or a set of grammatical rules and lexical items. (Dufva et al. 2011: 112–113; Llinares 2013: 31).

2.2 Functional learning

Ahearn (2001: 110) makes a brilliant point when stating that "In most scholarly endeavors, defining terms is half the battle". So is the case in this thesis as well or, perhaps, it might be a little more than just half the battle because of the ambiguity of the term functionality. In this material package, functionality refers to a slightly different phenomenon than one might think based on its name. I want to emphasise that functionality in the present paper means the Finnish term *toiminnallisuus* and stems from the POPS (2014) and more specifically from its translated English version (NCC 2016). This differentiation from other possibly rather similar approaches to language learning and teaching is needed in order to avoid confusion because the English translation of *toiminnallisuus* as 'functionality' is not an established term. In fact, the terms 'functional approach' or 'functionality' are sometimes used when discussing different phenomena than the NCC (2016) functionality. For example, Richards and Rodgers (2014: 85) use the term functional approach as a synonym for Communicative language teaching (CLT) which is a language teaching method of its own. Moreover, the NCC (2016) itself uses varying and inconsistent translations for the term "toiminnallisuus". It is translated in different contexts by using the words 'functionality', 'functional working methods', 'functional approach', 'active learning' and 'learning by doing'. In other publications written in English, the same phenomenon is discussed by using terms such as 'the action-based approach' (CEFR 2001: 9; van Lier 2007; Posio 2016) and 'the action-oriented approach' (CEFR 2001: 9). Since the present paper is based on the Finnish National Core Curriculum (2016), it uses the terms 'functionality' and 'functional working methods' or 'approaches' that are used most frequently in the curriculum text.

The difficulty of defining functionality may arise from the assumption that the term is somehow self-evident in Finnish. The word *toiminnallisuus* is so clearly linked to the Finnish word *toiminta*, or 'action' in English, that some might think that no further definitions are

needed for the term. In my opinion, defining functionality simply as activity or action says very little about what functionality is. It only raises the questions of defining what is meant by activity or action and what counts as activity or action. When functionality is left undefined it is easily misunderstood as something very informal and non-academic and not treated as an actual learning and teaching method (see Posio 2016; Öystilä 2003). The ambiguous nature of functionality can also be explained by the fact that it has some overlapping or similar features with other learner-centered teaching methods. This is evident in the way in which both the NCC (2016) and CEFR (2001) mix different English translations of the term while the Finnish versions of the same publications continuously use the term *toiminnallisuus* (See Chapter 4). Not defining what is meant by functionality in the NCC (2016) and other pieces of Finnish pedagogical literature makes it rather challenging to put the NCC's requirements for functional teaching approaches into practise.

Since the sole terminology referring to functionality is ambiguous, it is rather inevitable that the meaning of functionality is understood in various ways too. For example, some conceptualisations of functionality see it as closely related to physical activation of the learner in the learning process (see Jaakkola, Liukkonen and Sääkslahti 2013: 668; compare Posio 2016: 6–10). It can also be understood in a broader sense as learning that results from the personal activity of the learner or as an experiential approach to learning (e.g. Kolb 2015; Sergejeff 2007: 82–83; Vuorinen 2005: 180–181). CEFR (2001: 9) uses both the terms "action-based approach" and "action-oriented approach" and states that

> The action-based approach therefore also takes into account the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the full range of abilities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent.

Posio (2016: 10) discusses functionality in the context of language teaching by using the term "action-based teaching" and defines it as follows:

> In this study, action-based teaching is defined as teaching that focuses on the active role of the learner in the language learning process. It is considered to include approaches to language teaching that address the kinaesthetic perception of the learners by using, for example, play, games, drama, songs, experiments, arts and physical activation in order to produce meaningful learning through personal experience. The main idea is that learning results from participating in meaningful activity and the activation of the learner's kinaesthetic memory.

Öystilä (2003: 59–61) too acknowledges the difficulty of defining functionality but provides a rather extensive theoretical background for it. She uses works of academics such as Dewey, Lewin, Kolb, Moreno and Mezirow as the theoretical framework and bases her understanding

of functional learning on a combination of ideas from these theorists. She argues that the functional approach on learning is based on the theory of experiential learning (see Chapter 3 Section 3.2) and is also closely related to inquiry-based learning and self-regulated learning. Öystilä (2003: 59–61) defines functional learning as comprehensive activity that combines the processes of learning new information and personal growth. In her view, functional learning is more than just adopting knowledge. In functionality, the combination of action or function, thinking and reflection result in learning. (Öystilä 2003: 59–61).

In relation to theories of learning, functionality can be argued to have its theoretical background on both the constructivist and social theories of learning, because both of these theories include aspects such as learner activity, learning as a process and leaning as participation that can be seen as crucial elements of functionality. Wenger (2009: 213–214) discusses the social approach to learning and states that learning should not be seen as a separate activity but rather as an on-going process that is an inseparable part of human life. According to this social view, learning may also happen while the learner is doing something that does not directly aim on learning. In other words, learning takes place also in other circumstances than in formal classroom environments or during carefully designed learning activities. In functionality, this perception is realised as learning by doing, in which the learner explores the subject being learnt through concrete personal experience. Wenger (2009: 209) argues that the social theory of learning places learning "in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world". Thus, in the social approach to learning as well as in functionality, learning is understood as participation rather than passive acquisition. Learning is a result of the learner's active engagement in the world as a member of multiple communities of practice that can be informal or more formal in their nature (Wenger 2009: 210–213).

In contrast to understanding functionality as being based on the social theories of learning, it can also be seen as based on the constructivist theories of learning that emphasise the learner's mental process of constructing knowledge. Wenger (2009: 217) states that, in the constructivist view on learning, knowledge is constructed in interaction with one's environment and while engaging in tasks or activities that leave room for the learner's own initiative. Wenger (2009: 217) summarises the core elements of the constructivist learning theories as follows: "They favor hands-on, self-directed activities oriented towards design and

discovery". This summary can be argued to include the basic principles of functional working methods that also focus on the active role of the learner and aim on promoting learner agency through hands-on exploration of the subject being learnt. Van Lier (2008: 47) strongly links functionality (referred to as action-based teaching) to theories of learning that treat learning more as a process and activity than a product or object. According to this view, instead of treating learning as acquisition, it is seen as participation (van Lier 2008: 47). To be more specific, van Lier (2008: 61) explains that functionality is "a direct descendant of the educational theories and philosophies of a number of earlier thinkers and workers, including Pestalozzi, Vygotsky, Piaget and Montessori". According to van Lier (2008: 46), the factor that differentiates functionality from other very similar approaches to learning and teaching, such as Task-based teaching or Content-based teaching, is the aspect of learner agency that is considered the key issue in learning. In the functional approach to learning, learner agency is seen as a more important factor than any educational setting, task design or other curricular organisation (van Lier 2008: 46). Therefore, functional learning activities do not have to follow any specific pattern or order of organisation in order to be functional. Instead, they need to promote learner agency and personal activity by allowing the learner to have initiative in the learning process and self discover, explore and construct knowledge while engaging in the activity.

In addition to the understandings of functionality discussed above, a number of other definitions for the concept can be found from different pedagogical publications, such as teacher's guides or material packages for functional learning and teaching that are stated to follow the guidelines of the POPS (2014), but, interestingly enough, few of them directly use academic references. Therefore, it is rather hard to judge the academic reliability of these definitions. I chose to include these publications in this section despite of their rather vague academic reliability because they state to provide teachers with functional teaching material and functional activities that are based on the new POPS (2014) and therefore include information on how functionality is understood in the context of learning and teaching. Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena (2016: 14) for example, define functionality as a learner's active participation and thinking in the learning process but do not directly refer to academic sources or researches when doing so. However, they provide a list of references and suggested readings at the end of their material package. They state that in functionality, the physical activation of the learner is used for achieving learning goals. According to their

conceptualisation of functionality, experiential and cooperative learning are important features of the functional learning process. The emphasis is on the learners' active interaction with their peers, teachers and other people also outside the school institution. The aim is to encourage learners to express themselves, explore new phenomena and gain meaningful experiences from their own active participation in the learning process. (Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena 2016: 14).

Kataja, Jaakkola and Liukkonen (2011: 30) also discuss functionality without directly referring to academic sources. They provide a definition for functionality, but discuss it from the perspective of functional working methods. According to them, all activities that aim to activate the learners to act and function as individuals and as group members in the learning process are included in functional working methods. They state that, in functionality, cognitive processes and intellectual activity are produced by physical activation of the learner. (Kataja, Jaakkola and Liukkonen 2011: 30). Therefore, their understanding of functionality emphasises physical activity and kinaesthetic learning. According to Kataja, Jaakkola and Liukkonen (2011: 30), the teacher does not give learners ready models for working or seek information to them for their behalf. Rather, functionality relies on the idea that learners are able to construct knowledge themselves and find creative ways to solve problems in the learning process. Thus, functional working methods bring about opportunities to create new points of view to the subject being learnt and do not restrict the ways in which learning results can be achieved. (Kataja, Jaakkola and Liukkonen 2011: 30).

Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena (2016: 14) give some concrete examples of what they perceive as functional working methods. According to their view, the functional approach uses multimodality and different senses when exploring the subject being learnt. Their list of examples of functional working methods include research tasks, group and project work, cooperative learning, playing games, drama as well as digital and artistic presentations. Searching for information from multiple and varying sources and constructing knowledge are also seen as core elements of functional working methods. Learning can take place outside the school building and different kinds of field trips are recommended. (Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena 2016: 14). Thus, information is not just presented to the learner. Instead, the learner seeks and constructs it by active and explorative action. These learning situations pursue to provide the learner with experiences of succeeding in their endeavours and promote their

creativity (Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena 2016: 14). Very similar working methods are discussed by Kohonen (2001: 40), who sees them as examples of experiential learning methods. Therefore, it can be concluded that functionality is perhaps not an independent teaching method, but can be used as an umbrella concept that refers to different teaching methods that focus on the active role of learners but approach it from slightly different angles. According to this view, methods such as Task-based language teaching (see e.g. Long 2015; Nunan 2004) and experiential language learning and teaching (see Section 3.2) would both be functional approaches to language learning and teaching.

According to Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena (2016: 14), functional learning has numerous benefits to the holistic growth of the learners. They argue that these benefits are psychological, physical, cognitive and social in their nature. The psychological benefits have to do with enhancing the learners' self-esteem and confidence about their own learning skills. Öystilä (2003: 68) also states that functionality and reflection help learners to become more self-regulated. This has to do with agency that is a major element in functional learning and discussed into more detail in Section 3.2. The physical benefits regard the physical activation of the learners that is often discussed being too low during the school day. The cognitive benefits have to do with promoting learners' independent thinking skills and their learning-to-learn skills. The social benefits then concern developing the learners' social and cooperation skills as well as ability to give and receive feedback and critical observations regarding their work. (Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena 2016: 14). In addition to these social advantages, Kataja, Jaakkola and Liukkonen (2011: 30) argue that functionality is also a good way of affecting the group dynamics of learners and process their emotions indirectly during active participation. Moreover, Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena (2016: 14), see functionality as a way of taking different learners and their various learning styles into account. As the methods of working are versatile and allow different styles of self-expression, learners are able to use their own strengths and special skills in the learning process. At the same time, learners learn to understand and tolerate the fact that all people are different and learn in their unique ways (Leskinen, Jaakkola and Norrena 2016: 14).

When describing experiential learning that has overlapping if not identical features with functionality, Kolb (2015: 16) contrasts what he calls "abstract cognitive" learning with "concrete experiential learning". However, these two types of learning are not necessarily

mutually exclusive. It can be argued that in order to be effective, functional working methods as well as all other approaches to learning should also require the use of one's cognitive skills. Van Lier (2007: 47) states that "Another development relevant to an action-based perspective is a growing emphasis on the processes of learning, particularly those that combine social-interactive and cognitive-reflective work in the classroom." Therefore, functionality can be seen as an approach that combines both experiential concrete exploration of the content that is being learnt and its conscious cognitive processing (Öystilä 2003: 59–61). As Sergejeff (2007: 82–83) explains, the idea of functionality is to personally connect the learner to the specific subject matter that is being learnt. In her view, personal experience and activating the learner's feelings promote the learning process. Comprehensive activity of the learner as well as concrete, conscious exploration of the content of learning is thus seen as the key to meaningful and personal learning experience (Sergejeff 2007: 82–83). Functionality and concrete experimenting bring learning and its content closer to the learners themselves than plain cognitive and abstract processing.

As pointed out in Posio (2016), teachers tend to understand functionality in at least two different ways. It can be seen either as a way of learning and teaching the actual subject matter of the lesson or as something that does not necessarily have anything to do with the content of the lesson but aims on increasing activity and physical movement in the classroom. Öystilä (2003: 61) discusses the same problem and remarks that it is common to think that action that is characteristic to functionality cannot be a part of scholarly education and teaching. However, Kolb (1984: 3) states that experiential, or in this context functional, working methods should not be seen or used as a series of fun activities or tricks that have no intellectual purpose. Rather, they should be used for enhancing learning and enabling students to reach the learning goals of the lesson (Kolb 1984: 3). Because of the vast amount of reference to functionality in the NCC (2016), it can be argued that in the context of learning and teaching, functionality should be understood as an actual working method in which the aim is to learn the content of different subjects. Thus, it is not some extra activity or a break in the lesson but rather a recommended and required pedagogical approach. Karppinen (2003: 35) summarises the connection between functional working methods and learning of subject matter by using an apple tree metaphor. She discusses play and games in the context of Finnish as a second language teaching and argues that they can be integrated into language learning and teaching so that they are not a separate extra activity but a way of learning the

actual linguistic content of the lesson. According to her metaphor, the branches of the apple tree form the contents that should be learnt in language lessons. The apples in the tree then symbolise the different games, plays and other functional activities that are used in order to learn these contents. (Karppinen 2003: 35).

Öystilä (2003: 62–63) discusses functionality from the point of view of intellectualisation. Referring to academics that have developed ideas of experiential learning, she argues that functionality allows learners to delay the intellectualisation of their actions and makes room for affective experience and exploration as well as uncertainty that are often overtaken by excessive intellectualisation and analysing. As stated above, it is important to note that this does not mean that functional working methods would make learning anti-intellectual. On the contrary, reflection, intellectualisation and analysing are core dimensions of functionality. In contrast to more academic approaches to learning, in the functional approach, theory is not necessarily the starting point of activity but rather the end-result of action, experience and reflection. To Kolb (2015), reflection means immediate contemplation of experience that happens during the functional activity in social interaction. In the functional approach, the learner first actively and experientially explores the subject being learnt and then analyses and intellectualises the experience drawing conclusions from the results of the exploration process and his/her reflections on the activity (Öystilä 2003: 62–63). The learner is in a sense free from unnecessary boundaries created by excessive intellectualisation and theorisation of the substance to be learnt and is thus allowed to use his/her own imagination, creativity and thinking when making sense of that substance. By this, learning can be more learner-centered and enable learners to construct knowledge in their own individual way. The goal is that new information goes through the learner's own unique thinking process so that the learner links it to his/her already existing knowledge database forming a meaningful unity.

The functional approach to learning takes advantage of the situated nature of learning. According to Öystilä (2003: 65) the here and now situation is vital in functional learning because it enables the learner to make connections between the layers of the past and the future in the present moment of learning. That is, as learning is made concrete and active, the learner is able to explore and challenge his/her own presumptions and existing knowledge on the subject that is being learnt at the here and now moment (Öystilä 2003: 65). This here and now principle of learning can also be seen as problematic because it might strengthen the

common belief amongst learners that knowledge learnt at school cannot be used in real life. For example, Dufva, Alanen and Aro (2003) studied primary school learners' conceptualisations of language and, according to their findings, learners tend to think that language is in the school language books and they do not think they use it outside school. The authors argue that there is a gap between school and everyday life that should be eliminated (Dufva, Alanen and Aro 2003). Therefore, it is important to include analysis and intellectualisation in the process of functional learning and through that connect the gained new knowledge to its larger context. For example in functional language learning, connections can be made between the learnt linguistic feature and its real life context of use.

Öystilä (2003: 66–68) discusses the teacher's role in functional learning. In her view, the teacher's role is very flexible and can be different depending on the situation. The teacher must not get too much involved in the learning activity because it is important to give learners room to process and produce knowledge themselves. The teacher's goal in the functional learning process is to facilitate learning by guiding and supporting learners. The teacher also helps learners solve problems that occur while they engage in functional learning situations. (Öystilä 2003: 66–68). The teacher creates opportunities for learning and chooses activities that best suit the learners' needs. Öystilä (2003: 66–68) points out that it is important that the teacher gives enough time for the learner group to get used to functional working methods because the new kind of school culture may require a lot of practise and time to adapt to it. It is possible that functional activities take a while before they start working well if the group of learners they are used with is not familiar with having functional activities in the class. The teacher has authority in the classroom and uses it for the benefit of the learning group. For example, the teacher takes care of social control and creates rules for working so that every learner has equal opportunities to explore, experience and reflect on the subject being learnt. (Öystilä 2003: 66–68). Therefore, the teacher is in charge of what is happening in the classroom but does not limit the learners' chances to experience agency, activity and ownership of their own learning.

In this thesis, I define functionality as an approach to learning and teaching that promotes learner agency and treats learning as an active process where learning happens through meaningful personal experience and concrete exploration of the subject being learnt. In contrast to my former definition of functionality (Posio 2016: 10) in which functionality is

referred to as action-based teaching, I have diminished, yet not discarded, the role of physical activation of the learner and extended the meaning of activity to cover other dimensions than the physical as well. In the material package section of this thesis, I endeavour to transform the theory of functionality into practical language learning activities. For this reason, I also provide a definition for functionality that includes the context of language learning and teaching. Therefore, functional language learning and teaching in this material package is understood as an approach that focuses on the active role of the learner as a whole person in the language learning process. It emphasises the importance of agency (see definition in Section 3.1) and personal, meaningful experience in language learning. Language is learnt by using it in different communicational situations that ideally are somehow connected to the real-life contexts where different structures and communicative patterns of the target language occur. Through engaging in concrete situations of language use, learners gain experience on the function of different linguistic structures. This experience is then transformed into knowledge of language through reflection and intellectualisation. The main idea is that learning results from participating in meaningful activity and the learners are encouraged to experience, explore and construct information themselves and as members of an active learning group. Functionality is considered to include approaches to language learning and teaching that produce meaningful learning through personal experience; such as play, games, drama, songs, experiments, communicational activities, arts, physical activation and simulations. The learner is in an active role and has agency in the learning process. Functional learning provides learners with opportunities to explore the content being learnt in concrete situations that help them understand how and where it can be used. Through this, learners gain experience on the content being learnt and can thus see it as personally meaningful and useful to them. This experience can then be transformed into more abstract conceptualisations and sets of rules that make sense to the learners and are linked to their concrete situations of use because the learners themselves actively participate in constructing them. The concepts of learner agency and experiential learning that are important features of functionality are further discussed and defined in Chapter 3. As this material package is based on the NCC (2014), its view on functionality is further explored in Chapter 4.

2.3 Functional language learning and teaching

It is important to note here that even though this material package is based on functional language learning and teaching, the concept of functionality discussed in this section is not entirely the same as the conceptualisation of functionality used in the material package. The reason for this possibly confusing difference is that this material package is based on the POPS (2014) understanding of the Finnish term *toiminnallisuus*, that is often translated into English as 'functionality' in the translated English version (NCC 2016). Therefore, the same term has slightly different meanings depending on the context it is used in. This Section explores functional language learning and teaching that is based on the functional view on language.

Functional language teaching as a method stems from the functionalist approach to language. According to Rivers (1981), in functional language teaching, grammatical rules and generalisations of linguistic knowledge are formed based on the learners' experiences of language use. This approach to learning the forms of language is called inductive instruction (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009). It emphasises the logical and coherent nature of language and encourages learners to make connections and generalisations about how language works based on examples of language use. According to Kaschak and Gernsbacher (2013: 131) the functionalist view on language implies that language acquisition involves similar cognitive processes to the ones that are used in learning in general, which contradicts the Chomskyan understanding that language learning requires a specific language learning organ or cognitive system. Accordingly, the theory of universal grammar that applies to all human languages is not supported in the functionalist approach (Kaschak and Gernsbacher 2013: 131). Therefore, language learning does not need to consist of studying separate linguistic forms in some specific order building from simpler ones to more advanced structures. Instead, it should observe them in the actual language use concentrating on their function, that is, what they are used for. From this perspective, language is not something one can learn to master by just studying its forms. The key to learning is using the target language and analysing these situations of language use.

As mentioned above, the functional approach to language learning and teaching sees language as a coherent system of meaning-making instead of a set of grammatical rules that the learner must master and internalise in order to "know" the language. Thus, the goal in language

learning is not to learn perfect grammar and all its specific features, but rather to learn to use the target language and communicate in different situations. As Dufva et al. (2011: 112–113) argue, knowing facts and rules about a language is by no means the same as being able to use the language. Nikula (2010) also states that the functional view on language does not see language skills as knowledge of language but rather as an ability to use language in changing social situations as a means of conveying meanings and building shared social reality. She suggests that instead of referring to language learning as acquisition, it should be considered as participation. Therefore, when applied to language learning and teaching, the functionalist view on language prefers language learning in real-life communicational situations where the learners actively participate in the learning process and learn language by using it.

According to Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia (2009: 407–410), language use, communication and oral language skills are emphasised in the functional approach to language teaching. In their view, functional language teaching is based on the communicational needs of the learners. Llinares García (2007) studied the functional use of English as a foreign language (EFL) among five-year-old learners in order to find out whether the communicational functions used in the first language can be promoted in an EFL classroom context. In the study, she video-recorded and analysed four EFL classes from an experiment group that used activities that encouraged the children's use of the communicational functions and from a control group where the teacher used her normal classroom activities. The study shows that activities that motivate the learners to use the foreign language for some purpose help learners to initiate interaction and to communicate in the language being learnt. (Llinares García 2007). In her study, Llinares García (2007: 44) argues that a major motivation to learn a language stems from the learner's need to use the language and to do things with the language. She explains that the ability to do things with a language motivates young children to learn their first language and serves as a crucial motivator in learning a second or a foreign language as well (Llinares García 2007: 44). Llinares (2013: 33) states that creating the learner a need and an interest to use the target language is the key to second language learning. This means that functional language teaching should focus on linguistic forms that are frequently used in the target language and useful to the learners in different communicational situations. Therefore, the goal of language learning is to study useful linguistic structures that help learners function in the target language instead of aiming to learn all the possible aspects of the target language. Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia (2009: 407–410) also argue that the learner's need to express

something in the target language has a positive effect on his/her ability to learn the linguistic structure needed for that expression. This also contradicts the idea that language should be taught in a certain hierarchical order that proceeds from a simpler structure to a more challenging one and supports the view according to which language teaching should be founded on the learners' needs for language use. Accordingly, it can be argued that the functional approach to language teaching is learner-centered and strongly based on encouraging the learners' own initiative, observations and active participation in the learning process.

Llinares (2013: 30) argues that in the functional approach, interaction and the social context in which interaction takes place are important factors in language learning. She states that language learning happens in a social context and through interaction (Llinares 2013: 30). Therefore, language learning activities should encourage learners to interact in the target language and provide the learners with social contexts where language learning can take place. This contradicts the traditional academic setting where learners rather passively receive information from the teacher and makes the active participation of the learner in the learning process a crucial factor in language learning. As discussed above, Llinares García's (2007: 44) study on the functional use of EFL among five-year-old learners shows that even young children can use their second language in communication with others in situations where the learning activity provides them with a purpose to use the target language in similar situations where they would use their first language as well. According to the study, teachers need to plan these learning activities so that they encourage learners to initiate interaction in the target language themselves instead of just responding to questions asked by the teacher (Llinares Gracía 2007: 44). This argument links functional language learning and teaching strongly to the notion of learner agency that is further discussed in Section 3.1. Functional language learning activities should create the learners a need to use and therefore learn the target language (Wong-Fillmore 1991 as cited in Llinares 2013: 33). The factor of social interaction in learning activities creates the need for language use because, according to Llinares (2013: 30), language is a means that is needed in producing and negotiating social meanings and building shared understanding. Therefore, interaction in social contexts is a requirement for language learning. Studies show that language learning activities should encourage and support the learners' own endeavours to use the target language and to communicate in it (see Llinares 2013: 34).

Schleppegrell (2016: 126–127) defines the goal of functional language learning as "ability to participate in meaningful contexts of language use". She argues that the correctness of language is not as important as the learner's ability to use language in different communicational contexts. The context of communication is seen as an important factor when studying useful and appropriate linguistic expressions. Therefore, functional language teaching aims to help learners use language that is appropriate to and socially accepted in each text genre, context and situation (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009: 407–410). Learners are provided with forms and structures that are useful to them in practice. Teaching attempts to follow the learner's learning process and support it but not to determine it. That is, learning is not seen as a result of teaching but rather as a result of the learner's own participation in the learning process and exploration of language in different social situations. According to the functionalist view, language should not be decontextualised and seen as an object even though formal language teaching often represents it in such way (Dufva et al. 2011: 112–113). Instead of seeing language learning as memorising words, grammatical rules and structures, the functional approach to language emphasises language use and communication considering language both as the tool and the goal of learning (Dufva et al. 2011: 112–113; Llinares 2013: 41). The principle is that language learning occurs while the learner uses the language and engages in an environment that gives opportunities to communicate in the target language even though the learner's language skills would not be very comprehensive. Thus, when it comes to functional language learning, the most important thing is not the amount of linguistic structures the learner knows but the ability to use language in different contexts and for different purposes, that is, to do things in the target language.

However, grammatical rules are by no means totally left out and their role in language learning and teaching is not underestimated in the functionalist approach. The main point is that these rules are not necessarily given as something ready and pre-existing but instead created and concluded based on the learners' own logical thinking processes and experiences on language use situations (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009: 407–410). Conceptualisations of language are made based on the learner's experiences of language use using their own ideas and observations of certain communication patterns. This means that the teacher's role is to help learners to use their own thinking skills in order to construct knowledge and generalisations based on their own observations and experiences of language use situations. That is, the teacher does not lecture and present ready grammatical rules or other fragmented

structures of language to the learners (compare Llinares 2013: 31). Instead, the learner's own cognitive process is the most central aspect of functional language learning.

In the functional approach to language, as Llinares (2013: 31) emphasises: "there is no sharp distinction between the system and the use of language". For this reason, the functional approach to language earning and teaching also treats language form as embedded in its function. Therefore, forms are discussed from the point of view of their function and use so that the learners get a sense of their concrete communicational purpose while learning them. (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009: 407–410). Pica (2013) explains how linguistic forms can be studied through and within social interaction and communication. Relying on previous research on interaction, she argues that negotiation of meaning in communication during the language learning activities helps learners focus on language forms. This happens when learners try to understand each other's attempts to communicate in the target language and request for clarifications from each other. These requests help learners to focus on the comprehensibility of their messages in the target language and identify the gaps in their language skills that make the intended meaning of their utterances unclear. (Pica 2013: 52–53). Through this, the need for studying linguistic forms and understanding how a certain utterance is formed in the target language so that it becomes easily understandable is created. The shift from the meaning of the message into the form of the message thus happens rather naturally within communication. However, Pica (2013: 55–56) also points out that requests for clarification and confirmation may also occur in communication and interaction between learners even though the original message would be correct in its form. In these situations, the learners' focus does not necessarily shift to language form but rather stays on the negotiation of meaning which is also a desired activity from the point of view of functional language learning.

The functional approaches to language and language learning and teaching are often seen as opposite to the form-focused or formalist approaches to language (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009: 409). These two perceptions of language have been the basic notions behind many theorisations and methods of language learning and teaching throughout the history (Dufva et al. 2011: 113; Rivers 1981: 25). They are even discussed as mutually exclusive methods of language teaching. In practice, however, it is rather impossible to fully separate them because not any language teaching method can be strictly only formal or only functional but they

always include some features of each other. Therefore, the functional and formal views of language education can be understood as different ends of one continuum of teaching approaches. Rivers (1981: 25) points out that the trends in language teaching practices and theories have been moving from the formalist end of the continuum to the more functionalist one and back time and time again as new generations have intended to balance their predecessors' preferred viewpoints. Consequently, a complete balance between the two views as well as their mutual exclusiveness may be impossible goals. Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia (2009: 409) suggest that in practical language teaching, the formal and the functional approaches are both present and every teaching method is a combination of them. In their view, these two approaches complete one another without being in contradiction with each other (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009: 409). Accordingly, functional language teaching cannot –and should not– be only functional and deny the need for more form-focused approaches to language learning and teaching. As Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia (2009) explain, functional language teaching can also benefit from activities that separate a linguistic form from its function but the functional aspect should be thoroughly discussed before using such activities. Doing exercises that focus on making the use of some grammatical structure automatic can also be necessary even though the function of the structure in question would be emphasised.

2.4   Criticism towards the functional view on language learning and teaching

As all methods and theories of language and language pedagogy, the functional view on language teaching also has its own weaknesses and challenges. A well-known and inevitable fact is that not all learners benefit from the same teaching method and not every learner has the same cognitive skills and abilities that are needed in the functional language learning process. For example, as the functionalist approach emphasises the learner's own observations and conceptualisations of the logic behind some linguistic form, it might pose a very difficult challenge for learners that have learning difficulties. Some learners require concrete and well-structured information and repetition in order to learn new things and if learning is heavily built on the learner's own activity and observations, problems may occur. This does not mean that functional language teaching would be impossible with these learners. Instead, varying means of differentiating learning are needed to overcome these challenges (see NCC 2016: 64–80, 238). The amount of support and scaffolding from the teacher during the learning

process should be targeted to every learner's individual needs. For example, repetition, well-structured instructions and guidance throughout each learning activity might be good ways to support learners and help them develop their learning-to-learn skills. As a result of timely support from the teacher as well as other learners, all learners can be able to engage in the functional language learning process. However, this type of individual support is a challenge in large learner groups where one teacher has to both guide and support the learning process. Therefore, learning activities should be chosen so that they provide opportunities for differentiation of learning and the use of each learner's personal strengths. For example, working in small groups gives opportunities for multiple ways of participation and allows the learners to use their different personal skills in order to achieve a shared learning goal. It is important that even language teaching that emphasises the functional approach to language does not rely too heavily on only one teaching method because all learners are different from each other and their personal needs, strengths and weaknesses should be the starting point of all teaching. Accordingly, teaching methods, emphases and approaches should always be selected so that they support the needs and learning styles of the specific and unique group of learners the teacher might have.

Functional language teaching has been criticised for being too inaccurate and leaving too much room for errors and incorrect language use (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009: 409). As learners are encouraged to explore language and make conceptualisations of its forms based on their own experiences and logical thinking, errors and misunderstandings may occur. While learning through one's own experience and thinking may be effective and produce a long-lasting memory trace, unlearning an incorrect way of understanding some linguistic structure formed through this may be very challenging. Therefore, the teacher's role in monitoring learners' work and giving feedback during the learning process is important. In order to prevent incorrect understandings from becoming permanent, the teacher has to support and guide the learning process and provide help whenever needed. The teacher can use the learners' observations and questions as a starting point for helping them further conceptualise the linguistic form in question. That is, the responsibility of providing learners with accurate knowledge remains the teacher's while the initial need for, or an interest towards a certain linguistic structure may come from the learner as a result of experience of meaningful language use.

Another challenge in the functional approach to language learning and teaching is realising the functional language theory in practical learning activities. For example, when communication is seen as a priority goal of learning, teachers need to reflect on the learning activities they use and think whether they teach language for communication or through communication. Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia (2009: 411) explain that more often than not communicative activities in a language classroom become more individual performances than actual authentic communication between learners. That is, learners tend to focus on their own language use as well as their performance and do not necessarily take into account the others who participate in the communicative learning activity. Consequently, a major part of the linguistic input available in the learning situation is left unregistered and the communicational aspect of functional language learning becomes more restricted than originally intended. However, if the learning activity is designed so that each learner's contribution is needed in order to achieve a shared goal, learners are more likely to focus on each other's utterances and try to understand their intended meanings (Pica 2013: 53).

For language teachers, it is crucial to reflect on their conception of language because it rather inevitably transfers to the ways in which they teach. The conception of language adopted is visible in teaching for example when choosing which aspects of language are emphasised in language instruction. Different views on language focus on such things as the grammatical forms of language whereas others emphasise communication and conveying meanings. In Finland, The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCC 2016) gives guidelines for language teaching and also takes a stance on the preferred approach to language. In the NCC (2016: 171) the adopted view on language is expressed directly only in the section considering mother tongue and literature: "The instruction is based on a social and functional perception of language: the structures of language are studied in age-appropriate language-use situations and while working with text genres suitable for the age group". The same principle is articulated more indirectly in a section about language education: "The basic principle of language instruction at school is using the language in different situations" (NCC 2017: 170). Based on these statements, it can be argued that the basic approach to language adopted in the NCC (2016) is functional. That is, according to the curriculum, the functional view on language should be the premise of all language teaching in primary level education in Finland. However, Nikula (2010) argues that, even though the curriculum claims to rely on the functionalist approach to language, the reality of language education still echoes the formalist

emphasis on mastering the language as a system over the actual language use. More research on the functional approach to language learning and teaching is also needed, since little research has been done on it from the point of view of second language acquisition especially in lower educational levels (Llinares 2013: 31–32).

3   CORE CONCEPTS OF FUNCTIONALITY

As discussed in the previous chapter, functionality, that is the underlying pedagogical approach in this material package, is based on the functional view on language and has many overlapping features with other methods of language teaching. However, van Lier (2007: 46) argues that the most important construct that differentiates functionality from other rather similar approaches to learning is *agency*. Therefore, in this chapter, I discuss learner agency and its role in the learning process. Another significant feature that distinguishes between functionality and other methods that can be argued to have their basis on the functional approach to language is the aspect of personal experience and the idea of learning through it. Learning by doing and functional working methods can be seen as arising from the notion that experience and learning are linked together. Öystilä (2003) directly refers to experiential learning as the foundation of *toiminnallisuus* ('functionality') and uses works of the developers of the experiential learning theory as theoretical framework for functionality. Accordingly, in this chapter, I also introduce the most salient ideas of *experiential learning* and mirror the concept of functionality through this pedagogical approach. As main sources, I use the works of David Kolb who theorises experiential learning in more general terms as well as Viljo Kohonen, who discusses experiential leaning in the more specific context of language learning and teaching. These two sources are used because both Kolb and Kohonen provide an extensive theory of experiential learning and can be seen as very influential theorists of the approach. Kolb's work, which is based on the ideas of John Dewey and Kurt Lewin, is also considered to form an important theoretical background for functional learning in general (see e.g. Öystilä 3003) while functional language learning, to an extent, can be seen as descending from Kohonen's work on experiential language learning (see e.g. van Lier 2008).

3.1   Agency in language learning

Learner agency is a rather new concept in the field of research on language learning and teaching (Kalaja et al. 2015: 13). Despite of its relatively short history, agency is a widely researched and discussed phenomenon in the field of education and especially in language pedagogy (Huang 2013). Learner agency refers to the learner's actions and behaviour that facilitate learning (Fogle 2012: 4). From the perspective of language learning, Aro (2015: 48)

makes a remark that captures the importance as well as the nature of agency by explaining that "No amount of teaching or language material will magically turn into a learner's language knowledge unless the learner him- or herself makes some effort to learn". This quote summarises the basic notion of agency that has to do with the learners' active participation and initiative in the learning process. The same principle is adopted in the NCC (2016: 17), as the entire conception of learning presented in the curriculum is based on the idea of agency, that is, the learner as an active agent who implements agency in the learning process.

Agency does not have a widely-accepted definition (Ahearn 2001; Huang 2013; Mercer 2012). It is a debated phenomenon and can be conceptualised in various ways depending on the theoretical framework it is observed in (Mercer 2012: 42). According to Mercer (2012: 42), the divergent interpretations of the notion of agency may on the one hand be due to its complex and hypothetical nature. In other words, agency is such an abstract concept that creating a comprehensive and commonly accepted definition for it may be challenging. On the other hand, as Lantolf and Thorne (2006: 238) suggest, the dissimilar interpretations of agency may be due to different research orientations and emphases. However, even though academics emphasise different aspects in their views on agency, it is common to make reference to Ahearn (2001) and use her definition of agency as a starting point (see e.g. Fogle 2012: 5; Kalaja et al. 2015: 14; Huang 2013: 57; van Lier 2008). This definition for agency is of a sociocultural perspective and proposes that "agency refers to the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn 2001: 112). As Lantolf and Thorne (2006) point out, Ahearn's definition intentionally over-simplifies the phenomenon and leaves space for further elaboration. Ahearn (2001: 112) self describes the definition as a "bare bones" version of agency.

The sociocultural approach to agency emphasises the "relational interdependency between agent and world" (Kalaja et al. 2015: 15). It treats agency as a complex system that is both a person's subjective experience and a socially constructed phenomenon. In other words, agency can be seen both as an individual characteristic of a person and as a sociocultural and highly context-dependent concept. The sociocultural approach is the most prominent view used in research on agency in language learning (Aro 2015: 48). According to the sociocultural view on agency, mediation is seen as an important feature of agency that, as Kalaja et al. (2015: 15) explain, refers to a link through which a person's intrinsic agency is

connected to its sociocultural context. Mediation happens through artefacts that can be for example languages or other symbolic systems that are available in the sociocultural context (Kalaja et al. 2015: 15). The sociocultural approach to agency is used by van Lier (2008), who sees agency rather as action or behaviour than as property or a characteristic feature of a person. In his view, agency is an interdependent and a co-constructed system that can be individual and collaborative (van Lier 2008). The sociocultural approach to agency emphasises the social and contextual nature of agency and argues that the individual as an agent is affected by the sociocultural context but simultaneously participates in creating the context and also affects it (Mercer 2012: 43). Aro (2015: 48) criticises the sociocultural approach for being "biased towards systems and observable activities", which means that the agent's subjective sense of agency that has to do with how the individual experiences agency in the emotional level is not entirely covered in this approach.

Another commonly used approach to agency is called the dialogic approach. It is dialogic in the sense that it sees the learner as dialogically linked to his/her environment (Aro 2015: 49). This dialogic interaction can take the forms of "perceiving, sensing, experiencing, contributing, speaking, acting" and other activities (Aro 2015: 49). According to Kalaja et al. (2015: 17) the dialogic approach builds on the sociocultural view on agency but focuses more on the agent's individual experience and sense of agency. The main difference between these two approaches is that the sociocultural view emphasises the features of agency and agentic behaviour that are observable from an outside perspective whereas the dialogic view aims to discover the affective and subjectively experienced dimensions of agency (Kalaja et al. 2015: 17). However, the dialogical view is not an individualistic one. Rather, it treats agency as a socially co-constructed phenomenon focusing on the affective dimensions of it (Kalaja et al. 2015: 17–18). Agency can therefore be both something that is visible in the way a learner acts or does not act in the learning environment and also the learner's personal experience. Agency can be affected by its context but it also affects the context and can change in different situations. Thus, the dialogic perspective on agency does not treat agency as a matter that can be possessed by a person (Aro 2015: 49).

Kalaja et al. (2015: 17), refer to a more recent conceptualisation of agency as the complexity perspective that combines both the sociocultural and the dialogic approaches to agency into a holistic and dynamic model of agency. According to this theory, agency is understood as a

complex and multidimensional process that is always dynamic and in a state of flux (Kalaja et al. 2015; Mercer 2012). It observes agency both from the perspectives of sociocultural context and intrapersonal experience. This approach to agency is employed by Mercer (2012: 42), who argues that agency is composed in part of the learner's personal sense of agency that is both a general and a contextual phenomenon and in part of the learner's agentic behaviour which can be both active and non-active. The contextual nature of agency implies that it is constantly changing and varying in different situations (Aro 2015: 50). Therefore, agency is by no means a stable feature a person possesses but a dynamic system that is realised differently in different circumstances. The contexts and social environments where agency emerges in may either promote or inhibit agentic behaviour. According to Mercer (2011: 42–43), contexts are composed of different factors and are dynamic in their nature. A context can affect learner agency and also be affected by learner agency (Mercer 2011: 42–43). These contextual aspects and the learner's perception of them are in interaction with each other. This interaction is called affordances. (Ahearn 2001: 114–115; Mercer 2012: 43). Affordances have implicit potential for learning, the realisation of which depends on the learner's choice to make or not to make use of them. Mercer (2012: 43) states that "agency thus emerges from the interaction between resources and contexts and the learners' perceptions and use of them.

Mercer (2012: 43) emphasises that learners do not just react to contexts but also participate in creating them. If the learner chooses to make use of affordances available in the learning context, they become resources for learning. Mercer (2012: 43) explains that each learner interprets situations and contexts in their own personal way and makes use of affordances in ways that are meaningful to them. For this reason, it is important to enable the possibility of the learner's personal engagement in the learning process and explore the subject being learnt in ways that make it meaningful to the learner. If the learner is able to link the subject matter and the learning activity to him/herself s/he is likely to experience it as meaningful. Fogle (2012: 4) summarises that "agency as a construct, therefore, can both afford and constrain language-learning opportunities depending on the sociocultural context and the intentions or goals of the learner." Van Lier (2008) argues that in language learning, the learner's own activity and initiative are the most important factors that enable learning. In his view, the teacher's role or input matters are not as effective in the learning process as the things the learner self does and says (van Lier 2007, 2008). This means that information cannot just be given to the learner, but the learner must seize the learning opportunity him/herself and

actively take part in the learning situation.

Agency is often strongly linked to the concepts of action, autonomy and volition. This is expressed by Huang (2013), who states that "Agency, including learner agency, entails action, and often suggests action that arises from deliberation and choice". Van Lier (2008) also treats action that is a product of the learner's initiative as a visible representation of agency. Researchers seem to have reached consensus on this matter, however, Ahearn (2001: 114) underlines that agency should not be understood as a synonym for free will because it would neglect the importance of the social dimension of agency. Lantolf and Thorne too (2006: 237) stress that agency does not mean that the learner should have total autonomy and control over his/her actions. Nor does it indicate absolute free will. They argue that treating agency as that is unrealistic (Lantolf and Thorne 2006: 237). The reason for the differentiation of agency from free will might be that compulsory education in a sense contradicts the possibility of learners exercising complete control and autonomy in the learning process.

According to van Lier (2008: 5) agency is an indivisible part of language learning. Lantolf and Thorne (2006: 142) agree with this argument by stating that "learning a language is necessarily the action of an intentional agent". Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to create circumstances that promote learner agency in the language classroom (van Lier 2004b). Fogle (2012: 4) states that according to studies on learner agency in second language learning, achieving learner agency is crucial to the process of language learning. She explains that active participation and target language use in the learning process significantly ameliorate language learning (Fogle 2012: 4). Learner agency can be enhanced by engaging the learners in meaningful activities, "through the provision of choices and the opportunity to work as a member of a learning community on interesting and challenging projects and puzzles" (Allwright & Hanks 2009, cited in van Lier 2004b). Therefore, agency can be seen as closely related to learner motivation and the experience of meaningful participation in the process of learning. Van Lier (2007: 48) implies that motivation and learning most likely result from the learner's experience of him/herself as "the agent" of his/her own actions. Thus, the goal is that the learner has the ownership of his/her learning and is able to actively participate as well as express agency in the learning process.

As van Lier (2007) argues, learner agency is the core of functional language learning. Accordingly, in this functional material package, learner agency is understood as the crucial element that makes language learning possible. The approach to agency adopted treats it as a complex dynamic system that is both the learner's personal experience and a visible feature that can be seen as concrete actions in a sociocultural context (see Kalaja et al. 2015; Mercer 2012). In this material package, agency refers to the learner's abilities to act and have initiative in the learning process that are more important from the point of view of learning than any input or actions of the teacher (see van Lier 2004b). Since agency affects and is affected by the learning environment, the activities in this material package attempt to enhance learner agency by creating meaningful contexts, both sociocultural and physical, for learning that provide the learner with opportunities to be an active participant in the learning process. Each activity endeavours to create social interaction that promote learner agency and increase the learner's feeling of ownership over his/her own learning process. In order to enable agency to emerge, the learning activities attempt to connect the subject being learnt personally and meaningfully to the learner and give room for the learner's own thinking process and actions. Most of the activities are designed so that they create a framework in which the learners can operate customising the activity to match their own interests, strengths and personal skills.

3.2   Learning through personal experience

The connection between personal experience and learning has been widely known for decades. According to Kolb (2015: 15), the initial idea and theoretical background for experiential learning are originally expressed by such researchers as Dewey, Lewin and Piaget. For example, Piaget's theory of intelligence and learning shows how intelligence is a product of experience (Kolb 2015: 12). That is, intelligence and learning result from active interaction with one's environment. Piaget's theory is originally based on his observations of growing children who constantly explore their environment and through concrete, active inquiry become able to understand it in a more abstract level (Kolb 2015: 13). Learning is thus a product of one's personal activity. It requires concrete examples of different phenomena in one's environment that enable exploration and development of a personal experience of them.

Experiential learning emphasises the meaning of the learner's personal experience in the learning process. The core idea of experiential learning is that both concrete exploration and abstract thinking are efficient ways of learning but are at their best when combined together (Kolb 2015). Kohonen (2001: 22–23) defines experiential learning as follows:

> The term *experiential learning* is used to refer to a wide range of educational approaches in which *formal learning* (in institutional contexts) is *integrated with practical work and informal learning* in a number of settings.

According to Kolb (2015: 31), experience, exploration and consciousness are central aspects of experiential learning. In an experiential learning activity, the learner both observes and explores the phenomenon that is being studied. The key to learning is that the learner him/herself actively processes the new information and conceptualises it through concrete meaningful activity. (Kohonen 2001: 22–23). Keeton and Tate (1978, cited in Kohonen 2001: 22–23) explain that experiential learning "refers to learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the phenomenon being studied, rather than just hearing, reading or thinking about it". Thus, in contrast to more teacher-led views on learning, experiential learning puts the learner in a central and active role in the learning process.

In agreement with Kohonen (2001), Kolb (2015) suggests that experiential learning is a theory that should be combined with rationalist and behavioural learning theories instead of seeing them as separate or competing views on learning. He describes experiential learning as "a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior" (Kolb 2015: 31). Kohonen (2001: 23) states that just observing the phenomenon that is being learnt does not necessarily result in quality learning. In his view, the learning process should also include the learner's active and experiential exploration of it (Kohonen 2001: 23). In other words, it is important that the learner is not just passively receiving new information but is also able to form a personal understanding of it through meaningful concrete experience of the subject being studied. This argument works also the other way around, since only concrete experience itself does not necessarily lead to learning either. According to Kohonen (2001: 27) conscious reflection is also needed in order to transform experiences into learning. The learners must be engaged in the learning process "as whole persons both intellectually and emotionally" (Kohonen 2001: 24). Therefore, experiential learning involves both the concrete experiential and more abstract and reflective aspects of learning.

In experiential learning, the concrete experience of the phenomenon being studied does not have to be individually produced. Instead, it can also be gained in a shared social activity. According to Kohonen (2001: 24), interaction is an important experiential learning technique because it enables learning from other learners' experiences as well as one's own. In interactive practices, learners engage in a social situation where knowledge is constructed together and experiences are shared. Kohonen (2001: 24) states that in these practices learners are able to actively and personally engage in the learning process. The learner's prior experiences of the phenomenon also play an important role in the learning process and should be taken into account when constructing new knowledge.

Kohonen (2001: 27) describes experiential learning as "a cyclic process integrating immediate experience, reflection, abstract conceptualisation and action". Kolb (2015) also presents experiential learning in the form of a cycle that contains all the important aspects included in the learning process.

Concrete experience

Testing implications
of concepts in new
situations

Observations and
reflections

Formation of abstract
concepts and generalisations
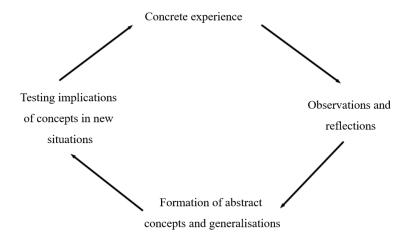
Figure 1. Lewinian Model of Experiential Learning in Kolb 2015: 32

Figure 1 is a model of experiential learning that illustrates a cycle through which learning emerges. The starting point of the model is *concrete experience* of the phenomenon being learnt. This concrete experience can vary by its form, but the key idea is that something meaningful is concretely done with the phenomenon (Kohonen 2001: 23). The concrete experience is followed by *observations and reflections* that refer to the analytical processing of the information gained by concrete experience. At this point, the learner observes and reflects the concrete experience making sense of it. The goal is to make note of information that is revealed by the experiential exploration of the phenomenon in question. After

observing and reflecting the experience, it is time for *formation of abstract concepts and generalisations*. This phase in the learning cycle is crucial when connecting the observations made of the concrete experience to one's previous knowledge base. At this point, the meaningful concrete experience is intellectualised and transformed into more general knowledge that can be applied in broader contexts than just the concrete experiential activity. The experience is thus used as a source of formal learning (see Kohonen 2001). The generalisations formed are then applied to different contexts in the last phase of the experiential learning cycle that is called *testing implications of concepts in new situations*. In other words, the experiential and intellectualised knowledge is further explored in a different situation as if to test whether or not the information gained is applicable to other similar situations. This phase begins another cycle of experiential learning that includes the same steps described above. Learners are encouraged to make new hypotheses that then are explored in practice and turned into further experiences of the phenomenon studied (Kohonen 2001: 29). Kohonen (2001: 23) makes a statement that concludes this experiential learning cycle as containing the elements of "*learning from immediate experience and engaging the learners in the process as whole persons, both intellectually and emotionally*. He argues that experience as itself does not necessarily result in quality learning, but conscious analysing and observing the experience is needed for it to happen (Kohonen 2001: 29). This model of the experiential learning (Figure 1) process is often criticised for over-simplifying the process of learning.

Kolb (2015: 13) explains the core idea of experiential learning in the context of learning and teaching science and mathematics as follows:

> The major task addressed by these programmes was the translation of the abstract symbolic principles of science and mathematics into modes of representation that could be grasped by people at more concrete stages of cognitive development.

The same principle can be applied in learning and teaching any other subject matter as well. For example, in language teaching grammar could be seen as the abstract symbolic principle of the target language which is, in the learning process, transformed into a more concrete representation in order to make it more comprehensible. According to Kolb (2015: 13), this can be done for example by using concrete touchable and moveable objects to represent the abstract principle. In terms of language learning, it could basically mean for instance using word cards to build phrases when learning the grammatical sentence structures of a language.

The abstract grammatical feature is thus made more concrete and approachable to the learner, which also makes it possible for him/her to physically explore it and through that develop a personal experience of its nature and function. Kolb (2015: 14) states that in addition to teaching the specific subject matter, experiential learning is a way to teach learners about the process of constructing knowledge. Therefore, it conveys a growth mind-set that encourages learners to understand learning as an active process rather than as passive acquisition of readily given information.

Corballis (1980: 288, cited in Kolb 2015: 16) discusses the neurological aspect of learning by explaining that the left hemisphere of the human brain processes abstract symbolic representations of information whereas the right hemisphere is specialised in processing concrete and experience-based information. Based on Corballis' findings, Kolb (2015: 16) argues that these complementary processes of the two hemispheres proof that both concrete and abstract processing of knowledge should be treated as equally important in learning. Therefore, he states that experiential and concrete ways of learning should be seen as fully competent approaches to learning as abstractive and cognitive ones.

In this chapter, my aim has been to introduce the basic ideas of the theories of agency and experiential learning that I see as core elements of functional learning. These elements as well as functionality as a working method are also emphasised in the current NCC (2016) that provides the guidelines for Finnish primary level education. For example, the active role of the learner and using concrete experiential learning activities are required in the NCC (2016). Chapter 4 further analyses the role of functionality and its core concepts in the NCC (2016) and seeks to explore how functionality is understood in the curriculum focusing on its connection to guidelines for foreign language learning and teaching. Since the NCC's (2016) principles for foreign language education are based on the CEFR (2001), I also discuss the views on functional language and functionality presented in it.

4   FUNCTIONALITY AND LANGUAGE IN THE CURRICULA

In this chapter, I explore the concept of functional learning from the points of view of the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) and both the Finnish (POPS 2014) and the translated English (NCC 2016) versions of the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education. These curricula provide the basic principles and approaches for foreign language teaching in Finland and are thus very influential in the Finnish educational scene. Therefore, I base the present material package on the conceptualisations of functional language learning that can be found from them.

4.1   Functionality in the Common European Framework of References

The national guidelines for language teaching in Finland, that form the basis for the present material package, are based on the principles discussed in the Common European Framework of References (2001). It is a common basis for language syllabuses throughout Europe which defines what knowledge and skills language learners should develop. The CEFR (2001) is a handbook that discusses important questions of principle and practice in language learning, teaching and assessment. It emphasises a learner-centered approach to language learning and sets out to improve the comparability of different language programmes and degrees in Europe (Eurooppalainen viitekehys 2003: 8). It also discusses the cultural framework of language and gives guidelines to assessment of learning. However, it emphasises that the CEFR does not give instructions or rules for professionals functioning in the field of language learning and teaching but rather raises questions and gives insight to these important matters. The aim of CEFR is to promote transparency of language education as well as international cooperation. Accordingly, one of the most important functions of CEFR is to provide the common reference levels that are used in language assessment. These levels are used as desired learning goals in the NCC (2014) as they describe different levels of language proficiency and different competences required in them. (CEFR 2001: 1).

The approach to language learning and teaching adopted in CEFR (2001: 9) is an *action-oriented approach* that is translated into Finnish as 'toiminnallinen lähestymistapa' (Euroopplainen viitekehys 2003: 28). Therefore, it can be stated that CEFR discusses the same or very similar approach to language learning and teaching that is referred to as

functionality in the present paper. CEFR (2001: 9) discusses the phenomenon in a rather general level and defines it as follows:

> The action-based approach therefore also takes into account the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the full range of abilities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent.

CEFR (2001: 9) emphasises the communicational and functional views on language and considers different language skills as competences that an individual develops as a result of experience in order to be able to perform tasks in the target language. Thus, language is seen as a tool that an individual uses when completing tasks, that is, meaningful actions that have a purpose and can be language-related or other. CEFR (2001) discusses language from the point of view of communication, meaning-making and pragmatics and sees it as a means of social behaviour and interaction. In other words, language is not just the goal of learning but also a means of learning. Language learning is understood as the process of developing different competences and strategies that the learner can use in various contexts and situations when engaging in linguistic activities and completing tasks. (CEFR 2001: 9–16).

In CEFR (2001) language learning is seen as a process through which the learner becomes a language user. The goal of language learning is to develop functional language skills that can be used in everyday life in a purposeful manner. The functionality of language skills refers to the idea that learners should be provided with language input and skills that are useful to them and help them function in the language in real life situations. According to this view, communication and conveying meaning is emphasised over the form and correctness of language. Language is seen as dependent on the context in which it is used. It varies according to the purpose it is used for and the situation it is used in. Therefore, language teaching should prepare learners for these different situations and contexts where language is used in real life. (CEFR 2001: 43–45). Understandably, the school environment provides language learning with limited resources for practicing language use in actual real life situations. Even though authentic learning opportunities can be included in school teaching, it is seldom possible to arrange them constantly. For this reason, functional working methods can be seen as a means to compensate this. Thus, the purpose of experiential and functional approaches to language learning that activate learners is to provide the learners with an opportunity to practise, explore and rehearse their language skills in concrete situations. The goal of language learning is to acquire functional language skills, that is, an ability to function in the language in different everyday situations.

4.2   Functionality in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education

The Finnish National Board of Education has released a new version of the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCC) that has taken into effect in August 2016. The new NCC (2016) includes some important educational reforms that oblige every teacher in Finland. The overall approach to education has become more learner-centered and it aims to make links between the learners' everyday life and schoolwork. Self-regulated learning, cooperation and peer feedback have also become more salient features of the curriculum. The nature and role of assessment has changed so that the amount of formative assessment has grown and the nature of the assessment is more dialogic and aims to advance learning (NCC 2016: 49–57). Furthermore, according to the NCC (2016: 135) every teacher is a language teacher. That is, in addition to teaching the relevant contents of a subject, teachers are also required to teach learners the language of the subject. The adopted view on learning has also changed to a more learner-centered one: "The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education is based on a conception of learning that sees the pupils as active actors" (NCC 2016: 17). Therefore, agency and the active role of learners are central principles in all learning and should be taken into account when planning and organising teaching. Accordingly, the NCC (2016) discusses pedagogical approaches that are seen as ways of activating students and promoting their agency. One of these approaches is functionality or functional working methods that are discussed in more detail below. The link between functionality and foreign language teaching is also discussed.

The term *toiminnallisuu*s in its different forms is mentioned in both the POPS (2014) and its English version NCC (2016) 50 times. Thus, according to the NCC (2016), functionality is a major pedagogical approach and working method that should be used in some form in all primary school subjects. In chapter 4 of the NCC (2016: 30–32), which handles the comprehensive operating culture of basic education, functionality is referred to as one of the commonly used and recommended working methods in primary education. In addition to this, functionality is named specifically in other chapters that separately discuss learning and teaching of different subjects. To mention some of these subjects, functionality as a working method is required for example in foreign languages, mathematics, visual arts, environmental studies, history and social studies in grades 3–6 (NCC 2016). Especially in the context of foreign language teaching, the role of functionality and functional working methods has increased significantly. While in the previous POPS (2004) functionality concerned language

teaching only at the first two grades of primary school (POPS 2004: 18, 138–142), it is currently a required language teaching approach throughout the whole basic education until grade nine (NCC 2016: 136, 236, 375).

Even though functionality has such an important role in the NCC (2016), the term seems to be lacking an established English translation. As I explored the occurrence of the term *toiminnallisuus* in the Finnish POPS (2014) and compared the results in the translated English version NCC (2016), I found that *toiminnallisuus* is translated into English either as 'functionality', 'learning by doing' or 'active learning' in different contexts. Depending on the original Finnish word form, functionality is also referred to as 'functional working methods', 'the functional approach' and 'functional activities' (NCC 2016). Functionality is also linked strongly to experiential learning in the NCC (2016). This is evident in the fact that functionality is often discussed in the same sentence with experiential working methods and these two terms are linked together as though they were a unit called 'experiential and functional working methods' (see e.g. NCC 2016: 31, 227, 280). Thus, it can be concluded that the Finnish version of *toiminnallisuus* is somewhat a unique phenomenon and perhaps does not yet have a word to word English equivalent.

The meaning of functionality and functional working methods are not thoroughly defined in the NCC (2016) either. Therefore, functionality is left a rather ambiguous concept that can be interpreted in multiple ways. There are, however, some examples in the NCC (2016) that in an indirect manner give some definitions for it. The definitions for functionality are indirect in the sense that they are presented in forms of lists of activities that are stated to be functional working methods. That is, no clear definition for the phenomenon of functionality itself is given in the NCC (2016), but some examples of what is seen as functional working methods are presented. In the NCC (2016) these lists of functional working methods can be found both in chapters discussing general guidelines for primary school teaching and in chapters dealing with different subjects specifically.

Firstly, functional working methods are described in more general terms when discussing the national goals of primary education (NCC 2016: 20–26) as well as when describing the aims of "Multidisciplinary learning modules" (NCC 2916: 32–34). In the context of national learning goals, functional working methods are connected to one of the transversal

competences called "Thinking and learning to learn (T1)" (NCC2016: 21–22). In this context, the following list of functional working methods is given:

> Playing, gameful learning and physical activities, experiential approaches and other functional working approaches and various art forms promote the joy of learning and reinforce capabilities for creative thinking and perception (NCC 2016: 22).

Functionality is also present in "Multidisciplinary learning modules" that combine different subjects as integrative instruction (NCC2016: 32–34). They are introduced for the first time in the NCC (2016: 32–34), and their purpose is to make connections between knowledge from different subjects and help learners to see how different skills can be combined and used in real life situations and purposes. In this context, functionality is associated with a number of working methods and learning goals which are described as follows:

> The purpose of the learning modules is to approach functionally issues that are part of the pupils' world of experience and that expand it with the aim of:
>
> - strengthening the pupils' participation and offering opportunities for involvement in the planning of the objectives, contents and working methods of the studies
>
> - bringing up issues that the pupils find meaningful and creating opportunities for discussing and working on them
>
> - providing additional opportunities for studying in different groups and with pupils of various ages and for working with several different adults
>
> - offering opportunities for combining what the pupil has learnt outside the school with schoolwork
>
> - giving space for intellectual curiosity, experiences and creativity and challenging the pupils to engage in many types of interaction and language use situations
>
> - reinforcing the application of knowledge and skills in practice and practicing agency that is consistent with a suitable way of living
>
> - inspiring the pupils to act in a manner that contributes to the community and the society. (NCC2016: 33).

Moreover, another list of example activities is included in the same context when describing how integrative instruction can be provided in practice. Functional working methods are listed as one alternative way and functionality is said to include: "theme days, events, campaigns study visits and school camps" (NCC 2016: 33). Based on these extracts, functional working methods can be seen as an umbrella term for the learning activities listed above. Because the examples discussed above are not tied to some specific subjects but they are rather given as general guidelines for functional learning and teaching, it can be assumed that, according to

the NCC (2016), these activities can be used in all primary level subjects as dorms of functionality. Nonetheless, no further concrete explanations are given for what these examples mean in practice and how they should be adopted to teaching. It is thus schools' and teachers' own responsibility to further develop and investigate these ideas and their application to education.

Secondly, functional working methods are described in the context of separate school subjects (NCC 2016). It seems that functionality can be different things depending on the context it is used in. For example, in history teaching, the following activities are named as functional and experiential working methods: "examining various sources, narration, drama, play, and games" (NCC 2016: 227) whereas in social studies the list of activities is different: "simulations, discussions, debates, and drama" (NCC 2016: 280). In the latter extract drama is included in functional and experiential working methods even though at times it is described as a separate parallel working method that is recommended to be used alongside functionality. This is the case in environmental studies:

> When selecting learning environments and working methods, learning by doing, experiential learning, using drama and stories, as well as the multidisciplinary nature of environmental studies are taken into account (NCC 2016: 260).

It is worth noting, though, that examples of recommended functional working methods are not given in every subject in the NCC. For example, when it comes to foreign languages, it is just stated that functional working methods are to be used (NCC 2016: 236). No further listing of suitable individual activities is made and again it is left unclear what is meant by functionality in the context of language instruction.

Because of the lack of an unambiguous definition and an established English term for functionality in the NCC (2016), it can be questioned why the term is used in such an extent in it. One rather logical reason for including functionality in the NCC (2016) is undoubtedly the CEFR (2001) statement that the approach adopted in language education is the action-oriented approach (see Section 4.1). Yet, this fact explains only the reason why functionality is adopted to language learning and teaching. As discussed above, the term is used rather extensively throughout the entire curriculum and required as a working method in many subjects specifically. Therefore, based on this, one could assume that functionality must be a very effective approach to learning and teaching and there must be a lot of research done on

its benefits. However, no reference to any studies or academics is made to illustrate the significance of functionality as a working method in the NCC (2016).

In contrast, some indirect reasoning for the benefits of functionality is visible in the curriculum text (NCC 2016). Functionality is seen as a way of promoting the joy of learning and increasing learner participation by making them active actors of their own learning process. For example, together with other approaches, functionality is said to increase motivation towards learning (NCC 2016: 31). It is associated with learner creativity and it is also said to promote the learners' thinking and cooperation skills as well as their holistic growth (NCC 2016: 151, 165). In addition to the joyful aspects of functionality, it is also referred to as an essential working method "[i]n terms of achieving the objectives" of some subjects, such as history and social studies (NCC 2016: 227, 280). Moreover, functionality is described as a characteristic and natural way of learning for "various ages and different learners" (NCC 2016: 28). That is, according to the NCC (2016), functionality is a creative, motivating, natural and intellectual approach to learning and teaching that should not only be used for making learning more fun and motivating but also for enhancing the acquisition of the actual learning objectives of different subjects.

5   FRAMEWORK FOR THE MATERIAL PACKAGE

5.1   Aims

The review on literature and studies about functionality has shown that the phenomenon is rather difficult to define and perhaps even more difficult to transform into practical learning activities. This material package addresses the problem by attempting to transform the theoretical knowledge available of functional working methods into actual classroom activities for English language learning and teaching. The activities and exercises included in this package are based on the understanding of functional working methods that I have developed during the process of writing this thesis and reading on the phenomenon of functionality.

The aim of this material package is to provide material and ideas for functional English language learning and teaching. As functionality is only one learning and teaching method amongst others, this material is meant to be used as a part of versatile and varying English teaching and as a way of providing learners with opportunities to active participation as well as information processing. The material should be used so that suitable individual exercises and lesson activities or bigger entities are adapted to teaching whenever they fit the learning goals of the lesson in question. That is, this functional material is not meant to be used as the only way of teaching in the language classroom or as a language course plan. The core idea of this material package is to use functionality as a method of teaching the actual content of the language lesson. Opposed to the common understanding of functionality as an extra activity that makes the learners move but does not result in learning the actual learning objectives of the lesson (see Posio 2016), this material aims to use functionality as a tool for learning.

The theoretical background for this material package comes from experiential learning and the functional view on language. These theories are visible in the material package so that all the activities in it are based on the active role of the learner in the learning process and involve learning by doing. Every activity attempts to create a meaningful context in which the given feature of language is studied through concrete personal experience. For example, in *The Character Party*, learners learn how to tell about themselves and how to ask questions from others in practice as they create themselves a character and get to know each other using

English. That is, the activities give learners opportunities to use language in concrete communicational situations that are similar to the real life contexts where language is used. According to these theories, a personal experience of the subject that is being learnt is the key to learning. The learners do not only hear about the subject being learnt but also gain hands-on experience of its function and use. Through this, the subject being learnt becomes meaningful to the learners and they are able to conceive its context of use. This understanding ideally transforms into the ability to use the language skills learnt appropriately in real life situations and contexts. My underlying thought and reason for choosing functionality as the method in this material package is well expressed by Kohonen (2001: 29), who argues that "Theoretical concepts will become part of the individual's frame of reference only after he or she has experienced them meaningfully at an emotional level". Enabling this sort of learning is the purpose of this material package.

Another important theoretical background used in this material package is the NCC (2016). My aim is to respond to the need created by the implementation of the new NCC for new up to date teaching material that takes into account the objectives of learning given in the NCC (2016: 236–244). Such objectives are development of the learners' thinking skills, cooperation skills, ICT-skills, multiliteracy and searching for information. Multidisciplinary learning modules are a new way of organising learning that has been first introduced in the NCC (2016). Two of the activities in the material package, namely *Shark Tank* and *Afternoon Tea*, also are concrete examples of such a learning module and other activities also leave room for combining different subjects into bigger entities.

5.2   Target group

The target group of this material package is primary level grade 5-6 English learning and teaching. That is, the material is designed for learners aged 11-13 years. I selected this target group firstly because, according to the NCC (2016), functional working methods are required when teaching English in grades 3-6. Secondly, learners in grades 5-6 have been studying English for at least three years, which means that they already have basic language skills and are therefore able to use English more independently and in more complex contexts than younger learners who are just beginning their English studies. Thirdly, as functional working methods are rather learner-centered and require self-regulation skills and independent

thinking, learners in grades 5-6 are more likely to be able to adapt to these requirements than younger learners whose self-regulation skills perhaps are not as developed. Finally, as my goal is to produce material that can be adapted and further developed to suit different contexts, contents and learners, I hope that designing the activities for this target group leaves room for the opportunity to adapt the activities even to secondary school level English learning and teaching. This also serves my own needs as a future primary and secondary level English teacher. Furthermore, many teachers in Finland teach in both primary and secondary levels and could benefit from material that can easily be used in both levels.

5.3   Task types

The task types of this material package are designed bearing in mind the functional views on language and language teaching (Chapter 2) and the personal activation of the learner in the learning process (Chapter 3). My rather ambitious goal is to produce functional teaching material that attempts to transform the theories behind functionality into practical learning activities. The tasks in this material package are designed so that they include functionality in its different forms trying to provide different learners with activities that are varying and serve as many types of learners as possible. Subject teachers, such as language teachers, often get criticised for being too much teachers of their own subject instead of being teachers of their learners. Therefore, in this material package, I emphasise the learner's own activity and personal engagement. I use activities that promote learner agency and personal activity in the learning process for instance by giving the learners opportunities to make choices, challenge themselves and work as members of learning groups so that their actions have a concrete effect on their learning outcome (compare Allwright & Hanks 2009, cited in van Lier 2004b). Learners are not passive receivers of information since it is not given ready to them. Instead, they are encouraged to search for it and construct it together with other learners. The activities used leave plenty of room for the learners' own initiative and the use of their personal interests, strengths and skills.

The functional view on language and learning through concrete experience are visible in all the activities because they activate the learner to do things in the target language and to participate in creating the learning activities. For example, concrete experience is used so that useful language for going to a restaurant is learnt by actually designing own restaurants where

the learners work as waiters/waitresses, plan menus and experience a conversation at a restaurant while visiting other learners' restaurants as customers. Similar hands-on experience is gained through preparing and participating in traditional English *Afternoon Tea*, creating and presenting new inventions in *Shark Tank*, getting to know new characters and introducing oneself in *Character Party* and reporting *Class News*. Vocabulary and phrases are used in meaningful contexts and also learnt through their use. Learners are required to think of what kind of phrases and words they need and want to use for communication during the activities. The learners collect this material in their own personal dictionaries where they can further explore the forms and meanings of the words and phrases collected. Furthermore, they can categorise and use these words and phrases in ways that feel meaningful and logical to them and document examples of their use.

All the activities attempt to create a meaningful context or situation where language use is needed so that a need for language use is created. Cooperation and group projects help learners understand that language is studied for communication and in order to be able to do things in the language. The purpose is to awake the learners' own interest towards English and help them acquire language skills that they themselves experience as useful and meaningful. The learners' agentic behaviour is encouraged by giving them opportunities to make choices, do research, work on projects in cooperation with other learners, explore and construct information and connect their own personal life and interests to language learning. Learning is seen as an active process and self-evaluation as well as peer feedback are used in order to make the learners' development and skills visible. Feedback is given from the whole learning process or project so that active and consistent participation is emphasised over the end-result of the activity. In the activities, linguistic forms and structures are first used in meaningful contexts and then further analysed and conceptualised based on the learners' own reflections, experiences and ideas that have developed during the activities (see Figure 1, Section 3.2). The teacher is encouraged to seize on the learners' questions and reflections that they have developed through experience of language use in the activities. For this purpose, a reflection part is included in some activities and can be used in all of them too. In each activity, the learners' role is very central and almost nothing is given ready for them. All the activities also require doing something with the target language. Through this, a strong link between language and its contexts of use is created.

The material package includes different types of activities that vary in their length, comprehensiveness and skills that are rehearsed. The idea is to provide teacher with a combination of classroom activities that can be adapted and shaped in ways that feel suitable for the specific group of learners in question. The material package includes example activities for developing such skills as vocabulary, phrases, grammar, reading comprehension, cooperation, discussion and communication. They also emphasise different aspects of the functional approach to learning, the connecting element being always the activation of the learner in the learning process. For example, some activities focus more on physical activation of the learner that aims to connect the content being learnt to the learner's kinaesthetic memory. In these activities, learners come up with movements that describe the words they are learning. Others challenge the learner to actively search for information and participate in constructing knowledge and producing contents to be learnt in cooperation with other learners. This material package also includes activities that aim to simulate real life situations where language is used in social interaction. In these activities, the aspects of personal experience and learning through meaningful social interaction are emphasised so that learning is done in small groups that work and communicate together in order to achieve a common goal. Some activities, such as the ones that aim to make learners process and practise new vocabulary, can be very easily included in a normal language lesson to add and increase learner activity. These activities do not require very much planning and structuring from the teacher beforehand. Other activities instead need more careful preparation and require more time in the language class so that they can be treated more as learning modules than single activities.

The role of the teacher is to guide learners through the learning activities and monitor their work giving instructions, support and new ideas when needed. That is, even though the activities aim to promote learner agency, the teacher has an important role as the facilitator of learning. The teacher also has to seize on questions and initiatives that appear and come from the learners during the learning activities. Through this, language learning can become very learner-centered and motivating to the learners. Quite many of the activities in the material package include searching for suitable words and phrases that the learners themselves have to plan and collect. The idea of these activities is to create a need for learning new expressions in English and a real purpose of using them. Even though the original assignment is given by the teacher, the learners themselves define what they want to express in the target language,

which aims to help the learners develop a sense of agency and ownership of their own learning process. I believe that the experiential and functional nature of the learning activities help learners experience agency in the learning process and attach the subjects being learnt to themselves personally and to their pre-existing knowledge so that the memory trace developed is permanent.

The user of this material package must bear in mind that it might take some time for learners to adapt to the functional learning activities especially if they are not used to actively engaging in the learning process and being involved in constructing information. Teachers might even be faced with resistance from their learners because it is not exceptional for learners to be rather conservative and to want to retain their habitual ways of working in the language class. When engaging in functional learning activities, it might sometimes be hard for young learners to realise that they are actually learning new things about language while playing games or doing some experiential activities with the language. Therefore, it is important that the teacher helps and encourages the learners to make their learning outcome visible and verbalise their progress. Moreover, the teacher must be very patient and include functional activities in his/her teaching little by little giving the learners time to adapt to the new way of working in the language class. Learning new working methods takes time and learning-to-learn functionally is a process as itself. It is also important to remember that functionality should be used in language learning only when it is appropriate and brings additional value for the topic being learnt. Accordingly, not all features of the activities in this material package are meant to be functional.

5.4 Assessment

According to NCC (2016: 49–56) assessment in primary education is formative and constant in its nature. The teacher's task is to monitor learning and observe the learners' progress and effort throughout the whole learning process. According to this principle, the subject of assessment is not solely the end result of learning that is measured in the form of summative tests at the end of each course. Instead, more emphasis is put on what the learners do during the learning process and how much they progress compared to their personal starting level. Assessment is extended from something that only the teacher does to a learning activity of its own. That is, assessment can take multiple forms, such as peer feedback, self-evaluation and

reflection. Through this, assessment can modify and direct the learning process and give learners feedback on how they are succeeding and what should be done next in order to achieve the desired learning objectives. Assessment focuses on how well the learner meets the goals set for each learning activity and what the learner does in order to meet them. Therefore, the learners are encouraged to adopt the role of an active actor in the learning process and also reflect on their own learning. (NCC 2016: 49–56).

According to the NCC (2016: 238–239) assessment in foreign languages in grades 3-6 should be encouraging and help learners see their own progress and skills. Assessment provides learners with versatile opportunities to express their developing language skills and knowledge so that learners can use their individual strengths and choose a suitable mode self-expression according to them. The form in which learners present the knowledge and skills they have acquired during the learning process should not be limited. Instead, multiple ways of expression are accepted and learners can benefit their own natural tendencies. Therefore, language skills cannot be evaluated by using only exams or other summative methods but assessment should take multiple forms and consider the learning process as a whole. The goal of assessment is to give all learners from different linguistic backgrounds equal chances to show their progress and make learning visible. (NCC 2016: 238-239). It is important that the learners are involve in creating the learning goals for each course and are fully aware of what is expected of them. Learners are encouraged to set goals for their own learning and through this become more aware of their own learning process as well as their growing language skills. According to the NCC (2016: 239) assessment of foreign language learning must take into account all areas of language proficiency including different forms of language use, comprehension, cultural aspects and linguistic awareness as well as the ability to interpret and interact in different language situations.

Assessment of the activities presented in this material package follows the principles of the NCC discussed above. Emphasis is put on the learners' active role that considers assessment as well. The learners are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences gained in the learning process and different means of self-evaluation and peer feedback are used as integral parts of the functional learning process. As the teacher often guides, supports and facilitates learning instead of just lecturing and presenting ready information to learners, room is left for formative evaluation during each learning activity. I suggest that teachers using this material

package focus also on the question of how to make learning and progress visible to the learners themselves and how to help them reflect on their own learning process. Some sort of a learning log could be suitable for this purpose. Learners can for example document their learning in a form of an electronic learning log or a portfolio (see NCC 2016: 238). Depending on the learning group, different forms of documentation can be used throughout the language course and collected to one platform, for example a blog. The teacher can use each learner's learning log as material for assessment that shows how the learner has progressed and what they are able to do in the target language. This documentation can be as simple as writing down reflections on the learning activities, their outcomes and the processes through which the end result has been reached. Learners can also collect different oral, written and video material in the learning logs during the language course.

6   DISCUSSION

The aim of this material package has been to provide language teachers with teaching material that implements the functional view on language and the concept of functionality transforming the theory into action as concrete learning activities. In this thesis, I have built an interpretation of functional language learning and focused on activating the learners as whole persons in the language learning process. I argue that I have succeeded in transforming the understanding of functionality I have gained through my literature review on the topic into concrete teaching activities. For example, elements of exploring language, personal experience, the functional approach to language and using language in meaningful contexts are visible in the material package.

The functional approach to language learning and teaching sees communication as a priority goal of learning (Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia 2009). In this material package, all the activities include communication in some form and encourage learners to engage in meaningful interaction in the target language. However, this emphasis is very challenging because it can be difficult to distinguish between activities that teach language for communication and the ones that teach language through communication. Aalto, Mustonen and Tukia (2009: 411) explain that more often than not communicative activities in a language classroom become more individual performances than actual authentic communication between learners. That is, learners tend to focus on their own language use as well as their performance and do not necessarily take into account the others who participate in the communicative learning activity. Even though this might be a contested matter in regard to the activities I have designed for this material package, I argue that quite many of the activities encourage learners to truly cooperate and communicate with each other instead of just focusing on individual performances.

In my view, the most significant weakness and strength of this material package is the element of surprise that the functional activities almost inevitably bring about. As quite many aspects of the learning activities are left for the learners to adapt and figure out, the teacher cannot plan every detail in advance and must thus tolerate uncertainty and, in a sense, lack of control. This does not mean that the teacher would not be able to be in charge of what is happening in the classroom or guide and support the learning process. Instead, it leaves room

for the learners' own initiative and ideas that can be further developed and elaborated on by the help of the teacher. Promoting learner agency in the learning process can make learning motivating and personal and provide learners with a sense of ownership of their own learning. Through this, the teacher can seize on ideas and questions that arise from the learners in the course of a learning activity and further elaborate on them when teaching for example grammatical structures. As the original question or need for the specific structure that is being learnt comes from the learners themselves, it becomes meaningful to them because its function and context of use are evident from the beginning. However, all this flexibility and unpredictability that characterises the learning process poses a notable challenge to the learners and not for the least part to the teacher. Such an active approach to learning can feel odd and burdensome to learners who are not used to participating in the learning process that comprehensively. For this reason, there is a need for more thorough material packages for functional language learning and teaching that also guide the teacher in establishing the new approach to learning in the classroom step by step.

It is important to emphasise that not any teaching method or conceptualisation of language can be seen as the only correct one. A language class always consists of a variety of different individuals who have their personal interests, learning styles, needs and experiences that need to be taken into account when organising teaching and selecting materials for the language course. However well-grounded and research-based the teaching method, it is always possible and even very probable that it will not be ideal for at least some learners in the language class. In my view, teaching should always stem from the needs of the learners and be as targeted as possible for them as individuals. A language classroom should by no means be a "melting pot" that pushes different learners through one and the same teaching method. On the contrary, it should provide learners with varying learning activities and multiple ways of presenting, constructing and producing information. Therefore, this material package is intended to be used as a resource for teachers who want to add some functional learning activities into their teaching and through that make their teaching more versatile and perhaps suitable for different learners. I do not recommend using this material in every lesson or even throughout a whole language course. Instead I recommend that teachers consider the needs of their own learners and choose the activities that serve their specific learning objectives or take ideas and modify them to fit their learners' needs.

In the Finnish education scene, functionality is often understood in terms of physical activation and even as something that does not necessarily directly relate to the actual subject that is being studied in the lesson. For example, the LIKES – Foundation for Sports and Health Sciences' *Finnish Schools on the Move* –programme (Liikkuva Koulu) in Finland promotes physical activation of learners during lessons and encourages teachers to include functionality in their teaching. In this context, functionality is understood as anything that makes the learners move and activates them physically. Functionality in this sense can be something entirely separate from the actual learning objective of the lesson and serve as extra refreshment to the lesson, the goal of which is to add physical activation and movement to the learners' school day. Therefore, functionality can be, for example, a short break in the lesson during which the learners move their bodies and stand up so that they do not sit the whole lesson time. This understanding of functionality separates it from other contents of the lesson and does not include processing knowledge or learning some subject information of the lesson. Accordingly, this view on functionality is often criticised by teachers who find that including this extra physical activation in the lesson time is challenging because of the lack of time. They feel that they have much to teach to their learners compared to the time they have for teaching them so that this sort of extra activity is experienced as a burden.

In this thesis, functionality is seen more than as physical activity. Therefore, one of my aims regarding to this material package has been to include functionality in language learning and teaching as an actual working method that helps learners to achieve the learning goal of the lesson. In the activities, I have reduced the emphasis on physical movement in functionality and attempted to extend the idea of functionality to include activation of the learner as a whole person. The purpose of this change has been to not see functionality as something extra that gives teachers unwelcome extra work but rather as a teaching method that both activates the learners and helps them learn. In order to fully meet this goal, however, more research on the concept of functionality and its true meaning is needed. As functionality remains an ambiguous term, it may be challenging to make it reach its full potential as a learning and teaching method.

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APPEDIX 1: Material Package for Functional English Learning in Grades 5-6

Material Package for Functional English Learning in Grades 5-6

Eveliina Posio

Table of Contents

Introduction

Are you tired of the exercises and task types you use on a daily basis with your learners? Are you in a need for new perspectives and ideas for language teaching that activates the learners? You have found your way to a material package that seeks to fulfil these needs and help you add more functionality to your English teaching. The goal of this material package is to give ideas for task types that activate learners and enable them to use language in a more functional way.

Functionality is an approach to learning and teachind that focuses on the active role of the learner in the language learning process. It makes learning an active process where the learners themselves experience, explore and construct knowledge through participating in experiential and communicational activities that encourage them to use their personal strengths and interests. The main idea is to connect language into the concrete contexts where it is needed and used. In short, functionality means learning language by using it.

You can use the activities presented in this package as such or modify them to suit your and your learners' personal needs. In these activities, learning happens through personal experience and reflection. Communication, interaction and body movement are key-elements of these functional learning activities. In this material package, functionality is seen as an actual working method and used as the theoretical background for the activities. Quite many of the activities enable learners to approach English from the point of view of their own interests and develop language skills that they personally need. The power of meaningful personal experience is used as the core element of this material package, which means that all the activities aim to give your learners plenty of opportunities to explore the English language and learn from these experiences.

Welcome! I hope you and your learners enjoy these activities and get inspired to create more functionality in the language classroom!

Eveliina Posio

How to use this material package?

This material package can be used in multiple ways. You can choose the activities that suit you and your learners the best. You can try the activities as they are or take ideas from them and design new ones. Each activity is presented in a model context so that you get an idea of what kind of things can be taught and learnt through them. Mix and match so that you get a combination that serves your learners the best! The choice is yours!

At the beginning of each activity, there is a short introductory section that explains the basic idea of the exercise. Right below this introduction, there is a list of aims, skills and resources that tells you what the activity aims for, what skills it develops and what kind of resources or preparations are needed for it. In this section, you can see all the worksheets, vocabulary lists and PowerPoint presentations that are provided as Appendices. These sections are designed to help you see quickly if the activity suits your and your learners' needs. You can find the instructions for each activity under the title *Instructions*. They are explained step by step as a numbered list that is easy to follow. Below the instructions, there is a section titled *How to develop and adapt the activity?* that gives you ready ideas for differentiation or other ways of modifying the activity. At the end of this material package, you can find the Appendices needed in some of the activities.

Symbols

Aims of the activity

Resources required

Skills developed and used

Pictures: Microsoft Word ClipArt

1   *My Own Dictionary*

This assignment can be given to learners at the beginning of the school year or an English course. The idea is that throughout the whole English course, learners collect their own dictionary that contains word lists, useful phrases and examples of pronunciation and their meaning and use. This dictionary can take almost any forms depending on what resources are available. I suggest using an online platform such as Microsoft Office Teams, Google Drive or some blog platform e.g. Blogger because they allow learners to collect their material for the dictionary in multiple forms and make it easy for them to access the dictionary anytime. Online platforms also provide a great opportunity to teach learners IT skills that are an important learning goal according to the NCC (2016). This assignment gives learners a chance to show their growing skills and express themselves using their strengths and interests. The material collected in the dictionary can also come from outside the classroom which makes it possible for learners to include their own interests in English learning and make links between school learning and real life language use. Material can be collected from wherever the learners come across English in their everyday life. For example, television, music, hobbies, computer games, the internet and other interesting environments can be used in this activity. The goal is to raise the learners' linguistic awareness and help them notice where they need, use and come across English in their own everyday life. This activity encourages learners to notice language around them, explore words and expressions and learn how and in which contexts they can be used. Each learner can choose to collect material that is personally meaningful and useful to him/her.

Aims
- To find, learn and collect vocabulary, phrases and conversation patterns that are personally meaningful, interesting and useful to the learners

Resources
- An online platform or notebooks, pieces of paper etc.
- Time: during the whole English course

Skills
- Vocabulary, phrases and conversation patterns
- (IT-skills)
- Consistent, self-regulated and goal-oriented working on a long-time project

Instructions

1. Choose the form of the dictionary according to the resources that are available to you and your group of learners. If possible, give the learners alternative ways to make the dictionary so that they can choose which one they prefer. If a learning log is used for assessment and documenting the learning process in the course, the dictionary can be an integral part of it.

2. Give clear instructions on how to collect the dictionary. It is important that the learners choose the contents of their dictionaries themselves so that they can collect words and phrases that they find useful. Material can be collected from anywhere the learners come across English in their everyday life but preferably from contexts that are meaningful to the learners. The learners can begin the project by observing their environment for one week and making notes on where and when they come across English and what kind of contexts these are. After this, they can start further analysing what kind of language they have found and collecting examples in their dictionary.

3. The dictionary can contain for example:
   * Word lists of different topics. These lists should include the meaning of the words in some form. A good idea could be to use them in sentences in order to include a context of use for them and to avoid misunderstandings that may occur in e.g. homonyms. The idea is that the learners study the words they collect so that they understand how they can be used in different situations. Words can also be defined according to their word class, which helps learners understand the function of the word, e.g. if it is used for describing how things are or if it is a word for doing something.
   * Translations
   * Phrase lists and model conversations of different themes
   * Pictures
   * Videos and voice recordings
   * QR-codes that contain sound, videos etc. This is a good way of including multimedia contents in dictionaries that are not electronic. QR-codes are easily made using free QR-creators online or with the help of different apps (such as *Chirp.QR* for Apple devices).

4. Ask your learners to use the words they have collected in sentences and other logical contexts so that the meaning of the word becomes evident in the dictionary. The words can also be translated into Finnish, but the most important thing is that the dictionary helps the learner understand how the words and phrases collected work, what they can be used for and how they can be used. All the material collected should be organised in a logical order in the dictionary so that the learner is able to use it as a reference book. The learners can themselves come up with the ways of organising their material which helps them classify and categorise the collected linguistic structures and further analyse their contexts and use. The dictionary can be collected for example in a weekly basis and some time for working on it can be given at the end of some English lessons so that the learners can include new words and phrases they have learnt during the lessons as well.

5. Remind your learners to keep updating the dictionary during the English course and set a deadline for when they have to return their dictionaries for your assessment and feedback. At the end of the course, the learners get to present and compare their dictionaries in groups

and explain what kind of material they have collected and how they have organised it. They can also demonstrate how the dictionary can be used. While doing this, learners can tell about where they need and use English and what they have learnt while collecting the dictionary.

2   *Silly Clothes*

This activity can be used when learning words for nouns in English. In this example, the suggested vocabulary consists of words for clothes. The activity combines oral communication, kinaesthetic activation and a bit of humour.

Aims
- To explore and get a personal experience of the new vocabulary
- To use words and phrases in a meaningful context

Resources
- A vocabulary list (Appendix 1) and a A3-size board (Appendix 2)
- Flyflaps or rolled up pieces of paper
- 15-20 minutes

Skills
- Vocabulary and phrases
- Oral communicaiton

Instructions

1. Introduce the new vocabulary (Appendix 1) to the learners in a way of your choosing (for ideas, see Appendix 10). Practise pronunciation with your learners
2. Divide your group into small groups. A suggested group size is 3 learners per group.
3. Give each group a A3-size board (Appendix 2) that has pictures of the clothes and two flyflaps (or rolled up sheets of paper). One group member is the judge who says a word from the vocabulary list in English and the others compete for which one manages to slap the correct picture first. The judge counts points and the one who gets 5 points first wins. The learners change roles.
4. Divide your group into pairs.
5. The learners decide which one of them is the mimic and which one guesses.
6. The mimic begins by putting on an imaginary piece of clothing and miming it to his/her partner.
7. The partner tries to guess the piece of clothing in question and asks the mimic e.g. *"Are you wearing / putting on socks"* etc. The mimic answers the question e.g. *"Yes I am. / No I'm not"*. The idea is to put on clothes in a strange order so that the other learner has to concentrate.
8. After a while, the teacher tells the pairs to change roles.

How to develop and adapt the activity?

- The learners play *Simon says* so that one commands and the other puts on the clothes. The commander gets to choose the order in which clothes are put on so it can get quite funny and strange.
- In order to make the activity easier, the teacher can hand out vocabulary lists with images (Appendix 1).

3   *Learning by Signing*

This activity connects words and movement. It uses Finnish Supportive Sign Language with English irregular verbs. The idea is that learners can use their kinaesthetic memory when studying these words that usually need to be learnt by heart. The activity links the words directly to their meaning as verbs are words for doing and they are learnt by doing. Using Supportive Sign Language is also a way to increase the learners' linguistic awareness and knowledge about languages.

Aims
- To learn irregular verb forms in English
- To connect meaningful movements (signs) to words

Resources
- Worksheets (Appendix 3)
- A data projector and a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix 11)
- 30 minutes

Skills
- Vocabulary
- Oral skills

Instructions

1. Introduce the vocabulary to the learners (for ideas, see Appendix 10). For example, you can read through the vocabulary list (Appendix 3) together and pronounce the words. Make sure you explain why the verbs have two different forms and that learners understand what verbs are.

2. Hand out the worksheet (Appendix 3) that has the verbs and the pictures of Supportive Sign Language signs. Ask the learners to match the irregular verb forms with their basic forms. Learners can work in pairs or small groups. Check the answers.

3. Divide the learners into four groups. Inside these groups, give each learner a letter a, b, c or d. Give each group four irregular verbs and ask them to learn the verb forms as well as the Supportive Sign Language signs linked to them.

4. After each group has learnt their verbs and movements, ask the learners to form new groups according to the letters you have given them. That is, all a:s from different groups form one group and all b:s do the same etc. In these new groups, all learners teach their group members the verbs and signs their group has learnt. This way each learner gets to be active and teach and learn verbs.

5. Divide the learners into pairs and ask them to take turns and sign the verbs to each other using Supportive Sign Language signs. The one who is not signing tries to say the correct verb forms in English.

How to develop and adapt the activity?

- If the each one teach one activity does not work with your group of learners, each group can take turns and come in front of the class to teach the rest of the group their words and signs.
- If necessary, the teacher can also teach all the signs.
- The signing part of the activity can also be done by using a computer and a data projector. The teacher puts pictures from the worksheet in a slide show (e.g. Power Point) so that there is one picture (and the basic form or both forms of the verb) per one slide. The teacher asks the learners to stand so that one of them sees the slide the teacher is showing and the other one does not. The one who sees it signs and the other one says the verb forms in English. (You can find a ready PowerPoint slide show in Appendix 11).
- The Finnish Supportive Sign Language can be replaced by American Sign Language or British Sign Language.
- Instead of using actual Sign Language, the learners can come up with suitable movements themselves and teach them to other learners.
- The same activity pattern can be used when learning any vocabulary. The vocabulary list can be given to learners in only one language so that they have to find correct translations for the words themselves e.g. using the internet and dictionaries.

4   *Human Forest*

This exercise is meant for experiential exploration of any story or an English book chapter. Instead of just reading or listening to a story, learners get a chance to become the story and explore it through movement, drama and interaction.

Aims

- To explore and get a personal experience of the text
- To use words and phrases from the text in a meaningful context

Resources

- An open space or a classroom, the schoolyard or a forest
- A story / an English book chapter
- 30 minutes

Skills

- Vocabulary and phrases of the story
- Oral skills

Instructions

1. Listen to the story or read it with your group of learners. You can find suitable stories for example from English children's books or from the following website: https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories. You can also write the story together with your group of learners. Divide the group into two smaller groups.
2. Both groups of learners form a human obstacle course that is inspired by the scenery of the story.
3. Each learner installs him/herself in the space and forms a part of the scenery by taking suitable positions or repeating some movements. Each learner can take a separate role or the learners can form pairs or small groups together in order to make bigger obstacles in the scenery.
4. As the learners take their positions in the scenery, each of them tells to the others in English what their role is, e.g. *"I am a tree that sways back and forth in the forest"* or *"We are a house in the middle of the forest"*. By doing this, the group of learners rebuilds the scenery of the story together and forms a shared obstacle course that relates to the story.
5. One by one, the learners get to be the "hero" or another suitable character of the story and go through the obstacle course by moving through the human obstacles. The group can agree on suitable starting and finishing points where each student starts and finishes.
6. The two groups of learners then go through each other's obstacle courses and find out what each learner is representing in the scenery

7. Reflection: *What kind of phrases did the learners use when they described their roles in the scenery to others? Any grammatical patterns that were used frequently? Write down the phrases each learner used and explore them in groups. Which tense is used?* The teacher can help learners study the phrases and seize on questions and observations that come from the learners.

How to develop and adapt the activity?

*   Each learner/small group comes up with a question related to the story and asks it from the learner moving through the obstacle course. The learner can proceed to the next obstacle only after having answered the question.
*   Add more movement by instructing the learners to make moving obstacles.
*   Divide half of the learner group into pairs that guide each other through the human obstacle course. One of the learners is blind folded and the other guides him/her using English phrases.
*   Divide the learners into groups of 3-4 and ask them to come up with a new story and write it down in English together. Check the groups' texts and give them feedback on them. Let the groups redraft and edit the texts a few times if necessary. When the stories are ready, ask each group in turn to read the story to others in class. The learners can also make a play about their own story and perform it to others. Do the Human Forest activity using these new stories created by the groups of learners.

5   *Character Party*

Encourage your learners to small talk in English through this simple drama exercise. This is a good way to practise conversation skills and learn phrases for how to tell about oneself in English and how to ask questions to get to know others.

Aims

- To practise small talk and introducing oneself in English
- To use English words and phrases in a meaningful context
- To personally experience a small talk situation

Resources

- An open space or a classroom, the schoolyard or a forest
- Dictionaries, iPads/laptops/computers/other mobile devices for online research
- A platform for the word and phrase bank (e.g. an online learning log, pen and paper etc.)
- 30 minutes + reflection and dictionaty 15-20 minutes

Skills

- Vocabulary and phrases for introducton and small talk
- Forming and asking questions in English
- Oral skills and discussion
- Writing

Instructions

1. The learners come up with fictional characters and create them an identity.
2. The learners write down their character's identity and can come up with e.g. a name, species (human/animal/other), age, hobby, profession, nationality, special skill etc.
3. Learners plan how they want to introduce themselves to others and what kind of words and phrases they might need when getting to know other learners' characters. Learners discuss this in small groups and search for useful phrases and words from the textbook, dictionaries, the internet etc. Learners collect a word and phrase bank from their findings.
4. A character party is arranged in the classroom or other suitable place and the different characters move around meeting other characters and discussing in English.
5. Reflection: *What kind of phrases the learners used when they discussed with other characters, asked questions and told about themselves in English? Any grammatical patterns that were used frequently? Write down some of the phrases the learners used a lot and explore them in groups. What is the correct structure of a question?* The teacher can help learners study the phrases and seize on questions and observations that come from the

learners. The learners' own ideas and examples can be used when studying grammar more carefully.

6. Give the learners time to work on their own dictionaries (see activity *1 My Own Dictionary*) and document the vocabulary and phrases they have learnt and used.

How to develop and adapt the activity?

- The characters can come from some story the group has read together or from their English book chapters. The teacher can also hand out structured character cards to make the process of inventing the characters' identities easier.
- The teacher can hand out a bingo sheet (Appendix 4) that guides the learners to talk to several different characters and find out versatile things about them.
- The learners can document this activity as a whole in their dictionary (see activity *1 My Own Dictionary*). For example, learners can make videos about their conversations in the character party and write down the phrases and words they use in the dictionary.

6   At a Restaurant

This activity is a simulation of a real restaurant abroad. It allows learners to experience a visit at a restaurant and practise ordering food and serving customers. Vocabulary and phrases are learnt in a meaningful context and used in social interaction. The same activity can be used when learning for example how to do grocery shopping or how to buy tickets at a train station etc.

Aims
- To learn how to go to a restaurant abroad
- To learn through concrete experience

Resources
- Tables or desks and chairs
- Cardboard or paper, skissors and coloured pencils etc. for the menus
- English books, dictionaries and/or mobile devices
- 45 minutes + reflection and dictionary 15-20 minutes

Skills
- Vocabulary, phrases and discussion
- Communication skills
- Cooperation and planning

Instructions

1. Divide the group of learners into suitable groups. A suggested group size is 5 learners per group.
2. Introduce the topic of going to a restaurant in London (or some other interesting city) to your learners.
3. Each group creates its own restaurant and designs a menu for it in English. The learners can use their imagination and come up with an interesting theme for their restaurant.
4. Each group sets up their restaurant in the classroom and arranges some tables for it. The groups create menus for their restaurants and decide what courses are included in them. They also think of prices for their courses and mark them down in the menus using pounds (or other currency depending on the country their restaurant is in).
5. When the restaurants are ready, each group thinks of what kind of phrases they need in order to serve their customers and to visit other groups' restaurants. The learners find and collect these phrases using their English books, dictionaries and the internet as resources. The teacher also helps and explains grammatical structures that are needed in these phrases. This is a good point to take a closer look at some useful grammatical structures (e.g. forming a question in English) when the need for the structure comes from the learners. Groups can practise their phrases and discussion patterns as well as pronunciation.

6. When all groups are ready with their restaurants, menus and useful phrases, they start going to each other's restaurants. Taking turns, each group works as waiters and waitresses at their own restaurant and takes orders from members of the other groups that come for a visit and vice versa.

7. Reflection: *What kind of phrases the learners used when they served customers or ordered food? Any grammatical patterns that were used frequently? Ask the learners to explore into more detail the phrases they wrote down for the activity. How would they say the same things in Finnish? Are there any cultural differences (e.g. politeness, tipping)?* The teacher can help learners study the phrases and seize on questions and observations that come from the learners.

8. Give the learners time to work on their own dictionaries (see activity *1 My Own Dictionary*) and document the vocabulary and phrases they have learnt and used.

How to develop and adapt the activity?

- In order to support those in need, the teacher can provide learners with ready phrases and discussion patterns that the learners have to translate into Finnish and practise.
- Learners that go to the restaurant can sit as a group at one table and practise making conversation with each other in English while they wait for their food etc.
- The teacher can provide the learners with more challenge by encouraging them to find out how to ask for and tell about today's specials or the chef's recommendations etc. There is a lot of room for differentiating learning in this activity.
- The same activity idea can be used in many different contexts. For example, the group of learners can practise grocery shopping in English by designing their own shops, markets and kiosks. The items sold in the shops can be empty packages that the learners bring to school. Money (e.g. pounds) can also be made out of paper.
- In order to assess the group work, you can ask the groups to fill in a self-evaluation form (Appendix 6).

7   *Interesting Hobbies*

This activity gives learners a chance to tell about their personal interests to others. It motivates learners to express themselves in English and teach others something that is meaningful to them. The learners find out interesting things about each other and learn new skills, vocabulary and phrases through concrete experience.

Aims
- To learn how to tell about a hobby in English
- To learn through experience

Resources
- iPads or other devices suitable for online research
- Depending on the learners' interests, a big space, a data projector etc.
- A feedback form (Appendix 5) and a self-evaluation form (Appendix 7)
- 2x45 minutes

Skills
- Oral skills
- Communication skills

Instructions

1. Ask the learners to think about their hobbies and interests and discuss them in small groups. If the learners do not know what their hobbies or interests are called in English, they can search for words online or from other sources (e.g. English books and dictionaries). Suitable questions for the group discussion are for example the following: *What is your hobby? What are you interested in? What do you do on your free time? Why do you like it? How long have you been doing it?*

2. Ask the learners to start planning on a presentation about their hobby or interest. The presentation can be made in any possible form but it must include a practical "show and tell" part where the learner demonstrates or teaches something about the hobby or interest to other learners. For example, if someone is interested in a computer game, s/he can show others how the game is played and teach them the basics of how to play it. If some learners share the same interest or the same hobby, they can work together in this exercise. However, it would be more interesting if everyone came up with something unique and did not take the same hobby as their friends.

3. Discuss a suitable time limit for the presentations with your learners and agree on a deadline for when the presentations have to be ready. Planning and preparing the presentations can also be partly done as homework. A suggested duration of the presentation is 5 minutes including the demonstration or teaching part.

4. The learners present their hobbies and demonstrate or teach something about it to the others.

5. After each presentation, the learners give feedback to the presenter (Appendix 5) and the presenter makes a self-evaluation (Appendix 7). The teacher also gives feedback about the presentation, the demonstration or teaching part and the process of planning and preparing the presentation.

How to develop and adapt the activity

- Instead of having presentations for the whole group, the presentation part of the activity can be done in a form of a "hobby market". Divide your group into half and ask the first half to build stalls in the classroom or other suitable place where they can present their hobby. The other half of the group circles around in the marketplace visiting different stalls and learning about other learners' hobbies and interests. After a while, roles change and the ones who presented start circling around and learning about other learners' interests. This way, more learners get to be active at once and the ones who circle around can choose to go and learn about the hobbies that interest them the most. The teacher can give instructions that make sure every learner's stall gets visited. Depending on the hobbies / interests the learners have chosen, the teacher's instructions can be for example the following: *Find a hobby you have never tried before. Find a person you don't know so well yet and find out about his/her hobby.*

8 Educational Videos

This activity can be used when learning almost any grammatical structure. In this example, the topic of the educational videos is the past tense. The idea is that learners make videos in which they teach the grammatical structure they have just learnt. As the learners have to figure out how to explain the grammatical structure or rule and show examples, they have to study it so carefully that they themselves also learn it better. This activity aims to develop learners' thinking skills and the ability to construct knowledge in cooperation with others.

Aims
- To plan, organise and carry out a project
- To explain how a grammatical structure works

Resources
- iPads/laptops/computers/other mobile devices for filming and online research
- English books, grammar books or other course material
- A data projector and PowerPoint slides for instuctions (Appendices 12 and 13)
- A feedback form (Appendix 5) and a self-evaluation form (Appendix 6)
- 45 minutes + 45 minutes for watching the videos and giving feedback

Skills
- Understanding, explaining and using a grammatical structure in a meaningful context
- Oral skills
- Cooperation

Instructions

1. Teach the past simple tense to your learners and let them practise it in different ways. This activity requires that the learners are already somewhat familiar with the grammatical structure in question.
2. Divide the learners into groups. A suggested group size is 3-4 learners.
3. Introduce the video assignment to the groups. You can use the ready Power Point slides (Appendices 12 and 13) or create your own instructions.
4. Decide on a timetable for the video project together with your learners and set a deadline. This is a good way to promote learner agency, autonomy and personal commitment to the project. A deadline is also a good way to guide the learners' use of time. A suggested length for the educational video is about 5 minutes.

5. The groups start working on their videos. The teacher's role is to guide and help whenever needed. However, the teacher must not get too much involved in the groups' work in order to let them express themselves and use their skills as freely as possible.

6. Watch the ready videos together in class. The videos can also be shown to younger learners in lower grades. This may motivate your learners to make quality videos.

7. Each group gives feedback to other groups (Appendix 5) and the group members fill in a self-evaluation form (Appendix 6) about the project. The teacher also gives feedback to each group and comments on their learning process.

9   *Class News*

This activity can be used when dealing with almost any topic. Using their own interests as inspiration, the learners learn how to tell about a topic in English and what kind of information should be included in a news video. Using iPads or other suitable devices, the learners prepare a news story about some interesting topic and make a short news video of it in English. The news stories can be about any topic that interests the learners or has to do with their school environment.

Aims
- To learn how to tell an interesting news story in English
- To learn through experience

Resources
- iPads or oth devices suitable for filming
- iMovie app or other application for easy news video making
- A feedback form (Appendix 5) and a self-evaluation form (Appendix 6)
- 2x45 minutes + 45minutes for presenting the videos and giving feedback

Skills
- Planning, scripting and filming a news video
- Communication skills
- Cooperation

Instructions
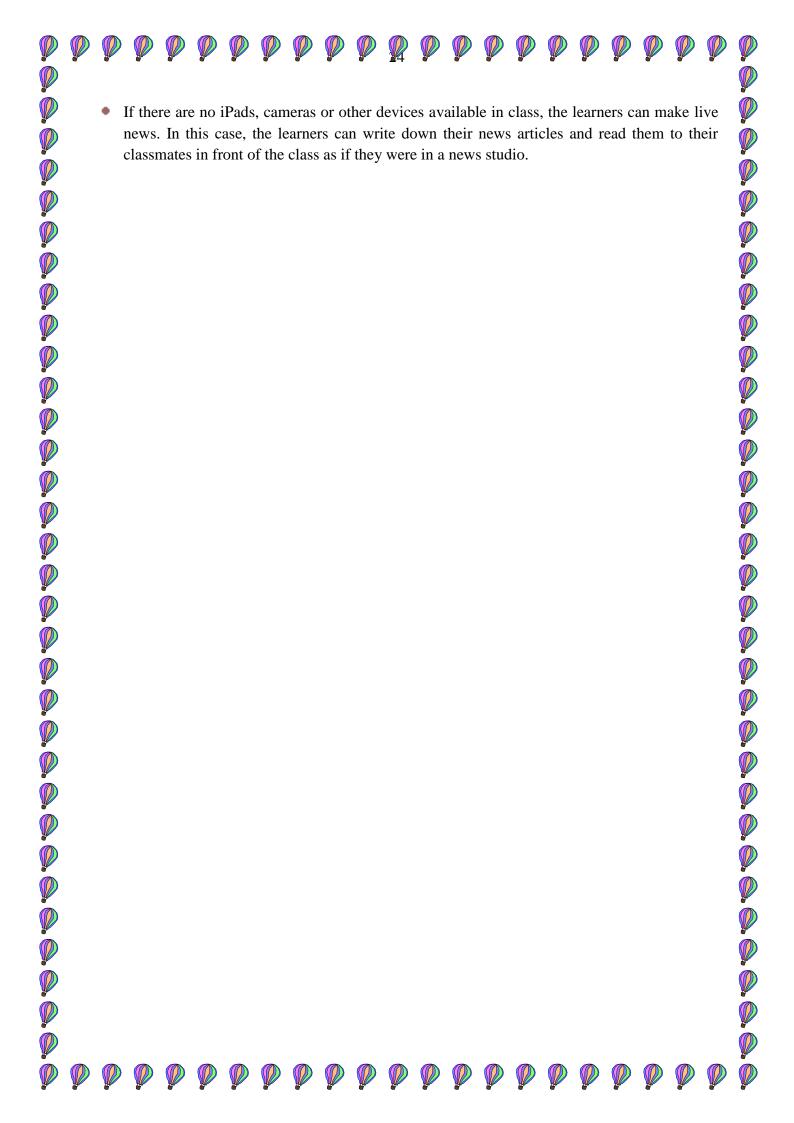
1. Introduce news as a text genre to the learners. What does a piece of news include? What kind of language is used? What questions need to be answered in a news video? Learners can contemplate on these questions and try to answer them based on their previous knowledge and experience. More extensive answers can be found by studying actual English newspapers and making observations on the news articles. For inspiration and examples, the teacher can also show learners some actual English news videos e.g. from YouTube that are analysed together. (If you use a Youtube video, share the link to your learners and ask them to watch the video using e.g. iPads or other suitable devices).

2. Divide the learners into suitable groups. A suggested group size is 5 learners per group. Explain the assignment and its aims carefully to the learners and give them a time frame inside which they have to finish their project. Also limit the maximum length of the news video. Learners should participate in deciding these matters so that they become personally committed to the assignment and experience agency in the planning stage too. A suggested length for the news video is about 5 minutes.

3. Ask the groups to start brain storming together in order to come up with an interesting topic for the news video.

4. When the groups have decided on a topic, they start researching it and planning on how to tell about it in their news video. *What kind of information and facts are needed? What kind of pictures or video material is needed? What does the host say at each part of the news video? Does the video include interviews? If so, who is interviewed and what kind of questions are asked?* At this point, learners need to decide on each group member's role in the news video project. *Who shoots the video? Who is the host and reads the news? Can there be more than one host? Who is in charge of the equipment needed for shooting the video? Etc.*

5. The groups present their plans and scripts to the teacher and to their peers (preferably in English). Give the groups time to prepare their presentations and help them with their linguistic needs. The teacher gives feedback on the groups' ideas and the other learners also give peer feedback. Before this stage of the project, it is important that the teacher explains to the class what good feedback is and gives opportunities to discuss the process of giving and receiving feedback. Based on the feedback each group gets, they further develop their plans and scripts.

6. When the final versions of the plan and the video script are ready, the groups start making and editing the actual news videos. For this purpose, I recommend using the iMovie app and iPads, because the app has a ready template for a short news video that is easy to use. However, any other device/software/application can be used for this too.

7. When the news projects are ready, each group presents their video to others. This can be done in the form of news video awards where everyone, including the teacher, gives feedback on other groups' videos. The videos can then be joined together into one full class news video and shown to other classes and school staff. Each group gives feedback to the other groups (Appendix 5) and each group member fills in a self-evaluation form (Appendix 6) about the project. The teacher also gives feedback about the project and its outcome to the groups.

How to develop and adapt the activity

- If some group of learners has trouble coming up with a topic for the news video, the teacher can provide them with suitable topic ideas. Good topics can be rather easily found from the school environment. Here are some example topics:
  - Where does the school food come from? How is it prepared? What does a kitchen staff member do?
  - A portrait of some teacher: background, special skills, interesting new information
  - A news report about some school festival or event
  - A news report about a school week of some class (or their own class)
  - An enquiry that finds out the pupils' opinion on some timely topic (e.g. favourite school food, school subject or sport etc.)
- A topic for the news video can also be taken from a suitable story or chapter in the learners' English book or from a story that has been read together in class.
- Instead of a news video, the learners can make a short film. A good idea for a short film can come from a story that has been read in class. For the film, the learners can come up with a sequel for the story and tell how it continues.

- If there are no iPads, cameras or other devices available in class, the learners can make live news. In this case, the learners can write down their news articles and read them to their classmates in front of the class as if they were in a news studio.

10   Shark Tank

This activity has taken inspiration from the American TV series *Shark Tank*, where ordinary people present their inventions and business ideas and seek investors for them. Most of the inventions presented in the series are rather simple and designed to make people's everyday life easier. The idea of this activity is that learners get to use their imagination and personal interests as they come up with new inventions that help their everyday life. The activity is a project that takes several lessons. It provides with a good opportunity to combine different school subjects into a multidisciplinary learning module in the form of integrative instruction. At the end of the project, learners present their inventions to the teacher and other learners and receive feedback from their work. A suggested combination of school subjects is English, visual arts and crafts. Other subjects can also be included in ways that feel suitable for the specific group of learners in question.

Aims
- To plan, organise and carry out a project
- To use new words and phrases in a meaningful context
- To be innovative
- To explore and get a personal experience of the subject being learnt

Resources
- Dictionaries, iPads/laptops/computers/other mobile devices for online research
- A feedback form (Appendix 5) and a self-evaluation form (Appendix 6)
- 3x45 minutes

Skills
- Vocabulary and phrases
- Telling about a project in English
- Oral skills and discussion
- Cooperation
- Writing

Instructions

1. Show a part of the Shark Tank TV series to your learners. Choose an episode that has examples of very simple inventions. For example this one: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5nmwuu6RX0. (If you use the Youtube video, share the link to your learners and ask them to watch the video using iPads or other devices).

2. Give your group of learners a homework assignment in which they observe their everyday life and make note of things that do not work or are problematic. These things should be very concrete; for example, how to carry a skateboard on a bicycle or how to prevent black socks from losing their pair in the washing machine etc. Learners take photos of these problems e.g. using their mobile phones or write down their observations.

3. In class, learners present their observations to others. While showing their photos in class, the learners also tell about the problem and explain how it can be seen in their everyday life. These small presentations can be prepared in class with the help of the teacher so that learners have a chance to find suitable phrases and vocabulary for the task. Language used in the presentations does not have to be perfect and flawless. The goal is simply to use one's language skills and convey meanings. Based on the presentations, learners form groups with other learners that have interesting problems. These groups then work together in the project itself. The teacher can help learners form suitable groups and modify them when needed. A suggested group size is 2-5 learners.

4. In groups, learners select one of the problems and start working on a solution for it. The idea is that learners come up with an invention that solves the problem they have chosen. At this part of the project other subjects such as visual arts or crafts can be combined. Learners are encouraged to use as much English as they can while they discuss their ideas inside the group and come up with a plan for their project.

5. If visual arts lessons can be used for the project, the groups can draw a picture of their invention. The groups can also build a prototype of their invention in the visual arts class or in crafts. The prototypes can be made out of recycled materials. If there are enough time and crafts lessons available for the project, the inventions can be further developed into actual products.

6. The groups use blogs (or learning logs) to document their learning process and the project's progress. Each group updates their blog with pictures, videos, links and texts etc. that tell about their project, its different stages and how they have made progress. The teacher can also provide learners with questions that should be answered in the blog.

7. When the inventions are ready, groups start to plan a Shark Tank inspired presentation of their project to the rest of the class. At this stage, more emphasis can be put on language form and correctness. The groups can decide the form of their presentation that can be for example an oral presentation, a video or a text that has pictures etc. in it. The learners can find information from the internet, dictionaries, their English books and other sources when planning their presentation. The goal is that the learners learn to tell about their invention and the project in English to their peers and to the teacher. At this stage learners may need a lot of support from the teacher.

8. Each group presents their project to others in class. The presentations can be carried out so that learners from other groups take turns and play the roles of the investors or "the sharks" in the Shark Tank series and give feedback to the group that presents their work. All groups give feedback to each other (Appendix 5). The teacher gives feedback to the groups about their project and the blog they have kept about it. Each group member also does a self-evaluation (Appendix 6) about their personal contribution to the project.

How to develop and adapt the activity?

- The visual arts and crafts can be left out of the project and the prototypes of the inventions can be made during the language lessons in a smaller scale. Even a simple drawn picture of the invention is suitable.
- After having finished the project, learners can reflect on their language use. *Were they able to use English while planning on the project? What kind of language did they need for the presentation part of the project? Were there any forms that were frequently used?* The teacher can seize on these observations and explain the use and form of some grammatical structures that the learners have used.

11   Afternoon Tea

This activity is a plunge to the British tea culture that gives learners true hands-on experience on the topic. It requires a home economics classroom and preferably more than one lesson's time. The activity includes actual baking and enjoying "afternoon tea" in the British way. The learners explore recipe as a text genre and learn how to follow one that is written in English. The aim is to learn and experience the British afternoon tea culture as well as practise good table manners and discussion skills in English.

Aims
- To follow a recipe and bake in English
- To explore British tea culture
- To learn how to behave and maintain conversation at the table

Resources
- iPads/laptops/computers/other mobile devices for online research and using the padlet
- English books, grammar books or other course material
- 2x45 minutes + 2x45 minutes for baking and eating
- A home economics classroom and ingredients listed in the recipe (Appendix 8) and tea

Skills
- Oral skills and discussion
- Reading comprehension and translation
- Cooperation
- Cultural knowledge

Instructions

1. Introduce the concept of British afternoon tea to your learners in a way of your choosing. For example, ask the learners if they have drunk tea somewhere and if they like it. Ask them to think about tea or coffee culture in Finland. *Is there a specific tea culture? Compare the Finnish coffee culture to the British afternoon tea. What similarities and differences are there?* For more information about the British afternoon tea and the origins of the tea culture, visit https://afternoontea.co.uk/information/what-is-afternoon-tea/ and watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCLVXvUIkg0 the video can also be shown to the learners. (If you use the Youtube video, share the link to your learners and ask them to watch the video using iPads or other devices).

2. Hand out the scone recipe (Appendix 8) and ask your learners to explore it in pairs or small groups. You can give questions to the groups to answer in order to guide and target their observations. *What does the recipe consist of?* (A list of ingredients, the method that explains how baking is done in practice and a picture of the ready scone). Ask the groups to find and circle all the verbs they can find in the text. *What are they in Finnish? What forms are used and why?* (The imperative mood that gives instructions and resembles the basic form of the verb). *What kinds of measurements are used?* Let your learners explore and make observations themselves so that room is left for the learners' own active thinking. Different groups or pairs can collect their observations to this padlet so that it is easy to look at them together in class: https://padlet.com/evelposi/woh4ye57hqd8.

3. Discuss the learners' observations together in class and discuss the grammatical forms and other interesting aspects of the recipe into more detail.

4. Take some time to discuss the afternoon tea etiquette. You can watch the following videos and ask the learners to observe how scones are eaten, how people are dressed, how the tea cup is held and how the napkin is used: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXQKtdHNNbQ and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fNiRabMMFk. (If you use the Youtube video, share the link to your learners and ask them to watch the video using iPads or other devices).

5. Ask the learners to think about some easy topics to discuss over afternoon tea. The learners can list topics, vocabulary and phrases they find useful and suitable for the occasion. The teacher guides, supports and helps the learners when needed. The internet, English books and dictionaries can be used for this task.

6. As homework, learners have to translate the recipe into Finnish so that they are able to follow it. Optional: you can agree on a dress code for the afternoon tea party. Just remember to wear aprons while baking!

7. Have the next English class in a home economics classroom so that you can bake the scones. Divide the learners into groups of 4 and give them the ingredients. Before starting to bake, you can watch together the video linked in the recipe to see how the different stages of baking the scones look like. This might help the learners follow the recipe. (If you use the YouTube video, share the link to your learners and ask them to watch the video using iPads or other devices).

8. Start baking the scones. The teacher circles around the classroom and helps each group when needed. If possible, ask another teacher to join in and help.

9. When the scones are in the oven, ask the learners to set the tables and boil water for tea. When the scones are ready, whip the cream and begin the afternoon tea party. Ask the learners to follow the tea etiquette as well as they can and discuss the topics they have prepared for the tea party in English.

10. Reflection: discuss the tea party and baking the scones with your learners. *What was easy and what was more challenging? How did the learners overcome the challenges? Was it easy/hard to discuss in English at the table? What did the learners do if they did not remember how something was said in English? Was it easy to understand each other? How did it feel like to follow the tea etiquette?*

How to develop and adapt the activity?

- The tea party can be arranged so that half of the groups have tea while others play waiters and waitresses that serve the tea and scones to them. This is a good opportunity to practise phrases for offering food and drinks and politely accepting them.
- The learners can collect their observations of the recipe in their own dictionaries or learning logs.
- If translating the recipe is too difficult to do for some learners, the teacher can provide them with a vocabulary list (Appendix 9) to support them.

APPENDIX 1 A suggested vocabulary: Clothes

Pictures: Microsoft Word ClipArt

shoes

socks

a beanie

a t-shirt

pants

a cap

a skirt

a jacket

a dress

a scarf

jeans

a hoodie

APPENDIX 2 A3-size board

Pictures: Microsoft Word ClipArt

APPENDIX 3 A suggested vocabulary: Learning by Signing

think	**give**	**see**	**write**
hear	**go**	**pay**	**am**
can	**buy**	**speak**	**say**
stand	**meet**	**do**	**come**

bought	**spoke**	**came**	**did**	**gave**	**went**	**paid**
could	**wrote**	**saw**	**was**	**met**		**thought**
stood		**said**		**heard**		

pictures: http://papunet.net/materiaalia/kuvapankki/luokka/208?field_stockimage_type_tid[0]=181&page=5

APPENDIX 4 Bingo sheets for the Character party

Instructions for the teacher:
Copy the bingo sheet and hand out different versions that have the instructions in a different order so that not everyone gets the bingo at the same time. You can also come up with your own instructions.

Instructions for the learner:
Cross the ones you find and shout BINGO when you get 3 crosses vertically, horizontally or cornerwise

Find someone who…

is not a human	has an interesting profession	has an interesting special skill
is an amazing singer	is younger than you	can play some instrument
is older than you	is from a different country than you	has children

has children	has an interesting special skill	has an interesting profession
is from a different country than you	is older than you	is not a human
is younger than you	is an amazing singer	can play some instrument

can play some instrument	is from a different country than you	is younger than you
has an interesting special skill	has children	is older than you
has an interesting profession	is an amazing singer	is not a human

APPENDIX 5 Feedback form

Provider of the feedback: _____

Group members / the learner's name _____

1. Name 3 things that were successful. Why do you think so?

2. Name 1-3 things that could have been done better. How?

3. What did you learn?

APPENDIX 6 A self-evaluation form for group work

Name: _____

1. What was your role in the group?

2. Did everyone work equally? Why?

3. What was successful about your project? Why?

4. What would you do different next time?

5. What challenges did you face? How did you overcome them?

6. What did you learn?

APPENDIX 7 A self-evaluation form for individual work

Name: _____

1. What was successful about your project? Why?

2. What would you do different next time?

5. What challenges did you face? How did you overcome them?

6. What did you learn?

APPENDIX 8 English scones

Serves 4

Time 30-40min

Ingredients

For the mixture:

225g flour

1/5tsp salt

1tsp baking powder

50g butter

125ml milk

1 ½ tbsp sugar

½ tsp vanilla extract

a bit of squeezed lemon juice

For the glaze:

milk

For serving:

200ml whipped cream

(sugar)

strawberry jam

20g butter

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C. Mix flour, salt and baking powder in a large bowl. Add the butter and rub in with your fingers until the mix looks like fine crumbs. Add sugar and stir.

2. Heat the milk in the microwave for about 30 secs until warm, but not hot. Add the vanilla and lemon juice.

3. Add the liquid to the dry mix and combine quickly with a cutlery knife. Scatter some flour onto the work surface and tip the dough out. Fold the dough over 2-3 times until it is a little smoother. Pat into a round that is about 4cm deep.

4. Use a 5cm cookie cutter and cut the dough into circles. Place the circles onto a baking sheet. Press the rest of the dough back into a round and cut out more circles.

5. Brush the tops with milk. Bake for 10-15 mins until the scones are golden on the top. Eat just warm with jam and whipped cream.

Watch a video https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/4622/classic-scones-with-jam-and-clotted-cream (the recipe is not the same).

The recipe adapted from https://www.mtv.fi/lifestyle/makuja/reseptit/resepti/englantilaiset-skonssit/5662452 and https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/4622/classic-scones-with-jam-and-clotted-cream

Picture: Microsoft Word ClipArt

APPENDIX 9 Afternoon tea: vocabulary list

a scone	skonssi, englantilainen leivonnainen
ingredients	ainekset
mixture	seos, tässä: taikina
flour	jauho
tsp = tea spoon	teelusikka
tbsp = table spoon	ruokalusikka
baking powder	leivinjauhe
butter	voi
extract	uute, tässä: aroma
squeeze	puristaa. pusertaa
glaze	kuorrutus, kiilto
serving	tarjoilu, annos
whipped cream	kermavaahto
jam	hillo
method	toimintatapa
heat	kuumentaa
an oven	uuni
tip	kaataa, kipata
large	iso, suuri
a bowl	kulho
mix	sekoittaa
rub in	hieroa, sekoittaa (jauhojen joukkoon rasvasta)
fingers	sormet
until	kunnes
fine	hienorakenteinen, ohut
a crumb	muru(nen)
add	lisätä
stir	sekoittaa
put	laitaa, asettaa, panna
a microwave	mikroaaltouuni
liquid	neste
dry	kuiva
combine	yhdistää
quickly	nopeasti
a cutlery knife	veitsi (ruokailuväline)
scatter	sirotella
a work surface	työtaso
dough	taikina
fold	käännellä, taittaa
smooth	tasainen, pehmeä
pat	taputtaa, painella
round	pyöreä, pallomainen

deep	syvä, tässä: paksu
use	käyttää
a cookie cutter	pikkuleipämuotti
cut	leikata
a circle	ympyrä
place	asettaa
a baking sheet	uunipelti
press	painaa, painella
brush	sivellä, harjata
a top	päällys, pinta
bake	paistaa (uunissa)
golden	kullanvärinen
eat	syödä

Picture: Microsoft Word ClipArt

APPENDIX 10 Ideas for introducing new vocabulary

- Word hunt:
  - o Give small groups of learners a vocabulary list and ask them to translate the words into Finnish by using the internet, dictionaries, the English book and other sources. The original vocabulary list can be either in English or in Finnish.
  - o If possible, include in the vocabulary list examples of simple sentences that include the words so that their meaning becomes more evident to the learners. The learners can also create these sentences themselves after they have translated the words.
  - o Ask the groups to compare their translations and check the correct answers together. Make sure that all learners get the correct answers and understand the meaning of each word. The meaning of the word is more important than the translation because the meaning helps the earners use it in suitable contexts.

- Brainstorm:
  - o Write down the theme of the new vocabulary on a black/whiteboard or on a padlet.com platform.
  - o Ask the learner to write down all the words that they know about this theme under the heading.
  - o Go through the words together and translate their meanings into Finnish.
  - o The teacher can add missing words to the list or ask the learners if they can come up with more words by giving them the Finnish version as a hint.
  - o Collect also synonyms and other words that are related to the theme and the learners bring up. Think about the differences between words that are have almost the same meaning but perhaps are used in different contexts etc.

- Find your partner:
  - o Write down the words in English and in Finnish on small pieces of paper.
  - o Divide these pieces of paper to the learners and ask them to go around in the classroom asking "What's your word" and trying to find a partner who has the same word in the other language.
  - o Once the learners have found their partners and matched the words, ask them to write them down on a black/whiteboard both in English and in Finnish.
  - o Go through the list the learners have written together and check if all the word pairs are correct. Read through the list and pay attention to the correct pronunciation of the words.
  - o Ask the learners to use the words in sentences and to write these sentences down on the black/whiteboard.
  - o Check the sentences together and study the meanings and the correct forms of the words together in these contexts.

- Memory game:
  - o Print out the new vocabulary in English and in Finnish and cut (or ask the learners to cut) them into small word cards.

- o Divide your learners into pairs or groups of four.
- o Ask the learners to turn the word cards face down on the table and shuffle them.
- o Ask the learners to play the memory game together and try to find the matching English and Finnish versions.
- o Instead of the Finnish word, the matching pair can be a picture of the word.

- Study the words:
  - o Give the learners a vocabulary list and ask them to read it through.
  - o Ask the learners to use colours to mark different things in the vocabulary. For example, learners can
    - ▪ circle all the verbs in green and nouns in blue etc.
    - ▪ underline all the words that are new or already familiar to them
    - ▪ mark the words that sound funny or look interesting
    - ▪ choose 5-10 words they want and decide to learn extremely wells
  - o Make sure to practise pronunciation and link the meanings of the words to e.g. sentences

- Act the words:
  - o While reading through the new vocabulary out loud, act the meanings of the words by using different tones, movements and mimicry. For example, if you are studying adjectives such as happy, angry, interesting, sad, hungry etc. also look, sound and move like the adjective. If you study verbs, mimic the verbs etc.
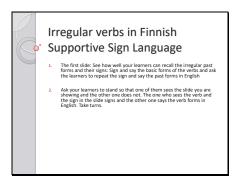
- Online games:
  - o Play quizlet.live or Kahoot! with the words or let the learners create their own study sets and play with the words using ready learning games in quizlet.com
  - o The learners can themselves create the Kahoot! questions and include different ways of using the words in the questions
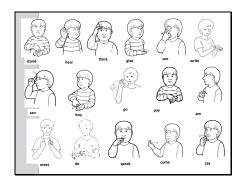
APPENDIX 11: Learning by signing slides

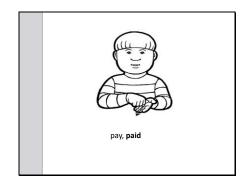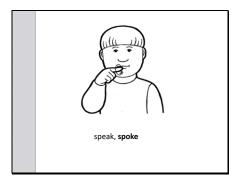pictures: http://papunet.net/materiaalia/kuvapankki/luokka/208?field_stockimage_type_tid[0]=181&page=5
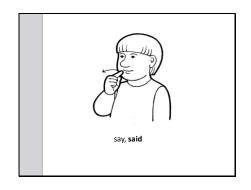
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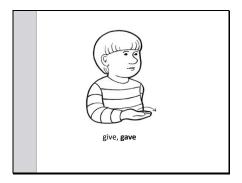
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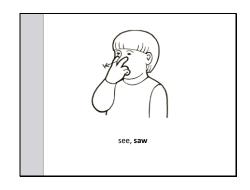
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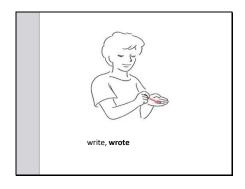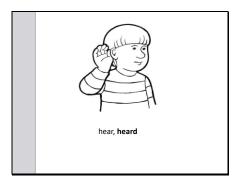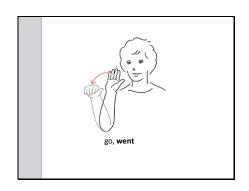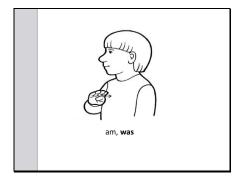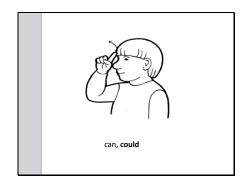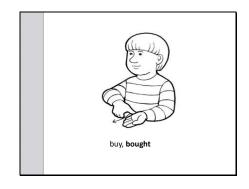
Slide 4

give, **gave**

Slide 5

see, **saw**

Slide 6

write, **wrote**

Slide 7

hear, **heard**

Slide 8

go, **went**

Slide 9

pay, **paid**

Slide 10

am, **was**

Slide 11

can, **could**

Slide 12

buy, **bought**

Slide 13

speak, **spoke**

Slide 14

say, **said**

Slide 15

stand, **stood**

Slide 16

meet, **met**

Slide 17

do, **did**

Slide 18

come, **came**
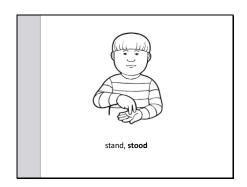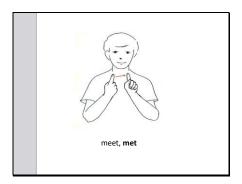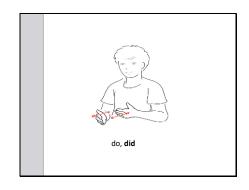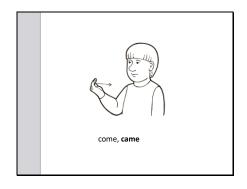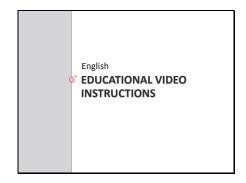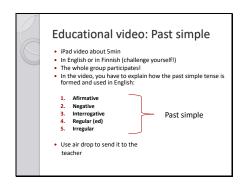
APPENDIX 12: English educational video instructions

Slide 1

English
○ **EDUCATIONAL VIDEO INSTRUCTIONS**

Slide 2

Educational video: Past simple

- iPad video about 5min
- In English or in Finnish (challenge yourself!)
- The whole group participates!
- In the video, you have to explain how the past simple tense is formed and used in English:

1. **Afirmative**
2. **Negative**
3. **Interrogative**   Past simple
4. **Regular (ed)**
5. **Irregular**

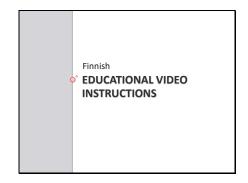- Use air drop to send it to the teacher
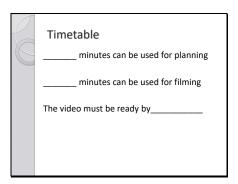
Slide 3

To do in the groups

- Agree on roles: every group member participates!
- Plan your video on a piece of paper
- How will you teach?
  ◦ Presenting the grammar rule?
  ◦ Signs?
  ◦ A play?
  ◦ Examples?
  ◦ A song?
- **English books cannot be shown in the video!**
- **Do not copy / read straight from your English book!**

Slide 4

Timetable

_____ minutes can be used for planning

_____ minutes can be used for filming

The video must be ready by_____

APPENDIX 13: Finnish educational video instructions

Slide 1

Slide 2

Slide 3

Slide 4