

The background is a dark blue field filled with numerous 3D geometric shapes, primarily cubes and rectangular prisms. These shapes are rendered in a variety of colors including light blue, green, yellow, red, and purple. They are scattered across the frame, some appearing to float or be stacked, creating a sense of depth and complexity. The lighting is soft, casting subtle shadows and highlights on the faces of the shapes.

Teaching English at Primary Level

Silva Bratož
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Knjižnica Ludus · 48 · ISSN 2630-3809
Series Editor · Silva Bratož



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From Theory into the Classroom

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Proof-reading · Tina Rozmanič

Design and Layout · Alen Ježovnik

Cover image · Rochak Shukla on Freepik

Knjižnica Ludus · 48 · ISSN 2630-3809

Series Editor · Silva Bratož

Published by · University of Primorska Press

Titov trg 4, 6000 Koper · hippocampus.si

Editor in Chief · Jonatan Vinkler

Managing Editor · Alen Ježovnik

Koper · 2023

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Electronic edition

<https://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-293-316-6.pdf>

<https://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-293-317-3/index.html>

<https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-293-316-6>



*The publication of the monograph was financially supported
by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency
from the state budget funds, tender for the co-financing
of scientific monographs.*

*We would like to thank the following teachers for contributing photos
of their pupils' and their own work: Petra Fabčič, Polona Lilič,
Etien Počkaj Godnič, Evi Petaroš, Katarina Benedik,
Nataša Puhner, and Eda Dermota.*

*Examples from the textbook Reach for the Stars (Bratož et al., 2019)
are used with permission from DZS.*

Katalogni zapis o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili
v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

COBISS.SI-ID 190009859

ISBN 978-961-293-316-6 (PDF)

ISBN 978-961-293-317-3 (HTML)

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning

EFL – English as a foreign language

FL – Foreign language

FLL – Foreign language learning

FLT – Foreign language teaching

L1 – First/source language

L2 – Second/target language

TL – Target language

TEYL – Teaching English to young learners

YL – Young learner

YLLs – Young language learners

YLS – Young learners

Introduction

The main purpose of the book is to explore the key principles and several practical considerations related to teaching English in the primary classroom (pupils 6 to 12 years of age). Over the last 20 years, we have witnessed the publication of a number of comprehensive guides to research and issues surrounding the teaching of a foreign language to young learners, references such as *The Primary English Teacher's Guide* (Brewster et al., 2002), *Teaching Young Language Learners* (Pinter, 2006), *Teaching Languages to Young Learners* (Cameron, 2001), *Teaching English to Young Learners: Critical Issues in Language Teaching with 3–12 Year Olds* (Bland, 2015), *Innovative Practices in Early English Language Education* (Valente & Xerri, 2022), and a great number of others which have been consulted and referred to extensively in this book. However, teaching English or other foreign languages to primary school learners is a fast-developing and exciting area which has taken many turns and encountered various challenges. It is also fair to say that we are living in a fast-changing world which has far-reaching implications for the young learners' classroom. One of such changes is undoubtedly the wide accessibility of web-based resources and learning spaces which provide plenty of opportunities for learning foreign languages more independently and autonomously.

The boundless possibility of being exposed to both spoken and written forms of a foreign language in authentic online environments is an important factor in language teaching which needs to be taken into account at all levels of instruction. This is also related to one of the most significant challenges in the primary classroom today, namely the varying degrees of pupils' background knowledge which may range from beginner to advanced levels already in the first grades of primary school. One of the implications of this phenomenon is that teachers and teacher educators should dedicate considerable efforts to developing more efficient strategies for teaching mixed-ability classes. It is the aim of the present book to capture these new developments and provide pre-service and in-service teachers with an overview of the fundamental concepts which underlie foreign language teaching for this age group and at the same time present them with practical guidelines and reflection activities to create efficient primary classroom teaching practice.

Before we continue, it is worth looking at some terms which will be used

throughout the book. As mentioned above, the main focus of the book are children at primary level aged 6 to 12. The term 'young learners' is commonly used in English to cover different age groups, from 3 to 11/12 (Pižorn, 2009) or from 5 to 14 (Pinter, 2006) and there is general consensus to refer to children who have not yet started compulsory schooling (3-6 years old) as 'pre-primary' or 'very young learners' (Reilly & Ward, 1997). This distinction is important because of the differences in the physical, psychological, social, emotional, conceptual and cognitive development of young learners in these age groups, leading to very different approaches and strategies to teaching (Ellis, 2014). In the present book, the terms 'young learners' (YLs) and 'young language learners' (YLLs) are used to refer to children at primary level, from age 6 to 11/12.

Another set of terms which needs clarifying is related to the kind of language being taught. 'Foreign language' usually refers to a non-native language formally taught and used within the school curriculum and not as a means of communication outside school. On the other hand, the term 'second language' is used to refer to a non-native language which has a special status in a particular environment, serving as a medium of education, administration or business (Crystal, 2003). A good example of a second language is Italian for native speakers of Slovene in the bilingual area of the Slovenian Istria. However, as our society is becoming ever more multicultural and multilingual, it is often difficult to establish the difference between 'foreign' and 'second language', such as is often the case in bilingual areas in which a foreign language (more often than not English) becomes more widespread than the second language. Another term, 'additional language', is used to refer to any language other than a person's mother tongue, especially in order to reflect the fact that many people learn more than one language other than their own, such as Slovene pupils in the Littoral who learn Italian as a second language, English as the first foreign language and, for example, German as the second foreign language. The advantage of using the term 'additional language' is especially in the fact that it refers to all the languages learnt beside one's native language with the same expression and therefore avoids the division into more or less important languages (Pižorn, 2009). In our book, the term 'foreign language' (FL) is mostly used as it corresponds with the school subject taught in school. In addition, while the focus is clearly on English as a foreign language (EFL), we believe that the principles and strategies presented are applicable and relevant also for teaching other languages.

The book is divided into three parts. Part One first presents the key approaches which have shaped the field of teaching English and other foreign

languages at the primary level by focusing on the importance of different language acquisition and learning theories for FL teaching. We then look at different approaches and methods which have been developed and used over the last century, with a special emphasis on those relevant for teaching English at the primary level. One of the approaches, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), is discussed separately in the third chapter. The decision to dedicate a complete chapter to CLIL was made based on the belief that it is an approach which offers great potential for teaching young language learners (YLLs) and which successfully integrates other approaches and concepts.

Part Two focuses on language skills and competences and consists of eight chapters. The first two give an outline of effective methods and strategies for developing the four language skills, while literacy development is discussed in a separate chapter. The fourth chapter, 'Focus on Vocabulary and Grammar,' deliberately examines the areas of grammar and vocabulary together, arguing in favour of using a holistic approach to teaching these two areas of language. The next two chapters, 'Materials and Resources,' 'Lesson Planning' and 'Inside the Classroom and Classroom Language' investigate several practical aspects of teaching a foreign language, from evaluating course-books to different aspects of lesson planning and classroom management. The last chapter in this part is dedicated to online learning. The decision to include a whole chapter to teaching a foreign language online reflects the time in which the book has been written. Although the text is the result of several years of studying, teaching, observing, (self)reflecting, trying and testing concepts and strategies in the area of teaching YLLs, several chapters were added in 2020 and 2021, the years of the coronavirus pandemic and a time which will go down in history as the great expansion of digital education.

Part Three outlines the most important aspects and basic principles of assessing young language learners and discusses different types of assessment, such as the difference between knowledge and performance assessment. We have argued that the assessment of YLs' needs to be conducted with caution, always bearing in mind the learners' age, their cognitive, motor, linguistic, emotional and social development. While separate chapters are dedicated to the assessment of individual language skills, we have also pointed out that the YLs' classroom is characterised by more attention on oral skills (listening and speaking) at the beginning, with reading and writing being incorporated slowly and gradually. Finally, we have laid out the benefits and potential of using formative assessment and assessment for learning in the YLs' classroom.

The book comes with several features which are aimed at providing clarity and direction to the reader. An important feature of the book are different sections or capsules at different points in the text. The 'Chapter Objectives' box gives an overview of the most important topics and concepts discussed, the 'Reflection Point' capsule is aimed at providing readers with a guide to the most relevant issues in particular areas, while the section 'Classroom Insights' looks at several classroom examples collected by the authors during classroom observations or from discussions with pre-service and in-service teachers. Finally, the 'Key Takeaways' section summarises the key concepts and most important messages of individual chapters, while for a more comprehensive insight into various issues discussed, readers should check the 'Further Reading' section at the end of each chapter. We hope *Teaching English at Primary Level: From Theory into the Classroom* will help you navigate your way through understanding the complexity of teaching primary language learners and provide valuable support in one of the most rewarding and challenging professions.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that individual chapters were written by separate authors. Silva Bratož is the author of Chapters 1–3, 7–11 and 14, Mihaela Brumen of Chapters 3 and 11, Mateja Dagarin Fojkar of Chapters 5 and 6, and Karmen Pižorn of Chapters 12 and 13. However, it is also important to note that in the process of writing the book, we all worked as a cohesive and collaborative team, providing ideas and invaluable feedback to each other.

Silva Bratož



Key Principles and Approaches

Key Principles

Chapter Objectives

- Distinguishing between the process of learning and acquiring a language
- Understanding the importance of different language acquisition and learning theories for FL teaching
- Examining the advantages and disadvantages of starting to learn a foreign language at an early age
- Understanding the usefulness of the 'scaffolding concept' for teaching young language learners

Learning and Acquisition

How do children learn their first language? How do they learn a foreign or second language? What is the best time to learn a foreign language (FL)? Are children more efficient language learners than adults? What teaching approaches are the most efficient with young learners? These are some of the questions which are central to the area usually referred to as teaching English to young learners (TEYL). In this context, an important distinction is made between language acquisition and language learning. Language acquisition is a largely subconscious process which is very similar to the way children acquire their first language, i.e. without consciously thinking of the rules of a language. Error correction and explicit teaching of rules are not relevant to language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

A good example of second language acquisition are children who move to another country with their parents and 'pick up' the language of the new environment without being conscious of the rules of the new language. Another typical example are children who always watch cartoons or play computer games in an FL, which is often the case today with English. They usually develop a good pronunciation and can communicate effectively but are completely unaware of the phonological or grammatical rules of the target language.

On the other hand, language learning refers to conscious processes for internalising a second or foreign language and is the result of direct instruction in the rules of language. Learners know that they are learning a new language and can talk about that knowledge. For example, they can talk about the pronunciation of a word, the rules for forming the plural of words or about the

Table 1.1 Learning and Acquisition

Learning	Acquisition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners consciously internalise the target language • Learners learn the rules of a language and can talk about them • Learners are exposed to the target language in a classroom environment • Errors are often corrected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A subconscious process, similar to the way a child acquires L1 ('picking up' a language) • Children are unaware of grammatical rules, they use the language for everyday needs • Exposure to natural communication is necessary • Errors are sometimes corrected
In practice both should happen at the same time	

differences between their first language and the target language. Finally, as Krashen points out (1982, in Lightbown & Spada 2013, p. 106),

we acquire as we are exposed to samples of the second language which we understand. This happens in much the same way that children pick up their first language – without conscious attention to language form. We learn, on the other hand, via a conscious process of study and attention to form and rule learning.

Table 1.1 gives an overview of the main characteristics of the processes of learning and acquisition.

The Identity Hypothesis

The identity hypothesis is based on the assumption that the process of learning a foreign language is essentially the same as learning the mother tongue. This means that the best way to teach a second language (L2) would be by imitating the way children acquire their first language (L1), or in other words, by recreating natural conditions in the language classroom aimed at facilitating learning rather than interfering with the learning process. It has been argued that several parallels can be found in L1 and L2 acquisition, such as the existence of a silent period, structural and semantic simplification, the use of language formulas and the order in which the structural elements of language are acquired. However, the identity hypothesis disregards the fact that there are also some obvious differences in the way learners acquire the two languages and that we need to consider the learner's age, their previous knowledge, their cognitive capacity, and several other elements. For example, while children learning an L1 always go through a kind of silent period (see 2.1), adults learning an L2 usually do not. Aside from these reservations,

however, several authors point out that the similarities between L1 and L2 acquisition are most prominent in the early stages of development (Čok, 2008; Ellis, 1994).

Reflection Point

1. Discuss the different ways in which we can acquire a foreign language.
2. Did you know any English words before you started learning it in school? Do you remember any? Where did you pick them up?
3. What are some ways of fostering language acquisition in school contexts?

L1 and L2 Acquisition

Several authors (Pinter, 2011; Skela & Dagarin Fojkar, 2009) argue that the methodology of teaching an FL to YLs needs to go beyond the field of foreign language teaching (FLT) into disciplines such as child development, theories of learning and first language acquisition. In other words, teachers who teach children an FL should have some basic knowledge of the cognitive, social and emotional development of different age groups. It has become widely accepted that the knowledge about how children acquire their mother tongue is directly relevant to the area of FLT (Brewster et al., 2002; Cameron, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). However, different schools of psychology and second language acquisition have explained how languages are acquired in different ways, each of them providing us with important insights into the process of acquiring an L1. Four perspectives have received particular attention in the area of FLT; the *behaviourist*, the *innatist*, the *cognitivist* and the *constructivist* perspective. Table 1.2 (p. 20) looks at the four perspectives considering four different aspects, the way they conceptualise the acquisition process, the way they see the role of the learner and the social environment and the challenges posed by these different views on language acquisition.

The Behaviourist Perspective

Behaviourism, a theory of learning associated with B. F. Skinner, was influential in the USA in the 50s. According to the behaviourists, imitation and practice are the most important processes in the development of a child's language, and language learning is essentially understood as the formation of a habit. Children learn a language through positive and negative reinforcement, which means that if they say something correctly, they are likely to be rewarded with praise while if what they say is wrong, they are usually 'punished' by being corrected. This view paved the way to the so-called *audio-lingual approach* to FLT. A typical classroom activity associated with this ap-

Table 1.2 A Comparison of Different Language Acquisition Perspectives

Focus	Behaviourist Perspective	Innatist Perspective	Cognitivist Perspective	Constructivist Perspective
Acquisition process	Imitation, practice, forming a habit	Testing language rules	A conscious thinking process	Language is constructed, the result of interaction between child and adult
Learner's role	Imitator, can be programmed	Equipped with innate ability for grammar	Information processor	Active participant in the learning process
Social environment	Parents and teachers as models	Minor role	Minor role	Strong interplay between the individual and the social environment
Criticism and challenges	How to account for language complexity	Focused mainly on language structures	Difficult to know exactly how language development relates to other kinds of development	Sometimes hard to know how much support should be provided

proach is learning a dialogue by heart and then repeating it a few times in the form of a drilling activity in order to make the response automatic. While behaviourism does offer insights into how children learn some of the regular and routine aspects of language at the early stage, it is also clear that it is not able to explain how children acquire more complex structures and vocabulary. Lightbown and Spada (2013) point out that rather than merely imitating sentences they hear from adults, children seem to pick out patterns and generalise them to new contexts. Skela and Dagarin Fojkar (2009) argue that some behaviourist tendencies have survived to the present day and can be recognised, for instance, in the belief that mistakes are unacceptable or that the use of the mother tongue should be avoided.

Stephen Krashen and the Monitor Model

Krashen (1982) developed the *Monitor Model* of second language acquisition as a response to the growing dissatisfaction with methods influenced by the behaviourist perspective. According to Krashen's Monitor Theory, second language acquisition is composed of two different systems: the acquired system, which results from subconscious knowledge of the grammar of a sec-

ond language and is similar to the way a child learns the first language, and the conscious learned system, which results from classroom instruction. The model is based on five hypotheses:

1. *The acquisition-learning hypothesis.* Acquisition occurs subconsciously, without formal attention to form and rule learning while learning occurs as the result of conscious study of the formal properties of a language and is directly related to classroom instruction. Applied to teaching practice, this idea suggests that the best way to learn a language would be through natural communication where learners are expected to fulfil some real purposes, for example, a learner asking the teacher if she or he may go to the toilet or asking a school friend to lend him or her a pencil-sharpener. This also means that there are clear benefits in maximising learners' exposure to L2.
2. *The monitor hypothesis.* The learnt system plays the role of the monitor of the acquired systems, in other words, it edits the acquired knowledge by making changes and refining it according to the rules of the language learnt. Krashen (1982) suggests three types of learners with respect to how much they use the monitor system. First are learners who attempt to monitor all the time, constantly checking the rules in their mind which may result in too much self-correction and reluctance to speak freely. Contrary to these learners, 'under-users' of the monitor system rely entirely on the acquired system and are not influenced by error-correction. Finally, 'optimal-users' of the monitor system use the 'monitor' in a balanced way so that it does not interfere with communication.
3. *The natural order hypothesis.* Learners acquire grammatical structures in a predictable order, certain structures are acquired early in the learning process, while others are more difficult to acquire. Lightbown and Spada (2013) point out that some structures, such as the rule of adding -s to verbs in third person singular, are easy to state and understand but difficult to acquire since even advanced learners fail to apply this rule in free conversation.
4. *The input hypothesis.* Language acquisition occurs when the input is a little beyond the learner's level of competence. However, it is also important that we provide as much comprehensible input as possible. In other words, we acquire new language only when we are exposed to language that is just a little beyond our current level of competence, but which we nevertheless understand by relying on the context in

which it is used, our general knowledge of the world, and other extralinguistic cues provided. In addition, the input hypothesis claims that speaking fluency develops over time as more input is provided. One idea related to this claim is that children learning an FL naturally go through a 'silent period' during which they build up competence in the FL through listening, while the speaking ability emerges on its own after enough competence has been developed by listening and understanding. This has important pedagogical considerations especially for YLs who may take several months before they start uttering their first words in an FL (Krashen, 1982).

5. *The affective filter hypothesis.* High motivation and self-confidence on the one hand and low levels of anxiety on the other result in learners having low filters which allow them to acquire a language without too many obstacles. In contrast, low motivation and a high anxiety level are seen as barriers for acquiring a language even with appropriate input.

Each of the hypotheses above has important implications for teaching practice. Table 1.3 gives an overview of the five hypotheses with guidelines and recommendations for effective classroom use.

Krashen's theory has been disputed and challenged by several researchers (Ellis, 1994; Hadley & Reiken, 1993; Lightbown & Spada, 2013) for different reasons. One of the most common criticisms is that the distinction between 'learning' and 'acquisition' is not clearly defined and the claims related to this hypothesis are largely untestable. Next, the nature of comprehensible input is questionable and again difficult to test. In addition, by focusing too much attention on comprehensible input, it disregards interaction and language output.

The affective filter hypothesis has been contested for not taking into account individual differences. Despite these criticisms, however, the theory has had a strong influence on second language teaching in the past forty years and the hypotheses in Table 1.3 are still largely relevant today (Loewen, 2021). Both researchers and practitioners seem to find Krashen's claims on the distinction between learning and acquisition, on the importance of comprehensible input and others useful on an intuitive level.

Reflection Point

1. In what way are Krashen's hypotheses useful in teaching YLLs?
2. How much do you personally use the 'monitor system'?
3. Discuss different ways of creating a mistake-friendly environment.

Table 1.3 The Monitor Model Theory by Stephen Krashen

Hypothesis	Implications for teaching practice
<i>The acquisition-learning hypothesis.</i> We acquire without conscious attention to language form; we learn through conscious attention to language form and rule learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is best learnt through natural communication in situations in which learners have to fulfil some real purposes. There are clear benefits in maximising learners' exposure to L2 in the classroom.
<i>The monitor hypothesis.</i> The learned system acts as a monitor (editor) making minor changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to strike a balance between encouraging accuracy and fluency. • Knowing the learners' psychological profile can help us determine whether they are under-users of the monitor system (usually extroverted pupils who like talking and communicating), while learners who lack self-confidence often over-use the 'monitor' and are reluctant to speak lest they make a mistake.
<i>The natural order hypothesis.</i> Learners acquire parts of language in a predictable order. Certain grammatical structures are acquired early while others are acquired later in the process. This natural order does not necessarily depend on simplicity of form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should be aware that certain structures of a language are easier to acquire than others. • It is useful to use various scaffolding strategies for dealing with language points which are easy to learn but difficult to acquire (such as the rule of adding -s to verbs in third person singular in the present tense).
<i>The input hypothesis.</i> Language acquisition occurs when learners receive messages that they can understand (comprehensible input). The comprehensible input should be one step beyond the learner's current language ability (represented as $i + 1$).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should provide as much comprehensible input as possible. • It may be difficult to strike the right balance between the new and already acquired language, a good idea is to prepare tasks which are challenging but not impossible.
<i>The affective filter hypothesis.</i> This hypothesis refers to affect (feelings, motives, needs, emotional states, attitudes). Negative feelings may be a barrier for acquiring a language even with appropriate input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should create a positive classroom environment. • In a mistake-friendly environment learners feel that they are allowed to make mistakes and take risks.

Learner Language

In the process of learning a foreign language, learners go through different language development stages which characterise language acquisition. This development has been described as a language system in its own right, which contains elements of both L1 and L2 but also other forms which are not related to the two languages. In other words, in the language learning process, learners develop their own language referred to as 'learner language'

or 'interlanguage' which is governed by its own vocabulary and grammar rules. Lightbown and Spada (2013) point out that it is important for teachers to understand learner language and the steps learners go through in the acquisition process as this can help them to plan their teaching procedures and be realistic about what they can achieve in the classroom. It is useful to know, for example, that a major source of errors in learner language is the negative transfer of L1 patterns which may occur at different levels, involving vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation or, more generally, discourse. Being aware of the typical errors due to negative transfer can help teachers focus their activities and target such errors more systematically.

However, negative transfer is not the only source of errors in language learning. Studies in language acquisition report that some patterns of language which are characteristic of different developmental stages in learner language are similar among learners from different backgrounds. Krashen (1982) summarised these studies in his 'morpheme acquisition sequence' model in which he showed that learners acquire the language features of L2 in a particular order. According to this hypothesis, learners acquire the progressive marker *-ing* (He's working at the moment.) and the plural marker *-s* (two boys) sooner than the third person singular marker *-s* (She likes him.) or the possessive *-s* (Peter's dog). This also implies that some structures may be easy to learn (such as the rule for the use of the third person singular marker *-s*) but difficult to acquire (learners frequently make the mistake of omitting the *-s* even at advanced levels of proficiency). Understanding the steps learners go through in acquiring the second language can thus help teachers to focus their teaching on specific errors made by learners.

Reflection Point

1. What are some of the most typical errors made by your learners as a result of negative transfer from L1 to L2?
2. What are some of the most typical errors you make or you used to make as an FL learner? Discuss the reasons for the errors.
3. Watch a video in which an English teacher discusses common mistakes made by students learning English. Do you also make such mistakes?



The Innatist Perspective

The *innatist perspective* is associated with the ideas endorsed by Noam Chomsky who challenged the behaviourist perspective by asking the following question: How come children know more about the structure of their language than what they could reasonably absorb from the language samples they encounter? In other words, is it possible they develop such a com-

plex system solely by imitating adults? He concluded that children's minds are not blank slates that merely imitate the language they hear; instead, they are inherently equipped with the capacity to independently uncover the underlying rules of a language system based on the natural language examples they are exposed to. According to Chomsky, children are pre-equipped with a universal grammar which helps them decide what is accepted and what not (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). While they might make mistakes (like attaching the past tense suffix -ed to irregular verbs -**taken*), this also shows that they intuitively know language is based on structure and rules.

Although the innatist perspective offered several useful insights into how languages are acquired, it was focused mainly on the structure of the language, leaving aside the social aspects of language use and neglecting the communicative aspects of learning and acquiring an L2 (Brewster et al., 2002). However, Chomsky's theory of L1 acquisition had a considerable impact on future developments and ideas in the area of foreign language learning and acquisition.

The Cognitivist Perspective

Cognition usually refers to people's ability for thinking and processing information, and cognitive theories of learning are concerned with the mental properties involved in the learning process. According to the *cognitivist perspective*, language development is an aspect of general cognitive growth and does not emerge from some innate language learning mechanism as claimed by the innatists.

The cognitivist views emphasise individual differences which may affect the learning process, focusing on both language acquisition and language use, and are especially interested in how L2 knowledge is stored and processed in the brain (Loewen & Reinders, 2011). Learning a foreign language essentially involves using general learning skills and is similar to other types of learning, such as learning to count or ride a bike. These types of learning involve both acquisition and learning which in turn requires both considerable mental activity and practice before a certain skill becomes automatized (Skela & Dagarin Fojkar, 2009). The cognitivist views are associated with the so-called Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) according to which people are genetically programmed to acquire certain kinds of knowledge and skill at specific times in life (later it would be much more difficult). In terms of language acquisition, CPH suggests that if children are not given access to language in early childhood, they will not acquire the language if the deprivation goes on for too long.

The Age Factor

One of the most intriguing questions in the area of teaching English to YLs is whether there is a critical period for learning a foreign or second language or, as it is often put, does younger mean better? The question of age is undoubtedly a central concern in FLT and is reflected in the worldwide trend of teaching an FL to ever younger children. There is a widely held belief that if we start learning a foreign language young, we will end up as better speakers of this language (Brewster et al., 2002). A standard argument claims that starting early is especially important for acquiring a natural pronunciation and native-like accent.

Although several studies have tried to prove the advantages of an early start, it is impossible to give a conclusively positive answer to the question of appropriate age for FL learning (Brewster et al., 2002; Enever, 2015; Pinter, 2011; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Rather than a definite answer, there is a general consensus among researchers that we can speak of benefits for different age groups. One of the most important benefits of starting young is that children are more sensitive to the sound and rhythm of the FL which means that they are more likely to develop good pronunciation. They are generally less inhibited than older learners and have lower anxiety levels. Pinter (2006) also argues that by starting early, they ultimately dedicate more time to language learning than those who start later in life.

On the other hand, there are several advantages of starting to learn a foreign language later in life, in puberty or adulthood. For one, older learners are able to understand and analyse the rules of the new language which allows them to use more efficient strategies for learning it. They can rely on a much more developed conceptual knowledge network and superior cognitive abilities compared to younger learners. Most importantly, however, they usually have a clear sense of why they are learning the FL (Pinter, 2006).

Another important aspect related to the best time to start with FL learning has been put forward by Enever (2015) who argues that the advantages of starting early are closely linked to other important conditions, such as the necessary expertise of YLs' teachers, the continuity of the learning process, the learners' motivation and learning experience, the importance of setting realistic objectives and the role of out-of-school language learning.

The Constructivist Perspective

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge influenced by the work of several noted psychologists, such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner and others. Broadly speaking, the constructivist perspective argues that 'children

construct knowledge for themselves by actively making sense of their environment' (Pinter, 2006, p. 6).

Piaget and Active Learning

Jean Piaget, one of the most prominent figures in the area of child psychology of all times, was especially interested in how children interact with the world around them and the effect of this interaction for their mental development. For Piaget, learning occurs through action and thinking develops as action is internalised or carried out mentally in the imagination. A child's thinking develops gradually, through different stages in which knowledge and intellectual skill grow from largely perception-based towards formal, logical thinking (Cameron, 2001). According to Piaget's famous framework, every child goes through four universal stages of development: the sensorimotor stage (from birth to 2 years of age), pre-operational stage (from 2 to 7 years of age), concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years of age) and formal operational stage (from 11 years onwards).

The studies which developed Piaget's ideas have been criticised for underestimating what children are capable of doing at a particular stage and for focusing attention on what they are not able to do rather than their achievements. For example, Piaget described pre-operational children as egocentric, unable to imagine other perspectives than their own and unable to follow the rules of formal logic. However, Pinter (2011) points out that while pre-operational children are not likely to do well in tasks which test formal logic, they still make important progress in their development, especially using activities which are more appropriate for their age, such as repetitive games and socio-dramatic plays. Despite these criticisms, several authors (Skela & Dagarin Fojkar, 2009; Pinter, 2006; Cameron, 2001) argue that it is nevertheless useful to be familiar with the Piagetian framework since teachers who teach a foreign language usually teach different age groups over a period of time. This means that they need to be able to respond to the needs and interests of several age groups by evaluating and balancing materials, methods and teaching styles.

Vygotsky and the Concept of Scaffolding

Compared to Piaget, Vygotsky gives much more importance to language and the interaction between the child and other people. The social-interactive approach emphasises human social interactions, especially the role of the relationship between an adult and a child in learning a language. In this respect, the work of Vygotsky and later Bruner was significant as it shed light

on the ways human thinking is dominated by mental processes emerging from language (Brewster et al., 2002).

A particularly valuable concept which derives from the work of Vygotsky and Bruner is the idea of *scaffolding*. It has its roots in the conceptual framework referred to as the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD), a metaphor proposed by Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) to illustrate the distance 'between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.' A good example of scaffolding are training wheels on a bicycle. They provide children with the support they need to acquire the complex task of pedalling, balancing and steering simultaneously until they can do it on their own. In a classroom context, this may be seen as the gap between what learners can achieve independently and what they can do with the help from a more knowledgeable individual (teacher or peer). According to Vygotsky (1978), children develop cognition and language as a result of social interaction with other people, but they gradually move away from relying on others and become more independent in their actions and thinking. This is achieved with the 'internalisation' process which does not just transfer or copy the external social interaction to the child but transforms it into a new form of interaction which guides the child's actions (Cameron, 2001). Read (2004) emphasises that the ZPD provides a useful conceptual framework for FLT purposes which can help the teachers calibrate the level of challenge and complexity in activities and tasks.

Various scaffolding strategies can be efficiently applied in teaching YLs, for example using visuals and realia, gestures, stories, various classroom routines, music and movement etc. While the choice of scaffold depends on the context of learning and the learners' needs, it is also useful to distinguish between different types of scaffolding. Echevarria et al. (2004) categorise scaffolding techniques into three types: verbal, procedural, and instructional. Verbal scaffolding refers to techniques which are focused on language development, such as paraphrasing or asking questions. Instructional scaffolding techniques include a variety of instructional tools that support learning, such as different kinds of visuals and graphic organizers, while procedural scaffolding techniques relate to different kinds of grouping and activity structures.

Scaffolding may also involve teachers helping learners to attend to what is relevant by providing focusing activities. Cameron (2001) suggests that language teaching can benefit from Bruner's concept of 'formats and routines' which refers to particular events which 'combine the security of the famil-

Table 1.4 Scaffolding Techniques for Young Learners

Verbal	Instructional	Procedural
Paraphrasing	Visuals	Working in pairs
Asking questions	Graphic organisers	Working in groups
Using synonyms and antonyms	Dictionaries	Personalising information
Teaching familiar chunks	Pictographs	Role play
Eliciting answers	Word wall	Use of routines
Songs and jazz chants	Non-verbal communication (gestures, facial expressions, voice)	Simulations
		Project work
		Task based activities

Notes Adapted from Echevarria et al. (2004).

iar with the excitement of the new’ and are intended for scaffolding purposes (2001 p. 10). Bruner’s most famous example of ‘formats and routines’ was based on parents routinely reading to their children bedtime stories. The types of books change as the child gets older but the basic format remains always the same. What changes in time is also the interaction between the child and the parent as well as the scaffolding strategies of the parent whose verbal and non-verbal input is greater when the child is very young, but is gradually reduced as the child develops linguistically and becomes more independent. For example, at a later stage the child may ask for explanations of words or give comments about the stories read. In an FL classroom context, similar formats and routines may provide valuable opportunities for developing language competence. In addition, the routine practices and procedures need not be limited to the standard classroom routines but can be extended to include other activities and tasks which can be adjusted to fit a routine format.

Reflection Point

1. Which insights into language acquisition did each of the perspectives presented above (behaviourist, innatist, cognitivist, and constructivist) give?
2. Discuss the efficiency of using different scaffolding strategies with YLLs.
3. Watch a video in which an English teacher presents a grammar lesson using ‘the rainforest’ as the guiding theme and identify the scaffolding strategies used by the teacher.



However, Read (2006) argues that it is helpful to identify what counts as scaffolding since not all kind of help provided by the teacher can be defined as such. For example, it is important to establish what skills, concepts or level of understanding are meant to be developed. This does not mean that scaf-

folding needs to be based on a well-defined activity, it just means that it has to be clear what kind of help can be provided by the teacher to accomplish clearly defined learning goals. It is important to note that in the end we need to see the result of scaffolding, i.e. some kind of evidence that the child has achieved a higher level of competence and is able to function autonomously, like being able to ride a bike without training wheels. In addition, Ellis (2012, p. 105) argues that 'for scaffolding to be effective in assisting learning, it needs to be tuned to the learner's developmental level (i.e. it should be neither too much or too little).'

YLS Attitudes and Motivation to Learn an FL

Attitudes towards learning an FL are today generally regarded as a key variable in successful language learning. We can say that they play an important role in building motivation which is a complex and multifaceted concept, comprising several aspects, such as the learner's attitudes, personality, and identity issues (Dörnyei et al., 2004). While positive attitudes tend to increase the motivation to learn, negative attitudes have a decreasing effect on learners' motivation. The findings of several studies suggest that YLS' attitudes are strongly influenced by their parents, teachers, and friends (Mihaljević Džigunović, 2012; Bratož et al., 2022).

Pressley et al. (2003) argue that motivation in the YLS' classroom can be increased by using several motivational mechanisms or techniques. An important mechanism is high but also realistic expectations which reflect the teacher's confidence that their learners will be able to achieve a higher level of competence. This is also related to the feeling of success pupils experience when they carry out a task really well. Another technique is reinforcement, which can take the form of an external reward (for example, a sticker or a candy). However, as the authors (Pressley et al., 2003) point out, rewards do not need to be tangible in order to work, in fact, as many teachers have come to realise, the most powerful reward is the teacher's praise. Praise is an effective tool to engage and motivate YLS, especially when it is a response to the pupils' specific efforts and not based solely on their natural talents, for example

I can see you really worked hard on this task. Well done!

You really improved your pronunciation. Just go on like this.

At the same time, we should bear in mind that overpraising may have the reverse effect and decrease motivation. Finally, another motivation strategy worth mentioning is cooperative learning which promotes pupils' participa-

tion and interaction. With YLs, cooperative activities are more likely to boost motivation than competitive tasks.

Teachers often feel that they need to make their YLs' learning experience as memorable and exciting as possible by including fun activities and interesting materials, nowadays often based on online resources. However, Pressley et al. (2003) warn against using too many distracting activities which might be well-intended but too often avert the attention from the main teaching objectives.

According to Dörnyei (2001, p. 31), three necessary conditions need to be provided in order for the learner to be motivated to learn:

- appropriate teacher behaviours and a good relationship with the students;
- a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere;
- a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

These conditions are interrelated, since, for example, a good teacher-pupil rapport will contribute to a supportive classroom environment. We could also argue that these conditions are especially important in a YLs' classroom in which pupils are still very much dependent on a good relationship with their teacher and a caring atmosphere.

Reflection Point

1. How would you describe an ideal YLs' classroom climate?
2. Discuss different effort-based praises in the YLs' classroom.
3. What elements influenced your motivation to learn an FL when you were a primary school learner?

Key Takeaways

- In the FL classroom we should provide opportunities for both acquiring and learning the language.
- Different language acquisition and learning theories have revealed important aspects about language learning.
- Krashen's monitor model has had a strong influence on second language teaching in the past thirty years.
- In teaching YLLs it is important to use different scaffolding strategies.
- We can use several techniques to increase YL's motivation to learn a foreign language.

Further Reading

Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed.). Heinle & Heinle.

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th ed., Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers). Oxford University Press.

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Approaches to Language Teaching

Chapter Objectives

- Critically examining different approaches to teaching an FL from a present-day perspective
- Evaluating the implications of different approaches to teaching young learners
- Understanding the suitability of different approaches for different types of learners

What is the best way to teach a language? Different approaches and methods, which have been developed and used over the last century, have tried to give an answer to this seemingly simple question. Each of them has proposed ways in which a language should be learnt and the most suitable teaching techniques that should be used. Some approaches, for example the *grammar translation approach* or the *audiolingual approach*, received wider acceptance for a certain period of time only to be replaced by new, more modern approaches. However, this does not mean that past approaches are today dead and buried. On the contrary, we often see evidence of their elements in today's language classrooms and it is one of the aims of this chapter to critically examine the selected approaches from the present-day perspective. Of all the approaches which will be discussed, the most prominent is undoubtedly the *communicative approach* or *communicative language teaching* which has dominated foreign language teaching for decades. In the meantime, several alternative methods and approaches have been developed, such as the *Total Physical Response*, *multiple intelligences*, *the task-based approach*, *the story-based approach*, *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)* and several others. In this chapter, we will look closely at the methods and approaches which we believe to be especially relevant for teaching young language learners.

Basic Terms

In the area of ELT, terms like *approach*, *method*, *procedure* and *technique* (see Table 2.1 on p. 34) are commonly used to refer to different aspects of teaching a foreign language (Harmer, 2007). Although the majority of these terms are not always used consistently (e.g. approach and method are often used interchangeably) and are sometimes vague to define, it is still important to

Table 2.1 Basic ELT Terms and Examples

Basic ELT terms	Description	Example
Approach	Theories about how language works and is learnt.	The communicative approach – the communicative function of language is more important than language structure.
Method	The practical realisation of an approach (objectives, types of activities, teacher and learner roles, kinds of material).	<i>Objectives:</i> focused on developing skills and on what learners will be able to do (e.g. present themselves, etc.). <i>Activities:</i> role-play, information gap tasks, etc. <i>Teacher-learner roles:</i> teacher as facilitator, active learners. <i>Materials:</i> authentic materials.
Procedure	An ordered sequence of techniques.	<i>Warm-up:</i> activating learners' knowledge about a topic, giving context and objectives of a task. <i>Task:</i> learners carry out a task in groups, teacher provides support. <i>Feedback:</i> the teacher gives feedback on language and content.
Technique	A single activity.	Communicative games, simulations, surveys, etc.

understand the general differences between them, especially since they often do not match the terminology used in the area of pedagogical research in other languages.

Approach is usually used to refer to the theories about how language is learnt and used and serves as a model of language competence. It is based on the 'theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching' (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 20). For example, the communicative movement in language teaching was based on the assumption that language is a vehicle for expressing functional meaning. This meant that the communicative function of language was seen as more important than its grammatical or structural features. In teaching practice, this opened the door for new methods which involved different aspects of teaching a foreign language, such as new types of activities, a different syllabus design, new materials etc.

Harmer (2007) describes *method* as the practical realisation of an approach. It includes the types of activities typically used, roles of the teacher and learner, kinds of material and syllabus organisation. Methods are characterised by specific procedures and techniques. For example, *Total Physical Response* is a teaching method which attempts to teach a foreign language by connecting speech and physical movement. The typical classroom ac-

tivities involve a variety of drills in the form of commands directed at the learner by the teacher. The learners listen attentively and physically respond to them so the primary role of the learner is that of listener and performer. On the other hand, the teacher plays a central and active role, controlling the language exposure and modelling the language to be learnt. The main objective of this method is to develop listening and speaking skills so few materials are used (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

A *procedure* is an ordered sequence of techniques. For example, a typical procedure for introducing new vocabulary in the YLs' classroom is to show children flashcards with a set of vocabulary items, say the English words aloud and ask the children to repeat the new words a few times. Then, when the pupils recognize the new words, the teacher reads a story to them which contains the new vocabulary. A *technique*, on the other hand, is a single activity rather than a sequence. For example, 'shadowing', a listening and speaking activity which requires learners to 'shadow' or repeat after a listening text as quickly as they hear it, or 'miming', a technique commonly used in the young learners' classroom for vocabulary development and revision.

Harmer (2007, p. 79) illustrates the difference between the three terms using a cooking metaphor: 'The approach is our belief about cooking, the method is the recipe book, the procedures are actions such as mixing, chopping, cutting etc. And the techniques are how we mix and chop.'

Another term often used in the area of FLT is *teaching strategy* which broadly refers to the actions of a teacher designed to reach a particular goal or, quoting Mangal and Mangal (2019, p. 335) 'may stand for the plans, means and specific ways especially devised and employed by the teachers for guiding, directing and showing path to the learners for the realisation of the set of instructional or teaching-oriented objectives.'

For a long time, the area of FLT has been characterised by the quest for the one most effective method of teaching a second or foreign language. It was believed that when such a method was found, it could be used with all types of learners, regardless of their individual characteristics or cultural background. Researchers and practitioners are today largely aware of the limitations of a one-method approach and there is a strong tendency to combine different approaches and methods, taking into account what works best for specific types of learners.

In addition, Harmer (2007) points out that it is not always clear which approach embodies a particular method nor is it clear whether a proposed teaching method can be defined as such. For example, CLIL has been referred to with a variety of names, from approach and method to didactic concept

and even philosophy, while Mehisto et al. (2008) define CLIL as an umbrella term covering a dozen or more educational approaches. Given the increasing spread and complexity of CLIL, this educational concept will be discussed in a separate chapter (see Chapter 3).

Grammar-Translation Method

The grammar-translation method has its origins in the teaching of classical languages, mostly Latin and Greek. Its main purpose was to help students read classical literature rather than develop fluency in the spoken language. A typical classroom activity involved the explicit teaching of a grammar rule, a list of vocabulary items and example sentences, a reading section illustrating the grammatical rule and the selected vocabulary and a set of exercises to practice using the grammar and vocabulary. Another important feature of the grammar-translation method was that the classes were usually taught using the learners' first language. This approach was strongly criticised during World War II and later for focusing too much on formal accuracy in writing and completely disregarding language use in communication. Although there is today a wide consensus among linguists on the ineffectiveness of the original method for FLT purpose, the grammar-translation method is still used in many parts of the world (Nunan, 2015).

Re-Examining Translation for FLT Purposes

Several authors have argued in favour of re-examining the role of translation for FLT purposes (Cook, 2010). Bratož and Kocbek (2013) argue that translation can be used in the YLs' classroom to raise the children's awareness of the culturally-determined speech practices and norms and for focusing on cross-cultural differences between different cultures. For example, children may be asked to look for translation equivalents of festivals and celebrations (such as Mother's Day in the USA or Women's Day in Slovenia), mythological and legendary figures (e.g. discussing the translation of the Slovene expression *Dedek Mraz*), literary characters (e.g. translating the main character in the Slovene story *Muca Copatarica* into English), recipes and other culinary practices (e.g. translating measuring units, special ingredients, etc.) and others. These activities can also be used as a springboard for discussing cultural practices, such as talking about the role of *Muca Copatarica* (Eng. *The Slipper Cat*) in the Slovene children's literature and the practice of 'wearing slippers' in the Slovene culture. In a CLIL classroom (see Chapter 3), translation can effectively be used for discussing the differences between L1 and L2 terms in a certain subject. For example, in a lesson in which learners explore the characteristics of the water cycle in L2, they may be asked to translate the terms

‘evaporation, condensation, precipitation’ into their L1 and discuss the Latin origin of the terms.

Developing Plurilingual Competence

The role of translation has also been reconsidered with the introduction of the concepts of ‘mediation’ and ‘plurilingual competence’ in the *Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 103):

In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning, encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning, and passing on new information in an appropriate form.

As already emphasised in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (2001), mediation language activities (translation or interpretation, paraphrasing, summarising, etc.) help develop competences which will enable individuals to effectively communicate with each other also in situations in which direct communication is not possible. Mediation is closely related to plurilingual competence which involves the ability to make use of the whole repertoire of languages available to a learner (besides foreign or second languages, also the mother tongue and various dialects) in communication by, for instance, switching from one language to another, expressing oneself in one language and understanding a speaker speaking another.

The concepts of mediation and plurilingual competence have acquired a new significance with the realisation that children do not switch off their languages (and dialects) when they enter the foreign language classroom. Classroom activities which involve the learners’ linguistic repertoires promote plurilingual competence and cross-linguistic mediation and thus contribute to effective communication both in and outside the classroom. As McConnell Duff (1989, p. 6) points out, ‘translation happens everywhere, all the time, so why not in the classroom.’

The development of plurilingual competence involves, amid other things, the forming of positive attitudes and perceptions towards foreign/second languages and the related cultures. In developing the language education policy, the Council of Europe recognised the promotion of linguistic diver-

Classroom Insight: Tea Time

Following an activity from the textbook *Happy Street* pupils in the fourth grade were drilling the following verse, adding different food items (an apple, an orange, a cake, a pear, a banana, an ice-cream):

Do you want an apple?

An apple for your tea?

Or do you want an ice-cream?

An ice-cream, please!

Anja, their teacher, was glad to see that the activity was going well, the pupils were able

to repeat the dialogue and all the names of the fruit and they seemed to enjoy the activity. However, it occurred to her that they might not know what was meant by the word 'tea,' so she simply asked them to provide a translation in Slovene. It was clear that the majority of the children did not realize that in this particular context, 'tea' did not refer to 'drink' but to the English social custom of 'an afternoon snack.' A discussion followed in which the pupils tried to find an equivalent for 'tea' in Slovene.

sity among Europe's key goals and priorities. Several initiatives have tried to promote language diversity in Europe over the last two decades. They are today referred to with the common name 'pluralistic approaches to language teaching' (Bratož & Sila, 2022). The 'language awakening' approach, for example, promotes the appreciation of language diversity in the classroom. The main idea is to encourage learners to think about language as a system and in this way start appreciating the role of language diversity in their own lives and society as a whole (Darquennes, 2017). An example of a framework designed for developing plurilingual competence is the 'Language Train Model' developed by Bratož and Sila (2022). The model is based on a metaphor in which developing plurilingual competence is conceptualised as a journey. This is an important aspect as it provides the children with a conceptual framework which helps them visualise their learning path and thus build an awareness of diversity. As children travel through different countries by an imaginary train, they experience the languages and cultures they meet through multisensory perceptions (through movement, singing, artistic expression, etc.). The journey by train is made more realistic with the children actually going around the classroom following an improvised engine and using the puppet of a station master, thus enhancing the journey metaphor and the way pupils experience linguistic and cultural diversity.

On the language train journey, learners are exposed to various languages, with English as the lingua franca or global language. They are exposed to linguistic diversity in several ways, such as by listening and joining in the tune 'Frère Jacques' in the language of the country ('Mojster Jaka' in Slovenian, 'Bruder Jakob' in German, 'Fra Martino' in Italian, etc.). The tune thus works as a scaffold, both phonologically and semantically. In addition to linguistic

diversity, pupils are exposed to different cultures through activities focused on topics, such as food, music, dance, art, clothing, sports, storytelling, videos and photos, etc. They learn that certain cultural traits are shared around the world while others vary. For example, they develop the awareness that people around the world eat in different ways: eating traditional dishes, eating with different utensils (forks and knives in Europe, chopsticks in China, or hand eating in India), noisily consuming food (making slurping sounds when eating noodles in Western countries is considered rude, whereas in Japan it is a way of indicating that you are really enjoying them).

An important aspect of the model is that the linguistic and cultural traits are discovered together with children through various projects and activities. The selection of topics depends above all on the linguistic and cultural background of children in each group, as well as the wider community the children live in. All the activities in the proposed model are designed to foster pupil participation and interaction with the teacher who discusses new destinations by train with the pupils and designs new activities in other languages. This is an important aspect of the model as it gives the teacher the possibility to create a learning space which enables learner-initiated activities and discussions.

The Audiolingual Method

The audiolingual method, which emerged in the 1950s as a reaction to the grammar translation method, followed the behaviourist models of learning, using the stimulus-response-reinforcement pattern. It relied on the theory of language (structural linguistics) with a strong emphasis on grammatical patterns. A typical audio-lingual lesson begins with a dialogue which contains the grammar and vocabulary to be focused on in the lesson. The learners try to memorise the dialogue through drilling and repetition. This is followed by pattern drills, aimed at reinforcing the grammatical structure introduced in the dialogue. Great emphasis is placed on correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation. Finally, the procedure involves exercises in which learners are asked to transfer the new patterns to new situations (Nunan, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Besides plain repetition, some well-known drilling techniques are (Nunan, 1991):

1. *Replacement*: one word in an utterance is replaced by another.
Example: I like *my brother*. – I like *him*.
2. *Completion*: the learner completes the utterance with the appropriate word.

Example: This phone is not yours, it is ... – This phone is not yours, it is *mine*.

3. *Transformation*: transforming a statement into a question, a negative statement, etc.

Example: She likes potatoes.

Does she like potatoes?

She doesn't like potatoes.

Today, it is generally believed that audiolingualism failed on several fronts. First, it was clear that although attention was mainly directed at listening and speaking, learners were not allowed to use language freely since this would mean making errors and errors could become bad habits. And as learners were encouraged to avoid errors, they rarely used the language spontaneously, which means that there was very little meaningful communication involved. However, although the audiolingual approach was replaced by other methods in the 1970s and 1980s, several techniques which were developed in the audiolingual era, such as different types of drilling, have survived and are still popular today.

Communicative Drill

Since the downfall of the audiolingual approach, drilling and repetition have been frowned upon in language classes. However, in his talk at the IATEFL Conference in 2014, Harmer (2014) invited teachers to re-examine the role of drilling in the classroom by pointing out that even though drilling is teacher- rather than learner-centred, this is not necessarily a disadvantage since teachers are, after all, good language models. It is true that drilling is uncreative and conditioning, but language is essentially a habit. Children learn their first language by endlessly repeating after adults. In addition, especially for young learners, drilling is safe and learners feel confident when they know the right words.

Harmer (2014) gives two suggestions for making drilling an effective FLT technique. First, do not overuse it. Drilling should be deliberate, it should not take too much time and, most importantly, it should be problem-solving. In other words, if a teacher notices that the learners are struggling with a structure, she may decide to introduce a short drilling activity to deal with the problem. For example, owing to negative transfer, a typical mistake in preposition use made by Slovene learners is *'let's go with a car' or *'we went with a plane.' The teacher may decide to teach the learners a short clapping song with this structure:

Classroom Insight: Disappearing Dialogues

Although Mateja is not particularly keen on using drills in her teaching, she often uses communicative drills to focus on accuracy. One of the activities which the learners really enjoy is the 'disappearing dialogues' drill.

1. She shows a picture of two children to the pupils and elicits a dialogue taking place between them. Together with the children they come up with something like:

Boy: May I borrow your pencil?

Girl: Yes, of course. Here you are.

2. She then projects the dialogue on the screen (using a Powerpoint slide) and drills it with the students, encouraging learners to use different voices (e.g. talking silly, whispering, begging, shouting etc.) to make the repetition more exciting.
3. In the next slide, she starts omitting words in the dialogue, first just one word (e.g. pencil), then two (e.g. pencil and here), then whole phrases (e.g. your pencil) and until the whole dialogue disappears.

All this time, pupils have to try to recreate the dialogue and repeat it, trying to remember the missing words.

B: May I borrow your _____?

G: Yes, of course. _____ you are.

B: May I borrow _____?

G: Yes, of course. _____.

B: May I _____?

G: Yes, _____. Here _____

B: May _____?

G: Yes, _____.

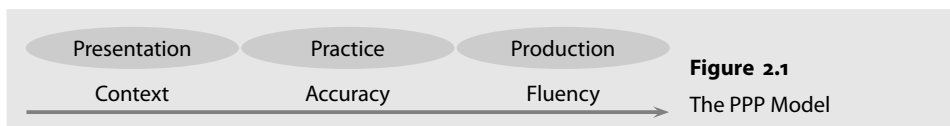
In a similar activity in higher grades, learners can then be asked to write down the dialogue (individually or in pairs) and then check if they have written everything correctly. The drilling activity is teacher-centred and structure-based but according to Mateja, the pupils usually thoroughly enjoy it. In addition, Mateja then encourages the learners to use the communicative pattern acquired in the activity in their pupil-pupil classroom communication.

Let's go by train,
let's go by plane,
let's go by car,
it's not that far.

Finally, Harmer (2014) points out that drilling does not have to be boring and tedious. There are several ways of making drilling more communicative and fun, such as using a variety of guessing games and drill-based interactive tasks.

The PPP Model

An off-shoot of the audiolingual method is the 'Presentation, Practice and Production' model or the PPP model as it is usually referred to, one of the most well-known language lesson procedures or teaching sequences in the history of ELT (Harmer, 2007; Skela & Dagarin Fojkar, 2009). The PPP lesson model (Figure 2.1 on p. 42) encompasses three phases (Richards & Rodgers, 2001): presentation (introduction of a new teaching item in context), practice



(controlled practice of the item) and production (a free practice phase). In a PPP lesson with YLs, for example, the teacher would first present the context in which the language is used (e.g. describing someone's favourite food) and demonstrate the meaning and form of the new language (e.g. I like/I don't like fish./Sam likes/doesn't like fish.). In the practice stage, the learners would practise making sentences with 'I like/I don't like' and 'she likes/she doesn't like' which is often done by using various drilling activities. Then is the production stage in which learners talk more freely (e.g. by asking each other about their favourite food). The PPP can also be used for teaching functions, vocabulary and even pronunciation.

In the last two decades, however, several authors have questioned the effectiveness of the PPP procedure, most notably its assumption that language teaching is most efficient if divided into well-ordered stages and the fact that it is more learning- than learner-centred. Several critics of PPP have proposed their own alternative models, such as for example the 'task-based learning' which is also organised in different stages (e.g. pre-task, task, planning, report, analysis, practice) and is based on the learners completing a central task. The language is not studied in advance but is analysed and practiced after the task is completed (Harmer, 1996).

Despite the criticisms, the PPP procedure is still widely used today in language teaching around the world. Its elements can be recognised in the grammar and vocabulary sections of modern course books (Harmer, 2007). There is a widespread consensus among authors in the field of FLT that PPP is just one of the many models which is best used in combination with other strategies and procedures. In this respect, Skela and Dagarin Fojkar (2009) point out that in choosing the best procedure and methodology, we should also consider the characteristics of ELT in a particular cultural and linguistic context. For example, learners in Slovenia are exposed to English to a great extent and generally more than to other foreign languages so there is a strong likelihood that they will come to the English classes with a considerable amount of knowledge acquired outside class.

The Communicative Approach

Born out of the inefficiencies and shortcomings of the grammar translation and the audio-lingual approaches but also the structural and behaviourist

approaches and methods of the time, the communicative approach changed the focus from the teaching of the foreign language as a system to teaching the language as communication (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). According to the fundamental principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), a language is best learnt by being used to communicate, in other words, learning an FL means acquiring different linguistic means to perform different communicative functions.

Some of the most distinctive features of CLT are (Harmer, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2001):

- the teaching goals should reflect the learners' proficiency and communicative needs,
- learners should have a desire to communicate something and a purpose for communicating (e.g. to express an opinion, to order a meal in a restaurant, to ask for information in a letter etc.),
- rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary, we should take into account the language functions and teach the learners to use appropriate language forms in different contexts and for different purposes,
- activities should involve learners in realistic situations where they are focused on the content of what they are saying rather than on the language form,
- the primary goal is fluency, not accuracy, and it is achieved through trial and error,
- the teacher's role is that of facilitator and monitor, while learners are seen as active participants in the learning process.

Learners can achieve communicative competences in an FL by engaging in meaningful communication, using authentic materials which reflect real life situations. While the range of activities used in CLT is endless, some of the more typical activities are: role-play and simulation, information gap activities, interviews and surveys, communicative games, discussions and debates, and several other activities which are focused on achieving communication. For example, an information gap activity emerges from the observation that in everyday lives people commonly communicate in order to get some information, such as asking somebody for a mobile phone number or directions to a post office. In information gap activities used in the classroom, we can recreate such realistic situations for learners so they will be able to exchange unknown information. In order to complete the task, they will have to draw on the grammar, vocabulary and communication strategies available to

them. Several information gap tasks can also be effectively used with YL, such as simple guessing games based on 'yes/no' questions or activities based on partially completed charts or grids. For example, when practicing family relationships, teachers may give one pupil a family tree chart with some information and the other pupil a chart with the rest of the data. The pupils then work together to make one, complete family tree by asking questions, such as 'Who is Leo's mum?' 'Who is Sarah's uncle?' etc.

CLT has been examined critically by several authors. One of the main criticisms is that by giving absolute priority to fluency, it does not give enough attention to form, resulting in learners' low accuracy level in communication. In addition, it has been criticised for favouring native-speaker instructors, expecting the teacher to be able to respond competently in the second language in a variety of situations which may come up in the classroom. Similarly, CLT proponents have typically disregarded the positive influence of the learners' L1, usually favouring English-only classes. The CLT methodology was supposed to work in different contexts worldwide, regardless of local varieties and contexts in which the teaching takes place. Bax (2003) also talks about a special 'CLT attitude' according to which there is only one right and proper way of learning an FL. Despite these drawbacks, however, CLT has had a huge influence on language teaching practice round the world and has developed in many directions since its emergence in the 1970s.

The approaches discussed in this chapter differ in a variety of aspects: the teaching focus, the importance of communication, how much attention they pay to pronunciation and grammar, which language skills are foregrounded, their attitude towards error correction and the way they conceptualise the relationship between teachers and learners (Table 2.2).

The Roles of the Teacher

Different teaching methods have implied different roles of the language teacher and different teacher-learner relationships. As Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 29) point out, these relationships may be either asymmetrical, as the relationship between a conductor and an orchestra member, a therapist and a patient, or a coach and a player, or based on more equal relationships, seeing teachers and learners as friends, colleagues or teammates. In line with the communicative perspective, the teacher's role is that of 'facilitator' rather than a source of knowledge. If the traditional role of the teacher was that of an expert whose main role was to transfer knowledge to the learners, the facilitators' role is to create an environment in which learners acquire knowledge by doing activities themselves. In a typical classroom example,

Table 2.2 Aspects of Different FLT Approaches

Aspects	Grammar – Translation Approach	Audiolingual Approach	Communicative Approach
Teaching focus	Accuracy, translation	Model language and pronunciation	Ability to communicate in an FL
Communication	Not important	Limited	Central
Pronunciation	Not considered	Central, native-like pronunciation	Comprehensible pronunciation
Grammar	Central, focus on grammar rules	Not analysed or explained	Explained when necessary
Language skills	Reading and writing	Listening and speaking	Integrated skills
Error correction	Focus on accuracy	Focus on accuracy	Focus on fluency, errors are part of the learning process
Teacher-student role	Teacher-centred instruction	Teacher-centred instruction	Learner-centred, teacher as facilitator

the learners are given a task to work on and the teacher acts as a helper or facilitator for them.

Harmer (2007) also points out that the teachers' roles in the classroom vary with respect to the type of activity. For instance, the teacher can act as an organiser, organising the learners to carry out various activities. This is reflected in the expression 'classroom management' which includes activities such as giving children instructions to do a task, putting them in pairs or groups, timing the activity, etc. When working on longer projects, teachers can act as tutors, working individually with learners and giving them directions and suggestions. Sometimes the teacher may act just as a resource, providing students with information they need, such as when they are making a poster in groups and they need the teacher to help them with some sentences or expressions.

From a traditional perspective, teachers were often seen as authorities whose job was to control the language learning process. While the teacher is today expected to play a more learner-centred role, Harmer (2007) argues that a teacher acting as a controller also makes sense in certain situations, such as in classroom-level discussions, drilling activities or when giving explanations. Moreover, in the YL's classroom, the teacher may be said to play several roles which differ from those performed by teachers in higher levels. Compared to older children, YLs are much more dependent on the teacher as they still lack efficient strategies and a language range necessary to carry out

tasks and negotiate meanings, but they also need considerable support from the teacher in carrying out tasks and activities (Bland, 2019; Enever, 2015). We may conclude that of all the possible roles played by a language teacher, that of language model and classroom manager are especially significant in the YL's classroom.

Reflection Point

Several metaphors may be used to describe what teachers do, some teachers feel they are like actors on a stage, some prefer the image of an orchestral conductor or even a gardener who plants the seeds of knowledge in learners (Harmer, 2007). How well do these metaphors capture the essence of being a teacher? Which metaphor would you use?

Learner-Centred Teaching

The question of the teacher's role is closely related to the constructivist idea of 'learner-centred' teaching, that is teaching which puts into the centre of the educational process the learners' needs and experiences. On a more practical level, Nunan (2013, p. 16) speaks of two opposing views to how a language should be taught. On the one hand, subject-centred teaching sees learning a language in terms of mastering a body of knowledge, while a learner-centred view sees language learning as a process of acquiring skills. In practice, both approaches are used, the difference is in the relative importance given to one or the other. In a learner-centred curriculum, the focus is on teachers assisting learners in gaining communicative and linguistic skills in order to carry out real-world tasks. In a learner-centred framework, 'the measure of a good lesson is the student activity taking place, not the performance of the teacher' (Harmer 2007, p. 56). However, learner-centredness can also be viewed from a different perspective, taking into account the type of activities and teaching objectives. Rather than speaking of two opposing options which exclude each other, Harmer (2007) suggests that the choice of using a more teacher-fronted or a learner-centred approach may depend on the type of activity the learners are involved in, the characteristics of the learners and the educational tradition. As we have argued in the discussion on teacher roles above, in the YLs' classroom, the teacher is an effective model of the target language and provider of additional support needed for carrying out tasks which may justify a more teacher-centred approach.

However, while there are important benefits in designing and carrying out single activities with YLs following a teacher-centred approach, it is also clear

that teacher-centred lessons are generally less efficient in developing learners' communicative competences.

Common European Framework of Reference

Communicative competence is also an important aspect of *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment* (CEFR) which was developed by the Council of Europe and published in book form in 2001. The CEFR has two main objectives: on the one hand to encourage reflection and innovation, and on the other, to provide a common framework for the description of levels of language competence, course planning, assessment and certification. We can say that it provides 'a common language' (Byram & Parmenter, 2012) for language educators across Europe to discuss different aspects of learning a foreign language, such as curriculum development, teacher training, the design of teaching and learning materials, assessment, certification and others.

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. [Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1]

The CEFR is also a reference framework that describes various proficiency levels in foreign language learning. It distinguishes six levels of foreign language proficiency: basic user (A1 and A2), independent language user (B1 and B2) and proficient language user (C1 and C2). The CEFR's scales are based on 'can do' descriptors to define the learner/user's proficiency at each level. For example, the global description of the A1 level reads:

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other per-

son talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. [Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24]

In what way is the CEFR important for teaching learners at the level of primary schooling? Sešek and Pižorn (2009) argue that the CEFR is a relevant framework also for teaching a foreign language to YLs although the element of learners' age is not specifically discussed. For example, the CEFR is used in developing materials and tests for primary school learners. In addition, it has been seen as the basis for the European Language Portfolio, which has been developed for different languages and different age groups. The portfolio is a document which provides learners with a structure in which they can record their language learning and cultural experiences both within and outside formal education. Finally, teachers can use CEFR-based assessments to determine whether learners are achieving the desired language proficiency levels through communicative activities.

In 2018, the CEFR was complemented by a *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2018) which provides new descriptors as well as a more detailed and up-to-date information on various aspects of language teaching and assessment. It addresses contemporary issues in language education, including digital literacy, multiculturalism, and mobility, and offers practical guidance for educators and institutions. It serves as a valuable resource for shaping language teaching policies and practices in Europe and beyond.

Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response or TPR is an approach to foreign language teaching which was developed by James Asher (1977, 1981) in the USA from the mid-1960s and is based on providing learners with plenty of comprehensible listening input related to actions. Language is introduced through the use of instructions or commands which learners respond to with movement. The initial instructions in beginner's classes are simple (for example: *stand up, sit down*, etc.) but are made more complex as the learners progress (for example: *walk to the window, pick up the book in the drawer*, etc.). TPR is based on the assumption that a target language is best acquired the way children naturally acquire their mother tongue, which always starts with comprehension rather than production. The focus is on language structures and formulas which are internalized through commands. This can be associated with the structuralist or grammar-based theory of language, while the type of drills and physical reactions involved can be related to behaviourism and the stimulus-response model of learning.

A number of benefits of using TPR with YLs have been pointed out (Bratož, 2015; Brewster et al., 2002; Davies and Pearse, 2000). First of all, the approach is based on the development of listening skills which is especially important at the pre-literacy level. And since the focus is on listening and developing extensive listening comprehension before production, there is no immediate pressure on the learners to speak. In time, some of the learners may take on the role of the teacher and give instructions for the other children to follow. Another advantage is that the new language is presented visually through movement, and it is placed in a context which the children can easily understand and relate to. In addition, the authors suggest that using action rhymes, songs and stories can also be regarded as a form of TPR. A number of efficient TPR songs are well-known in the YL's classrooms across the world, such as 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' or 'If You're Happy and You Know It.' Also telling stories, such as 'Little Red Riding Hood' or 'The Enormous Turnip' with the help of movement facilitates the understanding of the story and makes language learning an active process.

However, while TPR has been acknowledged as an approach which is particularly effective in initial stages of language learning and with beginners, it has also been pointed out that it is far less useful when moving on to more advanced levels and challenging contexts. On the other hand, we would like to argue that rather than understanding TPR as a self-sufficient approach to teaching a foreign language, it can be perceived as a useful tool, especially if combined with other effective teaching strategies.

Learning English through Movement

There are many benefits of using physical action and movement to facilitate the acquisition of an FL. Čok et al. (1999, p. 145) argue that when a child uses words to say something and movements to demonstrate it, the experience of movement enhances language acquisition. Physical play does not only facilitate cognitive, affective, and social development but also promotes positive self-esteem and positive attitudes towards language learning (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2009). In terms of language input, involving physical activity in language learning provides plenty of opportunities for rich and meaningful contexts in which language is used for real purposes. In addition, teaching an FL through bodily action is compatible with children's needs of being physically active, boosting their attention span and thus facilitating verbal, visual, and kinaesthetic learning (Čok et al. 1999; Videmšek et al., 2003).

In an FLT context, physical actions are commonly associated with playing games which involve physical movement. By including different kinds of

Classroom Insight: Warm-up Routine

Petra uses a number of routines in her English lessons with first graders. One of them is a routine physical activity at the beginning of every lesson. The pupils are in a circle and together with the teacher they do a series of movements following her commands based on a rhythmical sequence, for example when she says 'Clap up!', the pupils stretch their arms and clap their hands above their heads, when she says 'Clap down!', they bow and clap their hands near their feet, when she says 'Turn around!' they spin around, and so on. The learners are encouraged to join the teacher in giving commands so after a while they can take the role of the teacher. In her observations of the pupils' reactions, she realised that the children were really looking forward to this activity so she decided to add a new movement every week.

Every time, the pupils were eagerly waiting to see and learn the new movement and Petra sometimes surprised them by adding a 'funny' movement, like 'Pull your nose!' When she was sure they had picked up the command, she asked for volunteers to give commands instead of her.

She noticed several advantages of using this 'choreography' at the beginning of the lesson. First, since they started with English right away, the routine worked as a signal to switch to the English language. Secondly, as this was a routine, the children were always ready, they knew what they were supposed to do, so she did not need to spend time calming them down or giving instructions. Another advantage was that everybody liked to join in, even the shy pupils eventually joined the chorus.

physical games in FL instruction, we can create a number of opportunities for providing rich and meaningful input of language use as well as opportunities for spontaneous purpose-oriented communication and meaning negotiation in L2. A good example of a movement game which requires intensive meaning negotiation is Charades in which learners take turns physically acting out words or expressions and guessing.

Multiple Intelligences

The idea of *multiple Intelligences* (MI) is based on the work of the American psychologist Howard Gardner who developed the theory in 1980s. Gardner (2011) questioned the traditional IQ or intelligence tests which were primarily focused on measuring logic and language. He argued that there are different types of intelligences and that human beings differ in the strength of a particular intelligence and their combination. As an instructional approach, MI is learner-based in the sense that it emphasizes the differences between learners, their different learning styles, their preferences, and advocates instructional methods which take into account these differences (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Gardner's eight-dimensional model consists of eight types of intelligences and in practical terms offers a rich source of language-learning activities and

Table 2.3 Activities Catering for Different Intelligences

Type	Description	Classroom activities
Linguistic intelligence	The ability to use language in special and creative ways. People with a strong linguistic intelligence are sensitive to sounds, rhythm, and meanings of words.	Group discussions Word games Pupils' presentations Storytelling
Logical-mathematical intelligence	The ability to think rationally. People with a strong logical-mathematical intelligence are good at problem-solving, analysing, discovering patterns.	Puzzles Problem-solving tasks Looking for analogies Classifying Comparing
Spatial intelligence	The ability to form mental models of the world. People have a good perception of space, sense of orientation, and visual capacity.	Using charts, maps, diagrams Imaginative storytelling Painting and collage Optical illusions
Musical intelligence	A good ear for music. People with this intelligence are good at perceiving and producing sound elements, such as rhythm, pitch and melody.	Playing recorded music Using musical instruments Singing Jazz chants
Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence	Having a well-coordinated body which enables physical expression.	Role plays Hands-on activities Mime Drama
Interpersonal intelligence	The ability to be able to work well with people. People with a strong interpersonal intelligence are good at recognizing other people's moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions.	Working in teams Peer teaching Pair work Board games
Intrapersonal intelligence	The ability to understand oneself and apply one's talent successfully. People with a strong intrapersonal intelligence are focused inward, they understand their own feelings and are able to learn from experience.	Independent work Individualized projects Self-assessment Journal keeping
Naturalist intelligence	The ability to understand and organize the patterns of nature. Naturalist people are good at observing, understanding and organizing patterns in the natural environment and they enjoy in the natural world.	Semantic maps related to nature Classifying flora and fauna Field trips Observation of nature

ideas for lesson organisation. Table 2.3 shows the description of individual intelligences with examples of activities which cater for them (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

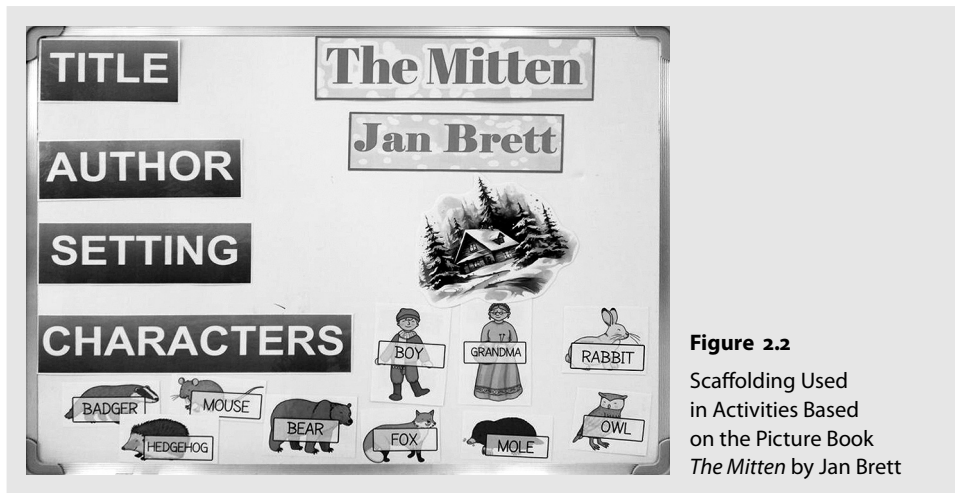


Figure 2.2
Scaffolding Used
in Activities Based
on the Picture Book
The Mitten by Jan Brett

The MI Approach has received remarkable attention since it was first proposed by Gardner. Both researchers and practitioners have especially warmed to the idea of seeing learners as unique and capable individuals who should be catered for using different channels of instruction. However, Franklin (2006) argues that the theory may be misleading for teachers who are led to believe that it is possible to teach in such a way as to take into account all the different intelligence types. In addition, categorising pupils according to a particular intelligence may lead to negative perceptions, for example, labelling kinaesthetic learners as 'low-ability' and logical-mathematical learners as 'high-ability'. While it is sensible for a teacher to be aware of the numerous advantages of using the MI approach, it is also important to understand the limitations of the theory.

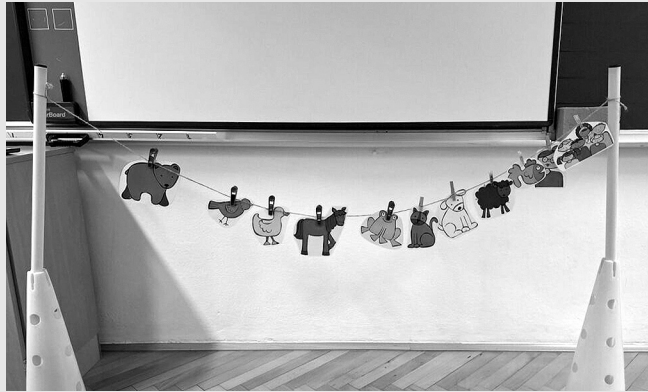
Story-Based Approach

There are several benefits of using stories in the foreign language classroom. From the language development perspective, they provide a natural context in which learners are exposed to rich and authentic L2 input which allows them to develop vocabulary and language patterns but also become aware of the rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of the language. Stories are characterised by predictable formats and repetitive patterns which give children the possibility to take part in the telling of the story or recreate parts of it.

From a socio-affective perspective, a good reason for using stories for FLT purposes is in the fact that children generally love stories. As they become

Figure 2.3

Story-Telling and Acting out the Story 'Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See?'



involved in the story, they identify with the characters which helps them interpret and make sense of the narrative but also develop their own creativity and imaginative power. In addition, stories develop children's cognitive abilities. In classroom activities with stories, children are often encouraged to guess the meaning of unknown words, predict and hypothesise the events in the story, which helps them develop important learning strategies and higher-order thinking skills. Stories also provide opportunities for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparison (Brewster et al. 2002; Mourão, 2009).

Like other approaches, the story-based approach may follow a characteristic procedure (Li & Seedhouse, 2010):

- the *pre-story stage* involves various warm-up activities (pre-teaching key vocabulary, drawing the children's attention to the topic with puppets or activating learners' background knowledge through questions),
- the *in-story stage* in which the teacher uses different reading techniques to make sure the pupils understand and enjoy the story,
- the *post-story stage* in which the teacher uses a number of different follow-up activities to develop creativity and reinforce language learning (such as playing games, recreating the story, using TPR, etc.).

There is a great selection of stories and story books available to teachers for use in the YLs' classroom. However, choosing the appropriate book for a particular class or group of pupils can be fairly challenging. Teachers should pay special attention to the choice of content as pupils have to be able to identify with the topic covered by the story, it should trigger their interest,

Classroom Insight: Drama with 2nd Graders

Manca often uses the story-based approach in her teaching in the second grade. She plans the activities and the stages of the lessons very carefully before she introduces the story. She works on each story for a few lessons. In the pre-listening stage, she introduces some of the necessary vocabulary for students to understand the story, mostly with the help of visuals and miming. In the while-listening stage, she tells or reads the story to the students, while they are sitting on the floor in a circle. They especially like it when she imitates the characters from the story (e.g. when she becomes Winnie the Witch with a hat, a broom and a toy cat). Afterwards, she rereads the story with the help of the students, focusing on the pictures

and repetitive phrases in the story. In the post-listening stage, she works on the story comprehension tasks using a variety of activities. In one of the activities, for example, she 'accidentally' drops story picture cards on the floor and the pupils have to help her put the cards in the correct order of the story. In this stage, she also works on the language of the story and new vocabulary by using activities, such as quizzes or TPR games. If the story is appropriate for drama, they act it out, sometimes also for the parents. In observing pupils' communication in class, Manca noticed that they frequently use whole phrases from the stories, which has encouraged her to use the story-based approach on a regular basis.

imagination and curiosity. Another important criterion in selecting the story is the language level. While it is not necessary for pupils to understand every word in the story, they should be able to follow the storyline. We also need to make sure that the pupils understand the critical vocabulary. For example, in the picture book *The Selfish Crocodile* by Faustin Charles, understanding the word 'selfish' is critical for following the story so the teacher should consider pre-teaching it as critical vocabulary in the pre-story stage. It is also useful if the stories contain a variety of repetitive language patterns which are easily picked up by the pupils (Pinto, 2012; Mourão, 2009).

According to Cameron (2001, p. 159), stories reflect a holistic approach to language teaching and learning as they 'offer a whole imaginary world, created by language that children can enter and enjoy, learning language as they go.' Read (2008b) also proposes using an integrated approach which combines storytelling and drama techniques. The proposed approach works as a scaffold for pupils' language development, as in acting out and re-telling the story through drama, they will be able to explore the issues raised in the story and in this way transfer the language used to their own personal worlds.

Task-Based Learning

In *task-based learning* (TBL) students are presented with a non-linguistic task they have to carry out or a problem they have to solve. TBL has three basic stages:

- the *pre-task stage* in which the new language is introduced and explained,
- the *task stage* where the pupils perform the task in pairs or small groups and prepare a report to the class,
- the *language focus stage* in which the learners study and practice the linguistic elements included in the task.

Rather than focusing on selected language forms, the emphasis is on language use for authentic, real-world purposes where fluency is more important than accuracy. On the other hand, TBL is an attempt to improve the communicative approach in the sense that attention is paid also to language, first by focusing on the language required for the task to be completed in the pre-task part and then attending to language in the final stage for example by finding and classifying common words and phrases (Willis, 1996). The teacher's role is to encourage and support the learners by providing the language they need to carry out the task. 'A guiding principle in this approach is that pupils are more likely to remember the language they have decided they need rather than the language the teachers has decided they need.' (Brewster et al., 2002, p. 46). Several types of tasks can be carried out in this way, for example, preparing an information booklet with illustrations, carrying out surveys, acting out or recording a story and many others (Brewster et al., 2002). The tasks may involve activities, such as listing, categorising, comparing, finding differences and similarities, solving problems (Willis & Willis, 2007).

Some authors have expressed their doubt whether TBL can be applied to YLs' levels but we would like to argue that several activities can be modified to suit YLs. For example, tasks in which pupils have to carry out surveys in their classrooms in order to find out the opinion of their schoolmates on a certain topic (e.g. their favourite toy, food, colour etc.) can easily be adapted for different levels.

Reflection Point

1. Which of the approaches and methods discussed above has predominated in your own experience as a learner?
2. Watch how Herbert Puchta (QR code) engages a group of very young learners by using an action story and identify the elements of the TPR approach.
3. Discuss the TPR, MI, story-based and task-based approaches considering the following aspects: teaching focus, communication, pronunciation, grammar, language skills, error correction, and teacher-student role.
4. Analyse different lessons or lesson plans and discuss which approaches are used.



Classroom Insight: Crazy Pizza

Teja decided to carry out a task-based activity with fourth graders related to the topic 'food.' In the pre-task stage, she explained the task which was to prepare a new type of pizza for a pizza restaurant to include on their menu. An important part of the task was also to give the pizza an attractive name. Before the task itself, the teacher and the children discussed the words for different ingredients usually put on a pizza and the names of pizzas the children were familiar with.

In the main part of the activity, pupils were working in groups of three drawing their pizzas on a poster and writing down the names of ingredients. They also had to come up with an interesting name. During this time, Teja helped them with the words of ingredients they needed for their pizza. A time limit was set for the learners to finish this part and then they had 15 minutes to prepare the presentation of the pizza. Again, the teacher was available for support with presentation language.

She encouraged the use of the structures 'On our pizza, we have ...' and 'The name of our pizza is ...'

In the follow-up activity, after each group presented their pizza, the teacher wrote the names of the pizzas on the whiteboard (children came up with expressions such as Crazy Pizza, Rocket Pizza, Pizza Big bang and so on). In addition, they classified the pizzas into two categories, 'healthy' or 'unhealthy' which provoked a lively discussion. Reflecting on the lesson, Teja commented that she had rarely seen the children so engrossed in an activity. When they were preparing their pizzas, they kept looking for her to ask for the words they needed for their task. There was a lot of noise in the classroom, some groups had heated arguments about the names of their pizzas, some asked the teacher for translations into English, for example, they asked how 'štirje letni časi' ('the four seasons') would be translated in English.

Key Takeaways

- The communicative approach has significantly changed the language teaching theory and practice by introducing the concept of communicative competence and meaningful communication.
- The teacher may play different roles in the language classroom, from classroom manager or organiser to tutor and facilitator.
- The one-method approach to teaching an FL is today seen as ineffective, combining different approaches for different learner types is preferred.
- Some approaches, such as TPR and the story-based approach, are particularly effective with YLLs.

Further Reading

- Brewster, J., Ellis, G., & Girard, D. (2002). *The primary English teacher's guide*. Pearson Education.
- Garton, S., & Copland, F. (Eds.). (2019). *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners*. Routledge.
- Valente, D., & Xerri, D. (Eds.). (2023). *Innovative practices in early English language education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Content and Language Integrated Learning

Chapter Objectives

- Identifying the term and characteristics/principles of CLIL
- Understanding the main elements of CLIL
- Interpreting effective CLIL methodologies in the classroom with YL
- Identifying the stages of planning a CLIL lesson

One of the most innovative approaches in FL teaching developed in the past decades is *Content and Language Integrated Learning*, known by the acronym CLIL. It involves learning a content (or curricular subject), such as mathematics, sport, music, or fine arts through a foreign language. It also means learning a foreign language by studying a content-based subject (Coyle et al., 2010). According to Dalton-Puffer and Bauer-Marschallinger (2019, p. 1):

The primary motivation for using CLIL is the desire to improve language skills by broadening the scope of traditional foreign language teaching, while at the same time achieving the same level of specialist knowledge as would be attained if the lesson were taught in the students' first language.

In the European educational context, CLIL has been established as an umbrella term for teaching settings in which an FL is used as a medium of instruction. The acronym was introduced by David Marsh in 1994 who then referred to CLIL as situations where content or curricular subjects, or parts of subjects (some topics or themes), are taught through an FL with dual-focused simultaneous aims: learning of content and of a foreign language. CLIL brings several benefits to language teaching and learning. It encourages holistic learning, stimulates student's cognitive potentials (higher taxonomic levels), encourages critical and creative thinking, discussion, as well as professional literacy (Kampen et al., 2016; Mehisto, 2012; Brumen et al., 2015). In addition, CLIL contributes to intercultural understanding and language awareness, provides a student-centred instruction, and boosts learners' independence (Griva & Chostelidou, 2017; Kashiwagi & Tomecsek, 2015). It also provides additional teaching of 'foreign languages without increasing the overall instruction time or taking away lessons from other curriculum subjects' (Eurydice, 2017, p. 14).

CLIL has been linked to bilingual educational programmes, especially *immersion* forms of education which were designed in Canada in the 1960s in order to enhance the acquisition of French as the second national language. However, the Canadian context differs from the European one in one essential point: in Canada, English is the dominant national language and French is the second, also national language, while in Europe, CLIL has emerged as an approach in teaching foreign languages which the learners encounter mainly at school. So, while in the Canadian context, the language immersion classroom content can be related as much to the learners' everyday life and culture as to their school subjects, in CLIL, the non-linguistic focus is primarily on the content of subjects, such as mathematics, science, or music (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010). Coyle (2011) argues that CLIL is not meant to replace language lessons but rather to provide different contexts in which a foreign language could be used for learning and communicative purposes. A study conducted by Várkuti (2010) indicates that CLIL students have significantly better skills in applying their broader lexical knowledge in various context-embedded conversational situations, as well as in taking into account grammar rules, text coherence, and sociolinguistic context.

The CLIL approach is known under various names (Kampen et al., 2016), such as *cognitive academic language learning (CALL)*, *content-based language teaching (CBLT)*, *bilingual education*, and others. The extent to which CLIL is included in a particular learning situation varies as the FL objectives may be either more content or more language oriented (Ellison, 2019). Several authors (Ball et al., 2015; Dalton-Puffer, 2010; Lipavac Oštir & Lipovec, 2018) also distinguish between 'hard' and 'soft' CLIL. In hard CLIL, the focus is primarily on developing knowledge and skills related to a particular subject content (such as science or mathematics), while in 'soft' CLIL, the content is subordinate to language objectives. Coyle (2005) points out that it is content which determines what will be taught, not language. In other words, CLIL is not about learning different aspects of a language but rather using the new language to talk about a specific content. What is important at this point is that the language used has to be understandable and accessible so that learning can take place.

The Elements of CLIL

An important aspect of CLIL in the primary education context is that it promotes holistic and interdisciplinary learning (Ellison, 2019), which is in line with the principles of an integrated curriculum. This characteristic of CLIL is realized through the 4Cs model which consists of four elements: *content*, *cog-*

Classroom Insight: Your Favourite Free Time Activity

Lina is keen on identifying topics from non-linguistic subjects which are good candidates for CLIL lessons. One of such topics is data management which is usually covered in mathematics in the fifth grade (10-year-old pupils). The subject objective is for the pupils to be able to analyse different kinds of data and use the appropriate ways of presenting it (e.g. pictographs, pie charts, tally graphs, bar graphs or line graphs). The language objectives are for the pupils to be able to take part in a survey in English, follow the teacher's instructions and presentation of different graphs, carry out their own survey and present the results in English. The activities usually take two or three lessons.

First Lesson

1. In the first lesson, the teacher carries out a survey at class level. The main survey question is 'What's your favourite way of spending free time?' She presents the pupils with a list of activities (watching TV, doing sports, reading books, playing computer games, playing board games, etc.) scaffolded by pictures on the board in the form of a table.
2. The students close their eyes and raise their hand when they hear their favourite activity. She records their votes in the table on the board. Then she uses a series

of questions to go over the results, for example 'Which is the most preferred way of spending free time in this class?, Which is the least preferred way?', etc. When this part is over, she discusses the different ways of presenting information with the students, together they compare the presentation of the results in a table, pictograph, pie chart, bar graph. They also discuss why a line graph is not appropriate in this case.

3. The pupils choose a way to present the results and draw it. They write a short presentation of the results. The teacher guides them with useful chunks: 'We carried out a survey on ...', 'The results show that ...', 'As we can see, the favourite way is ...'

Second/Third Lesson

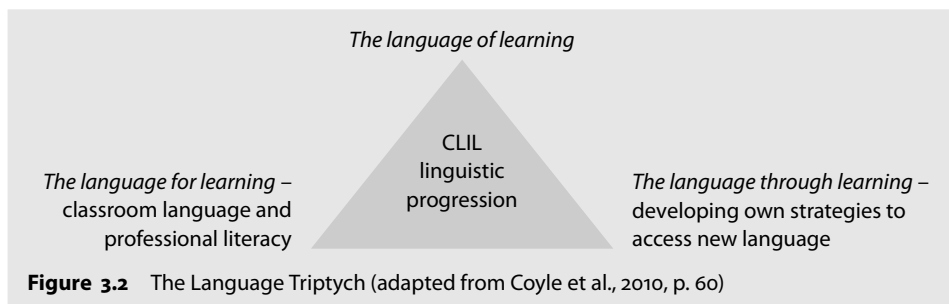
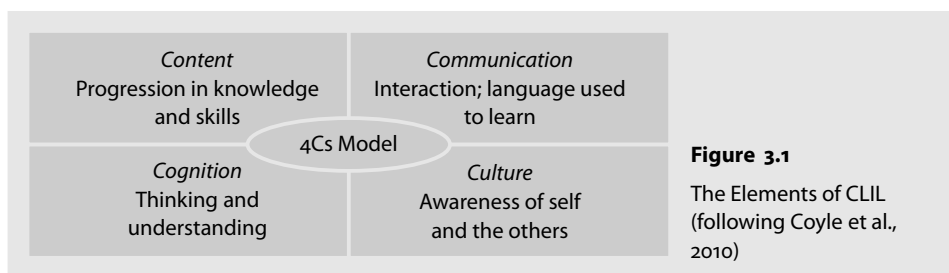
Pupils carry out a project in groups of four:

1. they decide on a survey question (e.g. their preferred outdoor/indoor activity, their preferred activity when hanging out with friends, the preferred way of spending their winter holidays, etc.),
2. carry out the survey in class,
3. analyse the data and decide how to present the results,
4. write a report and present the results in class.

niton, communication and culture (Figure 3.1). Coyle et al. (2010) emphasize that a successful CLIL lesson should combine the integrated elements of all 4Cs. The principal aim is to integrate content learning (content and cognition) and language learning (communication and culture). The 4Cs framework reflects the interrelationship between content (progression in knowledge, skills), communication (interaction, language used to learn), cognition (thinking and understanding) and culture (awareness of self and the others).

Content (through the FL)

Content refers to progression in knowledge, skills and understanding of a selected subject area. For example, from the mathematics topic 'time,' the aim



could be to calculate and convert units of time. This can be done through a variety of communicative and creative tasks in which pupils develop the skills for calculating and describing time. The content determines the language that will be used, so the focus will be on time vocabulary (*year, month, week, day, hour, second*) and useful structures (*A minute has 60 seconds*). Several studies indicate that CLIL students reach their learning targets in the content lessons just as well as those learning the same curriculum material in their L1 (Tedick & Wesely, 2015; Verdev et al., 2023).

Communication

The emphasis is on developing language skills and using language as a tool for communication while learning content from various subjects. Coyle et al. (2010) proposed the idea of ‘the language triptych’ as a framework for the analysis of language used in a CLIL lesson. The language triptych is composed of three types of language: the language *of* learning, language *for* learning and the language *through* learning (Figure 3.2).

The *language of learning* refers to the language needed to access concepts and skills in an area of knowledge. This does not only involve the key vocabulary related to the topic at hand but also the grammatical patterns and language skills (e.g. explaining, describing, etc.) needed by the learners in the learning process. For example, in a lesson on ‘geometric shapes,’ the lan-

guage of learning might involve the names and parts of the shapes (triangle, square, circle, angle, side, etc.), but also language necessary for describing them ('It has ...') or comparing them.

The *language for learning* is important for the learners to be able to function in a learning environment in which the medium of communication is a foreign language. This involves both classroom language (vocabulary, phrases, sentence forms used in typical classroom interactions) and the language needed by the learners to carry out the activities planned (working in groups, expressing arguments, writing reports, etc.). For example, in group work, phrases used for expressing one's opinion might include *I believe*, *I agree*, *Yes*, *but*.

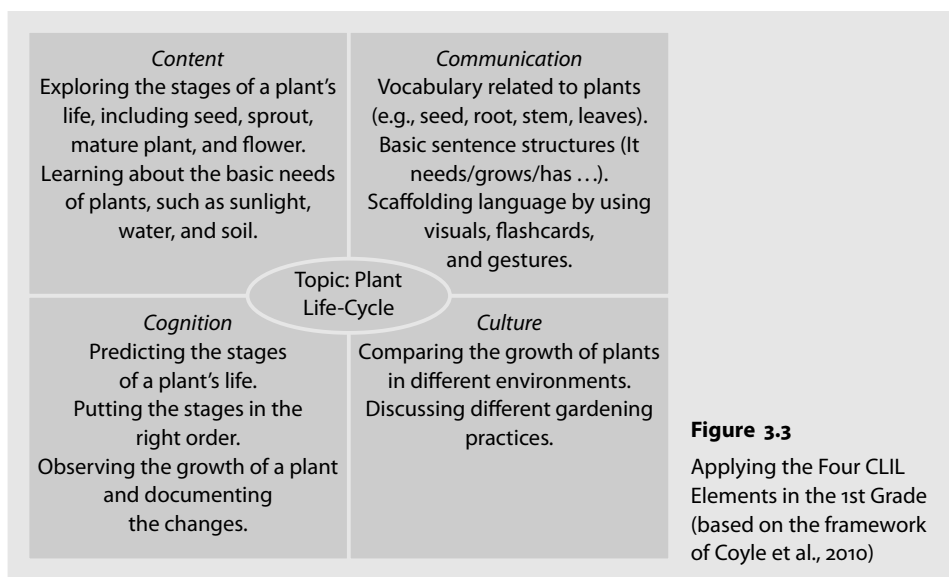
The *language through learning* is the language which emerges in the process of learning and is usually not planned by the teacher. The CLIL classroom offers a number of opportunities for learners to require and acquire new concepts and skills, necessary to carry out tasks. This is especially clear in project work and problem-solving activities in which learners create new meanings and express their own creative ideas. In such situations, learners develop strategies to access the new language for themselves (using dictionary skills, searching for and presenting new information, etc.).

Cognition

Cognition refers to the use of an FL for developing all levels of thinking (abstract and concrete), especially higher order cognitive processing necessary for understanding curriculum concepts. It encompasses the cognitive processes involved in understanding and working with content from various subjects while using an FL as the medium of instruction. It may involve several mental processes, such as conceptual understanding, critical thinking, problem-solving, and others. For example, in a CLIL science lesson on the topic of photosynthesis, pupils need to cognitively process and integrate information from various sources, such as videos or diagrams in an FL. They must understand the key steps of the process, the role of different plant parts, and the factors affecting photosynthesis. Cognition here includes their ability to synthesize and comprehend complex scientific ideas.

Culture

Culture in CLIL involves developing pupils' cultural awareness and sensitivity towards alternative perspectives, different backgrounds and experiences of others, particularly in a multicultural or multilingual learning environment. It comprises recognizing and respecting the diversity of students in the class-



room, including their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. By incorporating cultural elements into CLIL lessons, teachers develop pupils' ability to communicate effectively in a culturally diverse world and deepen their understanding of both language and content in a meaningful context. Griva and Chostelidou (2017) argue that CLIL students show a higher level of cultural awareness, and consequently, openness to other cultures, and a higher capacity for critical thinking.

Figure 3.3 presents an example of how the framework of the 4Cs developed by Coyle et al. (2010) may be applied to a lesson with YLs.

Teachers and YLs in CLIL Classes

Teaching in CLIL classes places high demands and expectations on teachers. They need to master the subject curriculum area and be proficient in an FL, including the relevant subject terminology. According to the Eurydice Report (2017, p. 14), in '15 education systems, teachers are required to have additional qualifications to teach in CLIL type of provision. In most cases, a particular language proficiency level is required – usually B2 or C1 levels of the CEFR (2011)'. In addition, teaching a curriculum subject through an FL requires the teacher to have special teaching competences. This may mean that teachers need to step out of their teaching comfort zones, characteristic of FLT contexts, and try new approaches based on the integrated curriculum (Skela

Table 3.1 Attributes of Teachers and Students in CLIL Teaching

Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a high level of proficiency in both the target language (the language of instruction) and the content language • Show a deep understanding of the subject matter • Are mentors, supervisors • Are open to exploring and teaching cultural elements • Use a variety of scaffolding strategies • Explain subject contents by using demonstration, gestures, visual aids • Include higher level cognitive skills in their teaching
Primary FL learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participate in activities and discussions • Acquire authentic experience by experiential learning (e.g. forming hypotheses, checking them out, drawing conclusions) • Engage in cooperative learning and work together to understand content and complete tasks • Use higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and problem-solving • Are independent learners as they research on their own • Can switch between languages and adapt to different teaching contexts

& Sešek, 2012). According to Coyle et al. (2010, p. 1). 'CLIL is content-driven, and this is where it both extends the experience of learning a language, and where it becomes different to existing language-teaching approaches.'

As is typical for student-centred teaching, in the CLIL classroom the focus of instruction is shifted from the teacher to the student and puts the teacher in the background. The teacher is no longer a transmitter of knowledge or the only source of information about a topic but, above all, a mentor, supervisor and creator of effective learning spaces. Such a division of roles stimulates students' development and contributes to their success. Pupils are thus active participants in the learning process, who take responsibility for their knowledge. They gain new understandings and comprehension through their own mental effort by giving meaningful interpretation to the given data and being aware of problem-solving as a basic learning technique (Skela, 2008). As emphasized by Coonan (2007), by dealing with content in a foreign language, learners are faced with an extra cognitive burden which affects the way they learn. This can be a positive experience for them, especially if the teacher helps them overcome the communicative and cognitive challenges. The key attributes of CLIL teachers and pupils are laid out in Table 3.1.

CLIL may be taught by different types of teachers who need to be both 'content- and language-sensitive' (Ellison, 2019). Elementary teachers are

Table 3.2 Example of a CLIL Lesson Plan

Lesson plan	Subject	Science (Solar System)
	Level	4th Grade (9/10-year-old pupils)
	Lesson objective	By the end of the lessons, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and name the eight planets in the solar system in English, • present a description of the key characteristics of each planet in English, • use appropriate English vocabulary and structures related to the solar system, • write a simple description of a planet in English.
	Duration	Two 45-minute lessons
	Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual aids (pictures or illustrations of the solar system) • Flash cards with pictures of planets and simple descriptions • Large drawing paper, coloured pencils, markers
Lesson 1	Warm-up (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils if they know how many planets there are in our solar system. Draw a solar system on the board and elicit the names of planets from them, translating the names into English as you go along. • Tell them they will work in groups and that each group will explore one of the planets.
	Presentation and language practice (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the solar system using visual aids (a poster or model). • Practice the names of the planets using a flashcard game. • Show and describe each planet separately and encourage the pupils to guess their names. • Practice language by playing a guessing game at class level, using a simple description for each planet 'I'm the second smallest planet in the solar system. I'm also called the Red Planet. Who am I?'
	Group work (30 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the eight planets. • Tell students to work together to create a poster of their assigned planet. Instruct them to create a drawing of the planet and draw the members of their group on it. Besides the drawing, they should write a description in English, including its name (for example, Mercury), order from the sun ('I'm the closest to the Sun.'), the number of moons ('I haven't got a moon.') and an interesting fact ('I'm the smallest planet of the Solar System.'). • Encourage pupils to search for information on their planet in various sources (both online and printed).

Continued on the following page

generalist in nature which means that while they are well familiar with the subject content, they also need to have a high level of functional FL proficiency. Conversely, specialist language teachers, who are already highly proficient in the target language, need to acquire an in-depth understanding of

Table 3.2 *Continued from the previous page*

Lesson 2	Group pres. (15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have each group present their planet to the class. As a class, discuss each planet's unique features and put the posters in the order they appear in terms of their distance from the Sun.
	Language practice and revision (20 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils play a quiz in groups revising their knowledge of the Solar System, using the same structure as in the guessing game with the teacher ('I'm the second smallest planet in the solar system. I'm also called the Red Planet. Who am I?') Watch a video for children which gives simple descriptions of the planets. Ask pupils which planet they would like to live on. Pupils now play the guessing game on their own, each getting one flashcard with a planet and a description and going around class guessing each other's planets.
	Evaluation and feedback (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give students feedback on their posters and presentations. Ask pupils to complete a self-assessment task based on a set of 'can do' statements (I can name all the 8 planets of the Solar System in English., I can describe Mars., I can tell which is the largest planet in the Solar System., etc.)

the subject content. Ellison (2019, p. 252) summarizes the necessary qualities of primary CLIL teachers by stressing that they 'need a good understanding of the theories of child development, how children acquire languages and the objectives of curricular areas.'

CLIL Lesson Planning

CLIL lesson planning differs from more traditional lesson planning in several key ways. An important task of the CLIL teacher is to plan the integration of content and language and look for ways to immerse pupils in contextual and experiential learning by providing hands-on activities, group work, projects and other activities which encourage active learners' participation. Like other more language focused lesson plans, also CLIL lesson plans can take several formats. Table 3.2 shows an example of a lesson plan in which the CLIL approach is used with third-grade pupils on the science topic 'Solar Systems.'

For a CLIL teacher at primary level it is important to consider the following key aspects of CLIL lesson planning and active involvement of YLs in the activities: subject content and learning objectives, language objectives, teaching techniques, ways of encouraging the development of higher-order thinking skills, and assessment (Table 3.3).

The CLIL learning environment differs from mainstream teaching in several ways. An important difference is in the fact that in order to be able to

Table 3.3 Aspects of Planning a CLIL Lesson

Subject content and learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some good subject topics for CLIL lessons? (some topics are more appropriate for CLIL instruction as they provide opportunities for YLs to develop both content and language skills) • What will YLs know or be able to do by the end of the lesson? What are the learning outcomes of the lesson?
Language objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specialized vocabulary and structures do YLs need to learn? Which do they already know and can be recycled? • What language do YLs need to know in order to be able to take part in classroom activities and complete tasks? • What strategies will we use for scaffolding classroom talk?
Teaching techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we ensure that the language input is comprehensible (for example, by using the same language structures repeatedly and in different contexts or demonstrating the instructions)? • What scaffolding techniques will we use (pre-teaching vocabulary, role playing, guessing from context, etc.)? • What kind of activities can we use (interactive and engaging activities allow students to actively participate and interact with the content and provide opportunities for language use and content exploration)? • How will feedback be provided?
Encouraging higher-order thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of questions can we ask? (display questions are used for eliciting pupils' prior knowledge and checking understanding, while referential questions encourage them to give opinions, clarify a point or predict content) • What kind of problem-solving activities can we include in the primary classroom? (hands-on science experiments, critical thinking stories, collaborative projects, simulations, etc.) • How can we foster creative and critical thinking at primary level (for example, in a lesson on animal habitats, pupils may be asked to analyze information and make informed decisions about which animal belongs to a specific habitat)?
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we assess YLs learning in CLIL classes? • Do we assess only language or only content or both? • What assessment methods can we use? (besides traditional tests, other methods can be used, such as project-based assessments, presentations, or written reports)

carry out a CLIL lesson efficiently, CLIL learners need a lot of extra support from the teacher in the form of various scaffolding strategies, such as visual support, movement, extra explanations and other supports. Another scaffolding strategy often discussed in CLIL teaching is translation. While its role in CLIL instruction has been questioned, Canepari (2020) points out that the use of translation is in synergy with CLIL methodology, especially since it contributes to the development of various disciplinary and communicative skills.

Drawing on the concept of *zone of proximal development* developed by Vygotsky (see Chapter 2), Mercer (2008) proposed a new model, the *intermental development zone (IDZ)*, in which the teacher and learner create a shared zone and negotiate to complete a task. Mercer's model sees learning as a dynamic process and shows how communication in the classroom can contribute to learning and conceptual development (p. 38):

For a teacher to teach and a learner to learn, talk and joint activity must be used to create a shared communicative space, the IDZ, constructed from the resources of their common knowledge and shared purposes. In this intermental zone, which is reconstituted constantly as the dialogue continues, the teacher and learner(s) negotiate their way through the activity in which they are involved.

In addition, (Jäppinen, 2005) stresses that CLIL teaching involves several socio-culture-specific factors which are related to the fact that by learning an FL, the learners are exposed to different cultures and societies.

Challenges of CLIL

There are several challenges facing the future development of CLIL. Coyle (2011) argues that CLIL is a complex phenomenon which can be connected with different contexts and ways of implementation. While numerous positive effects of CLIL have been reported, several authors point out that there are still issues which need to be discussed before CLIL is successfully implemented.

An important concern related to the use of CLIL with YLs is reflected in the question whether it is appropriate to introduce CLIL at the lower primary level while YLs are still struggling to understand the key subject concepts in their L1 (Ellison, 2019). To understand this, it is useful to look at Cummins' (2008) concept of CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) and BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills), a framework that describes two distinct dimensions of language proficiency. BICS involves the ability to engage in everyday conversations, both social interactions and informal communication. CALP, on the other hand, represents the cognitive academic language skills necessary for understanding and expressing complex ideas, abstract concepts, and curricular content. At the YLs' level, CALP skills may include the ability to understand and use specialized vocabulary, analyze and synthesize information, or participate in classroom discussions related to a particular subject content. We may conclude that while it is important to de-

velop both BICS and CALP for pupils' overall language and academic success, at the YLs' level this needs to be done gradually and systematically, using effective scaffolding strategies and age-appropriate support.

Another complex issue is related to assessment. The key question here is: What do we assess in CLIL? Do we assess language, content or both? Considering the dual focus of CLIL, the assessment should cover both language and non-language competences. However, the problem with YLs is that owing to their limited language proficiency, they are often not able to express themselves effectively.

As Ellison (2019) points out, the reason for an incomplete or inaccurate response may be poor language proficiency, insufficient content knowledge, or poor understanding of the task. In dealing with the complexity of YLs' assessment in CLIL settings, it is prerogative to consider the learning objectives and appropriate assessment methods (p. 257):

It would be unfair, for example, to assess children's knowledge of the water cycle in L1 if they had been introduced to it in English. Methods of assessment therefore, should mirror classroom practices, i.e. the typical tasks and activities planned by the teacher in order to reach the desired learning outcomes.

In assessing YLs in CLIL classes, it is also useful to consider formative assessment as an alternative to summative evaluation. Several methods can be used to gather ongoing information about pupils' learning progress, such as observation, project work, teacher-student conferences, self- and peer-assessment, language games and quizzes, etc.

Another issue is related to teacher training (Lipavic Oštir et al., 2015). Teachers are often not sure how they are supposed to integrate language and content, especially in situations in which the subject and language teacher are not the same person. Since CLIL is a relatively new approach in FL teaching, some teachers also report that additional time and effort is required to prepare the relevant CLIL materials. There are still relatively few textbooks or other CLIL material on the market which CLIL teachers could use as support. So it is largely up to the teachers to decide which content areas and type of materials are more suitable for CLIL-based classroom work. In addition, subject teachers report feeling insecure about their fluency and general FL level and voice their need for further language and pronunciation training, whereas language teachers call for greater training on the subject matter and CLIL methodology (Pérez Cañado, 2016). At the same time, studies (Kampen

et al., 2016; Coonan, 2007) also suggest that teachers consider CLIL lessons as an ideal environment for pedagogical innovation and believe that it fosters greater teacher awareness of student learning.

Reflection Point

1. Discuss which non-linguistic subjects and contents are good candidates for CLIL lessons. Are there ideal curriculum subjects for CLIL lessons with YLs?
2. Discuss the CLIL teacher profile by identifying his/her key competences and focusing on the teacher's possible concerns.
3. Which steps of CLIL lesson planning do you find the most challenging?
4. Watch a video (up to minute 7) in which several examples of CLIL lessons are demonstrated. Discuss the activities from the perspective of the four CLIL elements and the different types of language used considering the language triptych.




Key Takeaways

- CLIL is not about learning different aspects of a language but rather using the new language to talk about a specific non-linguistic content.
- The Four Cs framework implies the integration of content learning (content and cognition) and language learning (communication and culture).
- CLIL learners need a lot of extra support from the teacher in the form of various scaffolding strategies.
- In planning a CLIL lesson, it is useful to consider subject content and learning objectives, language objectives, teaching techniques, ways of encouraging the development of higher-order thinking skills, and assessment.

Further Reading

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Skills and Competences

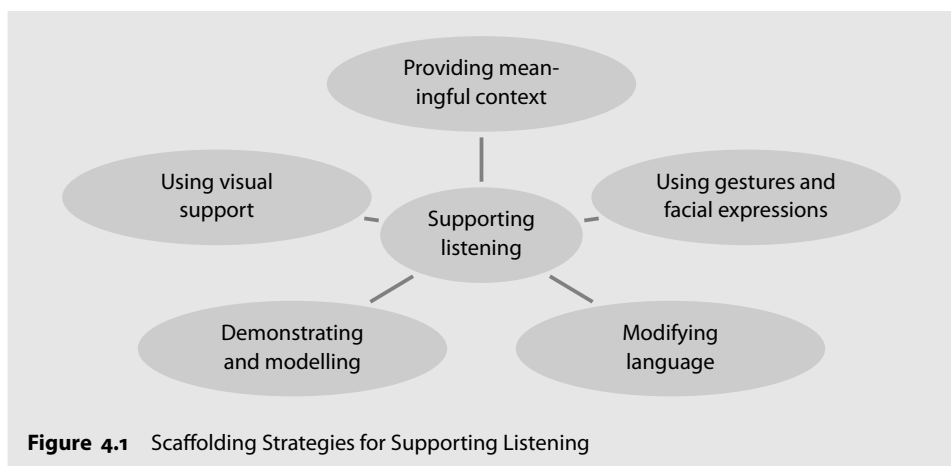
Listening and Speaking

Chapter Objectives

- Recognising the importance of teaching an FL by integrating all language skills
- Discovering ways of making learners engaged in a listening activity
- Understanding the role of meaningful context for an effective development of listening and speaking skills
- Reflecting on ways of making speaking activities with YLs more communicative

Language learning and teaching has traditionally been based on the division of four language skills: listening and reading tend to be described as *receptive* and speaking and writing as *productive skills*. However, proponents of the communicative perspective argue that language cannot be broken down into discrete skills sets since we rarely use only one single skill when we communicate. In real life, language skills are hardly ever used in isolation, they are more often than not integrated and interwoven. When we engage in a conversation, for example, we usually listen and speak at the same time and it is not hard to imagine a situation in which all the four skills are used simultaneously. Following the principles of the Communicative Approach, the four language skills are today usually taught in an integrated manner, which is reflected in syllabus design, teaching goals, course books, assessment instruments and other instructional materials and types of activities. This is in line with a holistic approach to language teaching which would focus on everything the learner needs to know to communicate effectively. In addition, as we have seen in Chapter 2, CEFR has replaced the traditional model of the four skills with communicative language activities and strategies, which are still based on the receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills but include two more types of activities – *interaction* and *mediation* (Council of Europe, 2018).

In this chapter, we focus on listening and speaking which dominate the learning process in the YLs' classroom, while the next chapter looks at a range of opportunities for developing reading and writing. While it is clear that it would be unproductive to teach each skill separately, discussing language learning in terms of the four skills helps us define the teaching goals and understand how the teaching process can be organised. In addition, focusing on individual skills enables us to recognise the potential of different activities



for integrating two or more skills. This includes also activities aimed at developing interaction and mediation which are not discussed separately but are considered from the perspective of effective communication.

Developing Listening

Although listening has been labelled a receptive skill, it is far from a passive process. In fact, listening to a text in a foreign language may be very difficult for children, especially if it comes from a recorded message (radio, smart phones, computers, etc.) and is not scaffolded by the teacher with gestures or speech adjustments. In initial stages of learning, children will be more comfortable listening to their teacher while playing games, singing simple songs, listening to stories or doing TPR-type activities, but also watching simple and easy-to-understand short videos (Brewster et al., 2002). The primary source of listening at the beginning stages of learning is the teacher. By using as much English as possible at this stage we can provide valuable language input for children. A number of teachers have realised that if appropriate support is provided, English can be used with learners from the very beginning. Figure 4.1 presents some useful strategies for scaffolding listening.

When trying to comprehend a listening text, learners may use two different processing strategies: *top-down* or *bottom-up*. Bottom-up strategies imply intensive processing of the text as learners listen for particular details by decoding sounds, words or larger language units. A typical bottom-up listening task is an activity in which pupils listen to a text and are required to fill the missing information in the blanks. On the other hand, top-down listening strategies are used by learners when they are focused on getting the general

meaning of a text and in trying to do so rely on their background knowledge. Examples of tasks which are based on top-down listening are using context clues to interpret the main idea or making predictions (Nunan, 2015).

A number of activities in the YLs classroom are aimed at developing top-down listening strategies. As they watch cartoons, listen to songs and rhymes, try to follow the teacher's instructions in experiments and projects, YLs usually listen for overall meaning. In practice, however, it is hard to distinguish the two processes and learners often alternate between bottom-up and top-down processing strategies. For example, in the activity dictogloss, learners first just listen to a text and later reconstruct it in pairs. They first use bottom-up strategies as they listen for key words, but as they later discuss what they have heard in order to reconstruct the meaning of the text, they also use top-down processing.

Pre-Listening, While-Listening, Post-Listening

There are different ways of making learners engaged in a listening activity. First of all, we need to organise the listening activity in such a way as to actively involve the learners. This can be done by preparing different *pre-listening*, *while-listening* and *post-listening* activities (Nunan, 2015). For example, before reading a story aloud to the pupils, we can ask them to make clever guesses and predict what will happen by giving them pictures of the main actions and asking them to organise them in the right sequence. While they listen to the story, they put the actions in the correct order. As a post-listening activity, we can ask them to work in pairs, mix up the pictures and try to reconstruct the story.

However, some authors (Field, 2002) argue that the standard format of three stages is not necessarily the only option. For example, there is a widely held belief among teachers that before the actual listening activity, it is necessary to spend some time on pre-teaching the key vocabulary. Field (2002) argues that if we want to recreate a real-life situation in the classroom, it is not sensible to explain all the unknown words in advance, only some 'critical' words which are indispensable for the comprehension of the text. In this way, we can also teach the learners an important strategy, i.e. guessing the meaning of the unknown words from the context. The main objective of the pre-listening stage is therefore to (p. 243):

1. provide sufficient context to match what would be available in real time;
2. create motivation (such as by asking learners to speculate on what they will hear).

Table 4.1 Examples of Active Listening Activities

Type	Examples of activities
Listen and do	A number of simple activities with which teachers can check if the pupils have understood classroom instructions (e.g. Open your books!, Raise your hand!, Make a circle!) and generally all TPR activities.
Listen and repeat	In listen-and-repeat activities learners develop pronunciation skills, the focus is on sounds, stress, rhythm and intonation. However, it is important to put this type of listening activity in a context and bear in mind that activities in which teachers ask students to just repeat something after them are not very effective. Drill-based activities can be made more communicative if they are turned into a game, such as the game Chinese whispers or Telephone. In this game, players first form a line or circle, then the first player comes up with a message and whispers it to the ear of the second person in the line. When the last player hears the message and says it out loud, the message is compared to the original.
Listen and colour	Listen and colour activities can be used at the very initial stages of learning when pupils are learning the names of colours and basic vocabulary items. From simple activities related to a vocabulary set (for example, colouring school supplies) to more complex tasks in which children colour a picture which requires from them familiarity with more complex vocabulary. It is always a good idea to contextualise the activities with a story. For example, we can tell a simple story of a house which is sad because it has no colours and the pupils can make it happy again by colouring different parts of the house according to the teacher's instructions.

Continued on the following page

In addition, the author suggests spending more time on the post-listening stage which can be dedicated to any difficulties or questions the learners might have and that the pre-listening activity should not take more than a few minutes.

Listening Activities

The first types of listening activities used with YLs will probably be those which require non-verbal responses from children, especially activities which are based on TPR and require a physical response from learners. In these activities, children have to understand a message and respond accordingly (Pinter, 2006). Several well-known games can be used for this purpose, such as Simon Says or the action song 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.'

In order to make listening an active and learner-centred process, it is useful to plan activities so that learners have to do something while listening. For example, in the course book *Happy House 2* (Maidment & Roberts, 2009), each unit starts with a basic 'listen and point' activity in which children listen to a text on the tape while they have to point to different items in a related

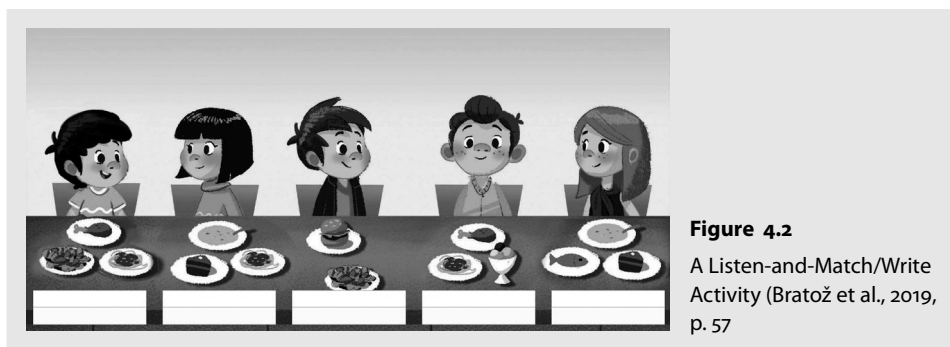
Table 4.1 *Continued from the previous page*

Type	Examples of activities
Listen and draw	The teacher or one of the students tells the others to draw a picture. It is important to note here that the picture needs to be kept simple as drawing may take time. A good example which is related to the topic 'body parts' is an activity in which the teacher gives the learners the instructions to draw a monster: 'The monster has got two yellow heads. It has got only one mouth. It has got six green eyes. It has got a square body, four red legs and two purple arms. It has got one small pink belly button.' The learners can then compare their monsters.
Listen and identify/ guess/ match	Learners are given pictures of different items, animals, situations, etc. They listen to the teacher describe one of them and guess which one is described. For example, the learners look at pictures of different school bags, each containing different school supplies and try to identify the right one. This activity can also be done with other topics where different items are involved, such as houses, cupboards, farms, shops, etc. This activity may be made more interesting with realia as learners may bring their own toys, clothes or other items to class.
Listen and arrange	The teacher gives the learners scrambled pictures of a story and while they listen to it, they try to put them in the right order. We need to make sure that the learners are able to follow the story and that appropriate scaffolding is used. The pictures can be either scenes from the story or pictures of objects related to different parts in the story.
Listen and decide	The learners listen to two or more descriptions of places (houses, schools, restaurants, towns, beaches, etc.) and need to decide which one they would choose or where they would like to go.
Listen and spot mistakes	The learners listen to a song, story or any other text which they are already familiar with but which the teacher has modified by including some mistakes (for example 'Today we will listen to the story of Little Yellow Riding Hood ...'). As they listen, the learners try to spot the mistake.

picture. However, there are several other, more demanding activities which can also be used in the YLs' classroom and which require learners to 'listen and identify,' 'listen and draw or colour,' 'listen and guess,' 'listen and act out' and so on (Brewster et al., 2002; Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2006). Table 4.1 gives examples of activities for developing active listening.

Active listening activities are often a combination of more than one task. For example, learners may be asked to listen and draw first and then to arrange or match what they have drawn. In the activity in Figure 4.2, learners are asked to match and write after listening to the text. They listen to the description of five different meals which have been ordered by the children in the picture and identify the children according to the ordered meal (e.g. 'Tom ordered ...'). They then write their names in the given spaces.

Several activities carried out in the language classroom are based on *inten-*

**Figure 4.2**

A Listen-and-Match/Write Activity (Bratož et al., 2019, p. 57)

sive listening which usually involves listening for some specific information. A useful strategy is to give instructions which are not predictable (such as colouring the roof of a house yellow instead of red) and thus make the task more challenging. With older learners, listening can also be used for a more detailed analysis of some language points. On the other hand, extensive listening ‘allows learners to receive a lot of comprehensible and enjoyable listening input’ (Renandya & Farrell, 2011, p. 56), such as when listening to the teacher read a story aloud or watching a cartoon for pleasure. Just like with extensive reading, several researchers have started recognizing the benefits of extensive listening for the acquisition of listening skills in an FL. A number of activities can be carried out in the YLs’ classroom based on extensive listening, such as teacher read-alouds or listening while reading.

A valuable source for developing *extensive listening* skills are also animated cartoons which can be used as authentic language material. One of the most important advantages of using cartoons in the classroom is that they are fun and learners are usually highly motivated to follow them, especially if they are already familiar with them outside school. Cartoons, such as ‘Peppa Pig,’ ‘Martha Speaks’ or ‘Postman Pat’ have become favourite shows of children around the world. Several studies (Krishnan & Yunus, 2018) have shown that using cartoons in the classroom enables the learners to contextualise the language learnt more efficiently, develop vocabulary using a variety of context clues provided in the cartoon (the characters’ facial expressions, body language, visual support, etc.) and develop strategies for guessing from context. Cartoons are often based on everyday social interactions giving the learners the opportunity to hear real-world conversations. An important characteristic of cartoons is also that the language used is typically repetitive – words, phrases, or whole communication patterns are often repeated which can be effectively used for language development.

Classroom Insight: Charlie

Sara decided to carry out an extensive reading activity during her English lessons with fourth graders who had just started to learn English. Her plan was to read a children's novel in instalments to see if they were able to follow the story and enjoy the extensive reading activity even if their level of English was low. She also knew that most pupils were not complete beginners, quite a few had attended language courses before they started learning English as an obligatory subject in the fourth grade. The whole reading activity lasted three weeks and took 15 minutes at the beginning of every lesson. She chose the novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* because the main character in the story was about the same age as the pupils (11 years

old) and she assumed that some of the children had already seen the film or read the book in their L1 which could work as a scaffold for understanding the story. She first decided to try out the original version of the novel but after the first reading, she realised that the pupils were not able to follow the story because the level of English was too difficult for them. So, she switched to the adapted and simplified version of the novel which turned out to be a good decision. In her evaluation of the action, she concluded that the pupils did not only thoroughly enjoy her reading aloud in instalments, but they were later also able to recognize and describe the main characters in the story and showed a good understanding of the plot.

In their analysis of the potential of using the Peppa Pig series for foreign language development Scheffler et al. (2021) argue that the cartoon contains several features which can be efficiently exploited in the classroom, such as frequent formulaic structures and genuine communication in social interaction. At the same time, the Peppa Pig episodes can also be used as the basis for classroom instruction leading to a number of activities or games initiated by the teacher or the learners themselves. For example, learners may recycle the interaction patterns from the cartoon in (re)acting out the scenes from the series.

Reflection Point

1. What do we have to pay attention to when we prepare a listening activity for YLs? How difficult do you think listening to a text in an FL is for YLs? How can you make it easier?
2. What are some real-life examples of FL listening texts that a school-aged child might hear (in the classroom, out of the classroom, at home)?
3. Can you think of any other ways of making listening active? What other actions could you use with the phrase 'listen and ...'?

Developing Speaking

In the YLs' classroom, listening and speaking are closely related skills, they go hand in hand as one usually automatically follows the other. Several authors point out (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2011; Kirkgöz, 2018) that for an effective de-

velopment of speaking skills we need to expose YLs to a range of contexts in which language is used meaningfully and purposefully. Kirkgöz (2018, p. 174) also stresses that for this age group it is especially important to involve 'real here-and-now experiences.' Activities which involve games, stories, drama, and role play in real-life situations (at the doctor's, in the restaurant, etc.) provide ample opportunities for learners to gradually move from listening into speaking in a holistic and enjoyable way.

From the YLs' perspective, speaking is one of the most useful skills as it enables them to communicate in their everyday life. However, it is considered by teachers to be the most difficult skill to teach (Kirkgöz, 2018; Scott & Ytreberg, 1990). In fact, learning to speak in an FL is considered to be one of the greatest challenges for the learners (Pinter, 2006), especially considering that some YLs are still in their silent period. This is why in planning activities for the development of YLs' speaking skills teachers should have a clear idea as to what they can expect from them. It would be unrealistic to expect pupils in the early stages of learning to produce extensive spontaneous speech, for instance. Especially at the beginning, speaking activities will probably involve reproductive and imitative language, such as learning some simple vocabulary items (e.g. numbers and colours), some set phrases and language patterns, as well as a few songs and rhymes. In addition, the spoken language needs to be continuously repeated and reused in different context.

Chunking

In initial stages, pupils will learn to produce mostly formulaic language, usually whole chunks of language which can be used for different purposes (Brewster et al., 2002, pp. 105–106):

1. Simple greetings: Good morning! Hello! How are you?
2. Social English: Have a nice day! See you tomorrow!
3. Routines: What's the weather like today? Who is absent today?
4. Classroom language: Listen. Repeat. Open your books on page 4.
5. Asking permission: Can/May I go to the toilet? May I borrow your pen?
6. Communication strategies: How do you say 'opica' in English? I don't understand.

There are two types of chunks: fully fixed chunks are ready to use, complete messages (such as 'See you tomorrow', 'How are you?', or 'Great job!'), while partially fixed chunks require additional elements (for example, 'Can I ...?' as in 'Can I go to the toilet/borrow your pen/leave?'). Pinter (2006) argues

that children pick up chunks easily because unlike adults they do not tend to analyse the different elements of language.

Developing speaking skills by repeating meaningful chunks can effectively be done through a variety of songs and games. A classic example is a guessing game in which pupils have to guess something by asking yes/no questions. For instance, the teacher chooses one of the animals which the pupil can name in English and asks them to guess which animal it is, encouraging questions, such as 'Is it a bear?', 'Is it a monkey?' This activity can be adapted for higher-level learners by encouraging them to ask more demanding questions: 'Is it big or small?', 'Has it got four legs?', 'Is it dangerous?' (Cameron, 2001). Although they are based on a drilling pattern, guessing games are very popular with children and can be done in a variety of ways, using mime, hiding objects, etc.

Speaking Activities

In order to develop YLs' speaking skills successfully, we should include a variety of activities with 'a good balance between control and creativity, repetition and real use' (Brewster et al., 2002, p. 106). In planning activities with YLs, we also need to keep in mind the right balance between fluency, i.e. the ability to use the language to communicate effectively, and accuracy, which refers to the production of grammatically correct spoken or written language, as both are equally important.

While it is hard to imagine YLs engaging in extensive spontaneous conversations in English, by exposing them to a range of repetitive interaction patterns, we can provide a good basis and plenty of opportunities for free and communicative language use. Becker and Roos (2016) give a good example of how a traditional YLs' activity can be modified into a more communicative and creative task. Both activities require the learners to describe a monster: in the first activity, learners look at a picture of a monster and describe it using the



Figure 4.3 Poster of a Monster Created by YLs

Table 4.2 Types of Speaking Activities with Examples

Types	Examples
Interviews	Activities in which learners interview each other in pairs can be used at different levels, from simple interactions in which learners ask each other personal information, about their favourite food, pets or hobbies to more advanced pair work in which learners enquire about each other's families, future plans, etc. Teachers can make interviews meaningful by linking them to a real-life context, such as a conversation between a doctor and a patient, a football star and a fan, two people sitting next to each other on a plane, etc.
Guessing games	There are a number of benefits of using games for developing speaking skills. A game which can easily be tailored to the learners' level is Guess who or what. The game can be played in groups or pairs and can be used with different topics, for example personal descriptions or professions. If they play in pairs, each pupil gets a slip from the teacher's hat with the picture of a famous person on it. Learners ask each other yes/no questions (Is he a sportsman?, Does he have dark hair?, etc.) in order to find out which is their partner's famous person.
Information gap tasks	In information gap tasks, students use the language to exchange some information and get their meaning across. We usually need to give out two sets of instructions or information so as to make sure that one student has the information that the other requires. There are several advantages of using information gap tasks. First of all, all learners are equally involved in the process and they have a specific purpose. Therefore, motivation is usually quite high. In addition, information gap tasks often reflect real-life situations which require cooperation and meaning negotiation. A good example of such a task is an activity in which learners give each other directions to get to a place on a map.
Class survey	<p>Another type of activity which provides opportunities for repeating various interaction patterns is 'classroom survey' which can be used with a variety of topics and communication patterns:</p> <p>Do you like/eat/know ...? – Yes, I do./No, I don't. Can you play/sing/speak ...? – Yes I can./No, I can't. Have you got ...? – Yes, I have./No, I haven't. Which do you prefer, ...? – (Apples.) What's your favourite ...? – My favourite ... is ...</p> <p>In a survey activity, pupils go around the classroom to interview their classmates. Such activities are usually full of excitement and action, so it is a good idea to give clear instruction and time limits. The teacher should also give the pupils a clear objective of the survey, e.g. to find out which is the favourite fruit among the pupils in the classroom (which is something the school cook might want to know). The results of the survey may be presented by the students or the teacher in a table on the whiteboard.</p>

Continued on the following page

chunk 'My monster has got ...' and a selection of set phrases describing the body (e.g. three legs, a big head, red eyes). In the second activity, the learn-

Table 4.2 *Continued from the previous page*

Types	Examples
Role play	Role plays give learners great opportunities for practising the FL in real-life situations. Here are some roles learners can play in the classroom: shopkeeper and customer in a shop, waiter and guest in a restaurant, flight attendant and passenger on a plane, doctor and patient in hospital, teacher and student at school, etc. To make the role play more realistic, it is useful to include realia and different props, such as creating a simulated shop in one part of the classroom, with a cashier, paper money, and a variety of empty food boxes and containers.
Class conference	One of the most common speaking production activities in the language classroom is the oral presentation. Learners are asked to present different things, an animal, a town, a famous person, etc. However, traditional oral presentations may be modified and made more communicative by creating a meaningful context. Rather than simply listening to their school mates' oral presentations, the learners may be told that they will be taking part in a scientific conference. Here are some ideas for creating the context for the conference: give the conference a name (e.g. Save our planet), write a conference programme, appoint a student to start and conclude the conference, ask the presenter questions, etc.
Project report	There are a number of benefits of using project-work and discovery-oriented tasks with YLs. In such activities, learners usually work together with a common purpose to achieve a concrete outcome: a poster, a video, a product, etc. They work together on a task often over several weeks which requires from them involvement, co-operation and, most importantly, responsibility. As they put considerable effort in the project-activities, they are usually proud of their own work and eager to present their results. The teacher may also encourage them to present the results in creative and innovative ways.

ers are still asked to describe a monster, using the same sentence pattern as before, only this time, they are required to do so in an information-gap task in which two learners have slightly different monsters and need to find the main differences between them. The most important difference between the two activities is in the fact that in the second task, the learners do not simply reproduce the given sentence pattern. They are involved in a meaning negotiation in which they have to cooperate and come to a common understanding, making the activity both more meaningful and creative.

Table 4.2 presents some ideas for speaking activities which provide YLs with opportunities to interact in contextualised communicative situations.

Another powerful tool for developing effective speaking skills is drama as it gives children a number of opportunities to speak even if their language is still limited. Just imagine the difference between simply reading a dialogue aloud and acting it out, putting themselves in the shoes of the characters (Phillips, 1999). As the author (p. 6) argues, 'drama involves children at

many levels, through their bodies, minds, emotions, language, and social interaction.' Drama provides learners with a relevant and meaningful context which gives them the opportunity to be more spontaneous, develop self-confidence and reduce potential inhibitions.

An efficient way of incorporating drama in the YLs classroom is through stories in the form of comics which are commonly found in student books for YLs. They often include dramatized stories with characters the learners get to know well as they progress from unit to unit. These stories are based on dialogues which contain a range of useful communication patterns. One way of exploiting comics for developing speaking skills is to ask pupils to act out the dialogues from the comics. Before this can be done, however, learners need to be familiar with the text and be able to pronounce the words correctly. This can be achieved by first using 'choral shadowing' (Klančar, 2006) in which learners read the text in the bubbles, listen to the dialogues and imitate the voices on the tape, trying to sound exactly like them. Then they act out the dialogues in pairs or small groups and in the end, they can volunteer to act the story out before the whole class.



Reflection Point

1. Watch a video in which learners do a role play activity and discuss the effectiveness of the task from the perspective of developing speaking skills.
2. Discuss why speaking is considered to be the most challenging skill to teach and learn.
3. Watch a video in which learners take part in a dramatization activity based on the story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' and discuss the effectiveness of using drama for developing speaking skills.
4. Think about the way you were taught speaking in primary school. Which activities/strategies used by the teachers were effective and which were, in your opinion, not so effective?



Key Takeaways

- Listening can be made more active and learner-centred by connecting it to another activity, such as listen and draw, listen and guess, etc.
- Efficient speaking activities provide YLs with opportunities to interact in contextualised communicative situations, such as information gap tasks, role plays, drama and others.
- A good speaking task should have a clear purpose and outcome and provide some kind of challenge for the learner.
- Drama is a powerful tool for developing effective speaking skills as it gives children a number of opportunities to speak even if their language is still limited.

Classroom Insight: Acting Out

Petra often uses drama with her pupils for developing speaking skills. She uses the picture book *Elmo the Cat* to discuss feelings and emotions with 2nd graders. The activities she has developed around the picture book are carried out over two lessons.

1. She first asks the pupils to sit in a circle around a blanket and guess what is hidden under it. She helps them with questions and invites them to explore by putting their hands over the blanket and also under the blanket. She then imitates the cats meowing.
2. Petra then reads the picture book by showing the pictures. She names the different feelings and emotions and adds special voices for each. The pupils first repeat after her, then she mimics a feeling or emotion while the pupils try to guess which.
3. In the next activity, the pupils create masks for feelings and emotions by working in groups, each group has one feeling or emotion. Petra then projects the picture of a stage with curtains to create a theatre background.

4. She determines the order of the performances by groups which represent different feelings and emotions. Each group has a rehearsal before the final show – the pupils rehearse their feelings or emotions and their role by expressing a complete sentence (for example, *I am happy ha ha ha*). The group who is next in line for the performance, waits on the side while the other groups sit on the chairs arranged as in the theatre and play the role of audience. For every group performance, she starts the show with: ‘Ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to the show! Have fun!’ For every group performance, Petra reads the story in the role of the narrator while the pupils step on the stage as actors to act out their scene.

According to Petra, one of the benefits of using this lesson model is that all the pupils, including the ones who are still reluctant to use English, participate in the performance, especially since scaffolding is provided, if needed, at all stages of the learning process.

Further Reading

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Developing Literacy

Chapter Objectives

- Identifying different types of literacy
- Recognizing the relationship between L1 and FL literacy
- Comparing different approaches to literacy and knowing when to use them
- Understanding the importance of working with different genres

What Is Literacy and Why Is It Important?

There are several different interpretations and definitions of literacy. It is most commonly associated with the development of reading and writing skills. However, literacy has recently come to be understood as a more complex phenomenon, incorporating all four language skills and contributing to the development of communicative competence. Several definitions of literacy stem from this perspective. The definition formulated by UNESCO (2004, p. 12) looks beyond the ability to read and write a simple sentence by defining literacy as ‘the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying context.’ On the other hand, Kern (2000, p. 3) sees literacy as ‘the ability to interpret and critically evaluate a wide variety of written and spoken texts,’ thus emphasising that literacy does not deal only with written texts, but also with audio and video input. Ediger (2014) adds *visual literacy* to the array of literacy definitions, accentuating skills involved in interpreting and producing visual content. This means that, for example, when you read a picture book, pupils understand how pictures contribute to the overall meaning of the story. Leu et al. (2007, p. 38) perhaps offer the most comprehensive definition, stating that literacy is ‘the ability to find, identify, evaluate, use and communicate using a variety of resources, including text, visual, audio and video.’ The ability to use and interpret multiple modes (i.e. linguistic, visual, aural, gestural and spatial), multiple languages and multiple cultural contexts is called *multiliteracy*. This can also include new media and digital literacies. And since a child’s different languages are often developed synchronously, the term *biliteracy* has been coined, referring to the ability not only to read and write in two languages, but also to be able to use these two languages for different purposes (Fu & Matoush, 2015).

Literacy is the foundation of lifelong learning and according to UNESCO (2014) a fundamental human right. Its development starts long before formal

schooling, within the family where children are exposed to spoken and written language to different degrees. Children who are immersed in language from an early age are more fluent and have a richer vocabulary than children whose literacy environment is not so stimulating. Academic success at school is very much dependent on the literacy level of a child. Therefore, parents can contribute to a child's level of literacy by reading to them, telling them stories, saying traditional rhymes and finger plays, singing to them, reciting poetry and by generally surrounding them with the written and spoken word.

Relationship between L1 and FL Literacy

Cameron (2001) argues that when teaching English literacy skills, we can rely on some methods usually used with children who are native speakers of English. YLs that are exposed to the spoken language through songs, stories, games, and similar sources and are surrounded by written texts of different genres and formats will be well-prepared for reading and writing in higher grades and will have fewer problems acquiring these two skills. Pupils with sound foundational literacy skills developed in their L1, will have a supply of skills and knowledge to draw on when learning an FL (Cloud et al., 2009). Riches and Genesee (2006) showed that phonological awareness, reading comprehension strategies and knowledge of cognate vocabulary in L1 facilitate literacy skills in English as an FL. Furthermore, they proved that successful FL readers use the same strategies as L1 English readers and that they rely on strategies they acquired in their L1 (Riches & Genesee, 2006). Some of these strategies can be related to the understanding of the text, e.g. visualising the content, inferring (i.e. deducing the meaning from the context, key words, etc.), knowing what is important and being able to summarise the text. These strategies can be developed in different languages simultaneously and in this way contribute to the development of both, L1 and FL literacy skills. The foundational literacy skills, which are the building blocks for higher-level reading and writing skills, include: comprehending meaning from the text, recognising letters, words and phrases, knowledge of letter-sound relationships, phonological awareness and being able to write letters, words and sentences (Cloud et al., 2009).

In an FL classroom, it is a good idea to give more attention to those aspects of literacy in the FL which contrast most clearly with reading and writing in the learners' L1. Ten-year-old pupils have already mastered the basic aspects of literacy in L1 so reading and writing can become a more important aspect of their FL syllabus. Besides utilising any transferable knowledge and skills from L1 literacy, they can also be provided with more focused instruction in

strategies that are specific to developing literacy in English. Dagarin Fojkar et al. (2011) point out that one of the main problems for learners who are learning to read and write in English is poor correspondence between sounds and letters. In English there are 44 sounds and 26 letters which can be written in 2501 different ways. Some of the examples of the spelling irregularities are: some letters or letter combinations are pronounced in different ways (e.g. letter 'c' can be pronounced as /k/ in 'cat' or /s/ in 'pronunciation'), some letters are silent (e.g. knee), there are diphthongs (e.g. /ei/, /ai/), etc.

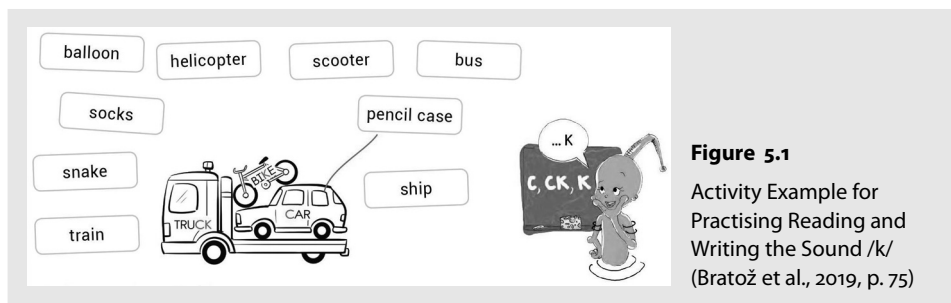
Due to the poor matching between letters and sounds, there are usually different ideas as to how literacy should be taught. Two main approaches have been the subject of heated discussions since the 19th century, the *phonics* and the *whole-word approach*. Phonics-based literacy teaching uses letter combinations and syllables in a word in order to decode language, while in the whole-word approach children are taught to read and write by recognizing words as whole pieces of language (see below).

Literacy Approaches

Reviewing different approaches to literacy development, Cameron (2001) argues that they differ in terms of the level of language which they start from: the text, the sentence, the word or the letter level. Each of these levels is related to a different approach to literacy learning both in L1 and FL. The *emergent literacy* and the *genre approach* are both focused on the text level, the *language experience approach* starts at sentence level, the *whole-word approach* at word level and the *phonics approach* at the level of sounds.

Emergent Literacy

This approach is based on the understanding that young children do not acquire literacy only through direct instruction but by being exposed to different types of text and reading. In other words, children will 'work out for themselves the patterns and regularities that link spoken and written text' (Cameron, 2001, p. 145.) by listening to different books and stories which are appropriate for their level. Studies showed that the emergent literacy approach works well with some children but not all and that it is especially effective when a lot of individual work is invested by a skilled adult. Nevertheless, the idea has had a considerable impact on understanding the role of literacy, promoting a learner-centred perspective and raising questions about the quality of books used in classrooms and the importance of children understanding what they read. Cloud et al. (2009) suggest that emergent literacy activities in school should be meaningful, interesting and interactive so



that students are engaged and motivated. They also emphasise that literacy teaching should build on the oral language skills and link to pupils' background knowledge and experiences (Cloud et al., 2009).

The Phonics Approach

The phonics approach focuses on letter-sound relations rather than on whole words recognition. It utilizes bottom-up processing skills, focusing on phonemic awareness. It helps children make mental connections between letters and sounds and to form a variety of spelling patterns in English. Learners need to be able to sound out or decode words (which involves taking the sounds in a word apart) and then blend the sounds together again. In a phonics lesson, the usual procedure is to start with single consonants that occur as onsets in one-syllable words (e.g. ball, bear, blue, big boy), then move to consonants at the end of words and then to vowels. The English vowel system is extremely complicated; a single vowel letter can be connected with different vowel sounds, we have short and long vowel sounds, combinations of two vowel sounds, some vowel letters are silent, etc.

While it would be counterproductive to teach all the rules explicitly, some patterns are useful to focus on, such as the 'Magic -e' rule according to which by adding 'e' at the end of a word, the short vowel sound changes to a long vowel sound as in *mad -made* or *plan -plane*. Similarly, Dagarin Fojkar et al. (2011) point out that the phonics method should be employed gradually and systematically in developing YLs' literacy skills. It should not be overused, since pupils will soon realize that the phonics rules do not always apply. For example, one sound can be related to different letters (e.g. /ʃ/ in *passion, machine, shoe, nation*) and one letter to different sounds (e.g. 'a' in *fat, fast, fate*). In Figure 5.1 you can see an example of an activity for 3rd grade pupils in which they need to match the letters to the right picture, according to the letter combinations that form the sound /k/ (i.e. 'ck', 'k' or 'c').

Classroom Insight: Language Experience Approach in Practice

Nataša develops her pupils' literacy skills in English in cooperation with the class teacher of her pupils. She follows the pupils' development in their L1 literacy skills and adapts the activities, the length and types of the texts and the style of handwriting (first block letters, later cursive) to their L1 level in her English lessons. She has to work closely with the L1 teacher and plan her lessons according to the children's cognitive level. For example, the L1 teacher works on a text or a story in their L1 class. After presenting the text or the story to the class, she discusses the genre, topic and content with the pupils. The pupils then do reading comprehension tasks related to the story, role plays, etc. and work on the story in a variety of ways. They usually talk

about the structure of the summary while writing a summary of the story, first on a poster together as a whole-class and later on in pairs or individually in higher grades on the basis of the language experience approach. Nataša uses strategies and techniques similar to the ones used by their L1 teacher when introducing a story in English, so her pupils are used to the sequence of activities and recognize the genres and structures of the story in English, too. Sometimes she introduces the same story in English which was already discussed in Slovenian, while other times she uses a different story, but with similar activities. Her step-by-step approach helps pupils to be more fluent in the written language.

There are many activities that can be used in developing YLs' phonemic awareness, such as finding rhyming words, searching for words with the same sounds or creating rhymes or stories with a certain sound. The teacher can pay special attention to the sounds that students struggle with (e.g. /ð/, /θ/ or the difference between long and short /i/). As this is a very popular approach in teaching L1 reading, many activities and phonics books can be found on the internet as well.

Whole-Word Approach

The whole-word approach teaches literacy at the word level. It is based on top-down processing skills. It does not involve decoding letters or sounding out words but learning to read the words as a whole by heart. In using this method, teachers often make use of flashcards with single words on them. Learners start with simple familiar words and when they have mastered them, move gradually to more difficult ones. The words should be meaningful to the children and connected to their background knowledge. The whole-word approach emphasises high exposure to words in different context, so that children can memorize their pronunciation.

Another term for the whole-word approach is 'sight reading' or learning to read 'sight words.' These are words in English that cannot be sounded out and the best way to learn them is to memorize them. In this way, learners will be able to read them automatically or 'at sight.' The 'sight words' are usually



high-frequency words (e.g. *the, of, said, who*) which the pupils are encouraged to learn by recognizing their form, length and letter combinations (Dagarin Fojkar et al., 2011).

The whole-word approach has been recognized as efficient for beginner readers and with limited amounts of words, but it was also shown that children found it hard to generalise and find patterns in the words being learnt or read unknown words. An example of the whole word approach is the activity in which pupils label things in the classroom by writing the words on pieces of paper and putting them to the matching places or labelling a picture (e.g. body parts on a picture of a body). Another common whole word approach activity is 'Look-say-cover-write-check' (Figure 5.2), where learners look at the pictures and words (or only word cards), cover them, try to write them on their own and then check their spelling by looking at the cards again.

Language Experience Approach (LEA)

The language experience approach starts at the sentence level and promotes reading and writing through the use of personal experiences and spoken language. When using this approach, learners and their teacher create a text together. This can be a summary of a story, a letter, a note, etc. Shin and Crandall (2019, p. 198) suggest these steps in creating the text:

1. Have a discussion about an event, a story (can be in L1).
2. Determine what to write (through a brainstorming web or other organisers).
3. Learners dictate the 'story' to the teacher, who writes it on a poster or a board so everyone can see it. The teacher helps with the language and reads the story step by step.
4. The teacher and the learners read the story together.
5. The teacher and the learners decide together if they want to change anything in the story.
6. Learners copy what is written on the board or the poster into their notebooks.

The length of the text, its difficulty level and the vocabulary used can be adapted to the learners' knowledge level. When the text is created, it can be used for multiple purposes in the classroom. The teacher can cover certain words on the board and learners read the whole text and guess the covered words, he/she can copy the text from the board and split it into different parts, which pupils put together in the correct order or he/she asks the pupils to point to certain words on the poster. The text can be used in the same way as any other text, but this time it is a personalised text, written by the learners, and as such it is more memorable and more meaningful for them. Cameron (2001) points out that this approach can be effectively used in the FL classroom, especially the idea of constructing meaningful sentences linked to a variety of topics and vocabulary.

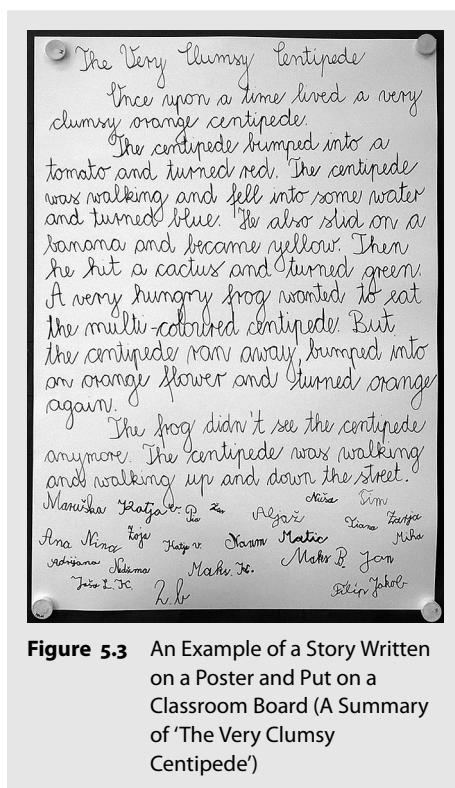


Figure 5.3 An Example of a Story Written on a Poster and Put on a Classroom Board (A Summary of 'The Very Clumsy Centipede')

Genre Approach or Text-Based Approach

The genre or text-based approach takes an authentic text as the basic principle in teaching. The rationale behind this approach is that we are surrounded by different types of texts which conceptualise language and are a source

for making meanings (Mickan, 2011). And if we want YLs to produce different types of texts, we need to work on them systematically.

In order to use the text-based approach effectively, it is useful to follow a set of steps (Halbach, 2018). The teacher first selects a spoken or a written text of a given genre, one they know their learners would find interesting and would be relevant to them. These can range from short, simple messages or texts, such as party invitations or Christmas cards, to more complex ones, such as letters or stories. The learners read or listen to the text and afterwards work on its structure, purpose, grammar and lexis. The emphasis is on working on specific features of a certain genre or text (e.g. in writing a recipe, we use imperatives and action verbs). Learners practise these through observing and analysing the text and through guided tasks (e.g. ordering parts of the text, creating word banks, correcting mistakes, etc.). At the final stage, they produce their own text of the same genre. This can be done individually or as collaborative work. Again, this text can be written or spoken, and its complexity can be adapted to different levels. Halbach (2018) gives an example of reading *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson, working on the features of the text (e.g. body descriptions of the Gruffalo), acting out the story, discussing its plot and as the final product drawing monsters and describing them in a few short sentences. Richards (n.d.) points out that this procedure may become tedious if it is always used in the same way and he proposes flexibility in applying this approach in teaching literacy.

Combining Different Approaches

So how does a teacher go about choosing the best approach? The best way to deal with L2 literacy development is to combine different approaches, focusing on all four language skills. On the one hand, by exposing learners to a variety of interesting texts and meaningful activities from a holistic perspective, we can motivate them to read and write (i.e. top-down approach), on the other, we can enhance their reading and writing skills by explicitly focusing on letter-sound correspondences and sound patterns (i.e. bottom-up approach).

Reflection Point

1. What are some of the benefits and drawbacks of different literacy approaches (emergent literacy, language experience approach, whole-word approach, phonics and genre approach)? At which age would you introduce these approaches to YLs?
2. Analyse various course books for YLs (grades 1–5). Which literacy approaches are present and which are not used?

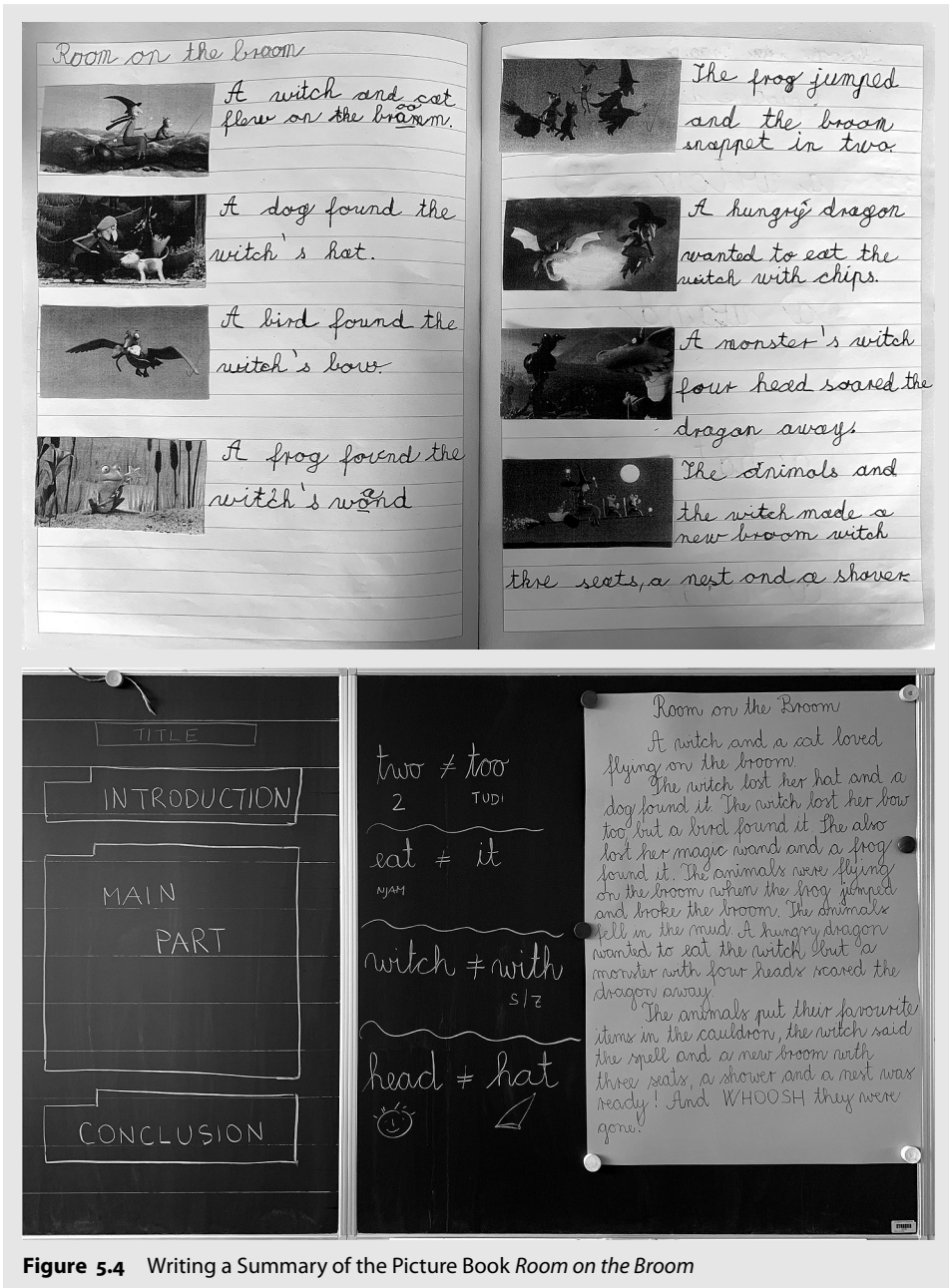


Figure 5.4 Writing a Summary of the Picture Book *Room on the Broom*

3. What kinds of texts (genres) do children mostly read in English? Are there any that could be added to their repertoire?



4. Watch a video in which the language experience approach is used in practice and discuss its effectiveness for developing literacy.
5. Watch Ana Halbach present the text-based approach in a CLIL context (Workshops and Conferences, Video 1: Developing FL Literacy in CLIL Contexts). What are the different phases of the approach and how do they help students produce texts?

Key Takeaways

- Literacy incorporates all four language skills and contributes to the development of communicative competence.
- Developing multiliteracy skills includes using multiple modes (i.e. linguistic, visual, aural, gestural and spatial), different languages and different cultural contexts.
- There are clear benefits in using a balanced-literacy approach – one that integrates different methods in line with the needs of the learners, their age and language level.
- Observing and analysing different spoken and written texts will help learners produce texts.

Further Reading

- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cloud, N., Genesee, F., & Hamayan, E. (2009). *Literacy instruction for English language learners*. Heinemann.
- Dagarin Fojkar, M. (2014). Literacy development in course books for teaching English in the second cycle of Slovenian primary school. *Linguistica*, 54(1), 153–166.

Reading and Writing

Chapter Objectives

- Comparing reading and writing subskills and strategies
- Recognising the characteristics and benefits of extensive reading programmes
- Understanding why writing is difficult for YLs
- Reflecting on ways of making writing activities communicative and collaborative

A central question related to developing reading and writing in an FL is whether we should wait until learners can read and write in their L1. Teachers who have been trained to teach older pupils and adult learners and are then asked to teach YLs soon find out how difficult it is to teach without the written word or the reading skill. Writing a list of words is a very demanding task for a 6 or 7-year-old learner and one that often does not contribute to their language development. The teacher usually provides other scaffolds, such as visual or musical support, movement, etc. to help the child learn and remember new vocabulary.

Researchers in the field of YLs generally agree that listening and speaking should have absolute primacy in the YLs' classroom. However, we can expose learners to the written word from the beginning of the learning process, usually by including it visually in the classroom. A classroom can have English posters on the wall and a notice board with different information, e.g. learners' timetable, a school lunch or snack menu, date and weather, pupils' birthdays, phrases of the week or any other messages that the teacher or the pupils want to communicate to each other. Besides exposing the pupils to the written word in their classroom environment, the teacher can provide the learners with the experience of extensive listening (see chapter Listening and speaking). If the teacher regularly reads stories to the learners, they will perceive reading as an enjoyable activity. Having a class library or a reading corner also contributes to learners' reading development. A cosily decorated corner with a sofa, soft cushions, a plush rug, and a bookshelf including graded readers, authentic books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, comics, and magazines is a place where children can relax, read or just browse the reading materials. This can also be the place where the teacher reads stories out loud so that children associate it with reading.

Table 6.1 Types of Reading Knowledge and Awareness

Type	Examples
Knowledge about print	Letters on a paper represent sounds; writing in a certain direction.
Graphophonic knowledge	Letters form certain sounds; pronunciation of sounds.
Lexical knowledge	Certain words are very common; some words go together (e.g. lunch time).
Syntactic knowledge	Typical structures or chunks (e.g. How are you? See you later.).
Semantic knowledge	Language is related to the knowledge of the world, experiences and culture.

Notes Adapted from Brewster et al. (2002, p. 110).

Reading

What is behind Reading?

In the process of developing reading skills learners acquire different types of knowledge and awareness (Table 6.1). In addition, reading involves several subskills. In a language classroom, *reading for specific information* or *scanning* is very common. Reading comprehension questions, such as 'How old is Anne?' or 'How many brothers has she got?' are examples of reading a text to find a specific piece of information. These types of questions prevail at the beginning stages of reading, because they are not demanding for learners. However, we have to bear in mind that learners need to develop other reading subskills as well, e.g. *reading for gist* or *skimming*, which involves reading a text to get the main idea of its contents or to be able to tell what the text is about. *Reading for detail* or *intensive reading* is another subskill with which readers focus on the new vocabulary or language structures in a text. It is the opposite of *extensive reading*, which is related to reading longer texts, e.g. stories, books. When we read extensively, we focus our attention on different parts of the text and we use contextual clues to understand the contents. When learning how to read in an FL, it is good to include reading tasks that develop different kinds of subskills, as learners will need to use a variety of them in the future.

In addition to different types of knowledge and reading subskills that encompass the reading process, several authors emphasise the importance of the vocabulary range which the learners need to master to be able to read a text effectively. In this context, Hu and Nation (2000) argue that learners need to know as many as 95–98% of all the words in a text to be able to read it independently.

Reading Activities and Strategies

Dagarin Fojkar et al. (2011, pp. 20–21) distinguish between activities at the pre-literacy stage and activities at the word level for YLs. For the pre-literacy stage, they suggest carrying out games which help learners connect sounds with objects (e.g. showing them a set of items starting with the letter 'b': ball, book, bird) and a variety of tactile activities which enhance vocabulary retention, such as cutting out letters or whole words from different materials and gluing them on paper, using the jigsaw sponge mat, magnetic letters, making shapes or letters in sand, different types of puzzles, and many others.

Shared reading also has a positive effect on the development of reading skills. The teacher usually reads a big book that everyone can see, and he/she reads it alone or with the help of the learners, depending on their level. During the reading, they discuss the contents of the book, the illustrations etc. While reading with the teacher, learners also see the common sound-letter combinations in the book and acquire different reading strategies.

Word level activities consist of both: techniques for recognizing whole words and techniques for making connections between letters and sounds. A number of games can be used for developing reading at the word level, such as memory matching of words and pictures, bingo, dominoes, word puzzles and others.

Most activities at the early stage will be focused on word level reading and developing reading beyond word level should be done gradually. Some examples of activities which are focused on phrases or sentences are: chopping up sentences and getting the pupils to put them back together, mixing parts of songs and rhymes and asking the learners to reconstruct them, various gap-fill activities, etc. Pinter (2006) also points out that developing reading in the YLs classroom is a holistic process, including subskills such as predicting, noticing patterns and guessing and it should include different senses, i.e. multisen-

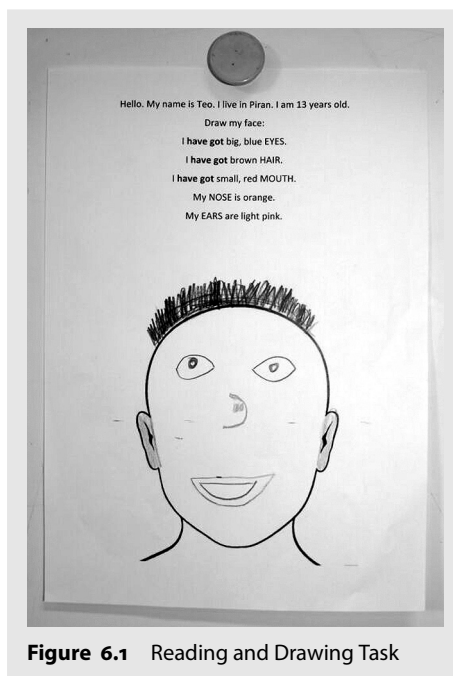


Figure 6.1 Reading and Drawing Task

Table 6.2 The Three-Stage Model for Developing Reading Skills

Reading stages	Aims	Examples
Pre-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introducing the topic to the learners • checking the background knowledge of the topic • introducing key vocabulary • raising motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key words • flashcards • pictionary • brainstorming
While-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual reading • reading in pairs • reading in groups (e.g. jigsaw reading) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a story • a dialogue • a greeting card • a birthday invitation • a recipe • an advertisement
Post-reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checking reading comprehension • doing a creative task connected to the topic of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quizzes • creative discussion • creative writing • questions from pictures • developing graphic organizers • designing posters

sory learning (for example by including movement or crafting). In the later stages, learners will be asked to read longer texts for meaning or for finding specific information. At this point, they can be taught to use reading comprehension strategies, such as predicting, making connections, inferring, questioning, and summarizing.

Similarly to listening, the three-stage model (pre-, while- and post-reading) can also be used for developing the pupils' reading skills (Table 6.2).

Reading Materials

There are different types of texts, books and genres suitable for developing YLs reading skills. An efficient strategy is to immerse learners in a variety of reading materials and make reading a regular part of the curriculum. Among the most common reading materials for YLs one can find (story)books, comics, magazines, brochures, manuals, etc.

In language learning, an important distinction is usually made between authentic books and adapted books or graded readers. Both are commonly used in the classroom but for different purposes. Authentic books are books written for native speakers. Their benefit is the use of authentic phrases and vocabulary that is used in real-life for communication. Their main purpose is not language learning but involving readers in an engaging text with (usu-

ally) high quality illustrations. The language in authentic books is richer and commonly more complex than that in adapted materials. However, a number of authentic picture books contain language that is appropriate for YLs, too (e.g. books by Steve Antony or Chris Haughton).

Adapted books or graded readers, on the other hand, are written for the purpose of language learning and include vocabulary and language structures that are adapted to the learners' level. Graded readers contain vocabulary that is 'graded' according to the language levels, e.g. Level 1 is usually restricted to 400 headwords (these are key words that have their own entry in a dictionary). Language structures in graded readers for the first levels are simplified, sentences are usually short and repetitive. The main aim of the illustrations is to help readers understand the words in the text. Many authors are in favour of using graded readers for EFL learners, e.g. Harmer (2007) claims that one of the fundamental conditions of successful reading for pleasure is that students read material which they can understand – if they are struggling to understand words, all the pleasure of reading is taken away. Graded readers are also more appropriate for independent reading.

Picture books are a powerful tool for teaching English to YLs as they provide a visually rich, engaging, and contextually relevant language learning experience. By combining visual elements with spoken and written language, learning can be developed through different modalities. The narrative and dialogues in the books provide examples of proper grammar and vocabulary usage. What is more, picture books often showcase characters from various backgrounds, exposing young learners to diversity and promoting cultural awareness. Table 6.3 (p. 102) provides examples of picture books which can be used for either focusing on specific language aspects or dealing with different topics relevant for YLs.

As the world is getting more digitalised, printed books are changing into e-books. Many readers still prefer an actual book, its smell and touch and especially for YLs, printed books are a must. Nevertheless, digital books have their benefits, too. They are easily accessible for learners and many of them have interactive elements that recreate the events of the story or where readers can do game-like reading comprehension activities. Another useful feature of e-books is the read-aloud or read-along function where learners can follow the storyline by listening to it and reading it together with a narrator. Many of these books highlight words as the narrator reads them, so a reader can follow along. They can pause the narration or repeat a certain word or sentence. These e-book features help readers decode the words and boost their reading motivation.

Table 6.3 Picture Books for YLLs by Topic

Colours	<i>Brown Bear, What Do You See?</i> (Martin & Carle, 1996) <i>If I Could Paint the World</i> (Massini, 2011) <i>Mix It up</i> (Tullet, 2011) <i>Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes</i> (Dean & Litwin, 2008)
Numbers	<i>Doggies</i> (Boynton, 2001) <i>Ten in the Bed</i> (Dale, 1992)
Weather	<i>Maisy's Wonderful Weather Book</i> (Cousins, 2011) <i>Mr Wolf's Week</i> (Hawkins, 2003) <i>Tap the Magic Tree</i> (Matheson, 2016)
Animals	<i>Dear Zoo</i> (Campbell, 2022) <i>The Mouse Who Wasn't Scared</i> (Horaček, 2019) <i>Walking through the Jungle</i> (Blackstone & Harter, 2021) <i>What the Ladybird Heard</i> (Donaldson & Monks, 2022)
Food	<i>I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato</i> (Child, 2003) <i>Ketchup on Your Cornflakes</i> (Sharratt, 2023) <i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i> (Carle, 2019)
Body parts	<i>From Head to Toe</i> (Carle, 2018) <i>Go Away, Big Green Monster</i> (Emberley, 1993) <i>My Nose, Your Nose</i> (Walsh, 2003)
Clothes	<i>Froggy Gets Dressed</i> (London, 1994) <i>Hooray for Hat!</i> (Won, 2017) <i>The Smartest Giant in Town</i> (Donaldson, 2022)
Means of transport	<i>The Bus is for Us</i> (Rosen & Tyler, 2016) <i>We All Go Travelling by</i> (Roberts, Bell, & Penner, 2021)
Feelings	<i>The Feelings Book</i> (Parr, 2009) <i>How Do You Feel</i> (Browne, 2013) <i>The Colour Monster</i> (Llenas, 2018)
Festivals	<i>Boo Who?</i> (Holub, 1997) <i>The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything</i> (Williams & Lloyd, 2019) <i>Dear Santa</i> (Campbell, 2016) <i>Father Christmas Needs a Wee</i> (Allan, 2018)
Inclusion and multicultural awareness	<i>Amazing</i> (Antony, 2020) <i>Here We Are</i> (Jeffers, 2021) <i>It's OK to be Different</i> (Parr, 2001) <i>My Cat Likes to Hide in Boxes</i> (Sutton & Dood, 2015) <i>Something Else</i> (Cave, 2011)
Traditional stories	<i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> <i>Gingerbread Man</i> <i>Little Red Hen</i> <i>The Enormous Turnip</i> <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> <i>The Three Little Pigs</i> <i>The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse</i>

Extensive Reading Programmes

There are many reading programmes that can be used at schools to develop reading. A simple programme can include a reading corner in the classroom with books, children's encyclopaedias and dictionaries, magazines, comics etc. Learners can read during breaks or search for unknown words in the dictionaries and thus become more autonomous in their learning.

Krashen (2004) coined different terms for school-based programmes of extensive reading. Some of them are called silent reading, reading for pleasure, SSR (Sustained silent reading) or free voluntary reading. Some schools have created their own catchy names of the programme, e.g. DEAR (Drop Everything and Read). Despite different names, their structure is the same – pupils read silently during an assigned time at school. The programme can take place every day, once or twice a week, etc. Day and Bamford (2002, pp. 137–139) established the following guidelines for such programmes:

- The reading material is easy.
- Learners have a variety of reading material and topics available.
- Learners can choose what they want to read.
- Learners read as much as possible.
- The purpose of reading is related to pleasure, information or general understanding.
- Reading is its own reward.
- Reading speed is fast.
- Reading is individual and silent.
- Teacher guides the students.
- The teacher is a role model of a reader.

The main aim of extensive reading programmes is to immerse learners in reading as Krashen's research (2004) showed that students with more access to reading in school scored significantly better on reading comprehension tests than their peers who did not have access to in-school self-selected reading. These students also outdid their peers in vocabulary knowledge and overall academic achievement (Krashen, 2004). Some authors also claim that silent reading should not be followed by reading comprehension tasks as is sometimes the norm in developing reading skills at school. Some booklovers even jokingly claim they would stop reading books if they had to answer a set of comprehension questions after reading each book.

In Slovenia, several teachers are trying to introduce extensive reading programmes into their teaching either by dedicating a lesson to silent reading

Classroom Insight: DEAR

Anja incorporated the extensive reading programme called DEAR ('Drop everything and read') into her teaching in the third grade. Her pupils silently read books for ten minutes every lesson. They picked their own books from the book corner that Anja created before starting the programme. They read the books individually or in pairs in different places in the classroom – sitting, standing, lying on the floor etc. The reading process was silent. The children found the programme interesting and were looking forward to every lesson. She said that they ran to the reading corner every time when the programme was announced. She also noticed the children calmed down during the programme. They

were often disappointed when the ten minutes were up and wanted to continue with reading. When she asked her pupils what they liked about the programme they said that they learnt new letters and words in English, they deepened their knowledge of reading and they had fun. She listed some factors that she thought contributed to the success of the programme: the books included different levels and topics; the pupils had control over the selections of the books and the reading place; they could work in pairs; and the overall reading environment was encouraging. The programme also instigated her pupils to borrow more books in the library and read at home more often.

every week or by taking part in the so-called 'Reading Badge' or 'Bookworm.' These programmes are organised by the two leading publishing houses and attract thousands of learners every year. The percentage of primary schools that took part in the 'Reading Badge' programme in Slovenia in 2017 was 64.4% (Dagarin Fojkar et al., 2017). Generally, pupils read two to five graded readers of different length and level per year depending on their level of knowledge and all the pupils are awarded with a certificate upon a successful completion of the programme. These programmes start as early as in the 2nd grade but are most often integrated into FL instruction from grade 4 onwards. The main aim of the programme is to encourage extensive reading in a foreign language. The sub-aims of the project are to increase pupils' FL knowledge, to contribute to plurilingualism and, more specifically, to develop pupils' reading skills and vocabulary (Dagarin Fojkar et al., 2017). They do not follow all of the Bamford and Day's guidelines for extensive reading programmes (e.g. learners cannot choose the books they want to read), but they are very often the only reading programmes that learners participate in and are therefore an important part of the development of Slovene learners' FL reading skills.

Reflection Point

1. How did you learn to read in L1/FL? How did your parents help you with reading in L1? Which activities did the teacher use to help you read in English?

2. How much and what will learners need to read when they grow up? Which reading subskills will they mostly need in real life?
3. Examine some digital books on the internet.¹ Plan a lesson in which you use a digital book with your learners.
4. Ask your colleagues or other teachers if they know of any successful FL reading programmes. What kind of a reading programme would you include in your teaching and how would you do it?
5. Watch Carol Read do shared story reading. What are some of the teaching tips she provides?



Writing

We usually start with developing reading and writing skills in tandem and in both cases, it is important to progress slowly. At the beginning, writing is also very much integrated with listening and speaking, the skills which are targeted in the first years. Brewster et al. (2002) distinguish between two types of writing in the language classroom. One is 'learning to write,' where learners develop the 'mechanical' skills of writing, e.g. handwriting, spelling, punctuation, accurate grammar and vocabulary. The second type is 'writing to learn,' where they are involved in free and creative writing with the focus on meaning and expressing themselves.

There are many reasons why we need to develop writing as a skill. Through writing, learners will also acquire new vocabulary and practice spelling as well as language structures and other language features. Writing will provide a meaningful context for language practice. The more they work on writing, the better writers they will become. However, we should not neglect the two fundamental reasons for writing, i.e. to communicate a message and to express yourself. If we develop writing as a means of communication, learners will recognize its main purpose and be motivated to write. When learners write for different audiences and not only for the teacher, they become aware of the real-life reasons for writing.

Writing is perceived as a difficult skill to develop, especially with YLs, because of different reasons (Moon, 2008):

1. Writing is not acquired naturally like speaking; it is a complex skill one needs to learn.
2. When listening to someone, we understand the meaning of the words we hear with the help of body language and intonation, which are not available in writing.

¹ E.g. <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

3. Writing can be abstract, whereas children learn through concrete activities and materials.
4. When writing, you need to sit still, have well developed co-ordination and fine motor skills.
5. You need to have a high level of concentration in writing.
6. In writing you need to organise your ideas, plan what you are going to write, rewrite your text, etc.
7. There is usually no immediate feedback in writing as there is in speaking (e.g. your listeners indicate immediately when they do not understand you).
8. In English, extra effort is needed in writing due to the mismatch between sounds and letters.
9. The progress in learning to write is usually slow, esp. in an FL.
10. Writing activities are time-consuming and are therefore often assigned as homework. Without proper step-by-step preparation for writing in the classroom, learners will struggle at home and will not be able to produce a satisfactory text.
11. Writing in English can be demotivating if the teacher gives priority to accuracy over content. Getting your written text back full of red correction marks will reduce your aspiration to continue with writing.

Writing is also a difficult skill to acquire because it involves many subskills, such as handwriting, spelling, punctuation, use of layout, selection of correct and appropriate vocabulary, grammar, word order and writing conventions, organisation of ideas, planning what to write, use of cohesive devices, linking sentences and paragraphs, etc. YLs will first focus on the basic subskills and gradually move towards the more complex ones. Teachers can facilitate the whole process of learning to write in many ways, first by making it meaningful and purposeful and by selecting appropriate tasks for learners. Writing needs to be developed step by step. It needs to be a well-planned part of the curriculum and not a side product when there is some time left in the lesson.

Implementing a process-based approach to writing (Table 6.4), in which the teacher guides the learners gradually and systematically towards the end-product, is essential in developing writing skills.

Developing writing strategies with learners, such as planning their work, considering their audience, how to draft, revise and edit their work helps them in developing their writing. Giving positive feedback and providing comments on content and not only on grammar and spelling will motivate pupils to continue with writing. Displaying children's written work in the

Table 6.4 Stages of the Process-Based Approach to Writing

Stage	Process
Brainstorming, discussion	To gather ideas about the writing task (e.g. by creating a mind map or making notes)
Drafting	To write down ideas, without worrying about mistakes
Redrafting, revising	To improve the draft individually or in pairs/groups
Editing	To correct mistakes; to check spelling, grammar, punctuation
Publishing	Sharing writing with the audience

classroom or in the hall or publishing it in a class/school magazine will show learners their work is valued and purposeful.

Teaching learners how to self-correct their written work is an indispensable writing strategy that will improve their writing skills. The questions below can help learners check their written work (Shin and Crandall, 2014):

1. Does my text have a title?
2. Does my writing have a beginning, middle and end?
3. Did I check my spelling?
4. Did I capitalise the first words in each sentence?
5. Did I write full stops at the end of each sentence or questions marks at the end of questions?
6. Is my handwriting easily readable?

Self-evaluation questions depend on the type of text learners have written. If it is a summary, we can also give them a list of key events in the story, so they check whether they have included them in their summary.

When we practice writing, it is advisory to work on different text types and genres. By focusing on texts, we draw the learners' attention to the various conventions or common features which make a text unique, such as the different elements which characterise a fairy tale (e.g. a typical beginning and ending). We can include writing letters, postcards, emails, stories, cartoons, advertisements, invitations, greeting cards, poems, recipes, shopping lists, etc. By working with a variety of text types, learners get to know the purpose, the layout, the vocabulary and the language structures of different texts.

Writing Activities

Writing activities commonly fall into four categories: pre-writing activities, controlled, guided, and free writing activities.

Classroom Insight: Postman Pat

Mateja practices writing with her learners in a variety of ways, but most of all, she tries to do activities where writing is used for communication. She brings empty postcards into the classroom and gives them to her pupils. Sometimes, pupils create their own postcards. First, they take a look at a postcard and discuss questions, such as 'Who wrote it?, Who got it?, Where is it from?' Then they

practice phrases used in writing postcards. Afterwards each child writes a postcard to a schoolfriend in the classroom. She assigns beforehand who is writing to whom so that each child gets a postcard. When they finish writing postcards, Mateja becomes a postman and delivers postcards to children in the classroom. At the end of the lesson, they write a reply to their schoolfriends.

Pre-Writing Activities

YLs in the first grades of primary school discover writing through other language skills. They look at the books and discuss how text is organised and they listen to rhymes and stories. They also begin noticing letters and words in books, e.g. when the teacher reads a big book to them, they try to identify certain words on the page. In addition to that, they need to develop orientation skills, i.e. how to write letters of a similar size, on the line and within the page. Starting with spatial orientation activities, such as moving within the boundaries of the classroom or a special place in the classroom can help them with orientation on a piece of paper later on.

Controlled Writing Activities

Controlled writing activities focus on practising the language and are usually the first writing activities. In the beginning stages, children usually learn the shapes and sounds of words, preferably through multi-sensory activities, e.g. writing letters into the air, on somebody's back or creating them with their arms or whole bodies (good for kinaesthetic learners), listening to rhymes and stories about the letters (for auditory learners), looking at pictures and videos of letters (good for visual learners), drawing letters into e.g. sand, rice, paint or creating letters out of clay or play dough (good for tactile learners).

A common controlled writing activity is tracing and copying simple words. Copying can be made more interesting by varying the activities, such as asking children to select words to copy from a list or copy only words which contain a certain letter, or only sentences that are true or meaningful to them, etc. A wide repertoire of games and activities can be used in the initial stages of writing, such as crossword puzzles, 'word snakes,' unscrambling words or sentences, or filling gaps with given words or sentences, etc. Delayed copying, suggested by Scott and Ytreberg (1990), is another task where learners read

a sentence, try to keep it in their memory (e.g. after the teacher has erased it from the board) and then write it down as it was written. This can be done with movement, with the so-called ‘running dictation,’ where a short text (or just words) is put on the wall and children have to run to the text, remember as much as possible and write it in their notebooks or dictate it to their classmate who writes it down.


Controlled writing activities do not need to be tedious. Learners can develop their creativity in designing ‘word pictures’ or calligrams, words in which the design and layout of the letters creates a visual image related to the meaning of the words themselves (Figure 6.2).

Guided Writing Activities


Guided writing activities offer less support to the learner than controlled writing activities, but they still ‘guide’ the learners in the writing process, usually by providing them with language they need for writing. Learners get support in the form of models, parts of sentences or pictures. Common guided writing activities are based on gap-fill activities. The three writing activities (Figures 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5) are designed so as to guide the learners in their first writing attempts. In the activity in Figure 6.3, the




Figure 6.2 An Example of a Calligram




1 BROWN



2 WHITE



3 SAD



4 HAPPY

1. The dog is _____.

2. The dog _____.

3. The _____.

4. _____.

Figure 6.3 Guided Writing Activity: Example 1

My (dream) pet is a _____.
Its name is _____.
It is _____ (colour)
It has got _____. (body parts)
It has got _____. (body parts)
It is _____ (characteristics).
It likes _____. (activities)
It eats _____.
It _____.

Figure 6.4 Guided Writing Activity: Example 2

If you're angry and you know it, kick your leg.
If you're angry and you know it, kick your leg.
If you're angry and you know it and you really want to show it,
if you're angry and you know it kick your leg.
(Nadja, aged 9)

Figure 6.5 Guided Writing Activity: Example 3

learners need to describe the dogs in the pictures. As can be seen from the procedure, the learners become more and more autonomous with each sentence.


In the guided writing activity in Figure 6.4, learners are required to complete sentences with their own words based on the support given.

Another type of guided writing activity requires learners to put sentences into the correct order or write a text based on a model, e.g. a postcard, an email, a poem or a song. Figure 6.5 is an example of a song rewritten on the model of the song 'If you're happy.'

Guided writing activities may also be linked to reading tasks, using the transition from reading into writing as a scaffolding strategy. As we can see from the task in Figure 6.6, pupils first read a description and complete the text with the given words and then move on to a guided but at the same time more personalised activity in which they describe their own picture, using the first texts as support.

Free Writing Activities

Free writing activities practise 'real' writing and not just the language forms. The language is not provided, but instead, it is the learners' own language,



designed by freepik.com

Complete the text.

bedroom bookcase house kitchen

In this _____ there is
a living room, a _____,
a bedroom, and a bathroom.

In the _____, there is
a bed and two lamps.

In the living room, there is a sofa, a plant
and a _____.

Draw your dream house and complete the text.

In my dream house, there is
a _____,
a _____ and
a _____.

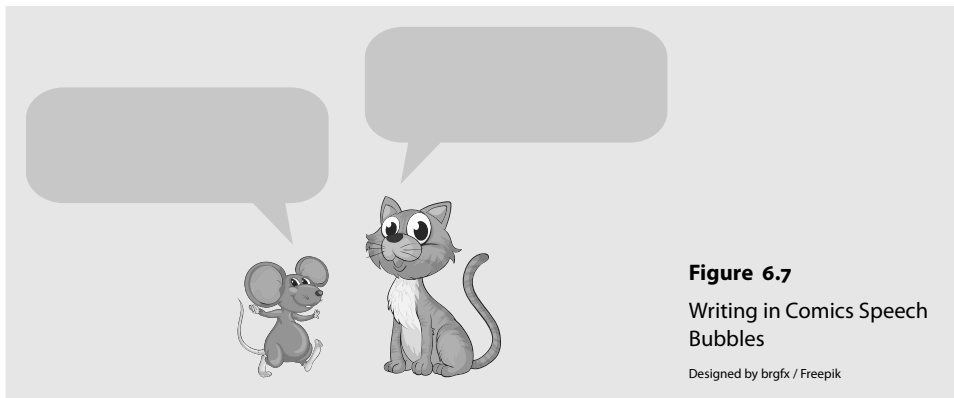
In the _____, there is
a _____ and
a _____.

In the _____, there is
a _____ and
a _____.

Figure 6.6 Example of a Reading-into-Writing Activity

regardless of their level. The teacher offers them help when they need it and can support them with activities before writing. Free writing activities give learners a chance to express themselves to a real audience.

In free writing, learners can write a variety of text types, such as messages, postcards, letters, advertisements, etc. They can be engaged in creative tasks, such as writing speech bubbles or acrostics. It is important for the teacher to guide their writing using the process approach. Below is an example of an



acrostic poem in which the first letter of each line spells out a word. The pupils may be given the task to write an acrostic name poem, in which each new line starts with a letter from a name (the pupil's name, their friend's name, etc.):

Easy-going
Magical
Amarzing

Comics with empty speech bubbles (Figure 6.7) can efficiently be used in more creative free-writing tasks. Such tasks are particularly suitable for lower levels as the text in the bubble may be simple and colloquial. Since it is supported by the visual context, it does not need to include descriptions and explanations which require more advanced writing skills.

Learners can create (mini)books with descriptions and pictures of different animals, clothes, seasons or any other topics and display them in the (class) library. They can also write their storybooks or adaptations of well-known stories.

Writing does not need to be an individual activity. Learners can write in pairs or in small groups, contributing different ideas and editing their work together. This is usually more motivating for learners and it also improves their writing skill effectively. You may find such kind of writing under the term 'collaborative writing.'

Having e-pals and writing emails or postcards to children in other parts of the world is another way of promoting purposeful writing with real audience. Teachers often engage in international projects where learners are paired with same-age learners and they write to each other, usually with a given topic so that it is easier for them to write. They can introduce them-

selves, write about their family, hobbies, their likes and dislikes, their school days etc. When they write emails, they can also share photos of their pets and families, schoolwork etc. If they exchange postcards, they can admire different landscapes and discuss stamps in different countries.

Shin and Crandall (2014) propose a writing activity where learners design photo autobiographies. They take photos of the things that are important in their lives and create a photo book. Next to the photos, they write captions briefly describing the events and people in the photographs. Another option is for them to create an online class book, each contributing a few photos with captions. They can exchange this class book with another class (Shin and Crandall, 2014).

Reflection Point

1. How did you learn to write in English? What was difficult for you? What kinds of texts did you write in the first years of your learning?
2. Take a look at a unit in a course book for the 4th or 5th grade. Find all the activities that focus on writing. Which subskills of writing do they develop? Which level are they at (text, sentence, word, letters/sounds)? Are they controlled, guided or free?
3. Design an authentic writing task where learners write for the audience and to express themselves. Make a list of real audiences for your students' writing.
4. Conduct an interview with primary school learners of different ages. What is their attitude towards writing in English? What kinds of writing activities do they like? What do they find difficult in writing?
5. Watch Jodi Crandall's webinar on how to develop reading and writing with YLs. What are some of the writing activities she suggests?



Key Takeaways

- Exposure to the written word (e.g. noticeboard, displays, posters, a reading corner) is part of developing reading and writing from the beginning of learning an FL onwards.
- Extensive reading develops learners' reading skills, vocabulary and overall academic achievement.
- Writing in an FL classroom needs to be purposeful and have a real audience.
- Writing in an FL is difficult for YLs, because it involves many subskills and it is abstract, therefore teachers need to plan it carefully, and offer the learners support and a lot of practice.
- Developing writing strategies with learners, such as planning their work, considering their audience, how to draft, revise and edit their work helps them in developing writing skills.

- Writing does not need to be done individually – use collaborative writing tasks in the classroom.

Further Reading

Dunn, O. (2014). *Introducing English to young children: Reading and writing*. HarperCollins Publishers.

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Teaching Grammar and Vocabulary

Chapter Objectives

- Examining different approaches to developing vocabulary and vocabulary learning strategies
- Analysing different approaches to teaching grammar to YLs
- Understanding the interrelation between vocabulary and grammar

Vocabulary and grammar are close friends and we store them together in typical combinations rather than in isolation. In fact, the more we know about a particular word, the more we move into grammar. Effective speakers do not store and retrieve individual words, but rather whole chunks of language. For example, native speakers of English are very good at retrieving whole pieces of language, they make grammar and vocabulary combinations such as ‘What’s up mate?’ or ‘Let’s have some coffee.’ without consciously thinking of grammar or vocabulary. This implies that the best way to teach and learn grammar and vocabulary is by considering them together. In addition, the teaching of vocabulary and grammar is integrated in the development of the four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The interrelation between vocabulary and grammar is especially relevant for young language learners who are not yet aware of the different aspects of language and can only be taught grammar and vocabulary using a holistic approach (Pinter, 2006; Cameron, 2001). In the two chapters below, we focus first on vocabulary development and then grammar, but always bearing in mind that these two aspects of language are tightly related and that one cannot be taught without the other. We focus on this aspect in the third chapter in which we present examples of a holistic approach to teaching grammar and vocabulary.

Vocabulary Focus

Vocabulary is not just about learning words; it is also about learning how these words function together and the contexts in which they are used. When teaching an FL, it is important to understand that recognising words does not automatically mean knowing them. For example, YLs might be able to connect the word ‘turtle’ to the picture of a turtle in a worksheet but will find it difficult to retrieve it when asked about the name of the animal in English. In order to ‘know’ the word, we need to expose learners to deliberate

Table 7.1 The Vocabulary Learning Process with Examples

Stages	Examples
1. Having sources for encountering new words	Watching a video about snakes (viper, rattlesnake, python, blind snake).
2. Getting the forms of the new words	Focusing on spelling and pronunciation of different types of snakes, the spelling and pronunciation differences and similarities between English and Slovene (e.g. in Slovene python is spelt 'piton').
3. Learning the meanings of the words	Matching the name of the snake with the picture of the snake, discussing the meaning of the compound – 'rattle' and 'snake,' why is the 'blind snake' called blind, analysing parts of snakes, discussing translations into Slovene etc.
4. Making a strong memory connection between the forms and the meaning of the words	Categorising snakes into venomous and non-venomous, discussing fear of different snakes, vocabulary games with snake names, etc.
5. Using the words	A school project in which pupils describe a snake of their choice (its habitat, characteristics, interesting facts, etc.), design a poster and present it in class.

practice in a variety of contexts. In addition, the more we know about a word, the more we enter grammar. For instance, from knowing the word 'friend' we can expand our knowledge about this word to include different grammatical aspects: 'friends' (plural), 'my friend' (possessive pronoun), 'best friend' (noun phrase, collocation), 'to befriend' (verb conversion), 'befriended' (past tense), 'a friend in need is a friend indeed' (a clause, a saying), etc. To sum up, vocabulary teaching encompasses three aspects of language – word form, word meaning and word use.

Most researchers agree that words 'should not be presented in isolation and should not be learned by rote memorization. It is important that new vocabulary items be presented in context rich enough to provide clue to meaning and that students be given multiple exposure to items they should learn.' (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 288).

According to Hatch and Brown (1995, p. 372), there are five essential steps in the process of vocabulary learning (see Table 7.1). Within these five steps, several activities will be carried out with the final aim of enabling the learner to use the new word productively. These activities will involve practicing the pronunciation and spelling of the item, creating mental connections by association to other words, using the words in different contexts and many others. And, most importantly, this will have to be done again and again or 'to use a metaphor, learning words is not like ticking off items on a shopping list when

Figure 7.1

Pupils Recycling Animal Vocabulary by Creating Improbable Animals from Different Animal Parts



they have been bought. It is more like a continual process of trying to keep a house clean; the cleaning (or learning) can be done one day, but needs doing again the next' (Cameron, 2001, p. 84).

In order for the children to internalise the new vocabulary, they have to be exposed to it several times in a variety of different contexts. Teachers are often frustrated to realise that the vocabulary from the previous lesson has been completely forgotten by the children after a week. It is unrealistic to assume that the learners will remember a list of vocabulary items after the first lesson. The new words will have to be recycled again and again in different activities and situations. For example, in teaching the learners the names of different colours, we can start by teaching the children a song (e.g. 'The Rainbow Song') in the first lesson, then in the next lesson play a game (e.g. a memory game or a simple TPR activity in which learners follow the teacher's instructions: 'Touch something blue!'), then present the children with a colouring page and ask them to colour the picture according to the teacher's instructions and so forth. In addition, different activities aimed at recycling the new vocabulary will have to be carried out in the next lesson, after a week, a month and again and again until we can see the pupils have acquired it.

Perceptive teachers will use every opportunity to activate the new vocabulary, for example asking learners to take the pencils of a particular colour before starting drawing or going around the classroom and commenting on the colours of the children's clothes ('I really like your blue sweater!'). In addition, Linse (2005) points out that learners should deal with new information at a deep-processing level, which involves higher-order cognitive skills and the learner's personal interest. Deep processing will help the learners to remember the new words more efficiently, for example by connecting them with their previous knowledge, which is much more effective than rote learning

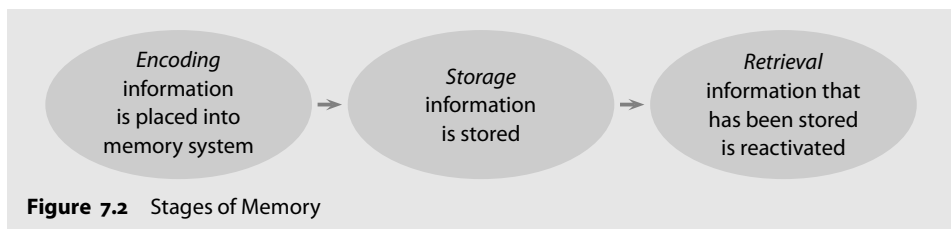
and memorising lists of words. According to Nation (1990, in Cameron, 2001, p. 85), in order for a word to be learnt, a pupil needs to be exposed to it at least five or six times. There are at least two different ways of presenting the meaning of new words:

- by demonstrating the meaning (using realia, using gestures, performing an action) or using pictures (photographs, drawings, moving images, etc.);
- by verbal explanation (providing a definition, providing a defining context or using translation).

Imagine we have to explain the meaning of the word 'toothbrush.' We can bring a toothbrush to class, we can perform the action of brushing our teeth, we can show a picture of a toothbrush, we can give a definition (e.g. *a small brush with a long handle for cleaning teeth*), we can describe the context in which it is usually used (e.g. 'If you want to have nice white teeth, what do you need?') or we can simply provide a translation (in Slovene *zobna ščetka*). The technique used will depend on the level of the learners and the classroom situation. Of all the techniques listed, perhaps the least effective is to provide a translation. This is because all the other techniques require some cognitive or mental effort from the learners which helps them establish associations and memorize the concept. On the other hand, sometimes translation is the most appropriate and effective way to describe meaning and it also helps learners to make strong memory connections. A good idea is also to ask the pupils to find translations and thus encourage cross-linguistic competence.

Making Strong Memory Connections

Psychological research has produced a great deal of knowledge about long-term memory, and this research can be useful as we try to understand how memory works and how we can help our learners to remember something better. The piece of information that we want to remember must be *encoded*, *stored*, and then *retrieved* (Figure 7.2). Encoding can also be described as the process by which we place the things that we experience into memory. We are more likely to remember information if we encode it in a meaningful way. Storage refers to maintaining information over time. Relating to what children learn to their own experience will help them store information they have to remember better. For example, if we are talking about food, learners will remember words for different kinds of food better if they have to decide if they like the selected food items, if they have ever tried or wanted to try



some of them. Retrieval refers to the process of reactivating information that has been stored in memory. Studies have found that we are more likely to retrieve something from memory that has been presented to us early or later in a list. One explanation for this is that when we hear the first words in the list, we automatically start to rehearse them, making it more likely that they will be moved from short-term to long-term memory. But for the words in the middle of the list, this rehearsal becomes much harder (Bailey & Pransky, 2014). This has important implications for teaching an FL to YLs. We might consider, for example, putting more important vocabulary at the beginning of the list or limit the number of vocabulary items to be learnt.

When pupils learn a new word, it first enters their short-term memory. Now the role of the teacher is to make the vocabulary available for the long term by using a range of vocabulary memorizing activities. One way of making strong memory connections is to present vocabulary in an organised way. This can be done by (Cameron, 2001, pp. 87–89):

- organising vocabulary by theme (e.g. food, clothes, family, etc.),
- using whole-part relations (e.g. body – arms – fingers – nails),
- building vocabulary from general to specific hierarchies (e.g. furniture – chair),
- using clines or degrees (e.g. hot – warm – cold),
- organising vocabulary in ‘ad-hoc’ categories (e.g. things to take on the school trip).

In this way we also teach children different memorising strategies. A very efficient strategy is the so-called memory palace technique which was invented already in ancient times. In this technique, we associate a location we are familiar with – such as one’s flat or house, or the route we take to work or school – with the items we are trying to remember. It works because we are visually pegging (or ‘placing’) representations of what we want to remember in places we already have strong memories of.

Thornbury (2002) points out that similar forms tend to be located close to

each other in our mental lexicon but that meaning seems to be more important than form. As a proof of that he refers to experiments in which learners are asked which of these questions is easier to answer:

1. Name a fruit that begins with *p* or
2. Name a word that begins with *p* and is a fruit.

Although the focus is on form and meaning in both cases it seems that it is easier to access the vocabulary item through meaning, so most learners would choose the first option. This suggests that our mental lexicon is based on meaning but that there is also a form-based back-up (Thornbury, 2002).

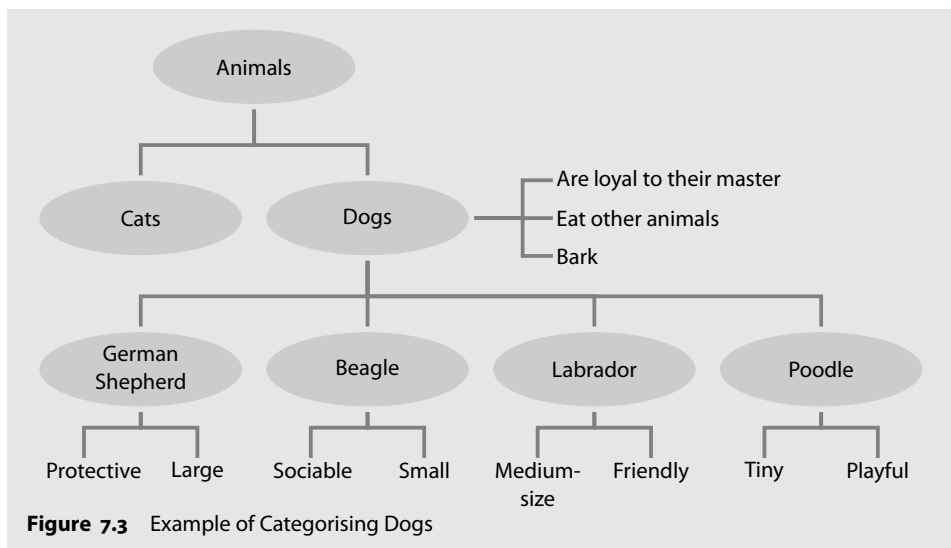
Words as Concepts

Children develop their conceptual knowledge as they acquire experiences in their environment. As they grow, they learn to make different associations between words. Research has shown that younger children tend to make more syntagmatic associations, such as connecting ideas from different word classes (e.g. chair – sit), while later on they are more likely to produce paradigmatic responses, which connect two concepts from the same word class (e.g. chair – table). This process corresponds to the development stage in which children develop the ability for abstract thinking (Cameron, 2001).

Another process which develops as children expand their mental lexicon is categorisation which is based on different hierarchies. Words are organised in hierarchies, with the basic level at the centre (e.g. dog) which can extend upwards to more general levels (e.g. animal) or downwards to more specific ones (e.g. German Shepherd). Figure 7.3 presents an example of categorising dogs, including some basic characteristics of dogs in general and selected breeds.

Being aware of word hierarchies can help us build and organise sets of vocabulary items in the foreign language classroom, usually starting with basic-level meanings and then extending them to general or specific levels. We can say that some category members are more prototypical than others. For instance, some category members (robins and sparrows) are highly prototypical of the category birds, whereas other category members (penguins and ostriches) are less prototypical. What is important to note here is that we retrieve information that is prototypical of a category faster than information that is less prototypical (Rosch, 1999).

In addition, words are organised in networks of connections or 'schemas' which are activated when we come across a particular word. We have schemas



about objects (for example that a triangle has three sides and may take on different angles), about people (that Ann is a nurse, she's friendly, likes green tea, and always wears sandals), about events (such as the typical features of a wedding or a Christmas dinner), and about social groups (we call these group schemas stereotypes). Schemas are important because they help us remember new information by providing an organizational structure for it. Our existing knowledge can help us organize new information, and this organization can improve encoding, storage, and retrieval.

When children start learning an FL, they have already constructed a number of such schemas in their L1 and they are likely to map their L2 mental lexicon onto the existing structure, thus creating links that resemble those used in their L1. These schemas are culture specific and when we learn a foreign language, we may encounter problems when the schemas do not match (Lakoff, 1993; Cameron, 2001). For example, the word 'sports' will activate different schemas in different languages and cultures: while football may be at the very centre of the category for both Slovene and British people, skiing and rugby will hardly share the same place in the two cultures (Bratož & Kocbek, 2013).

YLS' Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Pupils need to be taught strategies which will help them acquire new vocabulary items. The best strategies are those which encourage learners to fig-

Table 7.2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Strategies	Examples
Encouraging learners to guess the meaning of new words by providing visual scaffolds.	A game by showing the pupils only one part of the picture.
Encouraging prediction in stories.	What do you think will happen, will the Gruffalo eat the mouse?
Helping them notice links to similar words in L1.	Does the word 'giraffe' look like a Slovene word you know?
Teaching them to use graphic signs.	Create diagrams, mind maps, word trees, etc.
Teaching them to sketch the words.	Making quick sketches that connect the words to something personally meaningful to them.
Teaching them various mnemonic strategies.	Choosing a keyword that cues you to think of the foreign word, such as 'cloud' in English and the name 'Klavdija' in Slovene, and then imagining a connection between them (e.g. a cloud over a girl called Klavdija), visualizing a familiar path and mentally associating vocabulary with specific locations or objects along the way, creating rhymes, etc.

ure out meanings of words on their own by using contextual clues or guessing the meaning from context. This will also help them deal with unfamiliar words outside the classroom. By encouraging children to look up words in dictionaries and build their own glossaries, they will become more independent and will be able to deal with new vocabulary also without the teacher. A good idea is also to teach children to create picture dictionaries by drawing or cutting/pasting pictures from newspapers or magazines (Linse, 2005). Table 7.2 presents some useful classroom activities aimed at developing YLs' vocabulary learning strategies.

Content and Function Words

Words of language are split roughly into two groups according to their role in constructing sentences: content words are those that carry lexical meaning, while function words are mainly used for linking and syntactic purposes. In the sentence

The little house in the street was built when my mother was a child.

the content words are nouns (house, street, mother, child), verbs (was built, was) and an adjective (little). They are an open set which means that new

members can be added as new concepts or objects are created or discovered. The others (modal and auxiliary verbs, articles and prepositions) are function words and are also termed closed-class words as their number is generally fixed within a lexicon (Diaz & McCarthy, 2009). They signal the relationships that words have to one another. In other words, we could say they are the glue that holds sentences together.

Content words are usually stored in networks, they can be talked about and their meaning can be explained or shown with pictures or flashcards. They can be learnt in a more planned and explicit way. In contrast, function words are learnt incidentally, through continued use in different contexts. Function word are thus best taught in activities in which vocabulary and grammar are contextualised and which enable learners to notice the syntactic roles of words.

Using Flashcards

Flashcards are a common learning resource in the FL classroom. They are used by the teacher to introduce the meaning of new words, to revise vocabulary, practice pronunciation, as a warm-up activity etc. They can be used in several different ways by the teacher, either in teacher-fronted activities or in group tasks. Carol Read has proposed a number of ideas for using flashcards, from simple activities in which the teacher ‘flashes’ the cards quickly at the pupils and asks them to guess what is on the card to more organised group activities. An example of such activity is a game in which pupils are divided into groups and are given instructions to go to the flashcards with animal pictures hanging on the walls around the classroom: Group A walk to the monkey. Group B jump to the giraffe., etc.

Reflection Point

1. Imagine you have to remember a list of new words in Norwegian (kanin, (rabbit), ekorn (squirrel), spise (eat), eple (apple), søvn (sleep), pinnsvin (hedgehog), øyne (eyes), frukt (fruit), nese (nose). How would you go about it? What strategies would you use?
2. Discuss the mistakes in these two sentences, the first contains a grammar, the second a vocabulary mistake: (1) I’m liking cake.* (2) Can I borrow your cadger?*. Which of the two examples is easier to understand? What does this tell you about the role of vocabulary and grammar in understanding utterances?
3. Watch Carol Read giving tips on how to use flashcards in an English classroom with YLs and create your own bank of flashcards using her ideas.



Classroom Insight: Hot Chairs

One of the most popular games for vocabulary revision in Ina's class is the 'hot chairs game.' She uses it for motivating pupils during the lesson but often also as a reward at the end of the lesson as the pupils really like playing it.

She usually follows this procedure:

1. She splits the class into two teams and places two empty chairs ('hot chairs') in front of the board, one for each group.
2. One member from each group sits on the chairs with his/her back to the board, facing his/her team mates.
3. She then writes a word or expression on the board. The vocabulary is related to the topic discussed so the choice is not so wide. With younger learners, she writes different words before the pupils on hot chairs turn their backs so they all see the words (e.g. all the names of animals

discussed in the lesson) but then she circles the ones which the pupils on hot chair are supposed to guess.

4. The aim of the game is for the students in the teams to help their team members on hot chairs guess the words on the board. Here she uses different instructions, for example, the pupils on hot chairs can only ask yes/no questions or the team members can only give synonyms or antonyms, etc.

In lower levels she sometimes asks two pupils from each group to sit on hot chairs as this releases the pressure on individual pupils. She varies the activities both in terms of team organisation (sometimes the activity is carried out with the whole class, sometimes there are more teams) and language level (including, e.g. idiomatic expressions or longer phrases for more advanced pupils).

Grammar Focus

Teaching grammar has undoubtedly been one of the most controversial issues in the history of English language teaching, strongly influenced by different approaches which have dominated the area of foreign language teaching in different periods. With the emergence of communicative language teaching, grammar was first marginalised as the focus shifted from accuracy to fluency.

Today we can speak of two different ways of understanding the role of grammar – the weak and the strong view (Nunan, 2015). According to the strong view, learners will 'pick up' grammar subconsciously through communicative tasks, so there is no need to teach it explicitly. On the other hand, the weak view sees explicit grammar teaching as beneficial for language development. There is a general consensus among researchers today (Nunan, 2015; Ellis, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2000) that there is a place for grammar in the foreign language curriculum, but that it should be considered in the context of meaningful communication and that learners need to be helped to link grammar items and structures with the communicative functions they perform in different contexts.

There is a general agreement among authors in the field of teaching En-

glish to YLs (Cameron, 2001; Brewster et al., 2002, Pinter, 2006) that it is possible to facilitate learners' natural acquisition of grammar through instruction. Pinter (2006) argues that it is natural for children to make grammatical mistakes in the early stages of language acquisition, not only in learning a foreign language but also in acquiring the first language. In fact, some mistakes are universal and not the result of negative transfer from L1. The teacher therefore needs to attend to language forms in different ways to help learners to internalise and automatize grammatical patterns so they can be retrieved efficiently in communication.

Building Block and Organic Metaphor

Cameron (2001, pp. 105–106) illustrates the difference between explicit and implicit grammar teaching from the YL perspective through two opposing metaphors: the 'building block' and the 'organic' metaphor. The building block metaphor implies the introduction of grammar rules one-by-one as discrete blocks of knowledge, often using metalinguistic labels to describe the rule and following the sequence from 'easy' to 'difficult.' The building block sequence is clearly not appropriate for younger children whose ability to think about language in abstract, formal ways is still limited. The author proposes using a more organic metaphor with YLs for the growth of internal grammar, one that does not see grammar learning as 'the piling up of discrete blocks of knowledge, but that captures the idea of non-linear and interconnected growth: grammar grows like a plant, perhaps, watered by meaningful language use, and pushing out new shoots while older stems are strengthened' (p. 106).

However, this does not mean that it is not useful or sensible to teach YLLs grammatical patterns explicitly as analysed language (cf. Ellis, 2006). On the contrary, Cameron (2001) suggests occasionally applying explicit grammar instruction also to children – as a 'fertiliser at certain key points in the growing season.' We would like to argue that this is a valuable metaphor in trying to calibrate and balance the introduction of different aspects of language in FL teaching.

Noticing Grammar

Brewster et al. (2002) further point out that failing to attend to language form and, more generally, accuracy, learners will have difficulties participating in activities which focus on purposeful communication. As noted above, one way of supporting learners in this is to make them notice the grammatical patterns of the foreign language and help them make these patterns

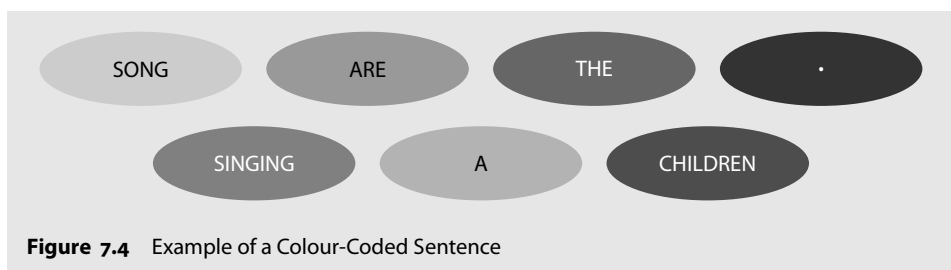
Table 7.3 Stages of Grammar Sequencing

Stages	Description	Teaching practice
(Re)noticing	Learners connect form and meaning	Using a story, a comic, a picture, etc. which illustrates a particular grammar point (e.g. the difference between 'this' and 'these' can easily be shown in a picture with one object on one side and two or more on the other).
(Re)structuring	Learners manipulate the forms and meaning	Several guided activities (movement activities, tasks on worksheets, etc.) in which pupils have to choose the correct form.
Proceduralising	Learners create their own meanings	Activities in which learners are encouraged to use the grammar point for a communicative purpose. They may play a game, prepare a presentation, create a poster, record a short video, etc.

part of their internal grammar. Batstone (1994) suggests a useful sequencing of grammar learning activities which consists of three stages – (re)noticing, (re)structuring, proceduralising (Table 7.3). Noticing or (re)noticing involves the learners becoming aware of the grammar patterns and connect form and meaning. At the second stage, which is referred to as (re)structuring, learners manipulate the forms and meaning through a series of controlled activities. In the last stage or proceduralising, learners use the language patterns by formulating their own meanings for communicative purposes. The three stages are especially valuable as they allow for a combination of both accuracy and fluency.

A grammar lesson can be contextualised and made meaningful in various ways which the children can identify with. For example, stories and storytelling can be used as efficient meaningful context for teaching the use of articles (Puhner & Dagarin Fojkar, 2018). The teacher can use audio or visual materials, realia and props, storytelling, problem solving, giving examples, showing grammar usage, playing games, etc. In an experiment carried out with fifth-graders, Lilić and Bratož (2019) concluded that activities based on grammar games (miming games, board games, card games, etc.) are a more efficient strategy for teaching grammar than more traditional ELT activities. It is also important to consider that YLs are good observers. In order to make sense of what they hear or see, they make use of contextual clues, such as movement, intonation, gestures, actions and messages (Arikan, 2009).

An important Issue related to learning and teaching grammar at this stage is the age at which it is appropriate to move to more explicit grammar teach-



ing with a focus on rules and language analysis. Read (2008a) points out that it is not sensible to teach grammar explicitly before ages 8–10, but also stresses that this decision depends on the educational and cultural context of learning. Her reference book *500 Activities for the Primary Classroom* includes a number of valuable activities aimed at raising YL's grammar awareness.

Teaching Grammar in Upper Primary Classes

Older learners are able to grasp grammar at a more abstract level and are probably already familiar with some metalinguistic expressions in L2, like 'sentence', 'nouns', 'verbs', 'tenses'. We can therefore use more explicit grammar activities and analyse or compare different language points. Pupils may be encouraged to study parts of a structure and then find or create similar patterns. However, this should be always done in a contextualised task, such as by focusing on a story or picture. A useful technique is also to use colour coding for labelling different sentence parts (e.g. yellow for nouns, blue for main verbs, red for auxiliary verbs, green for articles, etc.), jumble up the words and ask pupils to create new sentences following the color-coding scheme (Figure 7.4).

A number of teachers have also recognised the benefits of using inductive, discovery-oriented techniques in teaching grammar. Rather than presenting a grammar rule to the students, the teacher leads them towards a generalised grammar rule and lets them discover the grammar point for themselves. For example, instead of presenting the differences between the present simple and the present continuous, the teacher may decide to provide some examples for comparison and ask the learners a series of questions. Using the dialogue below, which illustrates the basic differences between the uses of the present simple and present continuous, the teacher might ask the following questions to help the learners formulate the rule: Can Alex come out to play football with Pete? Why not? Does he play his guitar on Mondays? Does he always play the guitar at the same time?, etc.

Classroom Insight: Discovering Grammar

Pia often uses discovery-based techniques for making learners notice a grammar point even in lower levels but without using metalanguage. For example, when teaching the plural of nouns, she first asks students to match names of animals in singular and plural (duck, ducks, pig, pigs, horse, horses, cow, cows, sheep, sheep) with pictures of one or more animals. In this way she guides them into noticing the difference between the singular and the plural and noticing the example of the irregular plural in 'sheep.'

The learners then copy the names of animals in a table under two categories – 'one' or 'two or more'. She then helps them to formulate the rule, adding also the example of irregular plural as a special case.

Examples	One	Two or more
	a duck	ducks
	a pig	pigs
	a horse	horses
	a cow	cows
	a sheep	sheep
Rule	a duck	no 'a' + s = ducks
		<i>Special case</i>
	a sheep	+ ø = sheep

In this way, rather than explaining the rule, she leads the learners to discover it for themselves. They also make their own poster with the rule and hang it on the wall in the classroom, so rather than correcting errors directly, she just points to the poster and helps the pupils correct their own mistakes.

Pete: Can Alex come out to play football?

Alex's mum: Maybe later. He is playing his guitar right now.

Pete: Oh, really? Right now?

Alex's mum: Yes. Well, he plays his guitar at this time every day.

Vocabulary and Grammar Combined

The best way to teach grammar to YLs is to use a holistic approach and combine grammar teaching with vocabulary development (Pinter, 2006). This is especially important for the learners in the first grades (aged 6 to 9) who are not yet able to fully grasp the concept of grammatical categories. A good source for combining the teaching of both grammar and vocabulary are repetitive or cumulative stories, such as *Gruffalo*, *The Enormous Turnip*, or *Chicken Little*. As the children do activities on the basis of these stories, they are exposed to various grammatical features of language (prepositions, articles, tenses, etc.). Pinter (2006) points out that when using stories with YLs, they will recognise the past tense as the natural tense for stories and will associate it with the right use without having to learn it explicitly through language practice.

Another good resource for combining grammar and vocabulary are songs. A good example is a song from the course book *Reach for the Stars 3* (Bratož et al., 2019). It is a TPR song in which pupils are encouraged to sing and at the same time move to show the meaning of the physical actions. As they par-

ticipate in this, they learn the meaning and pronunciation of nouns (horse, bunny, fish, cat), verbs (gallop, hop, swim, walk), a sentence structure in the present (I can + infinitive without to + like + a + noun) and four different communicative patterns: Yes, of course., It's so funny., If you wish., and Just like that. They develop and practice all these language points without paying explicit attention to either vocabulary or grammar, only through active participation.

I can gallop like a horse,
I can gallop like a horse,
Yes of course,
yes of course,
yes of course.

I can hop like a bunny,
I can hop like a bunny,
It's so funny,
it's so funny,
it's so funny.

I can swim like a fish
I can swim like a fish
If you wish,
if you wish,
if you wish.

I can walk like a cat,
I can walk like a cat
Just like that,
just like that,
just like that.
MIAOW!





Besides stories and songs, the teacher can use different kinds of games and classroom activities in which learners learn grammar and vocabulary in combination. Surveys in which pupils go around the classroom and ask their school friends different questions are especially useful for this purpose. In surveys, learners are usually given a task with a clear purpose and a set of vocabulary and language structures (e.g. 'Can you play (football)?' – 'Yes, I can./No, I can't.'). Whilst the teacher will see the activity as grammar practice and vocabulary development, the learners will carry out the task without being aware of the grammar focus.

A useful approach to teaching grammar and vocabulary to YLs is focusing on chunks of language. Chunks are complete phrases or word combinations which are very common in language and have specific meanings, such as 'I know what you mean.' or 'That's what friends are for.' They can be fixed ('What's the time?') or semi-fixed or partial ('Have you got (a pet/any cousins/a bicycle?'). Chunks function as single units so we do not need to analyse and construct a phrase or clause by combining different words. As such, they stick in our memory and can be retrieved when we need them. The most important characteristic of chunks is that because they are learnt as a whole, the grammar used is usually correct.

Classroom Insight: Class Surveys

When focusing on grammar with her YLs, Tina often uses a variety of class surveys. With younger learners, the surveys are usually small-scale, the task may be to survey as few as five school friends on a certain topic. For example, when talking about food, the survey question may be ‘Do you like (apples, bananas, oranges, cherries)?’ – ‘Yes I do./No, I don’t.’ Before the survey, Tina uses a well-known tune and rhythm to drill the communication pattern. Then she gives out tables for the pupils to fill in the results. She also always

encourages the pupils to report the results of the survey, for example: four pupils like bananas, two like oranges and one likes cherries. With older pupils, the survey task and the language can be more complex (e.g. ‘How often do you have (cereals, fruit, bread and butter, a toast etc.) for breakfast?’). Learners in higher levels are also encouraged to prepare a written report and a full presentation of results. Here Tina provides them with a range of useful chunks (‘The survey shows that ...’, ‘As we can see from the table, ...’).

				
Sara				
Tim				
Jan				
Ema				
Kristina				

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Reflection Point

1. What is your attitude towards teaching grammar to YLs?
2. Do you agree with the following statement ‘Grammar is too difficult for YLs so we should not teach it’?
3. Watch a video in which the presenter describes a grammar game for teaching the present continuous. Discuss how effective games are for developing YLs’ grammar competence.



Key Takeaways

- Vocabulary should always be developed and learnt in rich contexts.
- There are clear benefits in using the noticing approach to teaching grammar.
- Teachers can help their students to enhance long-term memory connections by encouraging them to use vocabulary learning strategies.
- In the YL classroom, grammar and vocabulary are best taught and learnt in combination.

Further Reading

- Read, C. (2008a). *500 activities for the primary classroom*. Oxford University Press.
- Lilić, P., & Bratož, S. (2019). The effectiveness of using games for developing young learners' grammar competence. *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*, 16(2), 49–61.
- Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to teach vocabulary*. Pearson Education.

Language Learning Materials

Chapter Objectives

- Reflecting on the role of textbooks and other materials in teaching YLLs
- Identifying the advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks for teaching English to YLs
- Understanding the importance of evaluating materials for teaching YLLs
- Becoming familiar with the criteria for evaluating FL materials and textbooks

One of the central questions in the FLT is related to the use of appropriate materials. While there is a wide array of instructional material available to teachers today, from flashcards, posters, story books to a variety of web sources, the most commonly used FL material still seems to be the textbook (also referred to as the course book, student's book, or activity book). In fact, we could say that few teachers today enter the FL classroom without a course book in their hands. But is this also the case in the YLs' classroom?

Several authors (Ghosn, 2019; Tomlinson, 2012) have recently argued that the textbook-based approach might be less appropriate for the pre-school and lower primary school level, especially if it implies a formal, teacher-fronted teaching style. Ghosn (2019) argues that typical course book texts, such as dialogues, are often inauthentic and drill-based, which means that YLs will find them less motivating and hard to identify with. In addition, traditional textbook-based instruction is less suitable for the first grades of primary school as children's L2 literacy is not fully developed yet while they might also still be struggling with L1 literacy. In selecting the appropriate materials, it is therefore vital to take into account both the learners' cognitive development and their psycho-social-motor needs (Ghosn, 2019). Ellis (2016, p. 216) argues convincingly that YLs should be provided with 'plentiful input, interactive input-based tasks and text-creation materials' as they are not yet able to perceive and appreciate language as 'an object that needs to be studied.' Ghosn (2019, p. 385) thus proposes that materials for YLLs incorporate basic comprehension strategies, word study and spelling instruction, as well as modelling of the writing process. This implies that there are clear benefits in using a variety of materials (such as picture books, games, discovery-oriented texts, etc.) and approaches which do not comply with the traditional textbook model, but which are focused on fostering motivation for FL learning and maximizing learners' exposure to L2 language in use. It

Table 8.1 Pros and Cons of Using Textbooks for Teaching an FL

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide teachers with a structured curriculum and clear lesson objectives. • Give the teacher a sense of direction and continuity. • Provide well-designed resources which are attractive for YLs because they are often bright and colourful with lots of pictures and images. • Are a good source of language. • May save precious teaching time as they provide teachers with supplementary materials such as flashcards, posters, audio material, etc. • Are useful for novice and less experienced teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often show an idealised view of the world and fail to take into account the learners' cultural context. • May be inauthentic and not really representative of language use, with a lot of repetitive material. • Often fail to meet the needs and level of local learners, they may be too easy or too difficult for them. • May be relied too much on by teachers who might feel they have to cover every point in the book. • Are often followed like recipes, encouraging teachers to be less creative and innovative. • Are usually designed for an average student so they rarely cater for mixed-level classes.

is also worth noting that a number of modern textbooks have managed to successfully integrate these aspects by including a variety of materials and activities suitable for YLLs.

Generally speaking, there are both several benefits and drawbacks of using textbooks for teaching a foreign language (Table 8.1). On the one hand, a textbook provides the learner and the teacher with a structure and a system and thus gives them consistency and a sense of direction. In addition, textbooks provide teachers with well-designed resources and activities, they are also a good source of language and a learning support (Tomlinson, 2021; Richards, 2001). Textbooks also save precious teaching time and may be especially useful for novice teachers who are still developing their teaching strategies and building their bank of materials and resources. However, as Zohrabi et al. (2014) point out, the textbook may both encourage or discourage the learners depending on the quality of the activities and materials included. Since textbooks are often written for developing selected teaching aims, the textbook language may be inauthentic and not really representative of language use. Furthermore, they generally contain non-problematic content, acceptable for different contexts and cultures, which means they often show an idealised view of the world (Richards, 2001). Tomlinson (2021) also points out that the modern global coursebook which caters for a global learner fails to meet the needs of particular groups of students and argues in favour of using more localised materials which take into account the stu-

dents' educational, cultural and social context. Finally, the role of the teacher who relies too much on a course book may be reduced to that of someone who merely 'follows the recipes,' a user of materials and activities developed by other people.

With the advent of communicative language teaching, it became clear that languages were best learnt experientially, through language use (Thornbury, 2013). An important question we could ask at this point is to what extent are FL textbooks able to fulfil this mission. While we may agree that the textbook provides the teacher and the learners with a structured curriculum and the basic material, it is also worth considering the warning against giving the centrality of textbooks in our instruction, expressed by Billows (1961, p. 91, in Thornbury, 2013):

The textbook is one – perhaps the most important – of many visual aids. [But] we should never allow it, or any picture or sentence in it, to stand between our pupils and the concrete world [...] The language must not be allowed to stay imprisoned between the pages of a book.

Reflecting on the role of textbooks in teaching YLLs, it is worth emphasising that textbooks are not teachers but rather a collection of resources and a support to learning and teaching. Several criteria have been proposed for evaluating FL materials and textbooks (Ghosn, 2013). It is generally agreed that materials for all levels should be relevant to the learners, take into consideration their experiences and interests, develop the four language skills gradually and in an integrated manner, and cater for mixed-ability classes. With respect to teaching YLs, it is above all important to consider their cognitive psychosocial and motor development which should be reflected in different aspects of teaching, such as in the use of the appropriate methodology, activities, language competences, but also in the structure and the visual representation of the material. Table 8.2 (p. 136) presents a checklist designed especially for evaluating textbooks and other materials for YLs and includes comments on the efficiency and use of different aspects of teaching when using the materials. While the checklist presented is especially useful in the textbook selection stage, it is also a valuable resource for assessing the materials on a regular basis, after they have been used for some time.

Reflection Point

1. Think about the textbooks and materials you used when you were a pupil in primary school. Did you find them effective? Discuss the positive aspects of these materials and the less efficient ones.

Table 8.2 A Checklist for Evaluating YLs Textbooks and Materials

	Questions	Comments, additional questions
Methodology	Which approaches to teaching English to YLs can you identify/recognise in the textbook?	Such as the communicative approach, TPR, CLIL, story-based approach, task-based approach, multiple intelligences approach, or perhaps other approaches (e.g. experimental, discovery, experiential, active, cooperative, problem-solving approaches).
	What is the organising principle of the textbook?	Most textbooks are developed around a topic so the main organising principle is the 'organisation by topic.'
	How are the units titled?	Is the title abstract (e.g. 'Food') or more specific (e.g. 'A birthday party') or communicative ('Let's go on a trip')?
	How clear are the learning objectives?	The textbook may include the learning objectives for individual units, such as 'learners will be able to describe their own family.' The learning objective may also be worded in a way that reflects a more learner-centred approach, such as 'I am/will be able to describe my own family.'
	How much freedom does the teacher have?	Does the teacher need to rigidly follow the textbook? Does the book allow the teacher to use complementary materials and activities, use his/her own or the pupils' ideas, make changes?
Language competences	How does the textbook provide for developing the four language skills?	How are reading, writing, listening and speaking skills developed? Which language skills are foregrounded? Is there an appropriate balance among them?
	Which approaches to developing English literacy can you identify?	The textbook may contain tasks which reflect different approaches, the phonics, whole-word, language experience, or emergent literacy approach.
	How is the new vocabulary introduced?	How is the meaning of new words presented (through pictures, translation, etc.)? Does the textbook contain word lists or a glossary? How much new vocabulary is presented? Is it enough/too much/just right for your learners? Is the vocabulary recycled throughout the book?
	In what way does the textbook focus on accuracy?	Does the textbook deal with grammar? Grammar points may be presented explicitly or through noticing.

Continued on the following page

2. Analyse different textbooks and materials for YLLs using the Textbook evaluation checklist in Table 8.2.

As we have argued, the traditional textbook, which often implies a traditional lesson format, is not suitable for teaching YLLs. Using materials, such as illustrated storybooks, posters, songs, CLIL activities etc., which give context and meaning to YLs' foreign language learning, is usually a much more

Table 8.2 *Continued from the previous page*

	Questions	Comments, additional questions
Activities	How is language introduced in each unit?	Several books use comics or stories to introduce the linguistic context of the unit.
	What is the balance between controlled, guided and free activities?	Controlled activities are aimed at manipulating form and meaning while in free activities learners are encouraged to use the language freely to create new contexts.
	How much interaction do the activities encourage?	Does the textbook contain tasks which encourage interaction and cooperation in pairs or groups?
	In what way do the activities motivate the learners?	Do the activities reflect the learners' interests? For example, can they identify with the characters or activities in the stories?
	How efficient are the instructions?	Are the instructions in English or in L1? How detailed are they? Are they scaffolded by symbols (e.g. pen for writing) or illustrations?
Textbook layout and structure	Does the textbook have a clear structure?	Are individual units structured in the same way? Do the activities in different units have recognizable formats?
	Are there any revision pages or quizzes?	Some textbooks contain special pages aimed at revision and assessment.
	Does the textbook contain self-assessment or peer-assessment tasks?	Are the learners encouraged to assess their own learning? Is peer-assessment included?
	Is the textbook layout young-learner-friendly?	How easy is it for YLs to find their way through the course book? Look at the numbering, colour codes, special symbols used. Are the format, size and type of font suitable for children? Does the book provide additional materials (e.g. digital access, flashcards, games, etc.)?
	How efficient is the visual material in the textbook?	What kind of illustrations are used? Are the illustrations and photos appropriate for the learner's age level? What is the balance between illustrations/drawings and real-life photos? Comment on the cover of the book.

effective strategy. When selecting the appropriate materials for our teaching situation, it is also advisable to choose materials which enhance higher level thinking-skills and encourage active, discovery and task-based learning. This has also been increasingly recognized by the authors of several modern course books which feature activities that cater for YLLs. These include stories, projects, experiments, interactive tasks, daily routines, drama and other activities which take into full consideration the characteristics of this age group.

Last but not least, learners may be encouraged to create their own materials which does not require only cooperation but also creativity and higher-

Classroom Insight: Course Book as Support

In teaching different levels of YLs, Anita likes to combine different materials, stories and picture books, textbook materials, activities and worksheets she finds online, but also materials which she develops herself for different purposes. When using a course book, she always tries to introduce the texts and activities in an interesting, discovery-oriented way. Rather than starting a textbook activity by asking the students to open their books at a certain page and then telling them what they need to do, she uses a number of different strategies to raise their interest about a topic and motivate them into the course book. Here are some of the strategies she uses:

- Before doing an activity with the course book, they discuss a topic, watch a video, read a story, etc. and then use the textbook 'to find out more about it.'
- She asks a challenging question related

to a text or activity in the course book and then tells the pupils to check in the book. She uses questions like: Do you think ... is true? Did you know that ...? Does anybody know how/who/when ...?

- Before starting with the activity, she carries out a game with the pupils in which they need to find something in the book which is related to that activity (a word, a sentence, a picture, etc.) as quickly as possible.
- She prepares a list of statements and asks the students to decide whether they are true or false. Then she tells the pupils to check in the coursebook.

By doing this she makes sure pupils understand the textbook as a support to their learning and as one of the materials in the classroom which help them in their learning path.

order thinking skills. For example, pupils may be asked to create their own vocabulary board games which involves several important steps, such as thinking deeply about the content, organizing the information, and presenting it in a coherent and understandable format. In addition, when learners are actively involved in creating their own materials, they take ownership of their learning which increases both motivation and a deeper connection to the content.

Key Takeaways

- Traditional textbooks are less appropriate for teaching YLLs.
- Textbooks are primarily a collection of resources and a support to learning and teaching.
- When (re)evaluating textbooks and other materials, we need to consider different aspects, such as the methodology employed, the type of activities, the ways competences are developed and textbook layout and structure.

Further Reading

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Inside the Language Classroom

Chapter Objectives

- Recognizing the importance of routines for facilitating FL learning
- Examining the role of classroom interaction and teacher talk
- Giving efficient instructions in the target language
- Identifying various types of corrective feedback

The YLs' classroom is characterised by a number of different elements which require from the YLs' teacher great flexibility and a unique combination of efficient classroom management and language teaching strategies. Stepping inside such a classroom one would be able to recognise some typical features which are common for the everyday activity of a YLs' class, such as the use of routines for language development, a special emphasis on using various classroom communication patterns and an efficient use of teacher and student talk. In addition, one would be able to notice several different strategies used by the teacher to give feedback on learners' performance. An effective YLs' teacher will be able to incorporate these skills and strategies in order to enrich the pupils' learning experience and help them progress according to their capabilities.

Routines

It is a well-known fact that efficient routines facilitate teaching and learning. Especially in lower levels, teachers are well aware of the benefits of using familiar routines and predictable patterns in their daily classroom life. Learners are reassured by the existence of classroom routines because they know exactly what is expected of them and how they are supposed to act. Moreover, by using predictable patterns, teachers can save valuable classroom time and focus on meaningful instruction (Bratož & Žefran, 2014).

Routines can be defined as established patterns of behaviour or courses of action in which all the people involved know what is expected of them and how they should behave. Several authors in the area of FL teaching have emphasized the benefits of developing and reinforcing routines in the FL classroom. Cameron (2001) argues that routines give learners the opportunity to make predictions while at the same time providing a platform for variation and novelty where children can experiment with more complex language.

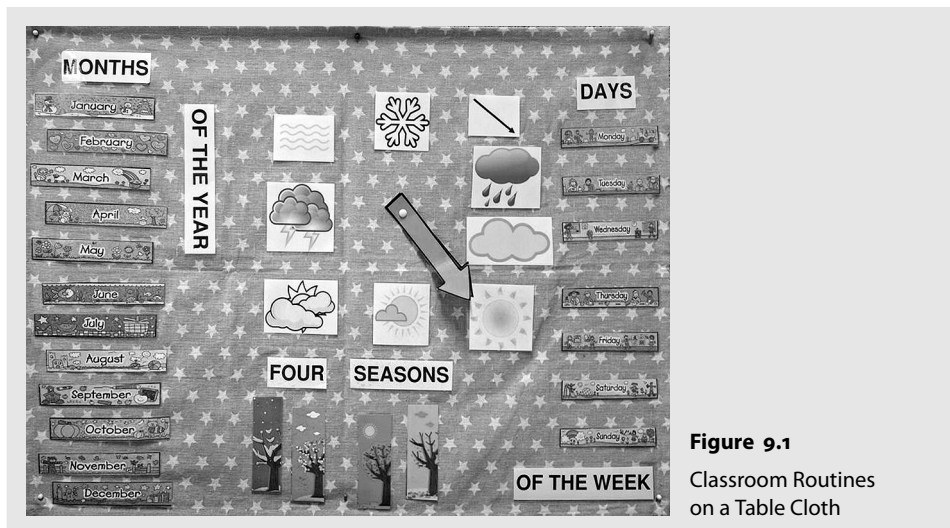
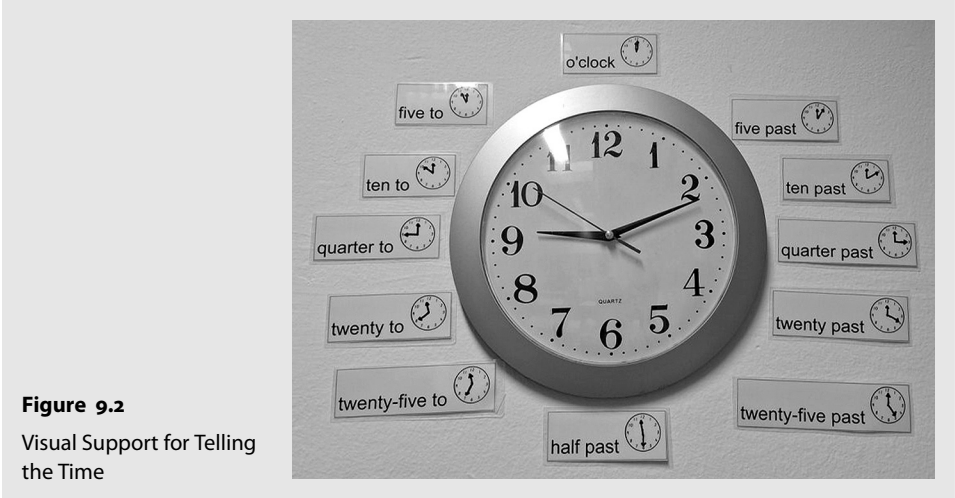


Figure 9.1
Classroom Routines
on a Table Cloth

Routines are especially valuable in lower grades where establishing predictable patterns of behaviour represents one of the most important instructional goals. Familiar routines, such as greeting the children, taking the register, starting and ending activities and tasks, moving around the classroom, collecting and returning homework, going to the toilet, tidying up and others have several positive effects.

Children feel confident about what they are expected to do in the classroom, they are encouraged to cooperate with their classmates in different situations and thus develop a sense of belonging to a community. In addition, establishing routines in an FL setting is related to the communicative goals of using as much of the target language as possible. By relying on daily routines teachers can maximise the exposure to English and promote its use by pupils.

Classroom communication is characterised by a high frequency of activities, such as turn-taking, giving instructions, maintaining discipline, as well as a wide range of other routine practices and characteristic communication patterns, allowing for an almost unlimited repertoire of repetitions. This constant and natural exposure offers a vast intrinsic potential in FL instruction. Aside from familiar routines which are characteristic of everyday classroom interaction, there are several other routine-like activities and situations which can be exploited for teaching purposes, such as following the calendar, telling the time, reporting on the weather, and celebrating birthdays and holidays. Teachers can make the most of such events and situations by intro-



ducing routine formats in their classes and thus give learners plenty of opportunities for repetition and prediction of characteristic language patterns.

There are numerous advantages to be gained by using a variety of established procedural and instructional routines in the FL classroom. However, we can do more than just exploiting the standard routine patterns which typically constitute everyday classroom life. We can capitalise on the habitual and repetitive nature of routines by establishing additional, unconventional classroom practices which can cater for different teaching objectives. For example, a teacher may decide to introduce a routine five-minute 'keeping-fit activity' in which learners in small groups take turns giving each other instructions on how to do the exercises. Besides the general goal of developing learners' speaking skills and increasing their confidence in communicating in a foreign language, this activity can be related to some specific teaching objectives, such as learning the language of instructions.

Especially in lower levels, teachers often see the benefits of building their

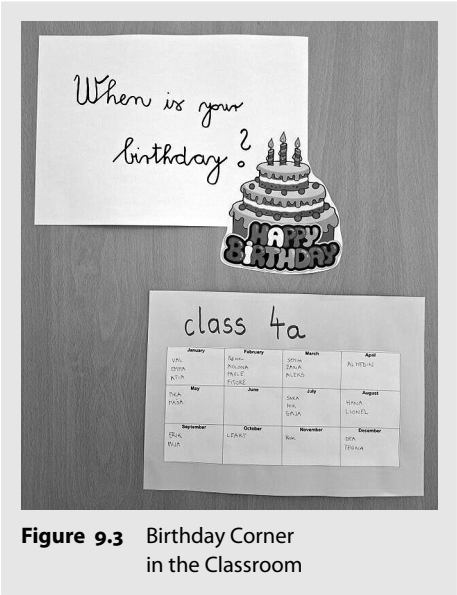


Table 9.1 A Lesson Structure Based on Routines

Beginning of the lesson	Greeting	Good morning, class! – Good morning, teacher. How are you today? – I'm fine, thank you. (Hello! song)
	Date	What is the date today? – Today's date is 19 November 2014.
	Day/time	What's the time? – It's 10 past nine. What day is it? – It's Thursday.
	Weather	What's the weather like today? – It's rainy and windy.
Main part	Attention getters	1–2–3 eyes on me! – 1–2 eyes on you!
	Classroom management	Be quiet!, Pay attention!, Who's absent today?, Make groups of four., Find a partner.
	Encouragement and feedback	Well done! Excellent job! Try again! Almost there! You've improved a lot.
End of the lesson	Brain break	Clap, snap, twist, repeat
	Exit ticket	The teacher has an exit routine (a hand slap, a sticker, a password, etc.)
	Farewell	Class, you were wonderful, you were great. See you next class and don't be late! – See you, teacher.

Notes Adapted from Shin and Crandall (2014).

lessons around a variety of routines, forming a routine-based lesson structure such as the one presented in Table 9.1. The different routines are usually associated with some typical communication patterns, such as the greeting pattern ('Good morning, children.' – 'Good morning, teacher.') or various question-answer patterns (e.g. 'What day is it today?' – 'It's Monday.'). In the YLs' classroom, pupils are usually exposed to these patterns through songs, such as the Hello Song in which the communication pattern 'Hello, how are you?' – 'I'm great/fine/sleepy/tired/hungry.' is first scaffolded through the song but can later evolve into standard everyday communication between teacher and learner without the support of the song.

A number of songs and chants are today available which are used by teachers as scaffolds to develop some elementary communication patterns and at the same time promote classroom interaction in L2. They are commonly set to the tune of well-known songs and nursery rhymes, such as 'Oh My Darling Clementine' or 'The Macarena,' and use the familiar tune as a scaffold. Some of these songs are explicitly aimed at developing a particular communication pattern ('The Weather Song'), while others are focused on learning vocabulary and correct pronunciation ('Months of the Year'). Chants and songs can also be exploited for scaffolding classroom management and giving instructions. A good example is the chant 'Make a Circle,' sung to the tune of 'London

Bridge Is Falling Down.' The children are encouraged to sing along and at the same time follow the direction to make a circle. Several web sites are today available offering a number of songs and chants, together with ideas and activities appropriate for classroom use. Some of the most popular are: British Council Learn English Kids, Super Simple Songs, Maple Leaf Learning.

Hello Song

Hello, hello,
Hello, how are you?
I'm great!
I'm fine!
How about you?
Hello, hello,
Hello, how are you?
I'm sleepy!
I'm tired!
And hungry, too!
And how are you today?
(Bratož et al., 2019)

Weather Song

(Tune: 'Oh My Darling Clementine')

What's the weather?
What's the weather?
What's the weather like today?
Tell us (child's name),
What's the weather? What's the weather
like today?
Is it sunny?

Is it cloudy?
Is it rainy out today?
Is it snowy?
Is it windy?
What's the weather like today?

Make a Circle

(Tune: 'London Bridge Is Falling Down')

Make a circle round and round,
round and round, round and round.
Make a circle round and round.
Make a circle! Make a circle big, big, big,
Small, small, small, big, big, big.
Make a circle big, big, big.
Make a circle!

Months of the Year

(Tune and movement: 'Macarena')

January, February, March, and April
May, June, July, and August
September, October, November, December.
These are the months of the year!

Classroom Interaction and Teacher Talk

The constant and natural exposure to the FL which characterises classroom interaction offers a vast intrinsic potential in FL instruction. As Mercer and Littleton (2007, p. 21) state, 'for a teacher to teach and a student to learn, they must use talk and joint activity to create and negotiate a shared communicative space.' This space does not only include the teacher's explanations or instructions for performing activities but all kinds of comments made by teachers during the lesson, such as asides, chit-chat, and jokes (Scrivener, 2011). Classroom communication can therefore be seen as a useful source of language input at all levels of foreign language teaching, including YLs (Cameron, 2001). In this regard Scott and Ytreberg (1990) explicitly maintain

Table 9.2 Useful Classroom Language

The beginning of the lesson	Hello, everyone. Good morning, everybody. How are you today? Is everybody ready to start?	Who is absent today? Did you oversleep? Did you miss your bus?
During the lesson	<i>Getting students' attention</i> Pay attention, everybody. Be quiet! Listen to me, please. Raise your hand. <i>Instructions during activities</i> Open your books on page ... Turn to page ... Look at activity five. Listen to this tape. Repeat after me. Who's next? One more time, please. The whole class, please. A full sentence, please. Louder, please!/Speak up. Whose turn is it to read? Who knows the answer?	<i>Classroom management</i> Get into groups of four. Go back to your seats. Work in pairs. Make a circle. Come out and write it on the board. <i>Giving feedback</i> Excellent! Well done! That's great! That's interesting! Not quite right. Try again. Have a guess. Not really./Not exactly. Practise makes perfect.
The end of the lesson	It's time to finish now. Have you finished? Tidy up.	Goodbye, everyone. See you tomorrow. See you next week.

that we should start with giving genuine instructions in English the moment the pupils start learning English.

In a study aimed at identifying the strategies used by EFL teachers to encourage classroom communication in the target language, Bratož and Žefran (2018) concluded that the majority of teachers surveyed are well aware of the benefits of using classroom communication for language development but are unsure as to how this can be done systematically. Among the most common approaches used for encouraging English classroom interaction reported by the teachers surveyed were 'insisting' and 'pretending not to hear.' At the same time, the results show that while teachers do encourage learners to use L2 as much as possible, they often turn to their first language when presenting new content, explaining grammar and disciplining. This suggests that there are clear benefits in using a systematic approach to developing classroom communication.

This was also stressed by Hughes (1981, p. 5) who maintains that teachers

Classroom Insight: English from Day 1

Klara believes that it is very important to use English from the very first day with a new group of learners so she plans her teacher talk carefully. She makes sure to include a lot of visual aids and gestures to scaffold every word and action she feels the learners might not understand. She is especially careful not to use unknown language without scaffolding in the first weeks as her plan is always to build a routine step by step. Here's an example of how she scaffolds her talk with a group of second graders:

Klara: Today I'm happy. (teacher smiles) And how are you? (pointing finger at pupils)
Are you happy? (teacher smiles)
Some pupils: Yes! Other PP: No.
Klara: Are you tired? (yawning and stretching)

Some pupils: Yes! Other PP: No.
Klara: Are you sad? (showing sad face and imitating crying)
Some pupils: Yes! Other PP: No.
Klara: Are you hungry? (rubbing belly)
Some pupils: Yes! Other PP: No.
Klara: (showing picture of a sad boy) Is he happy? (showing a big smile on her face)
Pupils: No.
Klara: Is he tired? (yawning and stretching)
Pupils: No.
Klara: Is he sad? (showing sad face and imitating crying)
Pupils: Yes.
She does the same thing with pictures showing other feelings – happy, hungry, tired.

should be trained in specialised classroom competence, using English 'both as the goal of their teaching and as the primer medium of instruction and classroom management.'

Several valuable strategies can be used in order to maximise student interaction in L2. It is especially important to develop a friendly and supportive atmosphere. This can be done in different ways, for example, by making sure learners are given enough time to process information and give an answer, arranging the seating so that pupils see each other, planning interactive activities by giving clear roles, etc. (Scrivener, 2011). Besides planning teacher talk, there are also clear benefits in developing pupil talk (both pupil-teacher and pupil-pupil) in a consistent and systematic manner (Table 9.3), such as by using a variety of games (memory games, dominos or bingo with typical phrases). An effective way of scaffolding pupil language is also to hang common phrases on walls around the classroom.

Several teachers have also come to see the benefits of hands-on activities in learning stations in which pupils rotate through different activities. Learning stations promote YLs' active engagement which enhances understanding and retention of the material learnt. In addition, learning stations can be designed to accommodate different learning styles and abilities and foster collaboration and communication among students. This promotes the development of social and interpersonal skills, which are valuable in real-world situations.

Table 9.3 Pupil-Induced Classroom Communication

Pupil – Teacher	Pupil – Pupil
I don't understand.	May I borrow your pen?
Pardon me?	Can you lend me your pen?
Can you repeat that?	Yes, of course. Here you are.
Sorry, I am not sure.	It's my turn now.
Please speak more slowly.	Can you repeat that, please.
Sorry, I couldn't hear you.	Who will start?
How do you say 'opica' in English?	Who will present this?
What does 'ferret' mean?	Can you help me?
May I go to the toilet?	Just joking.

Giving Instructions

Teachers are often reluctant to use the target language in giving instructions. As Scrivener (2011) argues, they find that there are so many difficulties with comprehension, especially with complex instructions, that they prefer to use their mother tongue instead. Gibbons (2002, p. 54) also points out that giving instructions in the target language is not an easy task, it 'may seem very obvious, yet it is often at the setting-up stage that even a well-designed task can go wrong.' Indeed, giving clear and understandable instructions is crucial for the success of an activity and failure to do so may lead to confusion and considerable time waste.

On the other hand, most teachers and researchers see clear benefits in developing the target language through classroom communication. A teacher giving the learners instructions on how to carry out a task may be said to be a typical example of classroom interaction. In addition, this kind of interactions serves a clear purpose and reflects the use of language in a real-life situation. In an environment in which teachers tend to give instructions in the target language, learners are constantly exposed to a number of characteristic communication patterns in the foreign language which can clearly be exploited for language teaching purposes.

Reflection Point

1. Discuss how you could improve this instruction. Which language is unnecessary? Which strategies could you use to make the instruction more efficient? 'Ok now, listen to me carefully, I'd like you to do this activity in pairs ... turn towards your neighbour and work together, in pairs. Do you understand? This is a game, you'll play a game together, ok? Now, take your notebook and a pencil. You will draw an animal in the notebook and your partner will guess what it is, ok? You can draw any animal you want, ok?'

2. Watch a video in which a teacher talks about different ways of grabbing the learners' attention in class. How effective are the strategies described?



A number of teachers have come to realise that it is possible to use only the target language in giving instructions in the YLs' classroom. However, it is really important to make sure the instructions are given with sufficient and appropriate scaffolding (Gibbons, 2002; Scrivener, 2011; Ur, 1999; Bradshaw, 2005). Here are some tips for providing clear and efficient instructions in the YLs' classroom:

- *Give Only the Essential Information.* When teaching in their mother tongue, teachers usually speak freely and often use unnecessary babble and chit-chat when talking to their learners about what they have to do. In the FL classroom, this free flow of speech has to be modified and adjusted to make sure the learners understand the instructions. Use short sentences and simple vocabulary so as not to confuse the children and lose their attention. This means that it is useful to consciously think about and systematically plan the language used. This is especially important in the initial stages of teaching. By starting with very simple and clear instructions in English (for example: 'Open your books!'/ 'Work in pairs!'/ 'Circle the correct word!'), the teacher will be able to build a special routine with the learners which will enable him/her to upgrade the complexity of the language of instructions later on.
- *Demonstrate the Instructions.* One of the most useful and practical strategies to use with young language learners is undoubtedly demonstration. The teacher may demonstrate the instructions in different ways, by playing the role of a student, but also using a pair or a group. Another efficient technique is to carry out an activity or game at class level and then ask the pupils to do the same in pairs or groups. In this way, the instructions are not given separately but are clear from the activity itself.
- *Use Gestures and Objects.* Gestures and facial expressions are an extremely valuable tool in the YLs' class. The first instructions a teacher gives are usually accompanied by very clear gestures and movement which function as scaffolding and facilitate comprehension. Teachers who tend to use the target language as much as possible also with beginners soon start to appreciate the role of gestures in conveying information. For example, even if we have never heard the word 'listen,'

we would be able to understand what the teacher is saying if she also cups her hand behind her ear. Bradshaw (2005) also points out that it is useful to make the gestures exaggerated and larger than life. Another useful advice is to use or point to objects and make use of the context, such as holding up and showing the things which the children will need for a task (a pencil, scissors, glue, etc.) and at the same time giving the instruction orally.

- *Give Instructions One Step at a Time.* Children in the first grades cannot concentrate for long periods of time and this is even harder for them when they have to process information they hear in a foreign language. It is therefore advisable to break down the instructions into easily manageable steps. Only when they have completed the first part of the task, are they ready to proceed to the second one. It is also a good idea to first organise the pupils into the seating or grouping arrangement planned and only then, when we have everybody's attention, start giving the instructions for the task. Another useful tip is to hand out the materials after giving instructions as pupils get easily distracted.
- *Make Sure Pupils Understand What to Do.* Teachers generally check for understanding by simply asking 'Do you understand?' However, this is not a particularly effective strategy as pupils may just nod without really understanding. As Scrivener (2011) points out, it is important to get concrete evidence from the pupils that they know what is required, such as getting one or two students to explain to the others what they have to do in their mother tongue.

By giving instructions in the target language, the teacher creates a natural and purposeful context in which the pupils are constantly exposed to the TL. However, in order for the teacher to efficiently exploit instructions for language acquisition, it is advisable to pre-plan the instructions carefully, think about how to modify and adjust the language to be used, and systematically organise every step.

Corrective Feedback

Generally speaking, corrective feedback refers to the teacher's response to students' utterances which contain a linguistic error. Its main purpose is to help learners correct their language use by showing them which responses are correct and which are incorrect and provide them with a model of correct language (Cameron, 1996). Several authors have argued that corrective feedback plays an important role in the learners' progress in learning an FL

Classroom Insight: Where is the Mouse?

When she has to give complex instructions in the first grade, Mia often decides to do the activity at class level first. Rather than giving the instructions to pupils on how to carry out the activity, they do it together first and then she just says 'Now you do it in pairs.' For example, in the activity 'Where is the mouse?', the pupils play a game in which they have to guess in which house the mouse is hiding. They have pictures of houses of different colours and a drawing of a little mouse. One pupil hides the mouse under the picture of a house and asks: 'Where is the mouse?' And his/her partner tries to guess 'The mouse is in the red/blue/yellow house.' Mia feels that

it would be too difficult for her pupils to follow the instructions in English, even with gestures and other scaffolding involved, so she always plays this game with the whole class first. Using pictures of houses with magnets on the board, she plays the game asking the pupils to put their hands over their eyes when she hides the mouse behind a house. Then she encourages them to repeat with her the communication pattern 'Where is the mouse?' – 'The mouse is in the house.' several times, using rhythm and clapping. When the class game is over, she gives them instructions (with gestures) to play the same game in pairs. And they always know what to do.

(Ellis, 2009; Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). While most studies focused primarily on corrective feedback with older children and adult language learners, Mackey and Oliver (2002) and Lyster and Ranta (1997) showed that feedback on errors can also be efficient with young (albeit not very young) learners.

Spoken Feedback

Lyster and Ranta (1997) have identified six different types of feedback by teachers to students: explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition (Table 9.4 on p. 152).

Another category, paralinguistic signal, was later added by Lyster et al. (2013). It refers to a corrective strategy in which the teacher uses a gesture or facial expression to indicate that the learner has made an error. For the example in Table 9.4, the teacher might point his/her finger at a third person to indicate that the form changes with number.

In a well-known study conducted by Lyster and Ranta (1997) with fourth and fifth graders learning English as a foreign language, the most used corrective technique by teachers were recasts which, however, turned out to be the least effective as they accounted for merely 31% of success in the correct use of learners. The most effective method in generating an accurate students' response to feedback was elicitation, with a 100% success rate in eliciting student-generated repair. One possible explanation for this is that YLs may not be able to notice recasts and recognize them as feedback while

Table 9.4 Types of Feedback with Examples

Type of feedback	Examples
<i>Explicit correction.</i> The teacher says what is wrong and provides the correct form.	P: She have got two brothers. T: No, this is wrong. She has got two brothers.
<i>Recast.</i> The teacher reformulates the sentence without the error.	P: She have got two brothers. T: So Ann has got two brothers? She has got two brothers.
<i>Clarification request.</i> The teacher checks potential misunderstanding by asking the student to repeat part of the utterance.	P: She have got two brothers. T: Are you sure she has got two brothers?
<i>Metalinguistic feedback.</i> The teacher uses comments or questions related to some grammatical rule without explicitly providing the correct form, sometimes also resorting to grammatical terminology.	P: She have got two brothers. T: What's the ending we put on verbs with 'he' and 'she'?
<i>Elicitation.</i> The teacher tries to directly elicit the correct form from the student, for example by deliberately pausing to allow students to 'fill in the blank' or asking questions.	P: She have got two brothers. T: She ...
<i>Repetition.</i> The teacher repeats the students' utterance in a correct way, often highlighting the error by using a particular intonation.	P: She have got two brothers. T: She HAVE got two brothers?

Notes Adapted from Lyster and Ranta (1997).

negotiating for meaning can help learners notice their errors and improve the inaccurate forms themselves.

Ellis (2009b) points out that there are a number of questions related to the use of corrective feedback, such as which strategy is the most efficient, which type of errors should be corrected, when they should be corrected, and whether they should be corrected at all. These issues reflect different approaches to teaching a FL which in turn point to different attitudes to mistakes in the FL classroom. In the spirit of the audiolingual approach, for example, mistakes should be avoided as they result in bad habits which means that there is little space for corrective feedback. On the other hand, humanistic approaches advocate mistake-friendly environments which promote positive assessment and the learners' self-image. According to Ellis (2009a), there is today a general agreement among researchers that corrective feedback does assist language acquisition and that the question we should ask is not whether to correct or not to correct but rather which corrective feedback strategies are the most efficient in a given situation.

Classroom Insight: My Mistake

One of the strategies Anja uses in order to make sure pupils see error correction as something positive is to make mistakes herself. For example, she deliberately misspells a word on the whiteboard and if the pupils point it out, she says 'Oh, thank you. Let's correct it together. You, see, also the teacher can

make a mistake.' If the pupils don't spot the mistake, she pretends to have noticed it herself 'Oh, I think I've made a mistake. Help me correct it.' In this way she creates a mistake-friendly environment and the pupils are used to being corrected, they expect it and even ask her for her feedback.

Corrective feedback is an important source of information for learners about how successful they are in their language learning. However, as Hattie and Timperley (2007) point out, its impact can be both positive and negative, depending on the feedback type and strategy used by the teacher. It is especially important to understand corrective feedback as part of the instruction process, providing information related to a particular task rather than an end in itself. As Hattie and Timperley (2007, p. 82) put it:

Feedback has no effect in a vacuum; to be powerful in its effect, there must be a learning context to which feedback is addressed. It is but part of the teaching process and is that which happens second – after a student has responded to initial instruction – when information is provided regarding some aspect(s) of the student's task performance.

In addition, it is necessary to investigate teachers' attitudes towards corrective feedback, since, as Borg (2003) contends, beliefs are likely to have a considerable impact on teaching practice.

Reflection Point

1. What are your own attitudes to error correction? Which of the teachers below would you identify with?

Karin: 'Yes, we should always correct our students. We owe that to them. They have the right to know if what they are saying is correct. I believe that by correcting them in an ESL course, we will help them to avoid embarrassment and even humiliation later on. So, it is well worth it.'

Ana: 'I correct students sometimes, but not all the time. If we're practising one particular language point, then I insist that they say it correctly. But if we're doing a freer activity, then I try not to correct too much. If I do correct students, I try to do it in an encouraging way.'

Peter: 'I try to correct errors as little as possible. I want my students to express themselves in English without worrying too much about making mis-

takes. Sometimes I notice points that everyone gets wrong, and deal with them later – but I never interrupt students to correct them.’

Anita: ‘I never correct students unless they ask, because I want them to be comfortable creating language without fear of making mistakes. In my classroom I foster an open environment that encourages students to make mistakes as long as they are persistent in trying to express themselves.’

Written Corrective Feedback

In their belief that feedback is helpful to developing L2 learners’ writing accuracy, teachers generally spend a great deal of time correcting students’ writing. However, both teachers and researchers have differing views on the benefits of written corrective feedback and the appropriate strategies used in providing written feedback. One of the questions often raised is whether written feedback should be focused or unfocused. Compared to unfocused feedback, the focused one targets fewer grammatical errors making sure learners notice the accurate language more readily (Ellis, 2009b). Another issue is the difference between direct and indirect feedback, whereby direct feedback refers to explicitly correcting the error by providing the correct language while indirect feedback only signals the place of the error. According to Ellis (2009b), indirect feedback is more useful with advanced learners who are able to analyse the errors on their own while beginners need more support from the teacher and are more likely to benefit from direct feedback.

Several authors have recently argued (Rouhi & Vafadar, 2014; Rezeki, 2017) that in the process of giving feedback, teachers should also encourage students to be less dependent on the teacher. One way to promote learner autonomy also in the correction process is to use collaborative feedback which is based on the use of different co-operative activities, such as peer reviewing and providing feedback. An important aspect of collaborative corrective feedback is that it provides mutual scaffolding and a learning space where students can learn from each other in groups (Rouhi & Vafadar, 2014).

Collaborative writing feedback can also be effectively used with YLs. An example of a collaborative feedback strategy is for the teacher to create a generic text with the learners’ most common errors. Here’s an example of such a text following a writing task in which learners were required to describe their best friend:

My best friend name is Ela. She’s favourit animal is rabbit. She don’t like snakes. She’s plays tennis. She’s has long hairs and dark eyes. She beautiful. She have brother and sister.

The teacher gives the learners the generic text and asks them to correct it by collaborating in pairs or groups. If and when necessary, the teacher may provide support in the form of examples or metalinguistic explanation (“‘She’s’ is a short form for ‘She is,’ is this the right form here?”). In this way, the pupils will become more autonomous and aware of the writing process. They can then go back to their own work and correct their writing independently using self-correction.

As Cameron (1996) points out, the teacher’s goal in giving feedback is to close the gap between the learners’ current performance and their target performance. However, it is equally important that by providing feedback teachers develop the learners’ learning strategies and metacognitive competence. This can be done by using different feedback strategies besides providing corrective feedback, such as strategic or evaluative feedback, which include the teacher’s advice for improvement or comments on the learner’s performance, such as ‘This is a really good idea, well done’, ‘Can you think of a better example?’, ‘Can you think of a better word for this?’ In addition, by using evaluative comments and giving feedback on content, we also make sure that learners understand that form and accuracy are not the only or even the most important elements in developing writing. Learners may, in fact, assume this is the case if we only provide feedback on form.

Teaching Mixed-Ability Classes

Learners come to the language classroom with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, different abilities, different approaches to studying, and different attitudes towards learning foreign languages. Most teachers of YLLs would probably agree with Tomlinson’s (2000, p. 2) view that ‘in most elementary classrooms, some students struggle with learning, others perform well beyond grade-level expectations, and the rest fit somewhere in between.’ We could say that all classes are to a certain extent mixed-ability and the more teachers are aware of the differences between their learners, the better they will be able to tailor their instruction to their needs. By implementing the principles of differentiated instruction (DI), teachers will be able to respond to learner differences in a systematic and consistent manner.

According to Tomlinson (2000; 2014), teachers can differentiate their instruction by adapting content, process, products or the learning environment. Content refers to the curriculum and the skills, i.e. what the learners need to learn. Process refers to the activities we use in the classroom and different ways in which learners are engaged in them, such as pair work, group work, individual work. Product indicates the tasks that students perform to

Table 9.5 Examples of Activities Catering For Different Differentiation Elements

Elements	Examples of activities
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When dealing with a specific content, the teacher provides additional scaffolding for struggling learners (e.g. Extra visual support when reading stories). • Using dictionaries or vocabulary lists as a support for struggling learners. • Dealing with content at different readability levels (e.g. Allowing advanced learners to read original rather than graded works).
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the think-pair-share strategy which will help learners to share their thoughts before presenting them to class. • Use reading buddies. • Organise pair and group work by combining advanced and struggling learners. • Give instructions in both spoken and written form. • Plan activities with different levels of support or complexity.
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give learners the possibility to present their knowledge in different ways: as a written report, a graphic organizer, an oral report, an artistic work. • Give the learners the possibility to express what they have learnt individually or in pairs/groups. • Allow advanced learners to present their knowledge in a different form (e.g. By summarising or continuing the story rather than answering questions about it).
Learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a learning space in which learners can get quick access to necessary explanations (e.g. Having dictionaries, computers and other resources available in the classroom). • Equipping the classroom with materials and resources for different levels (books, magazines, posters, lap books, etc.). • Develop classroom routines which will allow pupils to express themselves at their level (e.g. Advanced learners taking on the role of the teacher in the morning routine song). • Create spaces in the classroom where learners can work quietly on their own.

show their progress and the learning environment reflects the atmosphere in the classroom, the ‘physical and emotional context in which learning occurs’ (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 19). Table 9.5 presents examples of activities in which teachers of YLs can differentiate their teaching according to these elements.

In order to understand the theory and practice of DI, it is useful to look at what DI is not (Tomlinson, 2017). First of all, the author points out that DI is not ‘individualized instruction’ in the sense that it does not imply designing customised lessons for each individual student. The idea behind DI is to engage all the students, be that at class, group or individual level, in meaningful learning. Another important aspect of DI is that it is not chaotic or disorderly. Although learners may be working on different levels and tasks, discipline and organisation are as important as in any other school setting. Classroom management based on DI is based on flexible rather than homogenous grouping

Classroom Insight: An Alternative Learning Environment

In order to meet the needs of her mixed-ability classes, Katarina decided to design a teaching tool in the form of a lap book which contains activities at different levels of difficulty. The lap book is meant as an alternative classroom environment and is available to learners for individual work, either during the lessons or during breaks and afternoon activities. The lap book consists of different tasks related to the topic 'jobs' in the fourth grade (pupils aged 9/10), such as a story, various

games, matching activities, a social game, etc. An important characteristic of the lap book is that the activities are designed at three levels based on the language level (vocabulary and structure complexity, communication skills) and the amount of scaffolding provided (visual, verbal or procedural). The different levels are colour-coded which makes it easier for the pupils to follow the lap book organisation but also to monitor their own progress.



Figure 9.4 Lap Book Aimed at Differentiating Activities

in which learners develop skills for working with their peers in a variety of task designs. It is also not enough to tailor tasks by, for example, grading the tasks a little harder or easier depending on the learners' abilities. As Tomlinson (2017, p. 5) suggests that 'trying to stretch a garment that is far too small or attempting to tuck and gather a garment that is far too large is likely to be less effective than getting clothes that are the right fit.' In other words, if small adjustments to a task are not enough to make a lesson efficient, we need to redesign the whole lesson concept. Finally, DI is not just for students with serious learning disabilities, such as visually impaired children or children with an autism spectrum disorder. DI is designed for students who may just struggle with a particular step or topic, who may have problems concentrating for some reason or who just need a little more time to 'take flight' (Tomlinson, 2017).

On a positive note, DI is characterised by several aspects (Tomlinson, 2017).

It is proactive, in the sense that the teacher needs to make adjustments to make sure the lesson is meaningful and challenging for the learners. It is also more qualitative than quantitative in nature as changing the quantity of a task is usually less effective than redesigning its quality. An important aspect of DI is also diagnostic, formative assessment through which the teacher assesses the students regularly and methodically. In addition, DI requires the teacher to differentiate all three teaching elements (content, process and product). Lastly, DI is essentially student-centred as it is based on the premise that students do not all experience learning in the same way and that they need to develop their own learning strategies (Tomlinson, 2017).

Key Takeaways

- Use daily routines to maximise exposure to the TL.
- Plan your teacher talk carefully and encourage student talk in the TL.
- Use the TL in giving instructions but plan them carefully.
- Use different types of corrective feedback, including collaborative feedback strategies.
- Develop a friendly and supportive classroom communication atmosphere.
- We can differentiate FL instruction by adapting content, process, products or the learning environment.

Further Reading

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Lesson Planning

Chapter Objectives

- Exploring the reasons and benefits for planning lessons
- Identifying clear and efficient learning objectives
- Examining the ingredients of a lesson plan
- Understanding the importance of planning and scaffolding teacher talk

Teachers plan lessons all the time even if they are not always consciously aware of it. They think about what they will teach, which activities and materials they will use, how much time they will need for different parts of the lesson, how they will divide a unit into different lessons, and most importantly, what they expect their learners to be able to do at the end of a lesson or unit. There are different reasons why lessons should be planned. First of all, designing a lesson plan helps us define the objectives of the lesson more clearly and systematically and see to what extent the objectives have been achieved. It also helps us predict what will happen in the classroom, what kind of language and behaviour we can expect from the pupils (Brewster et al., 2002). Secondly, a lesson plan is also a useful record for future reference. It may save us precious time when we have to teach the class again the next year as adding or changing an activity takes much less time than designing a lesson from scratch (Jensen, 2001). Lesson plans from previous years also help teachers reflect on their own work and change things that did not work. Finally, a lesson plan gives the teacher confidence and a sense of direction which is especially important for pre-service and novice teachers.

Lesson planning involves both macro and micro planning. At the macro planning stage, the teacher decides on the methodology, the syllabus, and the course materials to be used, while micro planning refers to a specific lesson and an actual lesson plan (Jensen, 2001). A lesson plan has been described in different ways, for example a road map, blueprint or game plan (Ur, 1999) or more generally as a tool which reflects the teachers' teaching philosophy (Jensen, 2001). Every lesson plan should give clear information about the aims or objectives (what we intend to do) and the procedures (how we intend to do it) (Moon, 2005). Although lesson plans come in different shapes and formats, they usually have some common features, such as the objectives of the lesson, the language skills and functions, the resources and materials to be used, and the description of activities and their duration.

Table 10.1 Bloom's Framework of Learning Domains with Examples of Verbs

Domain	Examples of verbs
Knowledge	Show, circle, name, list, choose, match, describe, compare, classify, give examples
Skills	Draw, use, demonstrate, interact, present, act out, predict, solve
Attitudes	Accept, appreciate, value, enjoy, assess, judge

Some aspects of planning a lesson in the YLs' classroom are worth considering more in detail: lesson objectives, the sequencing of activities, the timing of activities, and lesson plan formats.

Objectives

An objective is a statement which reflects what the teacher hopes the learners will achieve by the end of a lesson or unit. In designing the objectives of a lesson, teachers are often focused on the procedures or activities rather than the outcomes of the lesson (Scrivener, 2011). For example, in the statement 'Pupils will practice the names of different kinds of fruit,' the focus is on the procedure rather than the achievement of the objective. However, if we reformulate the objective into 'Pupils will be able to categorise food into healthy and unhealthy,' the focus is on the achievement. In designing objectives, it is therefore advisable to use the wording 'Pupils will be able to ...' followed by a strong verb, such as describe, demonstrate, compare, present, show, etc., taking into account the level of the learners. An efficient objective will highlight the new skill that the learners will gain as a result of a particular lesson, such as 'Pupils will be able to describe their family in English,' while other objectives may be planned across several lessons, for example 'Pupils will be able to understand and follow classroom instructions.' An efficient learning objective is measurable and can be observed in the behaviour of the learner. This is reflected in the verbs used to describe the competence the learner is supposed to acquire. For example, the verbs 'learn' or 'understand' are difficult to measure objectively, while if we formulate the objective using the verbs 'explain' or 'compare,' we are able to see clear evidence if the learners have achieved the objective or not. In selecting the appropriate verb for formulating the learning objective, it is useful to draw on Bloom's framework of learning domains which integrates knowledge, skills and attitudes (Table 10.1).

Compared to other subjects, defining the aims and objectives in a foreign language classroom is particularly challenging since the target language is 'not only the content but the teaching medium' (Cook, 1991, p. 94). This is

Table 10.2 Example of Designing Learning Outcomes

Stem	By the end of the lesson learners will be able to
Action verb	name and categorize
Learning	food into healthy and unhealthy
Context	in a game played in English as a foreign language.

especially evident in content-based and CLIL lessons where it is also useful to distinguish between teaching objectives and learning outcomes (Coyle, 2005). The teaching objectives refer to the knowledge, skills and understanding which are intended to be taught and developed, while the focus of learning outcomes is on the learners and what they will be able to do and understand after the teacher's instruction. So, for example, if one of the objectives of a lesson focused on specific aspects of water is to understand the water cycle through the medium of English, the learning outcome can be for the learners to be able to give a small-group power point presentation explaining the water cycle (Coyle, 2005).

We can say that the learning objectives define the learning outcomes and help the teacher to focus and organise the teaching process. Clear, specific learning objectives will also help the learners to evaluate their own progress and take responsibility for their learning (Table 10.2). Finally, in planning and designing objectives, teachers should follow and refer to the objectives laid out in the national foreign language curriculum.

Reflection Point

Discuss how you can improve the following objectives. Start with 'Pupils will be able to ...'

- Pupils will learn the names of different animal habitats.
- Pupils will listen to a recording in which two people order food in a restaurant.
- Pupils will practice English prepositions of place.

Sequencing of Activities

The lesson plan usually gives information on the procedures to be followed and the sequencing of activities. There are different ways of ordering activities in the lessons. One of the most well-known lesson structure models is the so-called Presentation-Practice-Production model (PPP) which is based on a logical progression from the presentation of new language and controlled practice to free, spontaneous uses of language. Several other alterna-

tive models have been proposed by different authors, such as the Engage-Study-Activate model proposed by Harmer (2007) which has a strong emphasis on arousing the learners' interest and is more flexible than the PPP model in that the stages can be moved around rather than following the same scheme. What is common to different models is that they usually describe the teaching process in three different stages which involve the introduction of language, some form of structured practice and the use of the language practiced by learners in less controlled, more free contexts.

Another useful framework is the Plan-Do-Review sequence which involves warm-up and other activities at the beginning of the lesson, then several different activities in the main part of the lesson, which may also follow the main Plan-Do-Review format, and a rounding up of the lesson in which pupil performance is reviewed (Brewster et al., 2002, p. 239). In addition, as Jensen (2001) notes, planning the transitions from one activity to another and making sure the lesson flows well is particularly valuable for novice teachers and their learners.

A good strategy is also to ensure a balance between 'stirrers,' i.e. tasks or activities that stimulate or energise our learners and 'settlers,' designed to calm students down and settle them into a routine. In settling activities, such as drawing, listening to stories, or mini projects, pupils are usually quiet and calm, while typical 'stirrers,' such as class surveys, action and movement games or drama activities require the learners to actively participate and move around the classroom.

Timing

Another important aspect of lesson planning is time management. Especially new teachers might find the planning of the duration of different activities challenging. We could say that a foreign language lesson with YLs occurs in a different time dimension. In other words, time runs differently in the foreign language classroom compared to other subjects. Just imagine asking the pupils to copy a word from the whiteboard which is not in their mother tongue. They are more likely to check the word several times to get it right. And this is even more challenging in a language like English which is characterised by a weak correspondence between spelling and pronunciation. In addition, as we have seen above, giving efficient instructions for an activity in the FL takes much longer than in L1, sometimes even longer than the activity itself. Also, Jensen (2001) points out that teachers, especially inexperienced ones, tend to underestimate activities in terms of length. In this case, a certain amount of flexibility on the part of the teacher is welcome, such as

skipping an activity or taking extra time to make sure all the pupils understand what to do.

Lesson Plan Template

As Moon (2005) points out, there is no standard way of designing a lesson plan. It is, in fact, better to develop our own format which would suit our needs and teaching style. Referring to the need to have a formal lesson plan, Harmer (2007) comments that the actual form of a plan is not as important as all the thinking behind it. However, as we have seen above, a lesson plan may serve several functions, such as reminding the teacher what worked or did not work in the past, organising the activities more systematically, planning the materials etc. At the same time, teachers are often required to present formal plans for administrative or assessment purposes.

A formal plan for the FL classroom may contain a number of different elements, such as class description (level and number of pupils), lesson objectives, materials and resources to be used, language skills and functions addressed in the lesson, vocabulary and grammar that will be introduced, the sequence of activities, and time reference for individual activities. Some lesson plans are more detailed and may include information on homework assignments, evaluation or cross-curricular links. A useful element is also a section which includes extra activities for learners with different proficiency levels and learning styles.

We would like to suggest adding another element to the lesson plan template which is particularly useful for teaching YLs, namely planning and scaffolding teacher talk. As we have seen above, teacher talk and classroom interaction in the TL represent important aspects of developing learners' communicative competence. However, to develop effective classroom communication in the TL from the earliest stages, the teacher needs to be able to modify the language used and be well aware of different levels of language complexity. Besides language modification, a number of different strategies can be used for scaffolding teacher talk, such as visual aids, gestures or facial expression. By carefully pre-planning the language used with beginner YLs (writing down the actual comments, questions, instructions, etc.) and using different scaffolding strategies, the teacher will be able to build a classroom communication model by progressing slowly and systematically.

In Figure 10.1 and Figure 10.2 there is an example of a lesson plan template which is composed of two parts, the first part is focused on content, the second on procedures.

Lesson planning is an important aspect of effective teaching and a valu-

Lesson name:	
Class/Level:	Day/Date:
Number of pupils:	Time:
Resources:	Materials:
Objectives: <i>The students will be able to</i>	
Language skills:	
Vocabulary:	
Language Structures:	
Cross-curricular integration:	
Previous lesson:	Next lesson:

Figure 10.1 Lesson Plan Template, Part 1 Content (adapted from Moon, 2005)

Time:	Activities:	Teacher talk/ scaffolding used:
	1. Warm-up	
	2. Main activities and tasks	
	Optional or extra activities for mixed levels	
	3. Conclusion	

Figure 10.2 Lesson Plan Template: Part 2 Lesson Procedures (adapted from Moon, 2005)

able tool that has a direct impact on what and how students learn. However, it is also important to note that a lesson plan is essentially a guide, a proposal for action and not a dictum to be followed slavishly (Jensen, 2001; Harmer, 2007). We can also say that lesson planning is much more than simply designing and following a list of activities. It constitutes the essence of quality teaching and reflects the teachers' beliefs, understandings, and orientations

Table 10.3 Lesson Plan Checklist

Before taking a lesson plan into the classroom, it is useful to go through a checklist of questions:

1. Are my objectives clearly defined and focused on the learning outcomes?
2. How am I going to motivate the learners into the lesson (warm-up activity)?
3. Which language functions, structures, vocabulary and skills have the pupils already acquired? What new language will the lesson focus on?
4. How will I present the new language? (Using stories, songs, content from other subjects, etc.)
5. Have I included different tasks and activities? Do the activities progress from more controlled and guided to free activities?
6. Have I included differentiated tasks for different levels and for early finishers?
7. How will I scaffold my talk?
8. Have I included modified teacher talk which my learners will be able to follow?
9. Is the timing planned for the activities realistic? How long will it take me to give the instructions?
10. What resources will I need?

(Baecher et al., 2014). Lastly, as many successful teachers have come to realise, the key to an effective lesson is to follow the 5P maxim (Perfect preparation prevents poor performance.).

Reflection Point

1. What is your attitude towards lesson planning?
2. What are some of the most important differences between a lesson plan in foreign language teaching and the lesson plans for other subjects?
3. Watch a video in which the presenter describes the main elements of a lesson plan and compare them with the lesson plan template in this chapter.



Key Takeaways

- Efficient lesson planning is key for effectively using your class time.
- Lesson objectives should be clear and focused on the learning outcomes (Pupils will be able to ...).
- Planning and scaffolding teacher talk is an important aspect of lesson planning in a YLs' classroom.

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Going Online

Chapter Objectives

- Recognizing different terms of distance education
- Understanding and comparing the advantages and drawbacks of online learning with YLs
- Comparing different ways of planning and performing online collaboration with YLs
- Examining and reflecting on virtual lesson scenarios for YLs

The demand for digital transformation in education has recently reached new perspectives. Many (language) teachers have started using online education technologies, various online platforms and tools that support live video-communication, such as Zoom or MS Teams. However, for YLs to follow classroom work when teachers are not there face-to-face is challenging so teachers need to prepare online lessons with additional care and support. In order to maximize YLs' interest and online involvement, it is useful to be acquainted with some terms and benefits of using digital resources.

Defining Distance Education

Several terms have recently been used to refer to *distance education*, such as *online learning*, *e-learning*, or *remote learning*. What they all have in common is the acknowledgment that education takes place in a space in which there is physical distance between pupils and teachers and that Information Communication Technology (ICT) is used for interaction. According to Stanley (2019, p. 8), remote language teaching occurs 'when teachers are brought into the classroom virtually, using videoconferencing technology, in order to teach a language.'

Remote language teaching somehow 'substitutes' classroom teaching by creating the impression that the teacher is in the classroom. Remote language teaching is sometimes referred to as live online language teaching (Stanley, 2019), where the language teacher is not physically present in the classroom but uses a computer connected to the internet as a tool for online foreign language communication and interactivity with other participants (YLs or teachers).

On the other hand, we need to distinguish between remote/online language teaching/learning with blended teaching/learning (sometimes also-called hybrid). The latter refers to a mixture of both face-to-face and online

Table 11.1 Advantages and Drawbacks of Online, Virtual Learning with YLs

Advantages	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task based learning (YLs take their own photos, produce short movies, audio clips, using their e.g. mobile phones). • Completing the task(s) at their own pace. • Sharing and comparing their task(s), personalisation of work. • Exposure to FL outside the classroom (e.g. videos, e-games, websites, film clips, e-quizzes, stories, songs, picture dictionaries). • Formative assessment (overview of the tasks, teacher's feedback, and opportunities to improve the tasks). • Extra learning resources online (for differentiation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet security to guarantee YLs' safety (strict school rules on the computer and internet use are needed). • Finding time to research and track down suitable age- and level appropriate websites, activities, interactive games, materials; can be time consuming for FL teachers. • Bad mood and behaviour (when YLs experience fast moving images and sounds); low self-motivation. • YLs need support from the FL teacher or their parents and cannot work individually. • Some YLs may spend too much time online. • Some YLs may expect the FL teacher to be available 24/7.

learning (Hockly & Clandfield, 2010) so the language course is partly delivered online and partly in a classroom. It is also useful to distinguish between asynchronous and synchronous learning. The former occurs independently of time and place which means learners can access pre-recorded lectures, materials, and assignments at their own pace. Synchronous learning, on the other hand, involves real-time interaction between teachers and learners, often through live online sessions, video conferencing, or virtual classrooms.

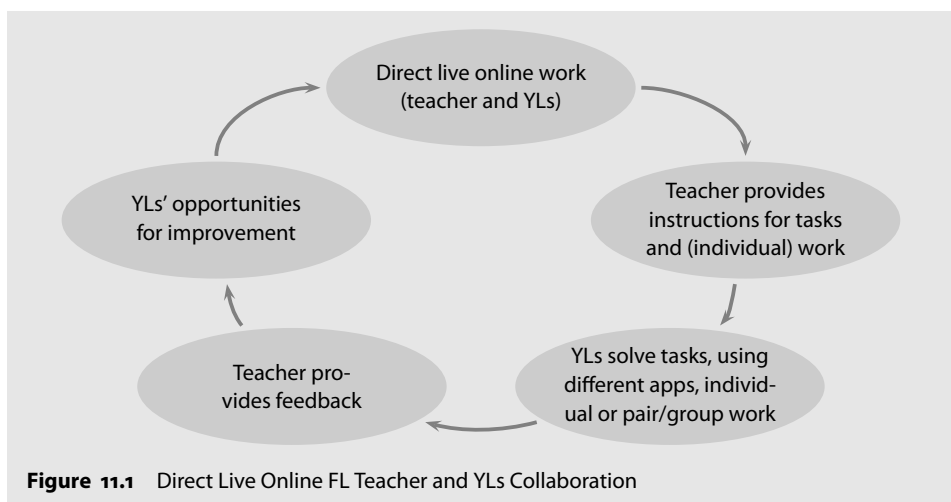
Advantages and Drawbacks of Online Education with YLs

There are both advantages and drawbacks related to using online instruction with YLLs. A major advantage is the possibility of using colourful online visual images, combined with sound, animation, and interactivity which can easily attract their attention and work as a motivational tool. Table 11.1 summarizes some of the most common advantages and drawbacks of using online, virtual instruction with YLs.

Planning and Performing Online Live Education with YL

Online education requires careful preparation and planning from the language teachers who need to focus on both FL and ICT skills in an integrated way. It is therefore advisable for the teachers to:

- have a clear idea of the lesson objectives and type of activities which



will be used in the online lessons (the content, topic, development of language skills, individual/pair/group work assignments),

- decide which online tools and applications they will use and consider whether pupils will need technical support and advice,
- decide when and how many times they will meet with YLs,
- select age- and level appropriate websites where pupils can carry out specific tasks,
- include staging online activities (before, while and after) to arise YLs' interest, curiosity and attention,
- plan different activities aimed at engaging YLs in active online participation,
- read YLs' assignments, provide feedback on their work and allow opportunities for improvement.

The two scenarios for online lessons with YL presented below offer several ideas for integrating FL and ICT skills.

Scenario Outline 1

The first scenario presents direct live online work with YLs (ages 8 to 11) in which an FL teacher explains and guides YLs to different tasks and (individual) work. YLs have their own digital note-taking apps (e.g. OneNote, Padlet) where they solve tasks, comment on them, and collaborate with their peers. After the task, the teacher provides comments to individual pupils or a group and gives opportunities for improvement of their work (Figure 11.1).

Virtual Lesson Procedures

Lesson objectives. Learners will be able to:

- discuss their personal experiences with pets (e.g. dog, cat, ferret, hamster, canary),
- read a description of a pet in English,
- write a description of a pet in English using simple sentence structures,
- analyse different online sources, collect and use the relevant information about pets.

Procedure:

1. Start by showing a picture of your pet at home (if you do not have a pet, use a photo of one). Use a picture of your home or a house and tell YL: 'I have a dog. He lives in my home.' Add a few of animals (e.g. a cat, a hamster) and form sentences: 'A cat lives in my friend's home.' Discuss with YL which animals they have at home. Which animal would be their favourite pet? Ask them to think about the kinds of animals that can live at home and in the zoo (here you may discuss why some animals may live in houses and some in the zoo (e.g. dogs can bark and guard the house/tigers are wild and dangerous)).
2. Send pupils the link (QR code). Explain how the memory game works, that they need to click on two cards to match the word and the picture. If they match, the cards remain open. If the two cards do not match, they are turned face down again.
3. Send pupils the link (QR code). The video clip is a cartoon of a dog (who dreams to help blind people) but it requires an active participation from a viewer because (s)he has to select the right answer in order to move on and see the next part. Let pupils watch the cartoon and solve the tasks individually or share your screen and solve the tasks together. After watching the clip, discuss the main idea of the story, describe the dog, his emotions, talk about other pets.
4. Write a sentence (e.g. in Padlet) and share it with YL so that everyone can see it.



My favourite animal is a

My favourite animal is a _____

Pupils copy the sentence into their e-notebooks, and then try to write

Table 11.2 Formative Feedback

Feedback	Sentences produced by YLs	Teacher feedback (written in L1 or English)
First	A <u>fh</u> lives in my <u>houm</u> . A <u>turtl</u> lives in my <u>houm</u> . A <u>canari</u> lives in my <u>houm</u> .	'Nice work, Tina. But you can make it better. Please check the <u>underlined</u> (e.g. circled, highlighted) words. Go back to the game with animals, find your animals and re-write your sentences.'
Second	A fish lives in my <u>huom</u> . A turtle lives in my <u>houm</u> . A canary lives in my <u>houm</u> .	'Much better, Tina. All animals are correct. But how do we write the word 'home'? Is it a 'houm' or is it a 'home'?''
Third	A fish lives in my home. A turtle lives in my home. A canary lives in my home.	Well done, Tina!

their own sentences, choosing the animal from the link (QR code). Pupils read the names of the animals by clicking the numbers from 1–12, select the correct answer and hear the selected word. Then they complete the sentences with the names of their favourite animals.

Pupils may also take a picture of the animal they have at home or try to find some photos or pictures of pet animals that live at home and share the photos in their e-notebook and complete the sentence(s).

5. Additional activity for early finishers – send the pupils the link (QR code). First YL listen to the song, then they read the lyrics on their own and finally they try to join in and use the lyrics of the song as karaoke.

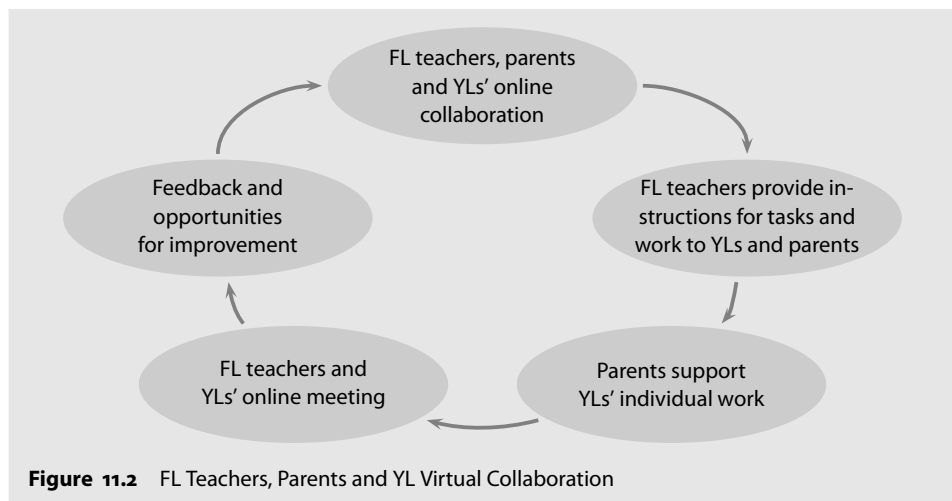


Providing Formative Feedback

When pupils finish writing their sentences, check them and comment on their achievement. If necessary, they work on improving their sentences. Here is an example of the comments made by the teacher. The feedback was given three times (Table 11.2).

Scenario Outline 2

When using online instruction with YLs, it is also important to cooperate with parents or the family who can offer to their children (ages 6 to 7) additional support on how to use different online platforms or applications and carry out individual tasks. If there are, for example, two FL classes a week, one class can be done at home, where YLs try to carry out the tasks with their parents' support, the second class is performed live online, where YLs meet with their FL teacher and together develop FL interactive communication and discuss their tasks or projects (blended learning).



It is first recommended that language teachers prepare instructions for parents, including guidelines on how to handle different online tools and activities (written in L1), and all the necessary information for YLs' tasks and their individual work. When giving instructions to YLs, it is important that the presentation of the websites is clear, easy to navigate (e.g. using just links), containing simple and reliable information, and involving easy-to-manage tasks. It is advisable to use websites with attractive visuals (videos, e-games, film clips, e-quizzes), sound effects, music and dialogues which support YLs' understanding of the FL content and guide them to age-appropriate task(s). It also helps if YLs have access to additional material, such as visual support, worksheets, or graphs, which they may download and use in their project work. This approach can be summarized as in Figure 11.2. In this scenario, the FL teacher sends the pupils and their parents a message in their L1, explaining what they are expected to do (Figures 11.3 and 11.4).

The next meeting is a live one, the teacher meets virtually with YL. When using an online education, it is important that the teacher includes gestures, mime, facial expressions, demonstrations so that YL tries to understand the FL content or topic. Again, a sample of a virtual lesson scenario is introduced and may guide a teacher in his/her own development of online lesson scenarios with your YL.

Virtual Lesson Procedure

Lesson objectives. Learners will be able to:

DEAR STUDENT!

TODAY WE WILL LEARN ABOUT ANIMALS. I CAN FIND A LOT OF SMALL ANIMALS IN MY HOME. CAN YOU? NOW WATCH THE VIDEO 'PEPPA PIG AND HER FRIENDS ARE VISITING A ZOO.' LET'S GO TO THE ZOO WITH THEM:



WHICH ANIMALS DID YOU SEE AT THE ZOO? CAN YOU DRAW AND NAME THEM? NOW WATCH ANOTHER VIDEO AND GUESS WHICH ZOO ANIMALS ARE SHOWN:



HOW MANY DID YOU GUESS? TWO OR THREE? NOW PLAY A WORD GAME ABOUT ANIMALS AND PRACTICE THEIR NAMES:



FIND SOME (STUFFED, PLUSH) ANIMALS IN YOUR HOME. CHOOSE YOUR FAVOURITE ANIMAL AND TAKE A PHOTO OF IT.

DON'T FORGET: WE WILL MEET ON FRIDAY FACE TO FACE. I WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT 9.00. HAVE FUN TILL THEN!!!

YOUR TEACHER

Figure 11.3 Example of Instructions to Students

Dear parents!

I would be grateful if you could encourage your child to do a few activities online.

First, they should watch a Peppa pig cartoon. After watching the cartoon, please ask your child which animals (s)he saw in the video. He or she should draw and tell as many animals as he or she can remember from the cartoon.

Then, the child should guess the zoo animals in the video clip (*Learn Zoo Animals for Kids*). (S)he should observe and guess the animals only in the first minute of the clip.

Next, your child can play a word game about animals. (S)he should listen to the name of the animal and then drag the word to the suitable picture.

Finally, your child should find a stuffed (plush) or any other animal in your home and take a picture of it. Please help your child to download it to his or her e-notebook.

Thank you for your support!

Figure 11.4 Example of Instructions to Parents

- discuss their personal experiences with zoo animals (e.g. tiger, panda, monkey),

- guess, imitate and act out zoo animals,
- read and solve the word puzzle about zoo animals and create one on their own.

Procedure:

1. Greet the learners and put on the table next to you your favourite stuffed (plush) animal (so that YL may see it on their screens). Ask them which animal they see. Tell them it is your favourite plush animal. Then, share some pictures of animals from the zoo on the screen and ask learners to give their names and their favourite zoo animal (pre-select some zoo animals from the Peppa Pig cartoon and the e-games learners played before the lesson).
2. Before the lesson, the teacher downloads the photos of stuffed (plush) animals, the learners (with their parents' support) download the photos to their e-notebooks (which the teacher has access to). The teacher shares the photos on the screen but only some parts of the animals can be seen.

Present parts of the animals in the photos and encourage learners to guess them by asking questions: 'What is it?, Is it a tiger or a panda?'

3. Share your screen with the learners. Together watch the second part of the video *Learn Zoo Animals for Kids* (which YL used in the previous lesson, only the first minute). Watch the video for the second time and make a pause where learners have to imitate animal movements presented in the video (e.g. eat like a crocodile, hop like a rabbit). In the last part of the video some zoo animals are presented. Together observe them and pronounce their names.
4. Call individual learners and encourage them to choose one animal from the video clips and imitate it. The other learners observe his/her movements on the screen and try to guess what animal (s)he is imitating.
5. Use the online Word search maker¹ and create your own word puzzle of zoo animals (see example below). Use the vocabulary learners have practiced during the lesson(s). Let learners solve the puzzle on their own, or share your screen and do the task together.
6. Share the Word search maker link with learners. Explain to the pupils how to use it. Encourage them to create their own puzzle. Some of them can share their screens and others try to solve their puzzles.



¹ E.g. <https://thewordsearch.com/maker/>

Perspectives of Online Learning

Developing online learning is a process and besides developing the skills to take part in online activities, YLs need to learn the rules of behaving in online spaces. This means, for example, that they have to learn how to use the 'mute button,' understand that they have to wait for their turn, and respond when they are called by their teacher.

FL teachers may also use digital tools for recording 'life videos' (e.g. Screencastomatic) and introduce topics in video lessons. In creating their own videos, teachers should consider several aspects which make such videos effective learning tools. First of all, learners will be able to follow the video much better if the teacher speaks slowly and clearly. Secondly, videos should encourage pupils to be active viewers (for example, by doing some mini tasks, such as imitating animals or playing online memory). Thirdly, by asking questions or providing arguments and examples, pupils may be given opportunities for developing critical thinking. Finally, by concluding the video clip with a summary of the most important points, learners will be able to integrate the central ideas of the topic in a meaningful way.

Teachers in general are today familiar with a number of different online tools and apps. In a seminar with FL teachers aimed at developing ICT skills (personal communication), the participants were asked to list which online website resources they use in their live online classes with YLs and the most commonly mentioned were: BBC Learning English, British Council – Learn English Kids, YouTube, Kahoot, Quizlet, Mentimeter, Games4esl, Matching games for ESL kids – Anglomania, Fun Games – English 4 Kids, Fun English Games, Learn English – Online ESL Games, iSLCOLLECTIVE.

Also YLs generally enjoy exploring different online apps, websites, and tools. This offers them a range of exciting opportunities to create and produce their own material. They are excited to present their previously prepared page design, fonts, written texts, pictures, colours, or layouts. This also enhances the development of their spoken FL skills. The inclusion of photos they have taken or short films they have created personalizes their work, motivates them to communicate in a foreign language and inspires them to produce more ambitious assignments. As an additional incentive, their projects can be published on a class or school website so that their peers and parents can see and read their work.

The pandemic which struck the world in 2020 has posed a number of challenges to traditional, face-to-face education. As technology continues to develop, the limitations placed on us by traditional classroom environments

will be surpassed making space for new forms of instruction. One such form is blended learning, or the combination of online and offline teaching discussed above which allows for greater teaching and learning flexibility.

Reflection Point

1. Compare face-to-face instruction and online education. Where do you see the advantages and drawbacks of both types of education?
2. Compare the suggested Scenario Outlines 1 and 2. Comment on the two approaches. Offer suggestions for improvement, especially how to work with very YLs?
3. How would you prepare your YLs if they had no previous experience with online education? What are some potential difficulties? How could you overcome these difficulties?
4. Compare the ideas suggested in the video with the online scenarios illustrated in this chapter. What are some similarities and differences?




Key Takeaways

- Distance education refers to instruction where there is physical distance between pupils and teachers and in which both use ICT for interaction.
- Use (supportive) task-based online learning for YLs' active online participation.
- Use colourful online visual images, combined with sound, animation, and interactivity. They attract YLs' attention and motivate them to communicate in an FL.
- Carefully plan online education, cooperate with learners' parents who can support their child in the use of online tools.

Further Reading

- Hockly, N., & Clandfield, L. (2010). *Teaching online: Tools and techniques, options and opportunities*. Delta Publishing.
- Mawer, K., & Stanley, G. (2011). *Digital play: Computer games and language aims*. Delta Publishing.
- Tan-Choi, A., Tinio, V. L., Castillo-Canales, D., Lim, C. P., Modesto, J. G., & Pouezevara, S. R. (2020). *Teacher's guide for remote learning during school closures and beyond*. Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development.

The background of the page is filled with numerous light gray, three-dimensional geometric shapes. These shapes, which include cubes, rectangular prisms, and trapezoidal blocks, are scattered across the page. Some are stacked on top of each other, while others are isolated. They have a soft, slightly blurred appearance, giving a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is a modern, architectural aesthetic.

Assessing Young Language Learners

Basic Principles of Assessment

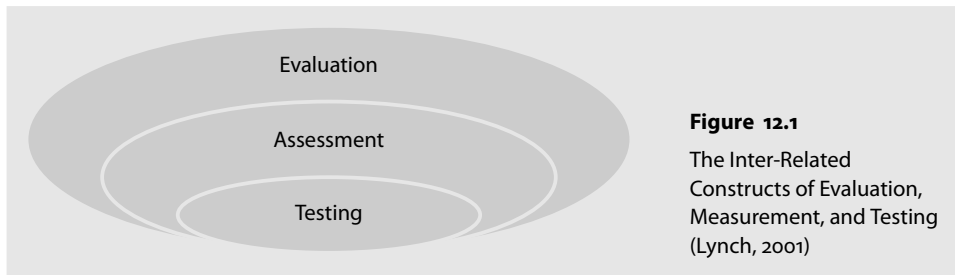
Chapter Objectives

- Understanding the difference between assessment, evaluation and testing
- Recognizing the characteristics of different types of assessment
- Understanding the principles of effective assessment

Assessment is not only an ongoing and indispensable part of teaching but also an essential dimension of our everyday lives. We may not be aware of it but in our day-to-day activities (watching TV, reading a newspaper article, or having a conversation with a friend), we tend to gather information on what is good and not so good, what needs to be changed and/or improved, what makes sense, whether the activity has a relevant purpose for us or not, etc. We may refer to these activities as unstructured assessment which is carried out all the time and is not usually associated with negative feelings or experiences. With assessment in school, however, students, but also teachers and parents often develop negative feelings and attitudes. This may be due to different reasons, such as one's bad experiences, unfair judgment of our work, a tense atmosphere when being assessed or not understanding the purpose of the test tasks. While YLs have not yet had the time to develop negative attitudes or experiences of assessment, they are extremely sensitive to their teachers' and parents' beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions. Therefore, what, and how we assess matters a great deal.

Assessment for teaching purposes is generally defined as the process of systematically gathering information from multiple and diverse sources and making inferences about the students to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do (Huba & Freed, 2000). In other words, assessment is the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students.

As YLs differ from adult learners or teenagers in a variety of ways, they need to be presented with carefully designed assessment tasks that they can perform either individually or in pairs/groups (Shin & Crandall, 2014, p. 245). Before assessment can take place, we first need to consider the learners' age, together with their cognitive, motor, linguistic, emotional, and social development. They are still in the process of developing literacy, knowledge, and skills in their L1 and may, especially in the early stages, still struggle with understanding how reading and writing work (McKay, 2006). The YLs' classroom



is characterised by more attention to oral skills (listening and speaking) at the beginning, with reading and writing being incorporated slowly and gradually. An important consideration refers to the types of activities used (such as games, rhymes, songs, and stories), which are especially appropriate for YLLs.

Language Evaluation, Assessment, and Testing

The terms evaluation, assessment and testing are frequently used inconsistently and interchangeably, which may lead to confusion (Lynch, 2001; Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2003). Evaluation commonly refers to the gathering of information to determine the extent to which a language programme meets its set goals, allowing us to make judgements about the value of an (educational) program. For example, the Ministry of Education may decide to evaluate the early English language teaching programme in Slovenian primary schools. Such an evaluation study would not just test the student's language proficiency, but would also collect data on teaching approaches, curriculum objectives, materials, and students', teachers', and parents' attitudes to teaching and learning English. Some evidence may also be obtained by classroom observations directly.

While evaluation refers to a global process, assessment may be described as a general term which covers a much broader range of activities aimed at gathering information about learners' knowledge, and skills, as well as their attitudes towards and motivation for language learning. To assess language learners, we may use a variety of methods and tools which may be formal (such as traditional tests) or informal (such as teacher observation and discussions with students). Whether incidental or intended, a good teacher carries out assessments all the time. In fact, whenever a student answers a question or provides a comment, the teacher subconsciously makes a judgment of their performance.

Tests are merely one of the instruments used in assessment. During a lan-

guage test, the test-takers respond to prompts (such as a set of questions related to a reading text or listening text) and their performance is scored according to a marking scheme. When assessing YLs, it is crucial to understand that traditional tests are a relatively small set of controlled procedures among a much broader range of options. Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2003) emphasize that it is especially important to create a positive learning space in which YLs will feel confident and safe to show their language performance. Therefore, they suggest using a variety of tools besides traditional tests, such as project work, self-assessment tasks, teacher observation and a variety of structured classroom activities, including tasks developed by the learners themselves.

Types of Assessment

There are several types of assessment which provide valuable insights into this complex process (Council of Europe, 2001). In this section, we will focus especially on the distinction between formal and informal, formative and summative, performance, and knowledge assessment.

School-based assessment may be formal or informal. Formal assessment provides evidence of learners' achievements of syllabus outcomes in a systematic way. In a typical formal assessment context, learners respond to the same questions under the same conditions, and the teacher grades them based on the extent to which they satisfy a range of pre-defined criteria. There are several formal assessment instruments, from written tests to projects, language portfolios, or oral presentations. Informal assessment refers to an intuitive evaluation method where the teacher assesses students without measuring their performance against some pre-planned criteria. It may take different forms, such as performance-based tasks, journals, portfolios, projects, as peer and self-assessment (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2003).

Another distinction worth looking at is between performance and knowledge assessment. In performance assessment, learners are asked to provide a sample of spoken or written language as proof of their language competence. Performance assessment can be described as testing the knowledge or competence *of* the language, while knowledge assessment usually refers to knowledge *about* the language as a system (such as knowledge of grammatical rules). To assess language performance, learners need to be given the opportunity to use the language in a relatively authentic context with a clear communicative purpose, while the assessment of knowledge can be more direct, for example, asking students to provide the rules or examples of a par-

Table 12.1 Principal Characteristics of Different Types of Assessment

Formal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides evidence of learners' achievements • Typically in the form of pen-and-paper tests • Clear criteria are necessary • 'Can do' statements may be used 	Informal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An intuitive evaluation method • Is based on teacher observation • May take different forms (discussions with learners, quizzes, etc.)
Formative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ongoing proc. of gathering information • Continuous feedback is provided • Aims to improve learning 	Summative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of term • Usually a test or exam • Feedback is rarely provided
Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence of the language • Learners are required to use the language in a context 	Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about the language as a system • Learners are required to provide the rules of a language

tical linguistic point. Since language competence and thus performance is hard to assess directly using a traditional test, teachers often combine performance and knowledge assessment.

The primary purpose of classroom-based assessment is to provide teachers with information to help them make further decisions. They can do this by assessing learners during the course of instruction, which is usually referred to as formative assessment, or at the end of a unit or course, for which the term summative assessment is used. Formative assessment is a continuing process that provides information on the learners' strengths or weaknesses and is ultimately aimed at improving learning (Council of Europe, 2001). As it is an integral part of the learning process, it is also referred to as an assessment *for* learning (Brumen & Garrote Salazar, 2022). Its main objective is to help teachers in the planning of future instructional steps, guide learners in their own learning process, and support learners' autonomy and responsibility for their learning. Formative assessment uses several instruments which help learners monitor their own learning, such as classroom observation, discussions with learners, projects, portfolios, pair and group work with peer feedback, self-assessment and others. What these activities have in common is that they help learners identify their own strengths and weaknesses as well as target areas that they need to work on. At the same time, they help teachers to recognize in which areas YLs are struggling so that they can respond immediately.

Summative assessment, which is also referred to as assessment *of* learning, is aimed at checking what has been learned at a specific point in time,

such as at the end of a lesson, unit, or school year (Brumen & Garrote Salazar, 2022). It is based on cumulative learning experiences, tests for achievement, and mastery of specific performance objectives. The teacher's role is to evaluate student's performance at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against standards. Summative assessments are often high stakes, which means that they have a high point value. Some typical examples of summative assessment are: a class exam or test which is graded, an oral performance by a student which ends with a grade, a national assessment of knowledge.

Several authors argue that we need both types of assessment in foreign language instruction. Dixon and Worrell (2016) argue that the two types of assessment serve different purposes and should therefore be seen as complementary. While formative assessment is best employed throughout the learning process to help learners deal with their strengths and weaknesses, summative assessments can be used at the end of a learning period to evaluate the learning outcome.

Effective Assessment

Assessment should reflect the learner's actual skills and abilities as closely as possible (McKay, 2006; Brown, 2004; Bachman & Palmer, 1996). To ensure that this is the case, teachers need to consider the following criteria: reliability, validity, authenticity, interactivity, feasibility, and the washback effect.

How Reliable is the Assessment Task?

For a language assessment to be reliable, the results need to be accurate and consistent. A reliable test will give similar results with a similar group of learners who take the same test under identical conditions (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). It is useful to consider that if a learner's specific knowledge or ability is assessed differently by two different teachers or by using different assessment tasks, the degree of assessment reliability will be low (McKay, 2006). There are several ways in which reliability may be enhanced, such as giving learners longer tests with more items. However, this is not necessarily a feasible strategy with YLs as they have a short attention span. One idea is, for example, to divide the assessment task into two parts, two 20-min tests, rather than a 40-min assessment session. We also need to consider that assessment reliability may be affected in a variety of ways. Some of the threats that are particularly relevant for YLs are unclear or ambiguously worded instructions, too long tasks, disruptive classroom conditions (such as too much noise), and poor concentration at the end of the school day.

How Valid is the Assessment Task?

Validity is concerned with the ability of the assessment task to test what it intends to measure (Brown, 2004). For example, a valid test of skiing skills should include the actual performance of skiing rather than a writing test in which test takers are asked to write a description of skiing skills. Assessment validity gives us an idea of how appropriate our inferences of the learners' abilities are based on the assessment tasks used and the information gained. If our assessment aim is to assess YLs' ability to take part in a simple conversation, for example, then the task needs to include performance in speaking interaction skills. However, we need to make sure not to include concepts or topics which the children are not familiar with or are not able to talk about as we would not be able to make valid inferences about the children's ability to take part in a conversation (McKay, 2006).

How Authentic is the Assessment Task?

Authenticity in language assessment refers to the extent to which it transfers the knowledge and skills acquired in the language classroom to everyday contexts and situations (Brown, 2004). With respect to YLs, we need to consider their world and think about what is natural and relevant for them. As McKay (2006) points out, traditional paper-and-pencil tests can hardly be considered authentic assessment tasks for YLs. Activities (such as games, role plays, simulations, surveys, etc.) which are tied to real-world contexts which children are familiar with and involve challenges in which a range of skills and knowledge need to be used in an integrated way are much more authentic and natural for YLs.

How Practical is the Assessment Task?

Practicality refers to the way assessment procedures are administered in terms of time, space, materials, and resources. In other words, assessment tasks need to be easy to design, deliver and evaluate. An important aspect of evaluation is time, especially when assessing speaking and interaction skills which are often assessed in individual interviews with the teacher. In larger classes, this may mean taking several lessons to assess all the students (McKay, 2006) so teachers should consider other options, such as role plays in groups.

What is the Washback (Impact) of Assessment?

Washback is the effect that testing has on teaching and learning. In YLs' assessment, it is crucial to promote a positive washback which can be reflected

in higher motivation of learners or positive attitudes towards learning the language, while avoiding negative experiences which may result in anxiety or confusion. Motivation is a vital issue in YLs' assessment, especially considering that a negative impact may have a harmful effect on learners' future language learning (Papp, 2019).

Discussion

1. Read about how a teacher uses ongoing assessment and discuss its effect on YLs.
2. Discuss which aspect of assessment you find most challenging.



Key Takeaways

- Assessment tasks for YLLs need to be designed with extra care, considering their age, cognitive, motor, linguistic, emotional, and social development.
- We can distinguish between different types of assessment: formal and informal, formative and summative, as well as performance and knowledge assessment.
- As YLLs are a sensitive population, we need to pay special attention to assessment reliability.

Further Reading

- Ioannou-Georgiou, S., & Pavlou, P. (2003). *Assessing young learners*. Oxford University Press.
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Assessing Language Skills

Chapter Objectives

- Analysing and designing various task types for assessing different language skills
- Discussing assessment tasks appropriate for YLLs
- Understanding the importance of context in assessment

Listening and speaking are at the very centre of the YLs' curriculum. Children start learning a foreign language by first listening to samples of the language and then using the learnt or acquired language to communicate messages. However, oral language is often avoided in tests with a greater focus on reading and writing. This is because assessing oral language is seen as more complex and difficult to carry out. Also, YLs often lack the cognitive and social skills needed for participating in oral activities (McKay, 2006). When we plan the assessment of language skills, it is worth keeping in mind that receptive skills (listening and reading) are invisible and unobservable; there is no language product for us to analyse. We can assess listening and reading only by inference and by using special types of tasks.

Assessing Listening

In order to become successful listeners, we need to develop a number of listening skills. They can be divided into different subskills, such as predicting content, listening for gist or the main idea(s), detecting signposts, listening for details, listening for specific information and inference, or inferring meaning from the input text. Table 13.1 (p. 188) presents some reasons why these are important for YLs and provides examples of their actual use in the classroom.

There are many types of texts which YLs may listen to in the real world: TV and radio programmes, cartoons, videos, movies, music, TV shows, digital stories, advertisements, documentaries, talk shows, plays, etc. Therefore, communicative listening tests should also include a range of different input texts which are relevant for YLs and which they are able to understand. Learners should be first exposed to and assessed on a clear and slow standard speech, but gradually, teachers should expose them to more authentic and real-life texts. It is also important to slowly increase the speaking rate of the speakers that YLs are exposed to so that when reaching their teenage years, they can understand any speaker using a normal speech rate.

Table 13.1 Listening Comprehension Subskills to Include in Assessment

Subskill	Why?	How?
Predicting content	Informing students that before listening or watching they need to start predicting what they are going to hear. Research shows that our knowledge of the world helps us anticipate the kind of information we are likely to hear. When we predict the topic of a talk/conversation, all the related vocabulary stored in our brains is 'activated' to help us better understand what we're listening to.	By watching or listening to a recorded TV programme or clip from YouTube and pausing after every few sentences, students predict what is going to happen or what the speaker might say next. In testing, students should be made aware that before taking a listening test, they should skim through the questions first and try to predict what kind of information they need to listen out for.
Listening for gist or the main idea(s)	Listening for gist is necessary to support learners in learning the main information and having a general understanding of the topic without focusing too much on detailed information.	The learner tries to identify keywords, intonation, and other clues to make a guess at the meaning. Before we test this listening subskill, teachers need to practise it with their students by, for example, asking questions such as 'What is the main idea of the conversation?', 'What is the purpose of the conversation?', and 'What is the story about?'
Detecting signposts	Just like the traffic lights on roads, there are signposts in language that help us follow what we're listening to. These words, which link ideas, help us to understand what the speaker is talking about and where they are taking us.	For example, if a teacher says: 'I am going to tell you a story about three sons who wanted to become the king of a very important country ...' then later on you might hear the phrases 'the first son,' 'the second one,' and 'the last one' to indicate the three sons. Other words and phrases can function in a similar way (and, but, then, once upon the time, in other words, in the end, etc.) In the listening test tasks, it is important to include texts which are signposted. This will help learners to become aware of the cues and understand the text better.

*Continued on the following page***Types of Tasks**

A number of different task types which can be used to assess YLs' (e.g. 'listen and point to things,' 'listen and sequence pictures,' 'listen and complete gaps in sentences,' etc.) are similar to activities used for developing listen-

Table 13.1 *Continued from the previous page*

Subskill	Why?	How?
Listening for details or listening for specific information	When we listen for specific information, we need to have some idea of what we are listening for before and while we are listening.	Listening for specific information also involves listening to determine whether the information is stated or not. Students should also learn to ignore information that is not relevant. While listening to a new text (a story or a conversation), it is important to give the learners a few questions which are related to specific details (such as <i>Who (with) ... When ... How long/far/often ... Where ...</i>). It is vital that when taking a listening test task, YLs should skim through the questions, underline the important words, and decide what kind of detail they need to identify in the listening text as soon as they get the question paper.
Inferring meaning from the input text	Refers to finding answers from clues and from prior knowledge rather than directly. Inferring allows readers to 'listen/read between the lines,' to 'listen/read for a deeper meaning,' and to 'make their own discoveries about the text.'	Students listen to a dialogue and must infer the relationship between the two speakers from what they hear. 'Who are the people who are talking? How do you know that it is a teacher and a student?' We can infer this from the use of the words 'homework' and 'tests.' By using contextual clues and our knowledge of the world, we can work out what's being said in a conversation, who is speaking, and what's taking place.

ing comprehension skills (Brewster et al., 2012). Teachers should have a clear idea about the purpose of each listening task, which listening subskill is to be tested in a particular task (e.g. listening for the main idea or listening for specific information), and why a particular task type is used. The task should reflect the way in which people usually listen to the type of text used. For a task to effectively assess the listening objectives, learners need to be exposed to the same task type during regular instruction. It is also important to stress that tasks should not test YLs' background knowledge. Below are examples of listening assessment tasks, together with recommendations for their use in classroom assessment.

Short-Answer Questions

This type of task, in which learners provide a short answer to the question, is especially suitable for YLs who still struggle with reading and writing in English. There are often several ways of saying the same thing and therefore several answers are allowed. However, it is essential to pay attention to the number of words or the required shortness of the answer. In short-answer questions, the aim is to assess the formulation of effective responses. It is also important to assess the relevance of the answer in terms of the specific information provided rather than focusing on grammatical and spelling mistakes.

As in all other task types, students should be advised to read the instructions very thoroughly and get prepared for the topic they are going to hear. Next, it is very important that students make good use of the preparation time by reading the questions carefully and/or underlining the key/question words. Questions may be written in the students' L1 at the beginning and later, when the teacher is sure that the students understand enough, provided in L2. In short-answer task types, it is recommended to teach and check YLs' understanding of question words (what, who, when, where, why, how long, etc.).

Multiple-Choice Tasks

A multiple-choice test item is composed of two parts: a stem that identifies the question or problem and a set of alternatives or possible answers that contain a key that is the best answer to the question. This includes several distractors that may sound plausible but are incorrect answers to the question. The advised number of choices appropriate for YLs is three as more than three may be too great a cognitive load for them to handle. Alternatives may consist of pictures, words, or very short sentences (in L2 or L1) but only when YLs are already skilled readers.

In designing multiple-choice tasks, it is necessary to consider YLs' cognitive, communicative and social competences, and ensure that questions are worded clearly and comprehensibly, avoiding complicated phrasing or negative wording. YLs often fail to observe negative wording and are confused. In fact, learners who are familiar with the material often make mistakes on negatively worded questions. While it is advisable to avoid negatives in the stem and the options, in the rare cases where they are unavoidable, they should be marked, e.g., put in upper case, made bold or underlined (for example: 'Which object is NOT in the room?').

Distractors are intended to distinguish between students who have not yet

At the Library

Your friend Mojca moved to New York. On her first day in school, she went to the library, where she had to answer the librarian's questions. Listen to the conversation between Mojca and the librarian and write short answers to the questions below. Read the questions carefully before listening and look at example o (zero).



- o. What is the librarian's name? _____ Mary _____
1. How old is Mojca? _____
2. What is Mojca's surname? _____
3. What class is she in? _____
4. What does she need to give to the librarian? _____
5. What kind of books does Mojca like best? _____

Figure 13.1 Example of a Short-Answer Assessment Task

acquired the knowledge/skills necessary to answer the item correctly from those who have already developed their listening comprehension skills up to the expected level. In listening comprehension tasks, distractors commonly contain words/expressions that have been mentioned in the input listening text but are not correct answers.

'John is my best friend and likes different kinds of sports, from running, mountain climbing to cycling but his most favourite sport is diving.' [Listening text]

John likes _____ most.

(a) cycling, (b) running, (c) diving. [Multiple-choice item]

When doing multiple-choice listening comprehension tasks, YLs should be encouraged to listen to and/or read the instructions carefully to learn more about the topic, the speakers, and the situation. If learners are tuned in to the listening text, they will begin to think about the words, expressions, and phrases related to the topic. After they have read and listened to the instructions, they should be allowed 30 to 60 seconds to read the task itself or study the pictures. Listening input texts should be played twice, so learners can

Listen to a conversation between Anna and her mum. Complete the sentences by circling the right letter before the answer. Look at the example given.


<p>0. Annie is in the ____.</p> <p>A kitchen B living room <input checked="" type="radio"/> C bedroom</p>		<p>4. Annie prefers to write the letter in ____.</p> <p>A blue B green C red</p>
<p>1. Today is ____ December.</p> <p>A 25th B 10th C 15th</p>		<p>5. Annie needs Santa's ____.</p> <p>A full address B phone number C letter</p>
<p>2. Annie thinks her ____ is not good.</p> <p>A drawing B reading C writing</p>		<p>6. Annie believes Santa spends holidays ____.</p> <p>A in a forest B in a castle C at the seaside</p>
<p>3. This year, Annie wants a ____ for her Christmas present.</p> <p>A doll's house B small dog C picture book</p>		<p>(6 točk)</p>

Figure 13.2 Example of a Multiple-Choice Listening Task (Državni izpitni center, 2018)

decide on one of the options during the first listening and use the second listening to finalise their decisions. An example of a multiple choice task is presented in Figure 13.2. The instructions were originally in Slovenian, the learners' L1.

Matching Tasks

Matching tasks usually involve learners listening to an audio recording and matching a list of items from the question to a set of options given (pictures/words/phrases/sentences). Matching tasks draw upon students' ability to make connections between ideas, and they are used to assess their understanding of associations, relationships, and definitions. They often test learners' competence to summarise longer listening passages or to understand the main point(s). To complete the task successfully, we should encourage learners to prepare for the topic discussed by reading the task instructions carefully and studying the individual statements or pictures.

As we can see from the task in Figure 13.3 (the original instructions were in learners' L1), matching tasks typically contain a table or column with numbered spaces for answers. By including an example, usually referred to as example zero (o.), learners are guided through what they are required to do in

Listen to a description of seven different situations. Write the letter of the picture (A to K) which matches the description in the given table. Four pictures are redundant. Look at the example given.

	0.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
B							

(6 točk)

Figure 13.3 Example of a Matching Listening Task (Državni izpitni center, 2022)

a particular task. In tasks which contain more items than there are possible responses, this should be made clear in the instructions.

Discussion

- Discuss what type of listening tasks would be suitable for the following objectives:
 - Pupils will be able to understand a simple description of a room (classroom, bedroom, etc.).
 - Pupils will be able to understand clock times, days, months and dates.
 - Pupils will be able to understand the main point(s) from a short spoken passage, such as a weather forecast.
- Look at the listening assessment task in the *Cambridge Starters Series* and discuss the aims of the activity. What do learners need to know in order to be successful in the assessment?



Assessing Speaking and Interaction

Assessing speaking skills is often considered to be one of the greatest challenges in assessing YLs' FL competence as it involves the observation of several language aspects, such as pronunciation, vocabulary control, grammar competence, interaction skills, and general fluency. Communication in an FL is a challenge for most YLs for two main reasons. First, their lexical and gram-

Table 13.2 Communication Strategies and Examples for Their Use with YLs

Strategy	Example
Using body language and gestures to communicate.	Encouraging the use of non-verbal language, such as showing an element in a picture or miming an action when we lack the words or expressions.
Using language patterns to help prevent and repair breakdowns as well as appealing for assistance.	Encouraging the use of communicative language patterns and chunks, such as 'Can you repeat please?', 'Beg your pardon,' 'I'm afraid I don't understand.'
Applying paraphrasing or substituting.	Teaching learners to use generic expressions when they do not know specific words (e.g., a flower for a rose, a doctor for a surgeon).
Identifying strategies that speakers use to compensate communication problems.	Listening to recordings of conversations (esp. in cartoons, fairy tales, children conversing etc.) and using role play as a follow-up activity.
Translanguaging.	Teaching learners to use their full linguistic repertoire (all the languages that they know) to make sure they are understood and cooperate in interactions.

mathematical knowledge is still growing owing to limited target language exposure in or outside school. Second, children between 5 to 10 years of age are still developing a clear understanding of what people say or how to effectively take part in a conversation (Cameron, 2001).

In assessing YLs' speaking and interaction competence, it is useful to distinguish between planned and unplanned speech. The use of oral language in situations in which no preparation is possible, such as in conversations, is referred to as unplanned speech. On the other hand, extended talk which students have time and the possibility to prepare for is called planned speech. Both are important and should be taught and assessed (McKay, 2006). Assessing learners' language as they take part in conversations is especially challenging as participants in a dialogue need to cooperate by taking turns, adding to each other's ideas, etc., making it hard to evaluate the role of each participant (*ibid.*). In addition, YLs are more likely to experience breakdowns in communication owing to their limited vocabulary and grammar range. Table 13.2 looks at strategies used to respond to communication breakdowns and examples of their use with YLs.

Teachers also need to be aware that YLs' world knowledge is still developing, and their familiarity with many important topics is still very limited. This is why it is useful to avoid discussing topics which may be sensitive (such as divorce, war, or death) or too abstract for them (e.g. human rights, time, money,

emotions, etc.). Besides preparing specially designed oral assessment tasks, the teacher can gain valuable information about YLs' speaking and interaction abilities on an ongoing basis through observation of everyday classroom communication.

Types of Oral Assessment Tasks

Most speaking assessment tasks for YLs may be categorised as language elicitation tasks since they need considerable support to be able to participate in oral communication. One way of preparing them for oral assessment is to use regular classroom activities as speaking assessment tasks, bearing in mind the basic assessment principles. When designing speaking assessment tasks for YLs, we need to consider several important aspects (McKay, 2006). First of all, tasks should be closely linked to their classroom and real-life experiences, and the topics included should be familiar to them. Secondly, tasks need to be meaningful with a clear purpose, reflecting a genuine need for participation. An important element is also visual support, such as pictures, real objects, puppets, or body language. Effective speaking assessment tasks will also have a clear structure, a beginning and end, and will involve learners actively. It is especially important to introduce the task by involving the learners in the context, for example by asking a few general questions about them. Finally, teachers need to have clear assessment criteria for assessing speaking in the form of rating scales with descriptors for the different levels. At the same time, YLs also need to be presented with clear and comprehensible criteria adapted to their level and shown before the assessment takes place.

In preparing speaking assessment tasks for YL, we also need to consider the learner's general language competence, as well as the type and extent of support necessary. Common speaking assessment tasks for YLs are picture-cued tasks, story-telling.

Picture-Cued Tasks

In picture-cued tasks, in which learners are usually asked to describe a picture, the teacher needs to pay special attention to the task introduction. One way of starting the task is to ask learners some opening questions, such as 'Do you like this picture?', 'What do you like in it?' Another important aspect to consider is the amount of support provided by the teacher, ranging from very little or no support to substantial support, especially in the case learners are only able to produce one-word or non-verbal responses. Table 13.3 gives an example of a rating scale for assessing YLs' speaking skills ranging

Table 13.3 Rating Scale for Assessing Picture-Cued Tasks

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Vocabulary	Uses one or two English words only. Most of the time stays silent or uses L1. Seems to understand but has difficulty responding verbally.	Uses only basic vocabulary and (expressions) and lists words. Needs a lot of support and help. Makes many mistakes. Doesn't speak in whole sentences.	Uses limited vocabulary and expressions. Occasionally needs support and help. Makes some errors. Speaks in whole sentences but needs help sometimes.	Uses a variety of vocabulary and expressions appropriately and correctly. Does not need much support and help. Makes only few errors. Speaks in whole sentences.
Grammar	Not enough production to assess the student's grammatical knowledge.	Uses basic structures and expressions. Makes many mistakes.	Uses different grammar structures. Uses basic grammar structures and occasionally makes mistakes.	Uses a variety of grammar structures and makes only few grammatical errors.
Fluency	Fluency cannot be measured due to no or very little speaking production in L2.	Often hesitates before and while speaking. Needs a lot of help and support from the teacher.	Speaks with some hesitation which does not usually interfere with communication. Some help is needed.	Speaks smoothly, fluently and freely with minimal hesitation, which does not interfere with communication. Almost no help is needed.
Pronunciation	Not applicable due to no or very little speaking production in L2.	Many problems with pronunciation and intonation (many words mispronounced). It is very hard to understand the student.	Some problems with pronunciation and intonation (some mispronunciations) that sometimes make it harder to understand the student.	Pronunciation and intonation are usually accurate with almost no mistakes. It is easy to understand the student.
Content	Not applicable due to no or very little speaking production in L2.	Covers only one or two subtopics.	Covers several subtopics/and or answers most of the questions set by the teacher.	Covers almost all subtopics independently.

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) no or very little L2 speaking production (1 point), (2) needs improvement (2 points), (3) partially achieved (3 points), (4) achieved (4–5 points).

from complete beginners to those who are already able to speak in whole sentences.

Storytelling Tasks

Storytelling is a genre most learners have been extensively exposed to in their childhood and their experience of both having been read and telling

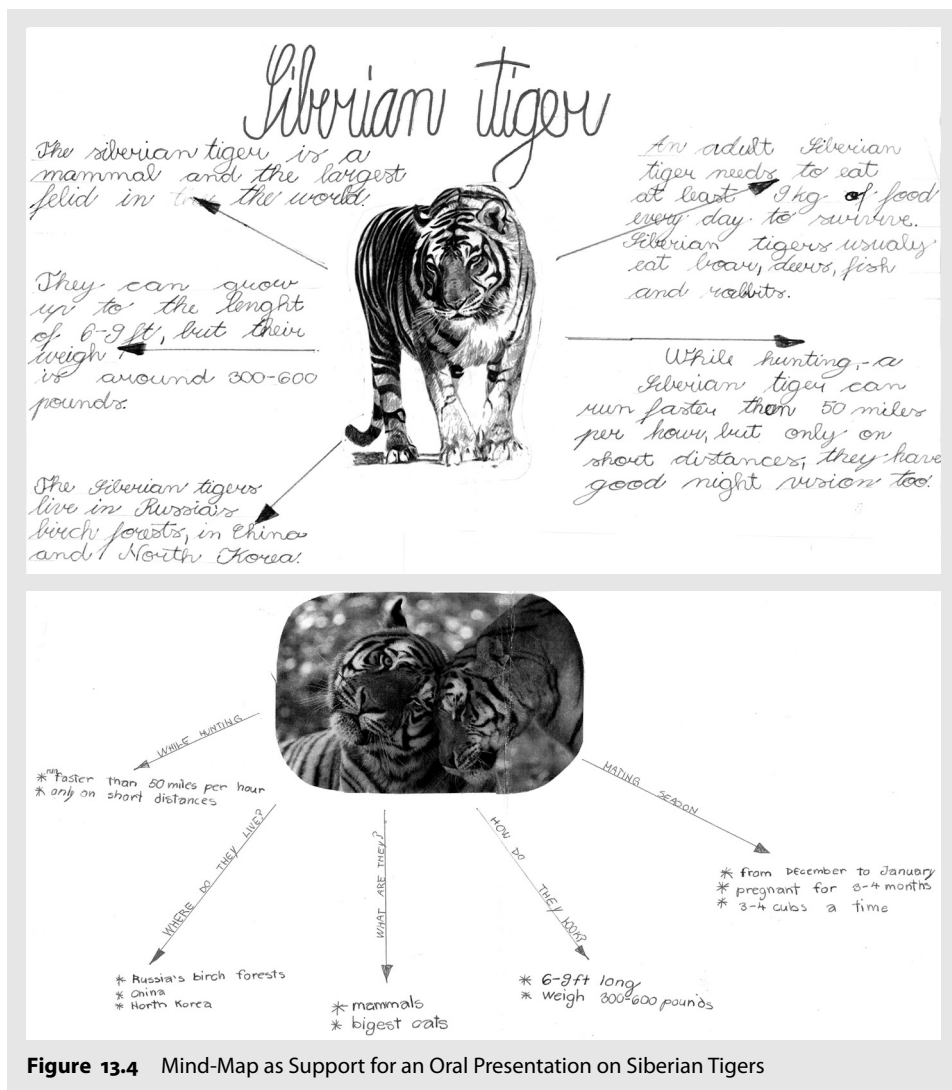
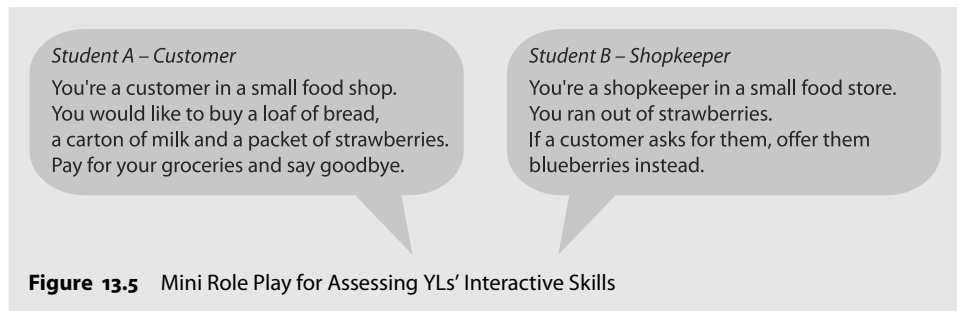


Figure 13.4 Mind-Map as Support for an Oral Presentation on Siberian Tigers

stories has an important impact on their language development. As Riley and Burrell (2007, p. 182) argue, 'storytelling (whether their own stories or retelling those read to them) gives children opportunities to speak at length and in longer utterances than in conversation.' This is why storytelling is not just a suitable activity in teaching YLs an FL but can also be used as an assessment task.

However, when using storytelling as a speaking assessment activity, teach-



ers need to pay special attention to the learners' general language competence, with a focus on the grammar and vocabulary available to them for speaking production. Another important point is the support provided by the teacher, especially in the form of pictures featuring the sequence of the story. In addition, as with all assessment tasks, a rating scale should be prepared in advance and preferably piloted during regular lessons, while learners need to be informed about the criteria (Rasinski, 2004; Hirai & Koizumi, 2013).

Oral Presentation Task

Oral presentations are common assessment tasks used with YLs. Learners may present an object, an animal, a photo, their own experiences, a project, etc. To ensure effective preparation for oral presentations, it is essential to provide YLs with clear guidelines regarding the content they should include and the types of support such as notes or mind maps. Figure 13.4 (p. 197) shows how a mind map can be used as support for an oral presentation.

Interactive Tasks

Interactive assessment tasks involve both speaking and listening. Some common tasks include oral interviews, information gap tasks, mini role plays, and games. McKay (2006) points out that oral interviews, where the teacher asks the learner questions in a face-to-face exchange, need careful planning as children might feel intimidated and, therefore, reluctant to speak. One way of reducing tension and creating a positive atmosphere is to use puppets to engage with the learner. Figure 13.5 provides an example of a mini role play focused on assessing interactive skills.

Discussion

1. Discuss the elements of a rating scale designed for assessing role play tasks.

Table 13.4 Informal Assessment of Different Aspects of Phonemic Awareness

Aspect measured	Description	Example
Phoneme matching	The ability to identify words that begin with the same sound.	'Which words sound alike? Cat, hat, pig?'
Phoneme isolation	The ability to isolate a single sound from within a word.	'What's the first/last/middle sound in "bag"?''
Phoneme blending	The ability to blend individual sounds into a word.	'What word do these sounds make /p/, /o/, /t/?'
Phoneme segmentation	The ability to break a word into individual sounds.	'What sounds do you hear in "hot"?''
Phoneme manipulation	The ability to modify, change, or move the individual sounds in a word.	'Say "pet" without the /t/ sound. Say "red." Now change the /r/ in "red" to /b/. What do you get?'

2. Watch a video in which an examiner interviews a young learner for the *Cambridge Pre A1 Starters Speaking Test*. Discuss the scaffolding strategies used by the examiner.



Assessing Reading

In designing reading assessment procedures teachers need to be aware that reading is an extremely complex skill which requires the coordination of several interrelated sources of information, reading subskills and other abilities. To be able to read involves two main processes, i.e. being able to say the words out loud (called decoding) and being given access to meaning (called reading comprehension).

Decoding is translating printed words into speech (or silent reading) by rapidly matching a letter or combination of letters to their sounds, blending the sounds together and recognizing the patterns that make syllables and words. While this awareness follows a predictable developmental progression in L1, YLs usually have difficulties linking the sounds of words to letter patterns in L2. This is especially challenging in learning to read in English which is characterised by a poor correspondence between letters and sounds. There are several ways of assessing YLs' decoding skills and phonemic awareness. Table 13.4 gives an example of how different aspects of phonemic awareness may be assessed in an informal way.¹

A well-known assessment instrument for measuring reading accuracy is

¹ See the Reading rockets initiative: <https://www.readingrockets.org/topics/assessment-and-evaluation/articles/phonemic-awareness-assessment>.

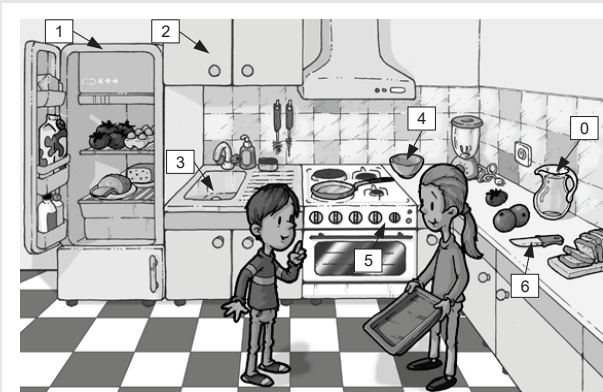
called 'running records' (Clay, 2000). It involves the systematic observation and documentation of learners' reading as they read a text aloud. Running records are typically used with early readers in L1 but may be adapted for readers in an FL learning context, bearing in mind that FL learners may have specific difficulties with pronouncing unfamiliar proper nouns, such as names for people, places, or organizations, due to their lack of cultural knowledge. The running record process begins by selecting a text that is at an appropriate level of difficulty for YLs. The learner then reads the text aloud while the teacher closely observes and makes notes, recording the learner's oral reading ability, including accuracy (Do the learners read the word correctly?), errors (What mistakes are made?), self-corrections (Do they correct themselves while reading?), fluency (How smooth and fast is the reading?), and comprehension (Do they understand the text?). After the reading session, the teachers look at the running record to gain insights into the learner's reading abilities. This helps them understand the strategies learners use when reading, monitor progress over time, and make informed instructional decisions.

To understand a sentence, one must visually process the words, identify their phonological, orthographic, and semantic representations and finally link the terms applying syntactical rules to comprehend the underlying meaning of the sentence (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). Before teachers design reading test tasks, they need to thoroughly understand the reading process and what may influence it. Besides word decoding and general language comprehension skills, some of the main elements of the reading process that may predict student's achievement in reading comprehension are also the characteristics of the text, reading fluency, and prior or background knowledge. In addition, reading competence may be influenced by the extent to which a learner is able to monitor the understanding of the text, for example by being able to predict, compare, draw conclusions, or make inferences. Reading comprehension entails the construction of a meaningful mental representation of the text in the readers' memory. This construction is built by the readers' making inferences, a skill which needs to be developed and assessed. Van den Broek et al. (2005) point out that just like older children and adults, also YLs are able to make inferences, they just need more support and less complex contexts.

Reading Assessment Tasks

According to research in reading comprehension assessment of young EFL learners, it has been observed that after 2 or 3 years of early FL learning, most

Look at the picture and read the words in the box below. Find the words for the things marked in the picture (1-6). Write the letters of the words you have chosen (A-J) in the table below. There are three extra words which you do not need to use. An example (o) has been done for you.



- A bowl

B cooker

C cupboard

D dishwasher

E fridge
- F jug

G knife

H mixer

I sink

J spoon

0.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
F						

(6 točk)

Figure 13.6
Example of a Word
Recognition Task
(Državni izpitni center,
2022)

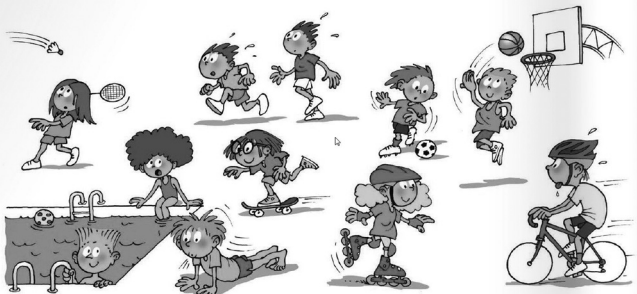
children are able to understand simple sentences and to reconstruct narratives with the help of pictures (Paulick & Groot-Wilken, 2009).

Word Recognition Tasks

The first reading comprehension assessment tasks with YLs will require learners to recognise simple words. As we can see in the tasks in Figure 13.6 (the original instructions were in learners’ L1), learners need to match the words with pictures. The task is made more difficult by including more words than test items, which decreases the chance of choosing the right answer by guessing.

True/False Task

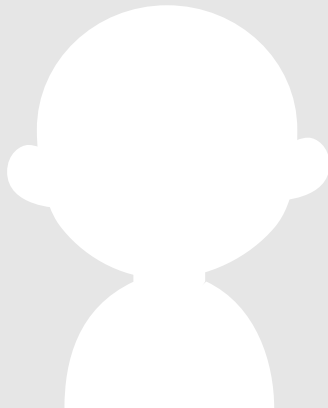
In true/false tasks, we present a series of statements related to a picture or story or passage and ask learners to determine if each statement is true or false. In the task in Figure 13.7, learners need to understand the sentences in order to be able to match them with the right person.



Alex is swimming.	YES	NO	Bob is playing football.	YES	NO
Sophie is cycling.	YES	NO	Annie is playing tennis.	YES	NO

Figure 13.7
True/False Reading Assessment Task with Picture (Bratož et al., 2019, p. 24)

What do Jane and Mark look like? Read the descriptions and draw.



MY NAME IS JANE. I HAVE GOT BIG BLACK EYES AND A SMALL RED MOUTH. MY NOSE IS SMALL. I HAVE GOT LONG CURLY BLONDE HAIR. MY EARRINGS ARE ORANGE.



MY NAME IS MARK. I HAVE SMALL GREEN EYES. I HAVE GOT A BIG NOSE AND A BIG ORANGE MOUTH. I HAVE GOT SHORT STRAIGHT HAIR. I HAVE GOT ONE EARRING. IT IS GRAY.

Figure 13.8 Reading Comprehension Task with a Visual/Drawing Response

Drawing Response Tasks

In drawing response tasks, learners draw a picture that represents the main idea or a specific event from the text. In this way, we can assess the learners' ability to visualize and interpret information (Figure 13.8). Besides drawing response tasks, we can use other 'read-and-do' activities, such as read and

Read the description of Sam's family and complete Sam's family tree below.

Hi, I'm Sam and this is my family. My parents, Mark and Lisa, have three children, my sister Emily, my brother Jake, and me. We live in the same street as my mum's parents, Grandma Mary and Grandpa Robert who are always around when we need help. My aunt Sarah, who is my dad's sister, also lives close by with her family. Her husband is a doctor and we always call him when we get sick. They have two daughters, Mia and Jenny who always play with us.

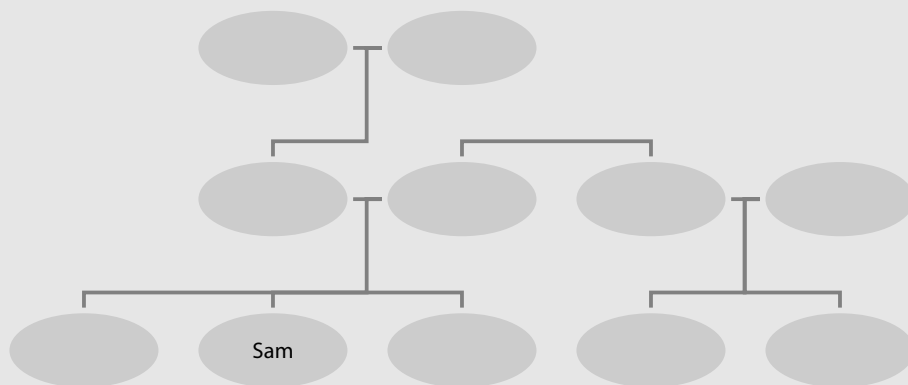


Figure 13.9 Information Transfer Assessment Task

show, read and reply in short answers, read and match, read and write, read and retell, read and act out, etc.

Information Transfer Task

Information transfer tasks encourage deep processing of information which is very useful both in academic and everyday life. Tasks involve getting learners to put texts into another form, such as a chart or table. In the task in Figure 13.9, learners are required to read the description of a family and transfer the information into a family tree.

Gapped Test Task

When YLs are able to read shorter texts, we may use more complex assessment tasks, such as reading with short answer questions, multiple choice (see listening assessment tasks), or gapped test tasks. The latter requires the learners to read a text from which sentences have been removed. The missing sentences are arranged in jumbled order after the text, and the learner's task is to reconstruct the text by selecting the correct sentence from a list of several options to fill each gap in the text. The gapped test task, which can be made more difficult by including an extra sentence which does not fit in any of the

Read the text about a boy called Arturo who loves animals. Seven sentences have been removed from the text. Choose from the sentences A-I the one which fits each gap. There are two extra sentences which you do not need to use. An example (o) has been done for you.

THE WRITING CONTEST

"I know I'll win the *Be Kind to Animals Week Writing Contest*," Janette says to Arturo, "No one has more pets than I do!"

Arturo nods. That is true. Everywhere you look at Janette's house – indoors and out – there are animals. (0) A.

"But what about you, Arturo? You don't have a pet. What will you write about?" Janette asks.

Arturo doesn't answer. He is on his knees, picking up worms from the sidewalk. (1) _____. "There you go guys. You'll be safer here", says Arturo.

Walking along, the kids see a turtle on the side of the road. "This is perfect!" says Janette. "Bring her home with you." (2) _____.

Arturo replies, "No, this animal belongs in the wild."

"Don't you want a pet?" Janette asks.

"Of course I want a pet, (3) _____. But my mom's flat is small," Arturo answers.

They reach Janette's home and go inside. "Why don't we walk your dogs first?" Arturo asks.

"No, I'll just let them out. They'll be fine," says Janette, opening the door. (4) _____. Along with them, a cat gets out through the open door.

Arturo hears a loud sound and looks out of the window. A car almost hits one of the dogs. The birds fly into the sky as the cat runs toward the bush.

Janette looks in the corner of the room and shouts, "Yuck! Look at the spider. (5) _____. Do something, Arturo!"

Arturo covers the spider with a cup and goes outside. Carefully, he lets the spider free. Then he picks up the cat and whistles for the dogs. (6) _____. Back in the house, Arturo watches the birds through the window. The dogs bark, the cat meows and Arturo smiles. "Now I know what to write about for the contest."

(Prijejeno po: Pleasebekind.com. Pridobljeno: 21. 10. 2011.)

A	There are dogs, cats, birds, hamsters and rabbits.
B	That creature is scary.
C	I have got a pet worm.
D	Janette watches as he puts them in the grass.
E	They all go back indoors.
F	They run outdoors.
G	"She can be your pet!"
H	"What a wonderful insect."
I	And one day I will have one.

Figure 13.10 Example of a Gapped Test Task (Državni izpitni center, 2016)

gaps, requires learners to recognise the relationships between different ideas in the text and its overall coherence. An example is provided in Figure 13.10 (the original instructions were in learners' L1).

Assessing Writing

Similarly to reading, writing is a complex activity which requires learners to carry out several processes at the same time: combining letters, selecting the right vocabulary, using the appropriate grammatical structures and punctuation, organising ideas in a logical order, applying the conventions of a genre, etc. This is why writing assessment is a challenging task for the teacher who needs to decide how much attention to pay to accuracy (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and how much to content and the message. It is especially important to convey to children what our expectations are and which aspect of writing will be assessed (McKay, 2006).

Writing assessment tasks should reflect the learning objectives of the YLs' level and the activities aimed at developing different writing aspects and

Table 13.5 Cambridge English Writing Assessment Rating Scale

Content	✓	The candidate answered the question. They have done what they were asked to do.
	✗	The candidate did not include everything they were asked to. They have written something irrelevant.
Organisation	✓	The structure of the writing is clear. The order of the ideas is logical.
	✗	It is difficult for the reader to follow. It is organised in a way which is not suitable for the task, like beginning an email with a title.
Language	✓	There is a good range of vocabulary and grammar. Language is used accurately.
	✗	Check the mistakes.

topics. For example, if the objective is for the learner to 'be able to write about their free time,' learners need to practice writing similar texts during their lessons and in this way develop the expected vocabulary and grammatical structures. It is also important to provide children with real-life contexts which will make the task relevant for them.

When designing rating scales in assessing YLs writing it is useful to consider that assessing writing is not just about correcting grammar or vocabulary mistakes. In marking a piece of writing, Cambridge English examiners² consider content, organisation and language.

Task Types

Several tasks can be used to assess YLs' writing skills, from copying words and completing crosswords to completing sentences or writing short texts. A useful task type is also writing in speech bubbles in a cartoon story which reflects the interaction of mini-dialogues and role plays (McKay, 2006).

Text Completion Tasks

Writing tasks for early writers will contain different kinds of support, such as visuals and sentence completion tasks.

Writing a Description

Description tasks are commonly used for assessing YLs' writing skills as they often contain chunks and phrases which can be developed and practiced in a

² https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/pl/Images/603898-cer-6647-v1c-jul20_teacher-guide-for-writing-a2-key-for-schools.pdf


	Draw, colour and write.
	I've got _____ hair.
	_____ eyes.
	I'm wearing _____

Figure 13.11 Text Completion Assessment Tasks

My Dream School

Write a description of your dream school. Include the following points:

1. Describe the school.
2. Compare your dream school with your own school.
3. Describe a typical day in the school.

Figure 13.12 Example of Writing a Description for the Assessment Task

variety of contexts before the assessment takes place. For example, in picture descriptions, the following structures are commonly used:

In the picture I can see ...

There is/are ..., There isn't/aren't ...

At the top/bottom of the picture there is/are ...

Besides describing pictures, YLs may be asked to describe people (e.g. their best friend), their hobbies, their classroom, a day in their life, their favourite food, their favourite holiday, their dream house, etc. To make the assessment tasks as communicative as possible, it is advisable to place the tasks in a relevant context. For example, learners may be asked to write a description of their favourite holiday to send to a friend from another country. In writing the instructions for the tasks, it is crucial to include a detailed description of the points that the learner should include in the text (see Figure 13.12).

Discussion

1. Discuss different rating scales for assessing YLs' reading and writing skills.

2. Discuss the relevance of formal assessment from the perspective of the four language skills.

Key Takeaways

- In assessing YLs, we need to consider age-appropriate procedures and tasks.
- It is essential that children understand the assessment criteria.
- Assessing YLs' reading and writing skills presents various challenges due to their limited general language abilities and cognitive characteristics.

Further Reading

Brumen, M., & Garrote Salazar, M. (2022). *How to assess primary school learners of foreign languages: A guide for classroom practice*. McGraw Hill.

McKay, P. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*. Cambridge University Press.

Nikolov, M. (Ed.). (2016). *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives*. Springer.

Formative Assessment and Feedback

14

Chapter Objectives

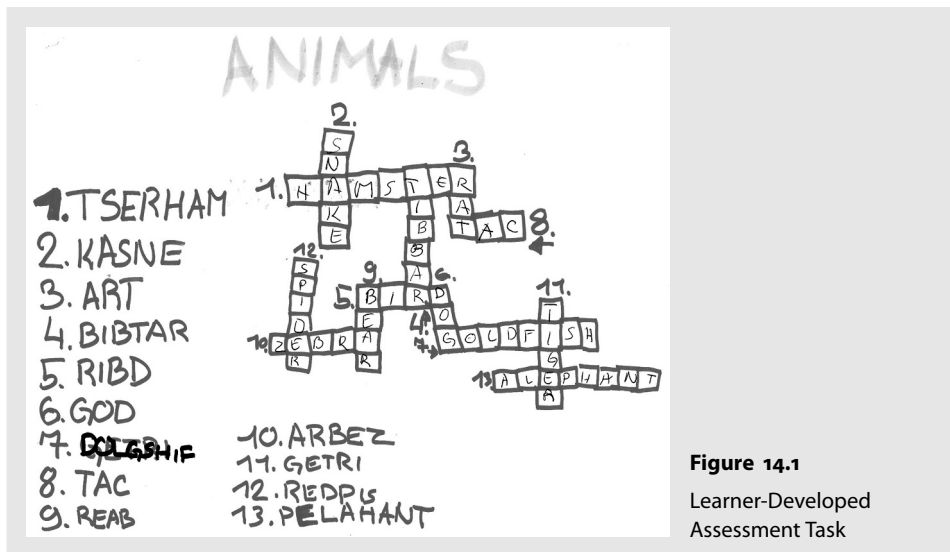
- Understanding the aims and characteristics of informal or alternative assessment procedures
- Becoming aware of informal assessment tasks and tools
- Understanding the importance of formative assessment and assessment for learning in assessing YLLs

Most activities described in Chapter 13 are designed for formally assessing YLLs' skills and knowledge. However, as several authors point out (Brumen & Garrote Salazar, 2022; Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2003; McKay, 2006), the assessment of YLLs should be conducted with extra care and caution, especially considering their developmental stages, varying abilities, and the potential impact on their attitudes towards learning.

This is why YLLs' assessment needs to include informal, alternative procedures which are in line with the principles of formative assessment, help teachers understand learners' progress and identify areas for improvement. These range from simple interactive games which engage the learners and at the same time give the teacher feedback on their progress to more systematically conducted observations in which teachers fill in a checklist with important information about individual learners' language development.

Formative assessments with YLLs should be interactive. For example, teachers can use role plays, peer feedback, or other classroom activities in which learners are actively engaged. Short, informal quizzes during or at the end of a lesson may also be used to assess the understanding of key concepts. One way of engaging the learners actively is to ask them to develop assessment tasks for each other. In Figure 14.1 (p. 210), we can see a crossword puzzle developed by a learner for peer assessment purposes.

Another important aspect of assessing YLLs is that we should collect information about their competences all the time and from a variety of sources. While specially designed tasks for assessing different skills are useful for summative assessment purposes, there are countless opportunities during everyday classroom activities which give us the possibility to incorporate YLLs-friendly formative assessment strategies, such as observation and self-assessment.



Classroom Insight: Feedback Game

At the end of his lessons, Simon often plays a game with his young learners in which each of them rolls the dice and answers a question based on the number rolled. The questions are related to their understanding of the topic discussed.

He also uses special 'starters' to identify learning incidents:

- Today I learnt ...
- One word to sum up what I learnt is ...
- I already knew ...

- I would really like to remember ...
- I'm still confused about ...
- An 'aha' moment that I had today was when ...

In lower levels, he carries out this activity in the students' L1, while in higher grades, when their English language proficiency is high enough to be able to express their ideas, opinions, and attitudes in a comprehensible manner, he encourages learners to use English.

An important element of assessment through which learners receive information about their language learning is feedback (Kerr, 2020). As Boyd (2020) points out, while the teacher can give feedback in a variety of ways (to the whole class or individually, in oral or written form), it is important to give it directly after the task when the learners still pay attention. Feedback may be 'strategic' – the teacher focuses on a particular language point which needs improvement. It is especially important to deal with one point at a time as YLs will find it hard to absorb multiple language points. In addition, pupils need to be shown explicitly what they can do to improve, such as a task or activity which will help them practice the language point. Sometimes teachers can

- ☐ My postcard starts with a greeting followed by a comma (Dear Annie,).
- ☐ My postcard closes with 'Best wishes' or 'Love' followed by a comma.
- ☐ I wrote about my holiday (where I'm staying, what I'm doing)
- ☐ My sentences begin with a capital letter.
- ☐ My sentences end with a full stop.
- ☐ I checked my spelling.

Figure 14.2

Success Criteria for Writing a Postcard



Image by Freepik

also use 'comfort' feedback, aimed at encouraging and reassuring them. As McKay (2006, p. 46) argues, 'assessment and feedback need to evoke positive emotions in children about language learning, about themselves and about others.'

Besides teacher feedback, we also should encourage feedback from learners. Learner feedback is at the heart of the *assessment for learning* (AfL) concept whose main purpose is 'to support learners in improving their learning outcomes by helping them to reflect on the extent to which they already meet learning objectives and on how best to move their learning forward' (Britton, 2021, p. 2).

An important aspect of AfL is giving the pupils opportunities to progress. This can be done by using different techniques, such as self and peer assessment, defining and discussing learning intentions and success criteria (Crichton & McDaid, 2016). Success criteria, for example, give the learners an idea of what is expected of them and feedback on the quality of their learning. In this way, they promote greater learner autonomy. Success criteria can be negotiated with the learners and presented in different ways. A common practice is to use rubrics which lay out what learners need to do to accomplish a writing task, such as in Figure 14.2, in which learners tick the criteria boxes for writing a simple letter. Another technique is to use 'I can' statements which refer to the skills learners need to accomplish in order to meet a specific learning goal. In the self-assessment task in Figure 14.3 (p. 212), learners colour parts of the rocket when they feel they can do the activities listed.

In integrating AfL into their teaching, teachers may use several practical strategies and activities, such as Traffic Lights, Think-Pair-Share, Admit and Exit Tickets, Learning Partners, and Self-check Questionnaires (Table 14.1 on page 213).

- 1. I can greet people in English.
- 2. I can name classroom equipment and school supplies.
- 3. I can understand instructions in English.
- 4. I can recognise greetings in different languages.
- 5. I can write the letters x, y, w, and q.
- 6. I can ask about and describe the weather.
- 7. I can name types of sports and sports equipment in English.
- 8. I can say which sports I can do and which I can't.

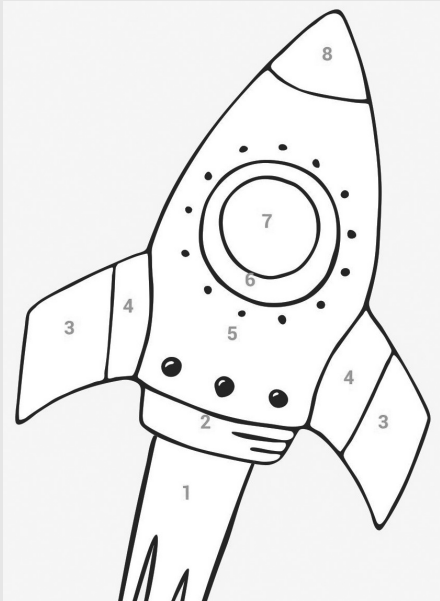






Figure 14.3
Example of Self-Assessment Task for YLs
(Bratož et al., 2019, p. 31)

			
I can't do this yet.	I can do this with help.	I can do this on my own.	I'm an expert and can teach someone else.

Designed by pch.vector/Freepik

Figure 14.4 Self-Check Questionnaire for YLs

AfL promotes a dynamic and responsive approach to teaching and learning, fostering a supportive environment and enhancing YLs' metacognitive skills. In this way, YLs are given the opportunity to assess their own understanding of what they are learning, identify areas which need improvement and learn how to ask for help and support. By continuously assessing YLLs throughout the learning process, teachers can thus pinpoint areas where they excel and areas where they need additional support. This allows for targeted instruction and personalized learning experiences.

Table 14.1 Examples of AfL Strategies for YLLs

Strategies	Description
Think-Pair-Share	The teacher asks a question and the pupils think about their ideas before first sharing them with a partner and then with the whole class.
Traffic Lights	Traffic light cards (red, amber or yellow and green card) are used by learners to communicate to the teacher how confident they are about what they are learning. Red may stand for 'I don't understand,' amber for 'I understand partly,' and green for 'I understand fully.' A simple alternative to traffic lights is the thumbs up/down activity in which pupils show they are confident by holding their thumbs up, horizontally to show that they partially understand and thumbs down when they feel they need more time or support.
Admit and Exit Tickets	Pupils write their feedback on small pieces of paper either at the start or end of the lesson. Admit and Exit tickets may serve different purposes. The former may be used to get learners' feedback about homework or their previous knowledge on a particular topic, while the latter may be answers to teachers' questions about what they have learnt or how they have felt during the lesson.
Learning Partners	Pupils are organised in pairs as 'learning partners' or 'buddies' and are encouraged to provide feedback, monitor and evaluate each other's work.
Self-check Questionnaires	A teacher can ask students to complete a short questionnaire with emojis at the end of the lesson (Figure 14.4). In such a survey, they can discover what their learners have found easy or difficult, what they have mastered or any difficulties they have experienced in the class.

Key Takeaways

- It is important to understand the benefits of using different types of assessment.
- There are several informal ways of assessing YLLs which are in line with the principles of formative assessment.
- Assessment for learning allows learners to gain confidence in what they are expected to learn and to what standard.

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Excerpts from Reviews

The key advantage of this book is a broad coverage of topics. Researchers and practitioners can familiarise themselves with key topics and research related to language teaching, such as language learning and acquisition, corrective feedback, teaching different language skills and competences, materials and assessment. Hence, the book provides a complete overview of the most important topics in language learning. Every topic is presented from two perspectives: the theoretical one, which enables the reader to easily find more relevant readings and research, and the practical one, in which readers are provided with 'insights' – representative examples of how teaching can be done. These teaching reflections are interesting and well-thought through.

Janina Iwaniec

The target group of this research monograph are foremost professionals in the area of foreign language teaching at the young learners' level. Researchers and teacher trainers will benefit from a systematic overview of the research in the field and a sound theoretical framework, while practicing and pre-service teachers will gain a thorough understanding of and a valuable insight into the ways basic principles can be applied in teaching practice. The volume therefore presents a valuable contribution to the area of teaching English to young learners, both at the national and international level.

Ester Vidović

The strength of the book lies in its adept synthesis of theory and practice. The authors skillfully navigate through theoretical frameworks that present and discuss all key topics in foreign language learning and connect them with 'classroom insights' – thoughtful practical applications and reflections of teaching practice. This approach effectively caters for both novice and experienced practitioners, as it provides a bridge between academic discourse and the real-world challenges faced in language teaching.

Anja Pirih



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