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Introduction

Since Uzbekistan has become an independent country there has been made many reforms and improvements in educational system by the president of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov[1,72]. One of his latest education decrees "On measures to further improve foreign language learning system" was signed on December 10, 2012. According to the decree, starting from 2013/2014 school year English language throughout the country must be taught from the first year of schooling in the interactive form i.e., the lessons should be taught through games and entertaining activities[2,44]. Moreover, at higher educational institutions the major subjects must be taught in foreign languages. This decree demonstrates that, nowadays, there is a strong demand to teach and learn English in Uzbekistan.

The actuality of the work is defined by the Presidential decree itself as teaching young learners from the first grade is the new stream in Uzbekistan. Undoubtedly, the course book as "Kid's English" is valuable contribution to the teaching young learners but still this issue demands deeper investigation.

The object of this work is enhancing young learners' speaking skills

The subject of this paper is appropriate way of teaching young learners to enhance their speaking skills.

The purpose of this work is to define the appropriate techniques and tools to develop young learners' speaking skills in EFL classes

The main tasks of the current paper is to define the main concepts of the young learners, the crucial features and demands of tasks directed to learning languages; guiding principle of learning spoken language for young learners; tolls and techniques used in developing and enhancing speaking skills.

Novelty of this work is the affirmation of using storytelling as the technique which can motivate, interest young learners and develop their speaking skills.

The main sources Brewster, J., (1991), «What is good primary practice?» in Brumfit C, Moon J, Tongue R (eds) Teaching English to Children. From Practice to Principle, edition published by Longman Group Ltd, 1995 ; Brumfit C., Moon

J., Tongue R. (eds) (1991) Teaching English to Children. From Practice to Principle, edition published by Longman Group Ltd, 1995 ;Ellis, G. & Brewster, J., (1991), The Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers, Penguin

The theoretical value Challenges await us at every turn in our professional path because the discipline of language teaching has only begun to solve some of the perplexing questions about how people successfully learn foreign languages. Opportunities for growth abound because, for as long as we continue to teach, we will never run out of new questions, new possibilities, new ways of looking at your students, and new ways of looking at ourselves. The joy of teaching lies in the vicarious pleasure of witnessing your students' attainment of broader and broader vistas of linguistic proficiency and in experiencing the communal bond that we have been instrumental in creating in our classroom[11,323]. And, ultimately, few professions can offer the fulfilment of knowing that you're seemingly insignificant work really can make a difference in a world in need of communication that transcends national borders and interests.

The practical value is that references of the research, its theoretical principles and conclusions are eligible to apply by improvement of modern sphere of linguistics in Uzbekistan within a world linguistic area, by drawing up an educational – pedagogical projects, forming manuals to optimize higher educational institutions system within the task of the National Programme of the Personnel Training System. Moreover, that results can be used on special courses on methodology, and practical lessons in English.

The purpose and structure of the qualification paper " Some Ways of Enhancing Young Learners' Speaking Skills" determined the following **structure:** the plan, introduction, first and second chapters, conclusion and bibliography. In the introduction we have identified the actuality of the object and subject matter under investigation, its purpose, main tasks, research methods, scientific novelty, the theoretical value and practical value.

In first chapter, " Learning –centered perspective as central issue to effective teaching for young learners" where young learners peculiarities and learning – centered perspectives in the young learners' classroom were examined.

In second chapter of " Enhancing young learners' speaking skills" the techniques and reasons of using storytelling to develop young learners speaking skills are considered.

In conclusion, the results and all data of this work are presented .

Chapter I

Learning –centered perspective as central issue to effective teaching for young learners.

1.1 . Considerations for teaching young learners.

What is different about teaching a foreign language to children, in contrast to teaching adults or adolescents? Some differences are immediately obvious: children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners. They want to please the teacher rather than their peer group. They will have ago at an activity even when they don't quite understand why or how. However they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult. Children do not find it as easy to use language to talk about language; in other words, they do not have the same access as older learners to meta-language that teachers can use to explain about grammar or discourse. Children often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language, and their lack of inhibition seems to help them get a more native-like accent. But these are generalizations which hide the detail of different children, and of the skills involved in teaching them[3,59]. We need to unpack the generalizations to find out what lies underneath as characteristic of children as language learners. We will find that important differences do arise from the linguistic, psychological and social development of the learners, and that, as a result, we need to adjust the way we think about the language we teach and the classroom activities we use. Although conventional language teaching terms like 'grammar' and 'listening' are used in connection with the young learner classroom, understanding of what these mean to the children who are learning them may need to differ from how they are understood in mainstream language teaching. In the learning-centered perspective, knowledge about children's learning is seen as central to effective teaching. Successful lessons and activities are those that are tuned to the learning needs of pupils, rather than to the demands of the next text-book unit, or to the

interests of the teacher. A learning-centered perspective should be distinguished from 'learner-centered' teaching. Learner-centered teaching places the child at the centre of teacher thinking and curriculum planning. While this is a great improvement on placing the subject or the curriculum at the centre, however, it is not enough. In centering on the child, we risk losing sight of what it is we are trying to do in schools, and of the enormous potential that lies beyond the child. Imagine a child standing at the edge of a new country that represents new ideas and all that can be learnt; ahead of the child are paths through valleys and forests, mountains to be climbed and cities to be explored. The child, however; may not be aware of the vast possibilities on offer, and, being a child, may either be content with the first stream or field s/he comes across, or may rush from one new place to the next without stopping to really explore any. If a teacher's concern is centered on the child, there is a temptation to stay in that first place or to follow the child. There are too many classrooms where learners are enjoying themselves on intellectually undemanding tasks but failing to learn as much as they might. The time available in busy school timetables for language teaching is too short to waste on activities that are fun but do not maximize learning [6,124]. The teacher has to do what the child may not be able to do: to keep in sight the longer view, and move the child towards increasingly demanding challenges, so that no learning potential is wasted. A learning-centered perspective on teaching will help us to do that more effectively.

In this chapter it is given an overview of theory and research relevant to children's language learning. The field of teaching young learners, particularly in teaching English, has expanded enormously in the last years but is only just beginning to be researched. We need therefore to draw on work from beyond language classrooms: in child development, in learning theory, in first language development, and in the development of a second language in bilingual contexts. Implications for teaching young learners are taken from each of these and used to establish guiding principles and a theoretical framework to be developed.

Austin's concern was with how young children function in the world that surrounds them, and how this influences their mental development. The child is seen as continually interacting with the world around her/him, solving problems that are presented by the environment. It is through taking action to solve problems that learning occurs[4,92]. For example, a very young child might encounter the problem of how to get food from her bowl into her mouth. In solving the problem, with a spoon or with fingers, the child learns the muscle control and direction-finding needed to feed herself. The knowledge that results from such action is net imitated or in-born, but is actively constructed by the child. What happens early on with concrete objects, continues to happen in the mind, as problems are confronted internally, and action taken to solve them or think them through. In this way, thought is seen as deriving from action; action is internalized, or carried out mentally in the imagination, and in this way thinking develops.

Piaget gives a much less important role to language in cognitive development than does Vygotsky. It is action, rather than the development of the first language which, for Piaget, is fundamental to cognitive development.

Piagetian psychology differentiates two ways in which development can take place as a result of activity: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation happens when action takes place without any change to the child; accommodation involves the child adjusting to features of the environment in some way. Returning to the example of feeding, let's imagine what might happen when a child, who has learnt to use a spoon, is presented with a fork to eat with. She may first use the fork in just the same way as the spoon was used; this is assimilation of the new tool to existing skills and knowledge. When the child realizes that the prongs of the fork offer new eating opportunities - spiking food rather than just 'spooning' it - accommodation occurs; the child's actions and knowledge adapt to the new possibility and something new is created. These two adaptive processes, although essentially different, happen together.

Assimilation and accommodation arc initially adaptive processes of behaviour, but they become processes of thinking. Accommodation is an important

idea that has been taken into second language learning under the label 'restructuring', used to refer to the re-organisation of mental representations of a language [21,107].

From a Piagetian viewpoint, a child's thinking develops as gradual growth of knowledge and intellectual skills towards a final stage of formal, logical thinking. However, gradual growth is punctuated with certain fundamental changes, which cause the child to pass through a series of stages. At each stage, the child is capable of some types of thinking but still incapable of others. In particular, the Piagetian viewpoint of development - thinking that can manipulate formal abstract categories using rules of logic - is held to be unavailable to children before they reach 11 years of age or more. The experimental studies used to support Piaget's theories have been criticized for not being sufficiently child-friendly, and for underestimating what children are capable of. In a series of ingenious experiments, Margaret Donaldson and her colleagues have convincingly shown that when appropriate language, objects and tasks arc used, very young children are capable of many of the ways of thinking that Piaget held too advanced for them, including formal, logical thought [27,5]. These results undermine some of Piaget's theoretical views, particularly the notion of discrete stages and the idea that children cannot do certain things if they have not yet 'reached' that stage. An example of how stage theory can lead to restricting children's learning occurred in the UK in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Before children were allowed to start writing sentences, they had to complete sets of 'writing readiness' activities that worked on part-skills. In spending so long on writing patterns and bits of letter shapes, they were missing out on the more holistic experiences that also help children understand the purposes of writing as communication.

An important dimension of children's lives that Piaget neglects is the Social, it is the child on his or her own in the world that concerns him, rather than the child in communication with adults and other children.

We can take from Piaget the very important idea of the child as an active learner and thinker, constructing his or her own knowledge from working with

objects or ideas. Donaldson's work emphasizes:" that (the child) actively tries to make sense of the world . .. asks questions,. .. wants to know. .. Also from a very early stage the child has purposes and intentions: he wants to do." Children also seek out intentions and purposes in what they see other people doing, bringing their knowledge and experience to their attempts to make sense of other people's actions and language[5,94]. Realizing that children are active 'sense-makers' but that their sense-making is limited by their experience, is a key to understanding how they respond to tasks and activities in the language classroom. If we take Piaget's idea that children adapt through experiences with objects in their environment it around,   We can see how that environment provides the setting for development through the opportunities it offers the child for action. Transferring this idea metaphorically to the abstract world of learning and ideas, we can think of the classroom and classroom activities as creating and offering opportunities to learners for learning. This view coincides with 'ecological' thinking that sees events and activities as offering affordances or opportunities for use and interaction that depend on who is involved [12,278]: for example, to a human being, a tree 'affords' shelter from the rain or firewood, to a bird, the same tree 'affords' a nest site or buds to ear.

Vygotsky's views of development differ from Piaget's in the importance he gives to language and to other people in the child's world. Although Vygotsky's theory is currently most noted for his central focus on the social and modern developments are often labeled 'sociocultural theory', he did not neglect the individual or individual cognitive development. The development of the child's first language in the second year of life is held to generate a fundamental shift in cognitive development. Language provides the child with a new tool, opens up new opportunities for doing things and for organizing information through the use of words as symbols. Young children can often be heard talking to themselves and organizing themselves as they carry out tasks or play, in what is called private speech. As children get older they speak less and less aloud, and differentiate between social speech for others and 'inner speech", which continues to play an

important role in regulating and controlling behaviour . Adults sometimes resort to speaking aloud when faced with a tricky task, like finding the way to an unfamiliar place, verbalizing to help themselves think and recall: Turn left then right at the roundabout. . .

In considering the early speech of infants and its development into language, Chomsky [24,40] distinguishes the outward talk and what is happening in the child's mind. The infant begins with using single words, but these words convey whole messages: when a child says *juice*, s/he may mean *I want to me more juice or my juice has spilt*. As the child's language develops, the whole undivided thought message can be broken down into smaller units and expressed by putting together words that are now units of talk. Underlying Chomsky theory is the central observation that development and learning take place in a social context, i.e. in a world full of other people, who interact with the child from birth onwards. Whereas for Piaget the child is an active learner alone in a world of objects, for Vygotsky the child is an active learner in a world full of other people. Those people play important roles in helping children to learn, bringing objects and ideas to their attention, talking while playing and about playing, reading stories, asking questions. In a whole range of ways, adults mediate the world for children and make it accessible to them. The ability to learn through instruction and mediation is characteristic of human intelligence. With the help of adults, children can do and understand much more than they can on their own. To illustrate this idea, let's return to the example of the baby learning to feed herself with a spoon. At some point in learning to use a spoon to eat with, the baby may be able to get the spoon in the food and can put a spoonful of food in her mouth, but cannot quite manage the middle step of filling the spoon with food. A helpful adult may assist the baby with the difficult part by putting his hand over the baby's and guiding it in filling the spoon. In this way, adult and child together achieve what the baby was unable to do by herself, and the baby receives some useful training in turning the spoon at the angle needed to get hold of the food. Before long the baby will master this step and can be left to do the whole feeding process by herself. The adult could have

helped the baby in many different ways, including just doing it all to save time and mess! The kind of spoon-filling help, targeted at what the baby can nearly but not quite do herself, is seen as particularly useful in promoting development; filling the spoon with food was an action in the baby's zone of proximal development (or ZPD). Vygowky used the idea of the ZPD to give a new meaning to 'intelligence'. Rather than measuring intelligence by what a child can do alone, Vygotsky suggested that intelligence was better measured by what a child can do with skilled help. Different children at the same point in development will make different uses of the same help from an adult. Take as an example seven or eight year olds learning to do arithmetic and perhaps meeting subtraction problems for the first time. For some pupils, a demonstration by the teacher using counting bricks may be all they need to grasp the idea and do other sums of the same type. Others will be able to do the same sum again but not be able to generalize to other sums. In foreign language learning, we might imagine children listening to the teacher model a new question: *Do you like swimming?* and being encouraged to ask similar questions. One child may be able to use other phrases he has learnt previously and say *Do you like drinking orange juice?* whereas another may be able to repeat *Do you like swimming?* and yet another would have trouble repeating it accurately. In each case, the ZPD, or what the child can do with the help of the adult is different; this, Vygoesky suggested, is a more useful measure of intelligence or ability. Learning to do things and learning to think are both helped by interacting with an adult. Vygotsky saw the child as first doing things in a social context, with other people and language helping in various ways, and gradually shifting away from reliance on others to independent action and thinking. This shift from thinking aloud and talking through what is being done, to thinking inside the head, is called internalization. Savignon emphasizes[55,200] that internalization for Vygoesky was not just a transfer but also a transformation; being able to think about something is qualitatively different from being able to do it. In the internalizing process, the interpersonal, joint talk and joint activity, later becomes intrapersonal, mental action by one individual.

The importance of the word as unit has been downplayed by those who have developed Vygotsky's theories . The word is a recognizable linguistic unit for children in their first language and so they will notice words in the new language. Often too we teach children words in the new language by showing them objects that they can see and touch, and that have single word labels in the first language. From their earliest lessons, children arc encouraged to think of the new language as a set of words, although of teacher can do to support learning, we can use the idea that the adult tries to mediate what next it is the child can learn; this has applications in both lesson planning and in how teachers talk to pupils minute by minute. The new language is first used meaningfully by teacher and pupils, and later it is transformed and internalized to become part of the individual child's language skills or knowledge

For Bruner language is the most important tool for cognitive growth, and he has investigated how adults use language to mediate the world for children and help them to solve problems [19,327]. Talk that supports a child in carrying out an activity, as a kind of verbal version of the fine-tuned help given in the baby feeding example above, has been labeled scaffolding . In experiments with American mothers and children, parents who scaffolded tasks effectively for children did the following:

- they made the children interested in the task;

- they simplified the task, often by breaking it down into smaller steps;

- they kept the child on track towards completing the task by reminding the child of what the goal was;

- they pointed out what was important to do or showed the child other ways of doing parts of the tasks;

- they controlled the child's frustration during the task;

- they demonstrated an idealized version of the task.

Moreover, good scaffolding was tuned to the needs of the child and adjusted as the child became more competent. Scaffolding has been transferred to the

classroom and teacher-pupil talk. Canale [20,27] suggests that teachers can scaffold children's learning in various ways:

Teachers can help children to

a) attend to what is relevant *by* suggesting/ praising the significant/ providing focusing activities

b)adopt useful strategies *by* encouraging rehearsal/being explicit about organization

c) remember the whole task and goals *by* reminding/ modeling/providing part-whole activities .

Each of these teaching strategies can be applied to language teaching.

The notion of helping children attend to what is important will recur in various topics, and echoes discussions in English language teaching about 'noticing' . In directing attention and in remembering the whole task and goals on behalf of the learner, the teach r is doing what children are not yet able to do for themselves. When they focus on some part of a task or the language they want to use, children may not be able to keep in mind the larger task or communicative aim because of limits to their attention capacity. Between them, teacher and pupils manage the whole task, but the way in which the parts and aspects are divided up varies with age and experience. The teacher does most of the managing of joint engagement on a task.

Bruner has provided a further useful idea for language teaching in his notions of formats and routines. These are features of events that allow scaffolding to take place, and combine the security of the familiar with the excitement of the new. Bruner's most useful example of a routine is of parents reading stories to their children from babyhood onwards in situations where parents read bedtime stories to their children (Bruner researched middle class American families), the routine that is followed at the same time each day goes something like this: the child sits on the parent's lap with a large picture story book, and parent and child turn the pages together. As the child gets older, the type of book changes and the roles of adult and child change, but the basic format remains. When action and language

use are analyzed, another layer of routine emerges. With very young children, adults do most of the talking, describing the characters and objects in the pictures and invoking the child with instructions, tag questions and talk about salient images, such as *Look at the clown. He's got a big nose, hasn't he?* The child can be further involved by being asked to point to known pictures: *Where's the clown? and where's his big nose*? As the child learns to talk, so the child's verbal involvement increases as she or he joins in naming pictures and events [27,34]. Over any short period of time, the language used by the parent includes a lot of repetition, and uses finely tuned language that the child, helped by the pictures, can make sense of. The book-reading event is scaffolded by the adult to let the child participate at the level he or she is capable of. The repeated language allows the child to predict what is coming and thus to join in, verbally or non-verbally.

At a later stage, when the five or six year old child is beginning to read, the format may be much the same, with the routine and language more advanced. At this stage, the parent may read the story aloud as well as ask questions about the pictures. The child may finish sentences, recalling how the story ends from memory of previous reading events. Later still, the child may read the story to the parent. Notice how novelty and change are incorporated alongside the familiar security of the routine, and how the child can participate at an increasingly more demanding level as the parent reduces the scaffolding.

Again, language use is predictable within the routine, but there is a 'space' within which the child can take over and do the language her/himself. This space for growth ideally matches the child's zone of proximal development. Bruner suggests that these routines and their adjustment provide an important site for language and cognitive development.

Transferring to the language classroom, we can see how classroom routines, which happen every day, may provide opportunities for language development. One immediate example would be in classroom management, such as giving out paper and scissors for making activities. As a routine, this would always take basically the same form: for example, the teacher talking to the whole class,

organizing distribution, perhaps using children as monitors; the scissors might be kept in a box, the paper in a cupboard. The language used would suit the task and the pupils' level; so early stage learner; might hear, *George, please give out the scissors. Margaret, please give out the paper*. The context and the familiarity of the event provide an opportunity for pupils to predict meaning and intention, but the routine also offers a way to add variation and novelty that can involve more complex language: *Sam, please ask everybody if they want white paper or black paper,* or *Give out a pair of scissors to each group*. As the language becomes more complex, the support to meaning that comes from the routine and the situation helps the children to continue to understand[40,328]. The increased complexity of language provides a space for language growth; if the new language is within a child's ZPD, she or he will make sense of it and start the process of internalizing it. Routines then can provide opportunities for meaningful language development; they allow the child to actively make sense of new language from familiar experience and provide a space for language growth. Routines will open up many possibilities for developing language skills.

First, second and foreign languages The central characteristics of foreign language learning lie in the amount and type of exposure to the language: there will be very little experience of the language outside the classroom, and encounters with the language will be through several hours of teaching in a school week. In the ease of a global language like English, however, even very young children will encounter the language in use on video, TV, computers and film. What they might not be exposed to is 'street' use, i.e. people using the language for everyday life purposes all around them.

It was thought until quite recently that by the age of 5, first language acquisition was largely complete. However, formal literacy skills are still in the early stages of development at live and six years of age, even though the beginnings of literacy can be traced back to experiences in infancy, such as listening to stories. Some structures in spoken language are acquired late because of their connection with the written language. In English, relative clauses are one

example of this: Fischer[32,13] reports that children of 11 years tend not to use relative clauses beginning with *whose*, or preposition + relative pronoun e.g. *in which*. She suggests that this is because such structures occur mainly in written text and so children have little experience of them in their early years. Children also have problems using words that express logical relations between ideas, like cause and effect. The full use of coordinators, including *but* and *yet*, is still to be developed after the age of 11 years and clauses introduced with *although* or *unless* can cause problems even for 15 year olds. The meanings of these linking terms are logically complicated and correct use requires the child to have developed both logical understanding and the language in which to express it. If young first language children find such aspects of English difficult then there seems little reason for including them on syllabuses for child learners of English as a foreign language, and the same would be true for similar aspects of other languages.

Discourse skills in the first language continue to develop throughout the early school years. At 7 years of age, children are still acquiring the skills needed for extended discourse. In telling narratives, for example, children are still learning how to create thematic structure through language, and are still developing the full range of uses of pronouns and determiners [20, 27]. Given the importance attached in the methodology literature to using stories in foreign language teaching, teachers need to remember that children may still be finding it difficult to use pronouns correctly in their first language to control reference to characters across a sequence of events and plot actions, and not to demand unreasonable skills in the foreign language.

Important work from the USA is showing that first language proficiency docs not develop as a single, global phenomenon, but that different domains of language use develop differently. In a project to investigate the language development of children aged 14-32 months, language was measured across the linguistic domains of phonology, morphology, lexis, syntax, conversation and discourse, and have been shown to be largely independent. Extended discourse seems to develop differently from conversation. Furthermore, a connection has

been found between children's early experiences with language use in their families, and their language development in various domains, their families where narratives arc told around the dinner table, on topics such as what happened to parents at work or siblings at school, children develop narrative and discourse skills faster; children whose families use a wide vocabulary develop faster in the lexical domain.

One implication for teachers of foreign languages to young children is that children will come into foreign language learning at the earliest stages bringing with them differently developed skills and learning abilities in their first language. By the age of five, individual differences in. language domains will be established and so, for example, some children will find it easier to learn vocabulary than others or children with more developed conversational skills may transfer these to the new language more easily than others. From the same language lesson, it is likely that different children will learn different things, depending partly on what they find easier to learn. In Vygotskyan terms, it seems likely that a second or foreign language ZPD may not be global, but that different aspects of language will have different ZPDs.

It has long been hypothesized that children learn a second language better than adults, and this is often used to support the early introduction of foreign language teaching. The Critical Period Hypothesis is the name given to the idea that young children can learn a second language particularly effectively before puberty because their brains arc still able to use the mechanisms that assisted first language acquisition. The Critical Period Hypothesis holds that older learners will learn language differently after this stage and, particularly for accent can never achieve the same levels of proficiency. While some empirical studies offer support for the Critical Period Hypothesis, other studies provide evidence that there is no such cut-off point for language learning.

Lightbown and Spada present some of the evidence for and against the Critical Period Hypothesis, and remind us to attend to the different needs, motivations and contexts of different groups of learners. They suggest that where

native-like proficiency in a second language is the goal, then learning benefits from an early start, but when the goal is communicative ability in a foreign language, the benefits of an early start are much less clear. Further support for making this key distinction comes from a recent study into brain activity during language processing. This stuff discovered that the brain activity patterns of early bilinguals, who learn two languages at the same time from infancy, differ from those of learners who begin learning a language after about 7 or 8 years of age; different parts of the brain are used for language recall and activation. Foreign language learning of the sort we are concerned with is thus an essentially different mental activity from early simultaneous bilingualism and from Li acquisition.

The 'Competition Model' of linguistic performance is a theory that explains how first language learning may affect subsequent second or foreign language development [35,198]. In this model, different languages have different ways of carrying meaning and the particular ways in which a language encodes meaning act as "cues' to interpreting the meaning of what is said. All levels of language can provide cues, including lexis, morphology (word endings or prefixes) and phonology (the sound system of a language). Sometimes one source of information reinforces another and sometimes they conflict, or are in competition, in which case the most reliable cue wins out. Studies carried out across different languages have led to the important conclusion that children become sensitive to the reliability of cues in their first language from early infancy. As babies, they learn to pay attention to particular cues which hold useful information for meaning. Later, if faced with trying to understand a second language, they will transfer these first language strategies to make sense of L1sentences, trying to find information in familiar places. Where two languages make use of very different types of cues, the transfer of strategies from L1 to L2 may not be very fruitful. Learners may need to be helped to notice and pay attention to the salient cues of the new language.

The cue effect is compounded by an effect of age. In studies of immersion language learning, younger children (7-8 years) seem to pay more attention to

sound and prosody (the 'music' of an utterance), whereas older children (11-14 years) are more attentive to cues of word order [48,195] . Children are generally less able to give selective and prolonged attention to features of learning tasks than adults and are more easily diverted and distracted by other pupils. When faced with talk in the new language, they try to understand it in terms of the grammar and salient cues of their first language and also pay particular attention to items of L1 vocabulary that they are familiar with. These findings will no: surprise experienced primary teachers, but they give further empirical support to the idea that teachers can help learners by focusing their attention on useful sources of information in the new language, as also suggested by Bruner's scaffolding studies . Which cues need explicit attention will vary with the first language of the learners.

The competition model of understanding a second language, and empirical findings that support the view that first language experience influences second language use, remind us that in learning a foreign language, students are learning both the whole and the parts. In this case, the 'parts' are tiny aspects of grammar or phonology that are crucial in reaching a 'whole' interpretation.

There is mounting evidence from foreign language learning contexts of the influence of teaching method on what is learnt. The range of language experiences that children get in their foreign language lessons is likely to influence how their language develops; for example, if lessons provide opportunities to participate in question and answer type talk then they will he good at that but not necessarily at other, more extended, types of talk. Current knowledge reinforces an intuitively obvious notion: foreign language learners who depend on their teachers and texts for most of their exposure and input, will not, if this is restricted in type, develop across the full range of the foreign language. A particular aspect of this concerns extended discourse, i.e. talking at length, and later, writing at length. If, as seems to be the case from the first language research, conversational skills develop independently of extended discourse skills, then we cannot assume that teaching children conversational language will lead to them being able to speak at length in the foreign language, but rather must work on the principle that if we want children

to tell stories or recount events, they need to have **experience** of how this is done in the foreign language. Modeling of language use by teachers, already seen as an important step in scaffolding, needs farther to be genre-specific.

Many advantages are claimed for starting to learn. a foreign language in the primary years; more evidence to needed to judge how far claims turn into reality. Experience in the UK twenty years ago found that language . learning in primary schools was not as positive as expected, although in retrospect this seems likely to be due to how it was implemented and, in particular; to the lack of attention that planners paid to what would happen at secondary level, when FL teachers were faced with mixed classes of beginners and more advanced learners. The social, cultural and political issues around policies of teaching foreign languages early are complex and influence teaching and learning at classroom level.

In applied linguistics over the last decades, it has been common to divide language into 'the Four Skills': Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, and then to add Grammar, Vocabulary and Phonology to them. This division is not as logical as it may seem and has been challenged [40,328]. Some syllabuses also deal in Topics, Functions and Notions, describing language in terms of how it is used in communication rather than seeing it as a linguistic system or a set of skills. Because children who start learning a foreign language very young may encounter nothing but the spoken language for several years, the customary division into the four skills seems somewhat inappropriate, and an alternative division of language has been attempted. The first cut into the holism of language learning separates literacy skills from the rest, on the basis that learning to read and write in a foreign language presents distinct learning tasks that require teaching. It is arguable that teachers need to plan and support literacy skills development informed by specific knowledge and understanding of literacy issues, although of course the learner will, and should, experience literacy development as integrated within spoken language development. Having separated out literacy skills development from of the totality of the foreign language, what then remains is much wider than Speaking and Listening as perceived in secondary or adult language teaching. For

young learners, spoken language is the medium through which the new language is encountered, understood, practiced and learnt. Rather than oral skills being simply one aspect of learning language, the spoken form in the young learner classroom acts as the prime source and site of language learning. New language is largely introduced orally, understood orally and aurally, practiced and automatised orally. The solution to the problem of how to divide up oral language learning comes from thinking about how children seek out meanings for themselves in language, and to focus on words and on interaction.

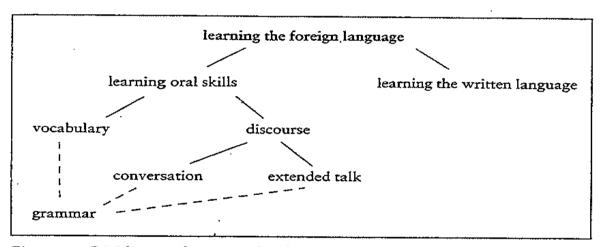The organizational scheme for language is summarized in Figure 1.1

Figure 1.1 Dividing up 'language' for child foreign language learning

Children actively try to 'make sense', i.e. to find and construct a meaning and purpose for what adults say to them and ask them to do. They can only make sense in terms of their world knowledge, which is limited and partial. Teachers thus need to examine classroom activities from the child's point of view in order to assess whether pupils will understand what to do or will be able to make sense of new language.

In both language and cognitive development, the ZPD or immediate potential of the child is of central importance for effective learning. Routines and scaffolding are two types of language-using strategies that seem to be especially helpful in making space for children's growth. Language in use carries cues to meaning that may not be noticed. Children need skilled help in noticing and

attending to aspects of the foreign language that carry meaning. Since they cannot benefit much from formal grammar; other ways of doing this have to be found. Children's foreign language learning depends on what they experience. There are important links between what and how children are taught, and what they learn. Within the ZPD, the broader and richer the language experience that is provided for children, the more they are likely to learn. Foreign language lessons often provide all or most of a child's experience of the language in use; if we want children to develop certain language skills, we need to ensure they have experiences in lessons that will build those skills.

The activities that happen in classrooms create a kind of *environment* for leaning and, as such, offer different kinds of opportunities for language earning. Part of teaching skill is to identify the particular opportunities of a task or activity, and then to develop them into learning experiences for the children.

1.2 Learning language though tasks and activities

Classroom tasks and activities are seen as the '*environment'* or '*ecosystem*' in which the growth of skills in the foreign language takes place. The idea of task will need to be adapted slightly from the way it is used in current 'task-based' approaches to language teaching and will be given a (post-) Vygotskyan slant. Young learners work hard to make sense of what teachers ask them to do, and come to tasks with their own understandings of the purposes and expectations of adults. Studies of young children starting school have shown how much difference there often is between language use and activities at home and at school, but also how quickly children work out what is expected of them and how to fit into the new patterns of interaction . We can predict that children will bring these abilities to their language lessons and that this urge to find meaning and purpose can be a very helpful language learning tool for teachers to exploit. Unfortunately ,even the most motivated child can have problems making sense of some of the activities in which they are asked to participate in their language lessons; the combined effect of the activity-type and new language can render everything just too mysterious.

Teachers may not notice pupils' confusion because the children are anxious to please and may act *as if* they understand. For example, they may pick out and repeat key words from the teacher's language, giving an illusion of understanding, or they may persevere with a writing or matching task without really understanding what they are doing. Here again, we see the importance of a learning perspective that will go beyond a superficial evaluation of classroom activity, and give teachers tools for really checking on how much pupils are understanding and learning.

The demands of tasks on the pupil can be divided into two types of demand: cognitive and language, and the are summarized below. Cognitive demands are those related to concepts, and to understanding of the world and other people. Language demands are those related to using the foreign language, and to uses of mother tongue m connection with learning the foreign language [48,195].

There may be other demands on the pupils beyond the language and the cognitive. If they are required to do the activity in pairs, then each pupil needs to listen to his or her partner paying attention to the particular box on the grid being talked about; this would be an *interactional* demand. *Metalinguistic* demands would require pupils to understand or use English to talk about the language, e.g. if pupils were instructed 'use the past tense of the verbs'. *Involvement* refers to the demand on the child to keep engaged with the task for as long as it takes to complete it; *involvement* demands will vary with how interesting the task is to the child. With younger children, especially, we need to remember that classroom tasks will present *physical* demands, sitting still long enough to do the task or using the fine-motor skills required to manipulate pencil to write, draw or tick boxes. The box below shows a list of types of demands that a task may place on learners:

TASK DEMANDS

● **Cognitive**

demands vary with the degree of contextualisation of language; difficulty of concepts that are needed to do the task (e.g. use of graphics, colours, telling the time).

● **Language**

demands vary with whether the language is spoken or written, understanding or production, extended talk or conversation; with vocabulary and grammar needed; with the genre; with the amount of L1 and L2.

● **Interactional**

demands vary with the type of interaction required, e.g. pair work; with the participants in talk – adult / peers; with the nature of the interaction, e.g. question + answer.

● **Metalinguistic**

demands may include the use of technical terms about language in production or comprehension e.g. in instructions, in feedback.

● **Involvement**

demands vary with the ease or difficulty the learner has in engaging with the task, e.g. length of task stages; links to child's interest and concerns; novelty, humour, suspense.

● **Physical**

demands vary with how long the child must sit still for; with actions needed; with fine motor skills needed e.g. to write or draw.

The analysis of the demands that a task places on pupils is a key way to assess its suitability and its learning potential. It is, however, only one side of the equation; we also need to look at how the child is supported in achieving the goals of the task.

We can categorize the types of support for learning in the same way as types of demand. When we think in terms of support, we try to use what the children can already do to help them master new skills and knowledge or we try to match tasks to children's natural abilities and inclinations.

Clearly, whether learners can do the task and whether they learn anything by doing it, depends not just on the demands or on the support, but on the dynamic relationship between demands and support. We can here recall the idea of the zone of proximal development, or space for growth, that children need for their language and cognitive development. If the demands are too high, learners will find the task too difficult: they are likely to *'switch off'* and not finish the task, or to finish it as well as they can, using what they know to complete the task but not

using the language intended. In either case, learning goals are not achieved. Perhaps, most dangerously of all for future learning, children may appear to the teacher to have completed the task, but may not have understood it or learnt from it. The teacher may then try to build on the unlearnt language in future lessons, and for a time may appear to succeed. Pupils' problems can remain hidden, particularly in contexts where the teacher leads and controls classroom activity very strongly, until revealed by some crisis, such as end of year examinations. While the desire of young children to please adults and participate as much as they can is one of the very positive sides of teaching young learners, we need to be aware that it can also hide a multitude of problems. If a task provides too much support, then learners will not be 'stretched'. A very common example of too much support is the teacher's use of the first language to explain the meaning of a reading text; this provides so much support to understanding that the learners do not need to think about the foreign language or to use more than just single words . In trying to strike a balance between demands and support, we can apply what cognitive scientists call *'the Goldilocks principle'*: a task that is going to help the learner learn more language is one that is demanding but not too demanding, that provides support but not too much support. The difference between demands and support creates the space for growth and produces opportunities for learning.

An analogy may help capture this idea. Imagine that you are working out in a gym and lifting weights. Your aim is to increase the size of weights you can lift, or the number of times you lift a weight. Either increase is an advance in fitness and can represent language learning. Now, the way to get fitter is not to try to pick up a weight that is very much heavier than the one you can lift at the moment, nor is it to use a weight much lighter. If the weight is too heavy (or task demands too great or support not enough), you will just fail to lift it altogether or, if you do manage to lift it, may well cause injury. If the weight is too light (demands too low or support too great), you will be able to lift the weight (complete die task) very easily, but it won't increase your fitness. What will promote increased fitness (or learning) is to work with a weight that is just a little bit heavier than your usual

weight, so that muscles can adapt to the increase, and then, through practice, the new weight will become your new current limit. The process can then be repeated with a slightly heavier weight still. Over time, you will become able to lift much heavier weights, but at no time will the strain have been too great! Language learning for an individual can be seen similarly as a repeated process of stretching resources slightly beyond the current limit into the ZPD or space for growth, consolidating new skills, and then moving on to the next challenge.

Task Support

• **Cognitive**

support can come from the contextualisation of language; from the use of concepts already developed; from familiar formats of graphics or activity; from familiar topics and content.

• **Language**

support can come from re-use of language already mastered; from moving from easier domain to more difficult, e.g. spoken to written; from using known vocabulary and grammar to help with the new; from use of L_1 to support L_2 development.

• **Interactional**

support can come from the type of interaction, e.g. pair work; from helpful co-participants; from the use of familiar routines.

• **Metalinguistic**

support can come from familiar technical terms to talk about new language; clear explanations.

• **Involvement**

support can come from content and activity that is easy for the learner to engage with, e.g. links to child's interest and concerns; from mixing physical movement and calm, seated activities.

• **Physical**

variation in sitting and moving; use of familiar actions; match to level of fine motor skills development, e.g. to write or draw.

How then can teachers achieve the most useful balance of demands and support when they plan lessons and adapt tasks from course books? If language learning is made the focus of this issue, the question then becomes, 'How can teachers ensure that the balance of demands and support produces language learning?' The answer we will pursue is that the teacher, in planning, must set clear and appropriate language learning goals.

As a bald statement, this may sound rather obvious. After all, surely language learning is a goal for all language teaching? At a general level, this may be so, but it does not always seem to be the case for individual lessons and tasks. Moreover, goals that result in learning need to be tailored to particular learners. The course book or syllabus may dictate what is to be *taught*, but what is to be learnt can only be planned by a teacher who knows the pupils, and can make the book or syllabus work for them. Learning goals are objectives or intended learning for particular learners working on particular tasks, made specific from the general learning aims of book or syllabus. In setting clear and specific language learning goals, teachers are scaffolding the task for children. Further scaffolding can involve breaking down tasks into manageable steps, each with its own sub-goals. The teacher takes responsibility for the whole task while learners work on each step at a time. Careful design of sub-goals should help ensure success and achievement at each step, and of the task as a whole.

Young learners face many years of classroom lessons and it is important that they feel and are successful from the start. Too many demands early on will make them anxious and fearful of the foreign language; too few demands will make language learning seem boring. Careful selection and grading of goals is one of the key tools available to teachers to build success into learning [6,124].

In primary language classrooms there is a further force that may shift teaching away from learning and that is the borrowing of materials and activities from general primary practice. This transfer of methodology happens rather often at primary level, partly because of the methodological vacuum in teaching young learners, and partly because primary practice has some genuinely good techniques and ideas that clearly work well with children. However, when ideas are transferred, they need to be adapted for the new aim of language learning. Thinking through the demands, support and learning opportunities of activities may help in this adaptation. Prime examples of techniques transferred from primary education would be theme-based learning and the use of songs and rhymes.

One way in which the construct 'task' entered language teaching was through work with adults, who needed to use the second language outside the classroom [48,200]. For these learners, there was sometimes a marked contrast between the kinds of activities they did in classrooms and the kind of activities they needed English for in their lives outside the classroom, and tasks were adopted as a unit that would try to bring the classroom and 'real' life closer together. The goals and outcomes of tasks were to relate to the real needs of learners, such as reading bus timetables or buying cinema tickets. Some writers argued that materials used should be real and authentic too, while others suggested that authenticity of texts was too difficult as a requirement but that authenticity of activities, or of interaction of learner and text, was more desirable . The latest versions of 'task-based learning' (TBI.) locate realness in outcome, with learners working together to do things like 'solve a problem, do a puzzle, play a game or share and compare experiences' . A young learner version of a task-based syllabus was tried out in the Bangalore project twenty years ago , with children working on maths, geography or other problems through English. In all these developments, the essential aspect of a 'task' is that learners were focused on the meaning of content rather than on form, i.e. the learners' goals and task outcomes are not explicitly language-focused. Recently there has been something of a return to form as needing attention too. Children in immersion classes, who have studied school subjects through their second language, arc found to develop language skills that match their native-speaking peers on listening skills and pronunciation, but lag behind in grammatical accuracy and precision. It seems that focusing on meaning is important, but is not enough for continued language development.

Language for young learners raises more problems with the notion of 'real' or 'authentic' language use. Many children do not use the foreign language much outside the classroom, except perhaps on holiday, with tourists to their country, and when using computers. Beyond these limited domains, their outside lives do not readily provide a needs-related syllabus for foreign language learning. Furthermore, their adult lives and possible needs for the language are still too far

away to give content to lessons: 7 and 8 year olds have little need to book holiday accommodation or even give directions! What 'real language use' is for these children is not obvious; it might be seen as the language used by native speaker 7 and 8 year olds, but by the time they have learnt it, they will be 9 and 10 year olds, and will no longer need to talk about, say, teddy bears or dolls. The best we can do is aim for *dynamic congruence*: choosing activities and content that are appropriate for the children's age and socio-cultural experience, and language that will grow with the children, in that, although some vocabulary will no longer be needed, most of the language will provide a useful base for more grown-up purposes. From this point of view, school activities are congruent with children's lives, and using English to take the register or sing songs is quite real enough. It seems appropriate that tasks can be defined as classroom activities. However not all activities that take place in a classroom will qualify as 'tasks'; an activity can be any kind of event that children participate in, but a task has further features. There must be something unified and coherent, for learners, about a task. Rather than taking outcomes as criteria as in Willis' and Skchah's form of TBL, the focus is on how the goals and action create a unified whole [55,200]. A classroom task will have a clear beginning and end; it may be quite short or it may last over several lessons. For the child, a classroom task should have a clear purpose and meaning; for the teacher, the task should have clear language learning goals. Key features of classroom tasks for children learning a foreign language are summarized as follows:

Classroom tasks for children learning a foreign language

- have coherence and unity for learners
  (from topic, activity and / or outcome)
- have meaning and purpose for learners
- have clear language learning goals
- have a beginning and end
- involve the learners actively

If we think about these features in singing songs, we can see that although any instance of singing is an activity, only the more carefully planned and structured events using songs will be classed as 'language learning tasks". This perspective turns the song into a tool for language teaching and learning, that can be effectively planned, implemented and evaluated.

A further aspect of the framework of classroom tasks is the notion of steps or stages. In teaching reading skills, it has been, common practice for many years to plan reading activities in three stages: pre-reading, reading and post-reading. The three stage format has been applied to listening, to ainstream tak-based learning and to activity-based language learning in primary classrooms.Thus, it can be adopted with the following labels: PREPARATION — CORE ACTIVITY — FOLLOW UP.

The 'core activity' is central to the task, just as the earth has a hot, molten core or an apple has its pips inside the core. Without the core, the task would collapse. The core activity is set up through its language learning goals.

Preparation activities prepare the learners to be able to complete the core activity successfully, and might include pre-teaching of language items or activation of topic vocabulary. The 'follow-up' stage builds on successful completion of the core, perhaps with a public performance of work done in the core or with written work based on oral language used in the core. Since one task can lead to another, the follow up of the first may be, or lead into, the 'preparation' stage of the next.

In this current work it is used the metaphor of the task as *creating an environment in which learning can occur*. This environment can be better understood by analyzing the demands and support of activities. In order to help maintain a clear distinction between what is planned and what happens in practice, we can label the two 'task-as-plan' and 'rask-as-acrion' . Until the task is turned into action, it cannot be fully evaluated for its usefulness or effectiveness.

Following the division of language skills set out, the following part deals with the development of children's skills in using the spoken language. It is built around two 'guiding principles' for teaching

1.   **Meaning must come first:** if children do not understand the spoken language, they cannot learn it.

2.   To learn discourse skills, children need **both** to participate in discourse **and** to build up knowledge and skills for participation.

The term 'discourse' is used in two ways in the literature. Firstly, discourse is contrasted with text to emphasize that it concerns use of the language. While 'text' means nothing more than a piece of language, if it is considered as 'discourse', we must include the context of use and the users of the text. A very simple example is a shopping list. If we consider the shopping list as a text, we have a list of items. If we consider the shopping list as discourse, then we have the text but we must also consider many other elements around the list: that it was written by a woman, who has a family and a house to look after, who was planning a trip to a supermarket, that the list was written on the back of an envelope, that it was intended to be used while walking around the supermarket. These use and user factors are part of any analysts of discourse, and help explain content and form[40,328].

The second use of discourse is in contrast to sentence, when it refers to a piece of language longer than the sentence. The sentence has traditionally been taken as a basic unit for grammatical analysis, broken down into clauses, phrases and then words. Once we move from sentences to paragraphs or to books, articles or other large units of text, we are in the world of discourse. When we think about spoken language, discourse in this sense refers to conversation or to larger units of talk, such as stories or songs.

The first sense of discourse is the most important, because all language is used in a context and develops as a result of contextualized use. The second sense can be seen as springing out of the first, in that, when people use language for real purposes, they tend to do so in time-bounded chunks of talk or wiring. These real units of language use are very seldom restricted to the length of a sentence or

smaller – although they can be, as when a sign on the edge of a building site says *Keep Off!* or *Danger*. The term 'discourse event' can be used h to describe a naturally bounded use of language of any length.

'Discourse' in foreign language learning needs both senses. Discourse

as real language use is the target of teaching: we want children to be able to use the foreign language with real people for real purposes. Part of this requires that children know how the foreign language works in conversations and longer stretches of talk and text. Furthermore, discourse occurs in language classrooms - when teachers and learners interact on tasks and activities, they are involved in a discourse event.

Piagetian and Vygotskyan theories of development see children as actively constructing meaning from their experiences in the world. Vygotsky emphasized the shared construction of meaning with other people, and Bruner's notion of scaffolding develops this idea to show how adults can support children in the construction of understanding. From early childhood, the desire to connect emotionally and communicate with other people seems to drive speaking. As children move through infancy, they begin to communicate with others about things in their shared world, and develop their vocabulary of labels alongside their developing abilities to categorize . Underlying any social interaction, including scaffolding, if the human desire to make contact with other people, to cross the gap between their thoughts and one's own. Even if, ultimately, we must acknowledge that we never have complete access to anyone else's mind, we seem to be driver, to keep trying. In this quest to connect with another's thoughts, language is the primary tool we have. When we interact, we use words to try to capture our own and other people's 'sense', our own particular contextualized understandings and connotations for events and idea. For infants, language often seems to play a secondary role to the social and affective, and less attention is paid to the actual language content of talk than to its probable social meanings. Locke (1993) describes three year old English speakers who were happy to respond to an adult who spoke to them in Spanish that they did not understand. The children

seemed to use the social context and intonation as guides to how to respond. Lockc points out that we need to be aware that young children must inevitably have to operate with only partial understanding of much of the language that they hear every day, but that this does not stop them interacting. As they get older; so they build up knowledge of word meanings from a wider range of contexts, and language gradually becomes a more precise and effective tool for communication. The move in language use from partial to more complete understandings must also be experienced by foreign language learners.

Donaldson's work with children taking part in experimental tasks showed how they use their experience of intention and purpose in human activity to make sense of what they are required to do . As human beings, we are driven by a need to 'make sense' of, and to, other people. In what has been described as 'an innate drive for "coherence"' , children cope with the continual novelty of the world by seeking sense, bringing all they know and have already experienced to work out a meaning in what someone says to them or in what they see happening. Research with autistic children adds further evidence to support the idea that children are normally driven to construct understanding; these children are *not* able to make coherent sense of these events but seem to see them as bewilderingly unconnected. The use of first language is driven by a socially-motivated search for understanding and a need to share understanding.

Children, who can be described as actively trying to make sense of new situations and events, sitting in a foreign language classroom. The social and affective drive to share understanding will still operate. When they encounter new language, we can expect that they will try to make sense of it by bringing their 'social knowledge', i.e. what they know already about how the world works, how adults, in this case teachers, talk to children and what kinds of things those adults have previously wanted them to do. This knowledge and experience will help children to find social purpose that can be used as a key to understanding. It will also help children understand the foreign language as a means of communication, as words and phrases are learnt to fit familiar contexts, such as greeting and

naming. When children-are put in a situation where they want to share understanding with other people through the foreign language, they will search their previous language-using experience for ways to act in the foreign language. If their language resources are not sufficient, then the social motivation to construct shared understanding, what Skehan has called 'communicative pressure' (Skehan 1996), is likely to lead to use of first language or mixtures of L1 and the foreign language. This tendency towards communication at any cost affects learners of all ages. In the learner- centered approach to classroom activity the human drive to find and share meaning is harnessed to support language use by being built into task demands.

If adults find themselves in a situation where they cannot make sense of what they were told or asked to do, they will probably ask directly for clarification or find some other way to understand. Children are importantly different in this respect because it takes some years for them to become equal participants in interaction, and to see that each participant has responsibility for making themselves understood to the other .

Generally respecting and wanting to please their teachers, children may continue with activities even if they do not understand. They will continue to speak in the foreign language and continue to perform classroom activities, without understanding. And, if they are not understanding, they cannot be learning. It is not unusual to see pupils in lessons 'mouthing' the sentences in the text book back to their teacher, appearing to complete an activity, but understanding, and learning, nothing. It is important to note the importance of teachers continually putting themselves in the child's position and asking: *Can the child find or construct meaning in this language / activity ?*

It is crucial for teachers to take the responsibility for checking whether their pupils understand the language being used and the purpose of activities being carried out.

Speaking and listening are both active uses of language, but differ in the mental activity- involved and demands that they make on learners of language in

terms of finding and sharing meaning, listening can be seen as (primarily) the active use of language to access other peoples meanings, whereas speaking is the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them. The labels '*receptive*' and '*productive*' uses of language can be applied to listening and speaking respectively.

To construct understanding in a foreign language, learners will use their existing language resources, built up from previous experience of language use. In active listening, the goal of the mental work is to make sense, e.g. of a story or instructions, and is thus naturally meaning-focused rather than language-focused. For example, children listening to a story told in the foreign language from a book with pictures will understand and construct the gist, or outline meaning, of the story in their minds. Although the Story may be told in the foreign language, the mental processing does not need to use the foreign language, and may be carried out in the first language or in some language-independent way, using what psychologists call 'mentalese'. If we were to check what the children understood, we might find they could tell us the story in their first language, i.e. they could recall the meaning, and they might recall some words or phrases in the foreign language. It is very unlikely that they would be able to re-tell the story in the foreign language, because their attention has not been focused on the words and syntax of the story but on its underlying meaning. Different types of listening activities are required to ensure a language -focus .

To speak in the foreign language in order to share understandings with other people requires attention to precise details of the language. A speaker needs to find the most appropriate words and the correct grammar to convey meaning accurately and precisely, and needs to organize the discourse so that a listener will understand. When listening, the nuances of meaning carried by grammar or discourse organization can often be constructed from other clues, but speaking doesn't allow for this so easily. The demands of re-telling a story in the foreign language after listening and understanding should not be underestimated: the language needed at word, sentence and discourse levels must be found and

produced. Speaking is much more demanding than listening on language learners' language resources and skills. Speaking activities, because they are so demanding, require careful and plentiful support of various types, not just support for understanding, but also support for production.

The terms Input* and 'Output' arc often used to refer to listening and speaking (and reading and writing) respectively. This terminology reflects a computer model of the human brain that sees language used by other people as 'information', which is received as input, is mentally processed, and the results produced as output. The computer metaphor has been helpful, but is not adequate to describe listening and speaking in a foreign language because the key processes between input and output, that have been described as finding and sharing understanding, are down- graded in importance.

For some time in the 1980s, it was suggested that 'comprehensible input', i.e. listening to or reading English and making sense of it, was not just necessary for learning a language but would be enough on its own to drive language development (Krashen 1982). Research in immersion situations, however, showed the limits of this comprehensible input theory. Pupils in Canadian schools who learnt their school subjects through French as a second language received plenty of meaningful and comprehensible input. Evaluation of their language skills and resources showed that their listening comprehension skills were very good, but that their production often showed a lack of precision and grammatical accuracy. It was clear that, in addition to being exposed to large amounts of comprehensible input, learners need to use their production resources and skills, if they are to develop knowledge and skills to share their understandings fully and accurately (Swain 1985). Cognitive differences between listening and speaking help understand why the metaphor of input and output is inadequate for language learning. For a computer, input leads to output through invisible processes. The metaphor directs attention away from the crucial learning processes which happen between input and output, both in the classroom and in learners' minds, and from how these learning processes may be supported by teaching and tasks. Recent work on 'input

processing' attempts to work with these in-between processes to help language development.

The classroom discourse event was recorded in a small school in northern Norway. The head teacher of the school taught English, and in this Grade 4 class he had just seven pupils, who were around 11years old and had been learning English for a year. Although the school was in a tiny, isolated village, many pupils used English on their home computer games and all had television showing programmers in English with Norwegian sub-tides; they were in these ways linked into a global English-speaking community. Their lessons usually followed the course book quite closely, and the class had just completed the reading of a dialogue about animals who live in the arctic areas of the far north and had discussed it a little. In the first extract from the talk, we see the teacher (T) setting out the task-as-plan that he intends the pupils to complete:

Note
All transcribed talk will use the following symbols:
(.)   micro pause   ?????   indecipherable talk on tape
(1.0) pause of approx. 1 second, etc.   an::d   extended syllable or phoneme
?   rising intonation suggesting question   <?   'ski-jump' question

Extract 1
1   T: um (4.0) there were some (1.0) polar (3.0) some some animals (.) there
            mentioned (2.0)
            er (2.0) could you please (2.0) think of (3.0) (*blinds pulled down*)
            any animals (.) you know (2.0) um (3.0) A (.) and then B (.)
5   could you please (2.0) go to the blackboard (.) and write (.) down (2.0)
            the name of an animal you know
*A and B (boys) go to the blackboard and write 'reindeer' and 'foks'. Teacher helps
with spelling of reindeer.*
       T: what is wrong about fox? (6.0) A (.) could you (.) correct it?
Correction made to 'fox' .
       T: yes (.) now it's right (2.0)
            er (.) while you are on the blackboard (.) could you please tell us a little
10   about (.) arctic fox (.) what kind of animal is it?

In line 5, the teacher addresses the whole class and asks them to think of any animals they know. He then chooses two pupils to go to the front of the class and write the name of an animal on the board. The boys do not know at this point what they are going to be asked to do with the names, this comes later in line could you please tell us a little about arctic fox. Here then is the oral task as set by the teacher to pupil A, standing by the board with pupil B next to him.

This task sets the initial conditions for the use of English by pupils (and teacher). As it unfolds, it creates the environment of language use and learning.

The demands and support of this initial task-as-plan can be analyzed as follows:

Cognitive demands: access previous knowledge about the animal supported by previous knowledge and by allowing pupils to choose an animal they know about. *Language demands*: to find words and phrases to describe the animal, speak them supported by open choice as to what to describe; by the earlier reading of the text. *Discourse demands*: extended talk is required supported by previous work on the topic. *Interactional demands*: to tell your classmates and the visiting researcher with tape recorder supported by familiar people to talk to (except the researcher!). *Involvement demands*: to be motivated to create an interesting description supported by the arctic context which links to pupils' lives; being able to choose the animal to talk about.

In the next extract, it can be noted what happens as pupil A talks about the arctic fox. The planned extended description is not produced, but instead the teacher helps out the pupil by asking questions.

Extract 2
10 T: what kind of animal is it?
    A: it's a (.) fox
    T: it's a fox ? (.) yes it is (.) *laughs*
          um (3.0) could you tell us (.) describe it (.) ?
          is it big? or is it small? (1.0) how does it (.) look like?
15 A: little (.) and white (.) er (5.0)
    T: is it a big or a small (.) animal?
    A: little one (1.0)
    T: a small one (.) yes (.) rather small (.) compared with (1.0) for instance
          (..) polar bears (.) yes (.) um (1.0) have you seen an arctic fox?
20 A: no (.) er (.) on TV yes
    T: not (.) the real one? (.) no (2.0)
          do we have (.) the arctic (.) foxes (.) in (.) Norway?

A: I don't think so
T: no I don't think so too (.) I think (.) you have to go to (.) further (.)
     further north to get them (2.0) yes thank you (.) um (3.0)

The task-as-plan is altered very quickly. The teacher's opening question (line 10) is very broad in terms of possible answers. Pupil A's response in the next

line seems to surprise the teacher, probably because saying it's a fox does not answer the question at all. In line 13, the teacher asks again, tell us ... describe it. This broad invitation to speak is narrowed down almost immediately in line 14, by asking more closed questions: *is it big? is it small?* Rather than leaving the pupil to decide which aspect of the fox to talk about, the teacher's questions decide for him that size/appearance will be topics. This '*yes/no*' type of question offers a lot of support to the pupil because it contains within it the vocabulary- that the pupil needs. The last question in line 14, *How does it look like?* opens out the talk again by offering the pupil more choice of answer topic. Pupil A responds in line 15 with his own vocabulary choice. Sticking with the teacher's topic of size, he chooses *little* to describe the fox, and then adds the colour word *white*. Notice that the teacher's planned task of describing the animal is being carried out, but only in single words.

The teacher response to pupil A in line 18 takes up the topic of size and contains a more complicated piece of language comparing the fox and a polar bear. Having taken over the lead role in the talk, the teacher then tries to hand it back to pupil A, by asking if he has seen a fox. Again, A seems to understand but replies very hesitatingly, in single words and with the short phrase: *on TV*.

In line 22, the teacher tries again to get the pupil to speak, this time with another closed question that only needs *yes* or *no* as a response. The pupil does a bit better than this, producing the phrase *I don't think so*. Finally, the teacher elaborates this answer by saying that they are further north.

What has happened to the task-as-plan? Clearly, the pupil has not managed to tell the class about the fox or describe the fox in a piece of extended talk. The teacher has had to take over control of the task and uses questions to construct some interactive talk about the animal. Pupil A found the task in some way too demanding. In the next extract from the discourse, again, notice what happens to the planned task, and how this comes about through language use, particularly through questioning.

Extract 3

```
     T:   B ( . ) you have written ( . ) reindeer ( . ) could you tell us a little about ( . )
          reindeers? (3.0)
          have you seen reindeers?
     B:   yes (3.0)
     T:   yes ( . ) how (2.0) do they look like?
30   B:   it's ( . ) er ( . ) white ( . ) and (4.0) ?????
     T:   yes ( . ) the colour is white ( . ) and
     B:   an::d grey
     T:   yes
     B:   and (3.0) they are er (3.0) bigger (3.0)
35   T:   yes (1.0) rather big
     B:   (quietly) rather big
     T:   yes um (2.0) have you seen one?
     B:   yes
     T:   where?
40   B:   in (2.0) Salten
     T:   Salten?
     B:   yes
     T:   yes ( . ) but ( . ) I think we have reindeers in Hameroy ( . )
     B:   yes
45   T:   yes in fact (1.0) I saw some last ( . ) week ( . ) when I was ( . ) in ( . ) ?????
          (2.0)
          so (1.0) we needn't go to ( . ) Salten to (1.0) see (2.0) I think we have some
          here in ????? too  (1.0) I have  seen some ( . ) in ????? (4.0)
```

After establishing that the pupil has in fact seen a reindeer, the teacher again uses an open question to prompt pupil talk: how does is look like? (line 29). With the help of the 'ski-jump' question in line 51, pupil B describes the colours, and in line 34 offers a sentence about their size.

The teacher corrects the word bigger to rather big, and the pupil repeats

the phrase. In this interaction, as with A, the pupil does not seem to be able to produce an extended description using several sentences together, but instead the teacher and pupil together construct a description, using phrases or words elicited through questions. In lines 37-41 the elicitation process becomes very marked, with very closed questions and single word replies. As B's turn comes to an end, the teacher offers a short piece of information about seeing reindeers in their locality. B's task changes from speaking to listening. After A and B, two more pupils were asked to talk, and the discourse proceeded in a similar way, with an early move from open to closed teacher questions. Again, the teacher closed the talk with a little story or narrative:

· **Extract 4**

> T: yes (1.0) they are very dangerous (1.0) in fact (.) some (.) months ago (2.0) a person were killed (.) on Svalbard (.) by a polar bear (.) two ladies were out walking (.) tourists (.) were out walking (.) and (.) were (.) attacked by (.) a polar bear (.) and one of them was killed (1.0) so they're (.) very dangerous (1.0)

It seems that a pattern of talk, or a format, occurs in these extracts from the task-in-action, in which the original task of producing an oral description has hanged under the pressures of production and become a task of answering the teacher's questions, with a concluding piece of information or an anecdote from the teacher.

These extracts demonstrate, pupils seemed to have problems in finding anything to say: perhaps they could not find the English, or perhaps they could not find information about the animals to share through talk. Either way, it is dear that these pupils needed more support to be able to do the oral description.

The pupils' talk clearly demonstrates that speaking is much more demanding than listening; although they had read (and understood) a text about arctic animals and although they could understand when they fastened to the readier talk about the animals, when they were asked to produce a description, they mostly used single words and phrases.

The heavy mental demands of speaking are believed to be one of the causes of the phenomenon of formulaic use of language [24,40]. In all types of language-using situations, first and second, child and adult, speakers seem to rely on such 'chunks' of language that come ready made and can be brought into use with less effort than constructing a fresh phrase or sentence. The 'formulaic sequences' or chunks can be learnt as wholes, or may be 'fused', i.e. they are not encountered as wholes but are made into chunks in the mind of the learner. Chunks are likely to be produced as whole units, and help to avoid long pauses while taking part in talk. The potential benefits of using and learning chunks are not fully understood yet. In child first language acquisition, there is some evidence that phrases learnt formulaically are later broken down into individual words that can be combined with other words, giving new ways of speaking. For foreign language learning, it

seems likely that even if formulaic phrases were not taught as such, some stretches of language would be learnt formulaically. The debate continues as to whether and how formulaic use of language can be exploited for learning, with some suggesting that direct teaching of formulaic phrases will help discourse skills development.

Examination of young learner course books show that many choose conversational phrases as units of language to be taught, and that they seem to expect these to be learnt as formulae. Phrases are presented to children through stories, songs, rhymes, dialogues, and through classroom language.

Learning and use are tightly interconnected - when a child uses English, adapting his or her oral skills to the task in hand, a micro-level instance occurs of learning in action. Over a longer timescale, these accumulating experiences of using language will produce more obvious changes in language resource, that constitute learning. What we might call language '*knowledge*' or '*proficiency*' is the overall effect of many separate uses of the language, in each of which ways of talking or understanding are *selected* and *adapted* to fit the specific situation or task. Over time and many, varied uses of language, the child will move from partial to more complete understanding of aspects of language and develop a greater range of language resources and skills; when the child is then put into a new language-using situation, there are more language resources and skills to select from and the language can be adapted more precisely to fit. Language-using experience in a variety of situations means that the child's language resources can be used across an increasing range of contexts; where at first a child can count in the language only in a recited sequence: one, two, three, fear, etc., gradually the numbers become available for use in more and more linguistic and situational contexts: *I'd like four apples*. The repeated use of the same words in different physical and language contexts helps to construct in the child's mind the sound, shape, and use of the word, language learning is the continual changing of these resources of words and phrases and of grammar, contextualized initially, and de-contexrualisins as it develops.

Explicit attention to language resources is not ruled out by this idea that use drives learning. Skilful leaching about language can play an important role in helping language development.

Conversational interaction and extended talk are the two major types of discourse that can be developed in both first and foreign languages (Brown and Yule 1983). Empirical research has shown that the two types involve different discourse skills and developmental patterns for young children in their first language (Snow 1996). This work has shown that, not only do these two types of discourse develop at different rates for different children, but that the rate and quality of development is connected with how much children are exposed to and participate in each type.

The key differences between conversation and extended talk are length of turns and degree of interaction. Both require attention to other people. In conversation, the social interaction is more obvious, as each short turn responds to previous turns and contributes to the development of the talk. But extended talk, if done well, also needs to take account of the listeners and how they will understand the longer talk turns. The teacher's little stories seem to be well adapted to his pupils' understanding.

Taking responsibility for how other people will understand what you say and for making sure that you understand them, is an aspect of discourse that develops with age. Young children are not very good at taking other discourse participants into account and shaping what they say to fit the needs of others. The effects of age on communication skills have been shown in various empirical studies into children's (first language) listening comprehension and communication strategies. Young speakers between five and ten years lack awareness of how to cater for other participants in discourse, and are not very skilful in planning their talk. As listeners, they understand other people's talk relative to their current level of social and cognitive resources; across the full young learner age range this can be different from an adult understanding. Children up to age seven seem to blame themselves if they do not understand something said to them, rather than judging

that what was said to them might have been inadequate. Even 10 and 11 year olds who have problems in understanding something may not ask for more information. Researchers have tried to train children to be more effective communicators, but have found that training is only effective for older children, above about eight years of children's limited communication skills have been explained in terms of their growing understanding of how they and other people think, act and communicate. Children seem to begin to really develop their understanding or other people's actions and minds around four years of age but it takes much of childhood to gather enough experience and use it to construct a full awareness of how people operate socially and mentally. Indeed, as adults we continue to develop this sensitivity to other people and everyone can probably think of someone who still seems to have problems seeing into the minds of their fellow adults!

While some theorists invoke the idea of a developing *'theory of mind'* in children [5,94], others posit that this understanding is a socially motivated process, in which (first) language use plays a key role in creating and learning from experiences with other people, initially in the family and then beyond (Nelson X996).

The maturation of social and cognitive understandings over the 5-12 age range has implications for foreign language use and learning. When children are asked to take part in conversations that are beyond their development, they cannot fully participate and may be forced to repeat without understanding. Discourse in young learner classrooms should follow patterns children find familiar from their home and family or from their school experience, and should not demand more of children than they can do, in terms of imagining someone else's state of mind or expressing causes and beliefs. These children may have difficulties in estimating what other people will understand from what they say. Summarizing someone else's point of view is also likely to be a demanding task for a child.

Familiarity of content and context in foreign language use will help children as speakers and as listeners. Learner training in communication from eight years on may help children to be able to say when they do not understand what they hear

and to formulate helpful questions to understand more. The final implication takes back to the teacher's responsibility for ensuring that children understand and can make sense of the foreign language they hear. The developmental constraints on children's ability to do this for themselves give a further emphasis to the seed for teachers to act on behalf of the child in this respect, carefully monitoring how they talk to their pupils in terms of what and how their pupils can find meaning in that talk.

Learners of a foreign language will increase their range or repertoire of discourse skills and types. They will learn to interact conversationally with an increasing range of people, in different situations, with different goals and on different topics, moving from the familiar settings of home, family and classroom to situations in the wider world. Children develop skills to produce different types of talk and increasingly long stretches of talk, including:

- narratives

- descriptions

- instructions

- arguments

- opinions

In contrast to the social demands of conversational talk, extended talk makes heavier cognitive and linguistic demands because ideas have to be held in the mind and organized so that the links between them will make sense to listeners. Language forms are need that display the links between ideas, for example cause and effect, and sequencing in time. Listeners to extended talk will face interpretive demands to unpack meaning from the language they hear. In young learner classrooms, we cannot expect pupils to produce extended talk of these forms beyond what they can do in their first language. Again, the first language research provides some help in working out what might and might not be possible in a foreign language.

Conclusion on chapter I. In conclusion it can be said some differences are immediately obvious: children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners.

They want to please the teacher rather than their peer group. They will have ago at an activity even when they don't quite understand why or how. However they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult. Children do not find it as easy to use language to talk about language; in other words, they do not have the same access as older learners to meta-language that teachers can use to explain about grammar or discourse. Children often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language, and their lack of inhibition seems to help them get a more native-like accent. But these are generalizations which hide the detail of different children, and of the skills involved in teaching them[3,59]. We need to unpack the generalizations to find out what lies underneath as characteristic of children as language learners. We will find that important differences do arise from the linguistic, psychological and social development of the learners, and that, as a result, we need to adjust the way we think about the language we teach and the classroom activities we use. Although conventional language teaching terms like 'grammar' and 'listening' are used in connection with the young learner classroom, understanding of what these mean to the children who are learning them may need to differ from how they are understood in mainstream language teaching. In the learning-centered perspective, knowledge about children's learning is seen as central to effective teaching

Chapter II

Enhancing young learners' speaking skills

2.1. Rationale for using stories

When teaching young learners we constantly have to keep in mind the fact that what we have in front of us is a mixed class with varied abilities, expectations, motivation level, knowledge and last but not least, different learning styles. Thus, we need to vary our approaches and offer as much opportunity as possible to make the whole class find a little something to hold on to, expand and grow. Developing speaking skills definitely deserves a closer look.

Young learners are like sponges, they soak up everything we say and how we say it. Thus clear and correct pronunciation is of vital importance, since young learners repeat exactly what they hear. What has been learned at an early stage is difficult to change later on. One of the rules that must be applied is: slowly and steadily, through constant revision and recycling. Furthermore, it is important to achieve a positive and relaxed atmosphere in young learners' classroom, as this proved a decisive factor in achieving maximum results. With the help of mixed activities, such as dialogues, choral revision, chants, songs, poems and rhymes students' speaking abilities grow, their pronunciation gets better and their awareness of the language improves. When applying the above-mentioned tools into teaching practice, it must be kept in mind that interaction is an important way of learning. Therefore, increased oral emphasis should be included in our teaching to give the students as much speaking time as possible. Combining the approaches, varying the cognitive styles, mixing and matching various methods and tools – e.g. songs, games, chants, rhymes, dialogues, etc. – provide the students with maximum variety and (in turn) offers them plenty of opportunities to play an active part in communicative situations, ranging from simple imitation to conscious exchange and internalization of certain vocabulary items / pronunciation styles / grammatical points / communicative techniques, at the same time building strategies that will help them later on when their knowledge of English has advanced and moved to a higher level.

The way the learners are taught the different subjects at school in their mother tongue reflects an attitude towards learning the language and not earning through language. Unavoidably this attitude becomes deeply rooted and forms their expectations in learning the second language also. Teaching contextualized language and developing cognitive awareness through stories is not considered as an effective language teaching methodology for L1 subjects. Literary texts in general are used as a basis for teaching structure and developing grammar drills. The story-based approach is not normally adopted in language schools either. Teaching children of this age is not easy, but it is certainly challenging. Brewster insists that one of the seven main features of good primary practice is 'reading literature for enjoyment, responding to it critically and using that reading for learning' . However "comforting" it might be for the teachers to be 'in charge of the proceedings' [48,195] with a traditional model of teaching, they should not ignore that stories are made for children and that young learners are also children. An area, therefore, which is less developed, is the possibility of using children's stories for the production of a wide variety of language and learning activities. These can lay the foundations for the development of more positive attitudes towards the foreign language and language learning.

There are numerous advantages for applying stories in language contexts. Firstly, they appeal to many teachers as an effective means for language teaching and developing children. They provide a natural context for language structures and vocabulary development and help enhance thinking skills . Furthermore, stories are an effective and enthusiastic technique in teaching young learners; they inject lots of amusement and help children enjoy learning language in purposeful communication . Consequently, stories create a desire to continue learning and positive attitudes towards learning a FL [50,132]. Wright , as well, comments that "stories are particularly important in the lives of our children: stories help children to understand their world and share it with others." Children in their turn try to discover their fantasy world by imagination.

Storytelling has been an old tradition in many countries and societies from a long time ago. Children enjoy listening to a variety of stories : storytelling has been their favorite time and their intimate companions . Krashen assumes that stories lower the affective filter and this certainly helps learners to acquire the FL easier. Generally speaking, using stories as a teaching tool yields several advantages. Wajnryb , for example, lists two major purposes for storytelling. A basic reason for using stories is to utilize them as a means of entertainment and having fun since they inject lots of amusement and interest. Another aim is to instruct, i.e. stories are meant to give morals lessons, e.g. the good people are rewarded and the bad are punished. However, the value of stories goes beyond the amusement and instruction that Wajnryb suggests. Every society has long traditions of oral storytelling which often represents its culture . This arouses children's curiosity to discover different cultures, people and places from other parts of the world. For example, the Cinderella story represents some images of European culture in the past; it shows the way the rich and the poor live, the way Europeans dress, and the kinds of transportation at that time. Another instance is "The Arabian Nights" which consists of a collection of stories that reflect Baghdadis' and Arabians' lives, customs and traditions which are somewhat still alive in these places. Being aware of other cultures has some benefits. For example, learners will enhance their intercultural understanding and thus be tolerant and open-minded to other speakers of FL . Also, the customs and traditions of cultures would be maintained; children can notice and compare the changes and developments that have happened during the time in terms of transportation, houses, clothes and other customs and traditions [55,200].

In addition to the previous benefits, stories are regarded to be a powerful tool in language teaching by several educationalists. In fact, stories provide authentic uses of language . "It seems a pity to deprive learners of opportunities to hear authentic uses of past tense forms and contrast with the other tenses, in the meaningful contexts of stories…". They are a means to acquire a FL unconsciously and often considered as an appropriate teaching technique to develop language

skills . Listening and reading are important skills that need to be developed in language learners to communicate and stories can develop such skills. Apparently, children always like everything that is enjoyable and interesting such as listening to stories in TV cartoon or reading story books. They like to spend much of their free time watching or reading stories about fairies, knights, kings, princesses, castles, dragons and magicians. In addition, being engaged in story events makes children try to predict what will happen next and guess the meaning of new words. Thus, stories not only develop language skills but also help children broaden their vocabulary repertoire because they will hear many new words while they are listening or reading [5,94]. Added to this, stories have been recognized as an effective aid for internalizing some grammar rules because they provide a rich source of language structures and repetitive sentence patterns .

On the other hand, storytelling may yield ineffective results. For instance, stories may sometimes open the door for nonsensical believes. Children usually believe in everything they hear and fairy tales are accepted by them as reality and make the impression of something that really happens. Thus, it doesn't matter whether one says to them they are true or not and so children would believe in things that do not exist in reality like fairies, monsters, ogresses, and talking animals. As a result, fairy tales feed the belief of superstitions that can be furthered; children may grow older with false beliefs stuck in their mind as reality. In his book 'The parent's book', Dr. Karl Oppel , a psychologist, comments that fairy tales prepare children's mind for superstition. No wonder why very large parts of the entire population still believe in superstition. Moreover, some stories fill children's imagination with horrible images and terrifying figures. Stafford warns from telling fearful stories to children. Children sometimes cannot get to sleep because they are thinking about those terrible monsters, ogresses, ghosts, or witches in the story they listen. Austin criticizes fairy tales because he thought that they have negative effects on children's believes[4,92]. For example, the story of the horrible old ugly witch seduces children to her lovely candy house to haunt and

cook the poor children may cause children to feel afraid from any old woman as they think she is a horrible witch.

Why use stories? Ellis and Brewster give several reasons why teachers should use storybooks.

• Storybooks can enrich the pupils' learning experience. Stories are motivating and fun and can help develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language.

• Stories exercise the imagination and are a useful tool in linking fantasy and the imagination with the child's real world.

• Listening to stories in class is a shared social experience.

• Children enjoy listening to stories over and over again. This repetition allows language items to be acquired and reinforced.

• Listening to stories develops the child's listening and concentrating skills.

• Stories create opportunities for developing continuity in children's learning (among others, school subjects across the curriculum).

Stories use a "holistic approach to language teaching and learning that places a high premium on children's involvement with rich, authentic uses of the foreign language."

Stories support natural acquisition of language. "Young learners acquire language unconsciously. The activities you do in class should help this kind of acquisition. Stories are the most valuable resource you have. They offer children a world of supported meaning that they can relate to. Later on you can use stories to help children practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing."

Storytelling is effective for early foreign language classes. Storytelling can be effective for teaching English to young learners for the following reasons given:

1. The purpose of telling a story is **genuinely communicative**.

2. Storytelling is **linguistically honest**. (It is oral language, meant to be heard.)

3. Storytelling is **real!** (People do it all the time!)

4. Storytelling appeals to the **affective domain**.

5. Storytelling caters to the **individual** while forging a **community** in the classroom.

6. Storytelling provides listening experiences with **reduced anxiety**.

Children love stories. They…

are always eager to listen to stories.

know how stories work.

want to understand what is happening

can enjoy hearing stories in English when they start English lessons.

enjoy looking at storybooks by themselves.

can reread the stories they like when they can read in English themselves.[5,94]

The question arises, then, of what we mean by "stories". Children have already formed their schema of what a story is since early childhood. Within the family environment children have had numerous opportunities to listen to stories being read to them, to hold and discover the world of the colorful pictures and, later, to make efforts to "decode" the letters and sounds until they make sense to them as words and sentences. Teachers can choose from a wide range of storybooks of this kind: traditional stories and fairy tales which are common in most European cultures (Snow White or Little Red Riding Hood for example); picture stories where children can build up their own version of the story; fantasy stories; animal stories. Alternatively, many authentic storybooks written for English speaking children are suitable for use in an EFL classroom. The advantage is that they bring the 'real' world in the classroom and they are an excellent opportunity for providing our students with examples of authentic language use.

Patience Adjahoe Karlsson in her thesis, explained how speaking skills through storytelling was for students to communicate in English. Since the initiation in the 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching, or CLT, has taken more account of how language is used as a means of communication than previous teaching approaches had done. Richards expands on this, arguing that CLT

includes knowing: 1. How to use the language for a range of different purposes and functions. 2. How to vary our use of language according to the settings and participants. 3. How to produce and understand different types of texts. 4. How to maintain communication despite having limitations in language knowledge. The most obvious characteristic of CLT is that everything is done with a communicative purpose. In a communicative classroom, students use the language and activities like role-playing, games and problem solving. Usually in a CLT classroom dialogues are not memorized; rather, the focus is on communication. Speaking is a vital element in learning a language. Acquiring communicative skills helps students to express themselves and learn how to follow social and cultural rules suitable in each 21 communicative situation. In speaking, students are inclined to get something done, they explore ideas, they work out some aspect of the world, or just be together [32,18]. Storytelling is an oral activity where language and gestures are used in a colorful way to create scenes in a sequence. Henniger stated that, in the storytelling classroom, activities are planned to inspire students' writing and speaking skills through meaningful, real-world experiences. Studies have shown that storytelling has made significant contributions to speaking and listening in building language skills. Storytelling consists of more than just telling stories. It may include not only creating a story but also the use of pictures, acting, singing, story writing and so forth. Isabel has written that Stories can demonstrate the confidence with which children can structure narrative orally and experiment with language through storytelling. Haven identified storytelling to be powerful, motivating and effective, stating that "Factual and conceptual information is learnt faster and better, and will be remembered longer, recalled more readily, applied more accurately when that information is delivered as a well-told story" . Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup argue that storytelling can incorporate various types of materials, such as musical instruments, costumes, pictures, real objects, ornaments, computers, the Internet, and of course the school book. Storytelling shares important characteristics with CLT. For example, both storytelling and CLT emphasize learner centeredness, as well as cooperative and

collaborative learning for example, children practice 22 writing and speaking by writing and telling stories to an audience of their classmates. This sounds a great deal like CLT, in which students may share information and achieve their learning goals as a group or team[24,40]. Similarly, during the preparation of group storytelling, students share and discuss ideas, and assign roles according to members' inclinations to create a story. As cited in Karlsson, Research by Donato et al. , Ghosn and Linse indicates that speaking proficiency can be promoted by storytelling activities. Stories seem to provide a number offunctions, including helping children to develop an awareness of narrative discourse structure, as well as stimulating their interest and imagination . Stories with a good illustrations and cultural dimension can be particularly effective. Teaching involving the use of stories, however ,should not be overly concentrated on grammatical structure but should highlight aspects such as the overall structure of narratives and different points of view within stories. This kind of activity can generalize to other areas of the child's learning and of the curriculum. There are several criteria a teacher could use for selecting a story that would be accessible and relevant for her learners. The successful choice, however, is not enough to ensure the good use of a story in class. The activities designed for each story and the exploitation of the rich material in the story itself are very important also[12,278].

Criteria for the selection of stories

✓ appropriate language level (vocabulary, structures, notions/ functions)

✓ content (interesting, fun, motivating, memorable, encourages participation)

✓ visuals (attractive, potential to work with, size)

✓ pronunciation (intonation, rhythm, repetition)

✓ motivation (develop imagination, arouse curiosity, draw on personal experience)

✓ Language learning potential (skills development, language practice, recycling, prediction, other strategies)

✓   potential in terms of learning other subjects, target/other culture, metacognition

Techniques for Storytelling

The following are some recommended storytelling techniques from Richards. J.[21,188].

1. If students are unfamiliar with storytelling, **begin with short sessions** which do not demand too much from them and over-extend their concentration span.

2. If possible, **have younger children sit on the floor around you**, making sure everyone can see you and the illustrations and can hear you clearly.

3. **Read slowly and clearly.** Give your pupils time to relate what they hear to what they see in the pictures, to think, ask questions, make comment. However, do vary the pace when the story speeds up.

4. **Make comments about the illustrations** and point to them to focus the pupils' attention.

5. **Encourage your pupils to take part in the storytelling** by repeating key vocabulary items and phrases. You can invite them to do this by pausing and looking at them with a questioning expression and by putting your hand to your ear to indicate that you are waiting for them to join in. Then repeat what they have said to confirm that they have predicted correctly and, if appropriate, expand by putting the word into a full phrase or sentence.

6. **Use gestures, mime, facial gestures** to help convey the meaning.

7. **Vary the pace, tone and volume of your voice.** Are you going to whisper to build up suspense? Are you going to introduce an element of surprise by raising your voice?

8.**Pause where appropriate** to add dramatic effect or to give children time to relate what they hear to what they see, and to assimilate details in the illustrations.

9. **Disguise your voice for the different characters** as much as you can to signal when different characters are speaking and help convey meaning.

10.**Make sound effects where possible.**

11. **Ask questions to involve children** *What do you think is going to happen next? What would you do?*

12. **Do not be afraid to repeat, expand and reformulate.** This increases opportunities of exposure to the language and gives children a second (or third) chance to work out the meaning and have it confirmed. If you need to walk around the class to show children the pictures, repeat the text again and again

Storytelling Tips For Educators: How To Capture Your Student's Attention

1. Every Part Must Be Essential

When you compose your storyline, be it a fictional story to teach a lesson, or a non-fiction example, make sure that each part of the story is essential to the ending. Each character, point, or principle must somehow relate to the main point you are trying to drive home. Anything that does not affect the outcome in some way (directly or indirectly) can be hacked off the story.

Let's take for example, a story about the planets. You may be trying to help students memorize the order of the solar system. Any tale you concoct to help illuminate the facts must be related to the planets. It is not the time to talk about black holes, supernovas, or even the size of each planet. Keep the main thing…the main thing.

2. You Must Have a Hook In Your Opening

In writing, it is called an inciting incident. You hook the listener in by presenting a problem that encourages them to keep listening. You can use this tactic in any lesson.

Creating a world in which it is taken away reveals the ultimate importance of the process you are describing.

For example, if you are teaching the concept of photosynthesis, start your story by imagining a world in which all the flowers didn't have leaves. You create a problem that the story (in this case photosynthesis) solves. In many cases, students don't realize how many principles they take for granted (gravity, light, etc.).

Creating a world in which it is taken away reveals the ultimate importance of the process you are describing.

3. Draw a Theme Out of Your Story

Stories have a depth of meaning when there is a theme. However, it isn't always easy to write a story with a theme in mind. Rather, write the story first- with all the points you want to cover. When you've finished, stand back from the story for a moment to see if you can draw out a theme.

This is especially important when your story relates to incidents in the past. History can be a boring subject without a lot of real-life application. Themes help connect the past with the present, and ultimately the future. Don't be discouraged if once you find your theme, you have to rework and rewrite the story.

This is common.

4. Keep It Simple

Complicated stories aren't necessarily better. If your audience is young, simple is obvious. However, even older audiences can be profoundly impacted when you take a complex idea and reduce it to a nugget that can be remembered.

Scientific principles like gravity and electricity can be difficult for young minds. Using analogies can help. For example, to explain an electrical circuit, describe how a train can only move along tracks that are connected to each other.

A broken track means the train must stop and electricity is the same way.

5. Maintain Eye Contact

Eye contact is one of the most important non-verbal ways to connect with other people. It not only helps keep a student's attention, but it also conveys a sense of confidence and truthfulness.

Imagine telling a story while looking at your feet. What kind of emotions would your students feel, even if the story were light and upbeat? Always look directly into your student's eyes. You will connect with them and keep their attention longer.

6. Use Vivid Language That Kids Can Understand

Some psychologists argue that telling stories is one of the primary ways hamans learn.

Even if you are teaching science or math concepts, pick a word or two that your student's haven't heard of before. Describe and define the word first, and then use it throughout the story. For example, if you are talking science, identify the word "energy" and then use it several times during your story [5,94]. By the end of the story, they will have learned the concepts of the tale plus some vocabulary.

Popular television shows use this method. Dumping down the vocabulary will minimize the power of your story. It is similar to reading a text in a translation. When someone wants to study the content more carefully, they first learn the original language it was written in to understand more fully what the writer was trying to convey.

You want to use the right words, which may mean first having to explain them so students can follow along.

7. Use Movement

Movement can be used in multiple ways. As the storyteller, you can paint pictures with your body- using your hands, feet, legs, and head. Similarly, you can ask the student's to perform movements during certain parts of the story.

This will help activate their memory and keep their attention focused on what you are communicating.

8. Use Dramatic Pauses

People often talk more quickly than the brain can process. If you pause at crucial moments in the story, you give your students the chance to think critically about the piece of information you have just given. Don't be afraid to pause, especially at a tense moment.

Popular television shows use dramatic pauses (or cliffhangers) to rope the audience back into the story. When it seems that the problem is unsolvable, it is the right moment to pause, giving your audience a chance to think up the solution themselves.

9. Change Your Voice With Different Characters

It helps to make characters more memorable when you give them personalities. Part of that includes changing your voice with each character. Without visual props, the voice is one of the only ways to bring the character to life.

If you can have multiple instructors acting as different characters, this is the best option. But sometimes, it isn't possible. If you are re-enacting the Civil War, stand tall and speak deeply when you are President Abraham Lincoln. When you are speaking as an African American slave, change the volume of your voice and use an accent.

Maybe slump your shoulders over to take on a look of oppression.

10. Make Your Ending Strong With an Important Take Away Point

The ending is the last thing your students will hear. Whatever points and/or principles you think are most important, put them at the end. If it doesn't make sense to wait until the end, simply add them AGAIN at the end- to drive the point home.

If you can make the ending one sentence, this is even better. Use alliteration, repetitive words, or a singsong cadence to help make it memorable. For example, if you want your students to remember that equality is the theme of the history lesson, come up with a phrase like, "The Civil War taught Americans that everyone is free to live, free to pursue their dreams, and free…to be free."

It is easy to remember that "freedom" is the central theme.

11. Tell The Truth, Even When It's Difficult

Adults are tempted to lie to children when the situation seems too complex or mature for younger audiences. However, telling the truth is always preferable, even if you have to adapt some of the details and adjust your language for younger audiences.Kids are notoriously smarter and more intuitive than adults realize.

For example, suppose you are teaching a lesson on the Holocaust. If you are speaking to a younger crowd, you might be tempted to gloss over some of the horrors because it is too scary. However, rather than describing the disgusting acts in detail, you can explain the "horror" in a way that gives a tone of seriousness, without the graphics. "The Nazi's made some terrible choices and killed millions of people[24,40]. They hurt them very badly and there was a lot of pain and suffering," is better than saying "The Nazi's weren't very nice to the Jewish people."

Kids are notoriously smarter and more intuitive than adults realize.

12. Make the Character Relatable

The main character of your story must be relatable to your students. You want them to "root" for the character's choices and decisions. If the main character is a dud, the student's won't care if he or she succeeds or fails.

One way to do this is to make the character "feel" real. He or she shouldn't be perfect, but have weaknesses and talents just like we all do. Juxtapose next to the hero (or heroine) an arch nemesis that rivals your protagonist. Student's love to root for the good guy in a story.

Keep in mind; it doesn't have to be human. For example, when you talk about pollution, make recycled paper the good guy, and aerosol cans the enemy. Anything can have a good and evil counterpart.

13. Have Your Story Provide An Answer To a Problem

Every story has theme or meaning. When you can tell a tale that provides a solution to a problem, there is higher likelihood that the story will take on a deeper meaning when it solves a problem in real life.

When you are trying to communicate boring facts (like multiplication facts for example), they don't take on meaning until you create a story in which the protagonist must know those facts in order to divide her gifts up among her family members.

All of a sudden, the solution to the story- lies in the principle you are trying to convey.

14. Know Your Ending Before You Begin

Before you tell a story, know the ending. Know where you are going so your story doesn't go down rabbit trails that distract the listeners.

Good storytellers when they begin to formulate their story, start at the end and work backwards. As you prepare, pick the ending first. Write it at the end of a timeline. Then think about the point that comes right before the end, then the point that comes before the point that gets to the end. Keep working backwards until you arrive at the beginning of your story.

15. Appeal To Their Senses

When preparing your story, activate as many senses as possible. Humans have five senses; sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. The more a story activates the senses, the more memorable it becomes.

For a lesson in geography, you can use a visual map first. Add a song to help memorize the countries or cities. Use props that the students can hold. Maybe you can offer a food from each locale, to activate touch and smell.

It may seem like more work, but ultimately- the principles learned will not soon be forgotten.

16. The Story Should Be "Trustable"

It is called "cheating" when a storyteller automatically twists the laws of the universe to make the story work. Don't offer coincidences that magically solve the

problem. Whatever world or situation your character is in, don't break its rules just to end the story.

According to Pixar (a very well-known storytelling production company), coincidences can be used to get your protagonist into trouble, but should NEVER be used to get them out of trouble.

17. Invite Interaction

At certain points in the story, open up an invitation for questions. When your students are able to offer their predictions, they are more invested in the future and ending of the story to see if they were right.

It drives home the idea that stories have multiple solutions.

Depending on the subject, you may want to enlist your student's help in solving the problem. Perhaps you could tell the first half of the story and ask them to write or act out an ending that solves the problem. Students can work in groups and learn from others who may have chosen to solve the story a different way.

It drives home the idea that stories have multiple solutions.

18. Make The Stakes High Against The Goal

Stories with a happy ending must first overcome obstacles. Before you get to the end of the story, you want to create dramatic tension that makes the listener think, "Will the character reach his or her goal?"

A good story knows how to use tension. Whatever the hero wants makes it difficult for him or her to get there. If the African Americans want freedom, build up the side of the story that showed a dismal outlook (i.e. the North had several setbacks, etc.)

19. Use Props

Almost any story can benefit from props, no matter what subject you are teaching. Don't introduce the props all at once, but bring them out one by one during poignant parts in the telling. Enlist the help of your students. You can have them hold the prop, use the prop, or even let them use it in a way that creates another problem in the story.

Magicians often do this in their show. They ask someone to come to the front and help with juggling. Then, the magician allows the helper to "accidentally" break the plate that the magician plans to put together. This can work well in math. If you have a student manipulate a prop (like for example breaking several pretzels), you can then showcase the mathematical principles of fractions and division.

20. Create The Extraordinary Out of The Ordinary

A story doesn't have to be dramatic in order to drive home a point. In many cases, taking a mundane event and looking at it from a different angle is just as profound. In many cases, taking a mundane event and looking at it from a different angle is just as profound.

For example, if you are talking about accepting other cultures, try this tactic. Pick a common ritual (like men shaving their faces), and tell the story from the angle of a character from another world that has never seen such a thing. Better yet, treat the students like they are from another world.

"Did you know that I saw someone put a knife to his face the other day?!" Use different vocabulary words (like knife versus razor). "Then, he smeared this unknown substance all over his face and used the sharp edge of the knife to rub it off!" Your students might be shocked when you reveal that you were simply talking about shaving. Then you can go into the idea and philosophy behind prejudice and discrimination against other cultures that are unfamiliar.

21. Set the Scene

It is crucial to create an environment for your story. Are you in the woods, on the beach, in a little apartment in the city, or on a different planet? Describe the surroundings, the weather, or the pre-existing conditions.

Use rich detail so the student's can picture the environment in their imaginations. Field trips are such a fantastic way to get into a different environment, but it isn't always possible. Words, descriptions of smell, sounds, and sights will make the story more meaningful.

22. Use Music

Music is an excellent way to learn and memorize long lists. If you are teaching the fifty states, a song with a catchy rhythm will help solidify the memorization process.

Songs have long been used throughout history to help cultures preserve traditions and historic events. What could be impossible for the human brain to do without music (like memorize the periodic table of elements) becomes possible when you create a song with a recurring chorus.

23. Create Fun Sound Effects

If it is a stormy night, enlist the help of your younger students by asking them to each be in charge of a "sound effect". For the older students, you can easily round up effects on the computer that will help paint a richer scene.

Sound is one of those senses that the world doesn't pay as much attention to when constructing buildings and classrooms, but it can be more psychologically powerful than sight. Make sure your story has a strong auditory component.

24. Have Your Students' Retell It Back To You

Once you are done with your story, have the students form groups and re-tell the story in a different way. Perhaps, you can assign them the task of summarizing the story in a sentence or paragraph. Maybe you ask them to use the principles and create their own story context.

The important part about this concept is to get the student's involved in an active way. They've spent some time listening; now it is time to put it into action.

25. Draw Real Life Connections

If your story teaches abstract concepts, find real life examples that make the information more meaningful. Math formulas are meaningless until they are building a computer from scratch and need to use the principle in order to continue to the next step.

If your story teaches abstract concepts, find real life examples that make the information more meaningful.

If you are trying to teach a history lesson (i.e. WW1), put the events in a different context. Imagine it now in the present day, with the present governments. How would the scene play out in 2012 versus 1914? All of a sudden, history will feel much more "real" and alive.

26. Use Repetition

This tip works well with younger students. Oftentimes, storybooks have a repeated phrase throughout the story (i.e. "I do not like green eggs and ham. I do not like them Sam I am). Do this when you start, in the middle, and at the end. Pick an important concept and repeat it over and over, even if you think you are being redundant.

You can describe the same concept with different words if you wish.

27. Write Your Story In One Sentence Before You Begin

In order to keep your story simple and focused on what's important, narrow it down to one sentence. Start with the beginning, and then add the middle, and the end. In the sentence, you should get the main purpose of the story, as well as the competing concept that threatens the story's goal. Some people might think, "I can't narrow down my story to one sentence!"

Yes you can.

It will force you to iron out the most crucial points. Once you do this, expand the sentence into a paragraph. Then expand each sentence in the paragraph to its own paragraph. Continue onward until your story is complete[43,34].

28. Avoid Detours

Simplify, simplify, simplify. Cut out characters, scenes, and information that do not somehow work towards the goal of the story. If you aren't sure if something is crucial or not, tell it to a friend or fellow teacher, and remove the parts in question.

If the story still flows well and has meaning, then it wasn't necessary.

29. Create a Timeline

Write a timeline of events for you to keep track of the order. You can even put up an empty timeline on the board, and as you tell the story- add the important events as they happen.

Combine the idea of props and interaction into your timeline. If it is a history lesson about the major events in WW2, have a student paste (or write) the event along the timeline, as you tell the story. When you are done, the timeline will be filled out, and act as a visual prop for your students.

30. Don't Give Away Too Much

When you tell a story that has some mystery, you invite the listeners to try to figure out the solution for themselves. When they do, chances are- it will be more memorable and long lasting.

Read a few mystery novels and watch how the author leaves crumbs. The key is to give enough information so the student can solve the problem, but not so much that it is obvious. If you leave no trail of hints and clues, then it will be frustrating and impossible to solve.

 Read a few mystery novels and watch how the author leaves crumbs.

Stories are meant to bring meaning, feeling, and context to concepts that are dry and lifeless by themselves. Invite your students into the storytelling process. Give them enough to understand and follow along, but not so much that you are spoon-feeding. Add drama, props, effects, and set the scene, so the listeners are drawn into the story; its characters, problem, and ultimately, the solution.

2.2 Lesson plans and activities based on stories

A story-based framework of teaching and learning can become a very powerful tool in the hands of a teacher. A well-organized story lessons can intrigue the students and make them want to explore many features of the language. **Storytelling activities**

a. Pre-storytelling activities

Before you start telling a story, you can do any of the following activities to prepare your students:

Capture their attention. Introduce the story in a fun and interesting way. If you have supplemented the storytelling with visuals, you might want to preview these pictures or realia.

Connect to prior knowledge and experiences. Brainstorm or web ideas and concepts related to the story or the characters of the story in order to connect students lives to the story.

Review language students have learned. If the story contains vocabulary and structures that students have learned, it can help to review this language. This is especially important when the story is a part of a larger thematic unit and recycles language previously learned.

Pre-teach new vocabulary or expressions. If there are some key words or structures that are necessary to comprehend the story and cannot be inferred from the context, it is better to teach them before the storytelling. Try to do this in the context of connecting to prior knowledge.

Predict what will happen in the story. Give students a chance to think about what might happen in the story. It is a good critical thinking skill to encourage.

Give students a purpose for listening. Before you begin, try to give students a purpose for listening in addition to pure enjoyment. If your story has a lesson to learn from it, tell your students to listen for it.

b. During and Post-Storytelling Activities

During and after a storytelling, the teacher can do the following activities to check comprehension of the story and encourage students to practice new language:

Q & A. Prepare comprehension questions for students to answer orally.

TPR (Total Physical Response). If the story has movements, the teacher can do a TPR with the students.

Group retelling. Have students work with you to retell the story by retelling it with pauses and gaps for students to fill in. Or have students retell the story and fill in their gaps when they encounter difficulty.

Create your own ending. Tell the story up to the climax, and have students predict the ending. Have students create multiple endings to the story, then finish telling the story.

Drama. Do a retelling by having students act out the plot of the story.

Story mapping. Give students a graphic organizer to map out the plot of the story or compare the characters of the story.

Story boarding. Have students make simple drawings in boxes that show the plot of the story sequentially (like a comic book). The drawing can be accompanied by text or dialog bubbles.

Read & Write Books. Students create their own storybook by drawing and adding text.

Projects. Have students work together in small groups to create a wall display for a story or put on a performance of a story. You could invite students' families or other classes to see the students' work. You may want to do this after reading a few stories and have each group work on a different story.

Tierney and Patricia (1995) assume that teachers should be well-qualified to tell stories. They need to tell stories willingly and patiently and be aware of some effective techniques in storytelling.

The bellow **plan** tries to show how to exploit a short story "Jack and the Beanstalk" in EFL classrooms through a set of various kinds of associated activities that offer different learning styles.

Time: 120 min (three classes)

Language: attributive adjectives (adjectives before nouns)

Preparation: flashcards, blue tuck, papers, stick

Target learners: primary school children

The Story: Jack and the Beanstalk

Activity 1: Warm up The teacher introduces the characters of the story and then the students will be shown some beans to elicit the topic of the story. After that, they will be introduced to the key vocabulary that is unfamiliar to them and essential for their understanding of the story such as beans, beanstalk, castle, giant,

and axe. The vocabulary will be introduced through real material and flashcards. The other non-familiar words will be learnt from context. Moreover, the teacher will first introduce the key structure in the story which is 'adjectives before nouns' implicitly before telling the story. With some flashcards, the teacher will describe the object in the picture and the students repeat or mime, e.g. I like big black dog; She was wearing a beautiful long red dress.

Activity 2: Muddled Pictures The teacher sticks some scramble pictures that illustrate the events of the story on the board and let students predict the sequence of the story and try to organize them and put them in the correct sequence.

Activity 3: Telling the story The teacher will read the story aloud making use of some flashcards as she/he tells the events.

Activity 4: Listening Then, the students will listen to the story twice. The first time, they will listen to the whole story on tape recorder without pausing. Then, they will join in with telling the story. The teacher will play the tape and pause at some sections to have the learners repeat.

Activity 5: True or False The teacher tells the story again to the learners but this time with some changes. The learners have to listen carefully to discover what wrong is said about the story.

Activity 6: Throw the ball and continue the story The learners are put in a circle. The teacher sits in the middle and starts the story. Then, he/she throws a ball to the first child who will continue the story. The ball will be passing around the circle several times till the story is finished. The teacher might want to provide some support for some students who will be stuck or shy.

Activity 7: Making masks the learners will be divided into groups of four. They will be making four faces of Jack, Jack's mother, the giant and the giant's wife. To avoid wasting time, almost everything will be ready for the children. The groups will be given a collection of: mouths, noses, eyes, hairs, ears and blank faces. The groups will be given a paper that has descriptions of the four faces and they have to make masks according to the descriptions. For example, Jack has big blue eyes, a small mouth, small ears and curly black hair. Jack's mother has small

green eyes, a small mouth, small ears and straight yellow hair. The giant has big black eyes, a big mouth, big ears and curly red hair. The giant's wife has small brown eyes, a big mouth, big ears and curly black hairs. Before starting the work, the teacher has to make sure that students know what they are doing by demonstrating to them how the masks are made; e.g. one mask can be made as a sample.

Activity 8: A role play The groups now will be preparing for a role play which will be performed in front of the class. The students would not act out the whole story but some sections extracted from the story: those with dialogues.

The above activities are designed to fit various principles. First, they are meant to create positive atmosphere in language classroom. It can be clearly noticed that the suggested activities inject lots of fun and movement and this, as Asher (1966) declares, suits children's intrinsic nature. Second, it is known about children that they have a short span of memory (Wario, 1989). Therefore, the previous activities are not too demanding for children; learners would not spend a lot of time and effort on them as they seem to be comprehensible. Though they involve a lot of interaction and comprehension, they are accessible and manageable. In addition to this, the activities have been designed to get learners involved in the stories and participate in the activities as much as possible. Involving the learners physically in some of the activities such as making masks and performing a role play and getting them work in-pairs while retelling the story is a good way to get them engaged and participated in the story events and activities. The warm-up stage is a fundamental step to start the story. If the teacher immediately goes into the story, the learners might be lost or uninterested in the story. Wario (1989) suggests starting a story with introducing its characters and presenting the things which will be used in the story such as real materials, pictures, flash cards, etc. Therefore, to make the story more interesting and real, authentic materials are used; e.g. the students will be shown some real beans. Wario also proposes to teach the difficult vocabulary which will have an effect on students' understanding before telling the story. Thus, some difficult words that the

teacher thinks necessary in the story comprehension will be introduced through real material and flashcards so that learners will not stop for a long time and work intensively looking up a word in a dictionary. The rest will be guessed from context as introducing them all makes students lose their interest in the story. Moreover, introducing the language before starting the story makes students notice the repetitive patterns of language in the story and therefore learners will have the opportunity to learn the structure before listening to the story. Having a childish activity would de-motivate learners from responding to it (Phillips, 2003) and the contrary may also be true. Predicting may not be so easy to do for young learners, but it is challenging and motivating. 'Muddled pictures' is a valuable activity to get children predict the sequences of the story and this develops their predictive skill. Slatterly and Willis assume that stories are the most valuable source to practice the four skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. However, it is not easy to let children decode the story and transfer it into pictures of their own imagination. Children enjoy listening to stories but this does not mean that they enjoy reading them. Since the learners are at their lower level and they can hardly read words, then the story will be introduced through listening. The first step, the teacher will read it to them using pictures, gestures and body language. The students will listen to the story on the tape recorder twice. As a first step of storytelling, the children listen to the story for an overall comprehension and engagement. The second listening will be played and paused to get students repeat after some sections. Since children are going to act out some parts of the dialogues, then they need to listen to them on the cassette and repeat the sentences to get accurate pronunciation and intonation. Thus, the second listening aims to create awareness of pronunciation, stress and intonation . One of the suggested activities is "True or False" activity which is a good way to check their comprehension. Students' answers reflect their understanding of story events and sequences. Another way to check -their comprehension is retelling the story through "Throw the ball and continue the story" which is an efficient way to get learners engaged and be active in the lesson. Cameron argues that retelling is a very demanding activity and

might be frustrating for children if they are not given scaffolding. Thus, children will be supported with some phrases and pictures to guide them in their retelling of the story as suggested by Wario . Also, this activity is a kind of a game which means it lowers the learner's anxiety and makes them enjoy telling the story to their pairs. Making masks is fun and at the same time helps to learn the language in a naturalistic context. The learners will collaborate in their groups to make their masks. They have to understand the descriptions in the paper, which is a good practice for the language which is meant to be taught in the story. The masks would be a first preparation for the role play. The role play would not only make the students interested but it is also a useful technique to practice the language in the story . As far as it concerns young learners, bodily-kinaesthetic activities are of a great help to make learning the language easy to understand . Also, the role play not only makes students move while performing but it is also a great opportunity to practice fluency of learners' speech.

Here below follows a case study based on story lessons aiming at communicative skills development.

LESSON PLAN

Age: 9-10, 3rd grade

Aims: Learning actively the phrases while enjoying the story and preparing for role play. Developing oral communicative skills in the situation of the story (drama) and then in other situations

Objectives:

- **Vocabulary:** revising and enriching animal names, living places, environment

- **Grammar:** imperative; can

- **Social language:** practising conversation (meeting someone, greeting people)

- **Repeated phrases:** Can you tell me how to ….
  o Nothing is done without trying.
  o And he/she tried.

- o   The house that is for you will not be for me!
- o   Just as you please!
- •   **Skills:** Developing listening and speaking skills
- •   **Interdisciplinary problems:** places to live in: various creatures –
various houses

Time: 3 classes English + 1 Arts & Crafts

Materials: the story "The House That Suits You Will Never Suit Me"*
(Eccleshare J. 1995 Five Minute Stories, Scholastic Ltd)

PROCEDURE

Lesson 1

- •   **I Warm up**

Talking about the following animals: mice, fish, birds, wild duck, bear, squirrel –
where they live, what their house is e.g. a hole, a nest, a cave etc.

- •   **II Storytelling 1** (without the end)
- •   **III   Discussing** the   story.

It can be done in native language in order to receive feedback and all the pupils to
understand what the story is about. At the same time is discussed the problem
about the different creatures and the different houses they inhabit, the suitability of
the house of one creature for other creatures. During the discussion some of the
new words and phrases are introduced.

- •   **IV Storytelling 2** (without the end) – the pupils who want to, who
have remembered the phrases, take part in the story.

- •   **V Discussion** how to help the main character, adding more animals
and situations; guessing the end of the story (might be in NL).

Students are given time to discuss in groups who else the character can meet and
what advice would he receive this time.

- •   **VI Telling and discussing** the end of the story

Lesson 2

- **I Warm up**

Storytelling with the students – the whole story with the situations added by the students.

- **II Game** – the teacher mentions one of the characters and the students say the advice the character gives to the man (e.g. MOUSE – make a hole; BEAR – go to the mountain and find a cave; BIRD – make a nest SQUIRREL / BIRD – find a tree).

- **III** In pairs students practice the **dialogue** from the episodes.

- **IV** In groups of three (a story teller, a man and another character) the students choose another episode to practice.

- **V** Preparing for role play. Distributing the roles and first rehearsal (the dramatization is prepared for a feast of the class so part of the rehearsals are practiced during the Periods of the Class

Lesson 3 – Arts & Crafts

Drawing pictures and emblems of the characters, preparing crowns with their images for dramatization.

Lesson 4

- **I Revision – Storytelling –** the students take part

- **II Roleplay –** using the expressions from the story in a situation, different from that in the story. The students receive tickets with roles (Appendix 3) – two situations for pair work.

Finally the pupils performed the dramatization at a class feast in front of their parents.

The discussion after **storytelling 1** is very important because sometimes there are pupils who have difficulties in grasping the meaning of the story in English – they enjoy the pictures we use, mimes and gestures and after the discussion in native language – after understanding exactly what the story is about, they can take part in the second storytelling.

During the discussion after the first storytelling a student decided to retell an episode in Bulgarian – meeting the bird and building a nest – "… and he gathered

branches, tied them on his back and started climbing the tree…" This detail (tying the branches onto his back) was originally in the story, but while simplifying it for the class we decided to skip it. Since the child had not read the story before, we can conclude that children really extract great part of the information from the context – one cannot climb a tree if s/he holds something in one's hands. When the students pick up the key words and expressions, they can easily understand the message from the situation.

Discussing new characters and episodes children have to use their imagination to invent more story characters to take part in the story e.g. a spider, a goat, a butterfly, a bee, a rabbit, a snake, an ant, a snail, a monkey, a lion. As a result of this activity the story was enriched with a few new episodes .

While the students work with their hands during the Arts and Crafts activities, they discuss the story, the characters, their roles using English as well as Bulgarian.

The aim of the role play is to activate the phrases from both roles – asking for and giving advice and directions – using the expressions from the story in a situation, different from the original one. The activity also aims at enriching students' linguistic, social and cultural experience – recipes are given in imperative – this is part of their linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. Another aim of the activity is developing tolerance towards various traditional meals and arousing interest in the foreign culture. Here are examples of the expected dialogues:

A: Can you tell me how to make Yorkshire Pudding?

B: Easy. Go to the kitchen. Take flour and salt; add an egg and some milk. Mix it and bake it 30 min. Serve it with roast beef.

A: That sounds delicious. The food that is good for you will be good for me.

A: Can you tell me how to make an apple pie?

B: Easy. Go to the kitchen. Take flour and salt, add some butter and milk. Then take it to the fridge, add apples to the pastry and bake it 45 minutes.

A: Mmm that sounds delicious. The food that is good for you will be good for me.

Some of the most interesting **results** of the role play activity are:

- **47%** of the students start their conversations with greetings, one student includes vocative – social language – a sign for the development of their sociolinguistic competence.

- **64%** of the students include the phrase '*Nothing is done without trying*' although the roles in the tickets do not require it – it is part of the learnt model and they cannot easily separate it from the other phrases in the same situation.

We can follow:

- the students' linguistic competence – the most often met mistakes and the fields for further work (word order, etc);

- the development of their interlanguage and the interference of Bulgarian – expressions like: '*The food that is ... good for you is good and for me*' and '*Go in the kitchen*' are literal translation from Bulgarian;

- the students' sociolinguistic competence – using social language not because the ticket with the role says so, but because it is normal to start a conversation with a greeting;

- the development of the students' discourse competence – 27% of the students use *first* and *then* talking about the events: '*First go to the kitchen, then…, then…*'; we can follow their ability to build a text about a succession of events;

- the students' strategic competence – they sometimes use similar words – similar in pronunciation or derivatives (service instead of serve), but the most often used strategy is the pause – they pause or repeat the first word until they remember or think of the following one.

Using stories in the primary classroom heightens students' interest in English and their motivation – their willingness to study at home and to participate in the activities in class. This allows them to demonstrate larger part of their knowledge and skills in the foreign language; and teachers to follow easier their linguistic and communicative development and provide appropriate additional activities.

Conclusion on chapter II. Teaching stories varies from one context to another and thus teachers should be good storytellers and be aware of how to get the ultimate benefits from the taught stories. They should select effective teaching techniques to facilitate teaching stories (e.g. gestures, pictures, illustration, eye contact and tone voice) and adopt effective activities which make use of stories as much as possible. It is not enough to provide a variety of activities; teachers must also make sure that these activities suit children's intrinsic needs. They should be aware of how to utilize associated activities to make students understand and memorize the repeated patterns of language more easily, how to develop their imagination and how to engage them in a meaningful interaction. In primary language classrooms there is a further force that may shift teaching away from learning and that is the borrowing of materials and activities from general primary practice. This transfer of methodology happens rather often at primary level, partly because of the methodological vacuum in teaching young learners, and partly because primary practice has some genuinely good techniques and ideas that clearly work well with children. However, when ideas are transferred, they need to be adapted for the new aim of language learning. Thinking through the demands, support and learning opportunities of activities may help in this adaptation. Prime examples of techniques transferred from primary education would be theme-based learning and the use of songs and rhymes.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that storytelling is a very powerful language learning technique. Stories in English for development children's imagination and contribute to their whole development. Moreover, they help to make the classroom atmosphere more interesting, develop positive attitudes toward learning, arouse students' interests and curiosity and encourage them to participate. Their content suits young learners' interests and makes them curious to know the end and quite suits the age of the learners "…in a way not to be too babyish nor too adult" [24,40]. Some learners might be familiar with particular stories; however, this would not inhibit their enjoyment to listen to them again in the FL and it would be a challenge for them to comprehend the story in another language. On the other hand, there are some stories and activities that should be simplified by adopting efficient teaching techniques, or replaced or modified to make them more effective and suitable to the learners' level and interests. Teaching stories varies from one context to another and thus teachers should be good storytellers and be aware of how to get the ultimate benefits from the taught stories. They should select effective teaching techniques to facilitate teaching stories (e.g. gestures, pictures, illustration, eye contact and tone voice) and adopt effective activities which make use of stories as much as possible. It is not enough to provide a variety of activities; teachers must also make sure that these activities suit children's intrinsic needs. They should be aware of how to utilize associated activities to make students understand and memorize the repeated patterns of language more easily, how to develop their imagination and how to engage them in a meaningful interaction. In primary language classrooms there is a further force that may shift teaching away from learning and that is the borrowing of materials and activities from general primary practice. This transfer of methodology happens rather often at primary level, partly because of the methodological vacuum in teaching young learners, and partly because primary practice has some genuinely good techniques and ideas that clearly work well with children. However, when ideas are

transferred, they need to be adapted for the new aim of language learning. Thinking through the demands, support and learning opportunities of activities may help in this adaptation. Prime examples of techniques transferred from primary education would be theme-based learning and the use of songs and rhymes.

Additionally the story telling is an excellent tool to enhance speaking skill and culture awareness. Implementation stories is a good opportunity to keep young learners attention , motivate and interest them as well. Moreover, storytelling can include songs, chants, role play, drawing, games, etc. In a nutshell, storytelling is an irreplaceable tool in teaching young learners.

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