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TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS UNDER THE PROGRAMME OF IMMERSION

BA Thesis

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Warsaw, July 2009

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis is an attempt to work out an immersion programme to teach English to 2-3-year-old pupils. The children come from an international environment and attend a nursery school – The English Playhouse in Warsaw. The author worked on the programme in the years 2008 – 2009.

Chapter One is a review of literature dealing with teaching a foreign language to children and the present-day developments in the area of immersion programmes.

Chapter Two is a close-up of the English Playhouse, the aims of its establishment and programme it follows.

Chapter Three is a case study of the Ladybirds group taught by the author. It presents a detailed description of the group, classroom organization and development of children's speech competence in English within the period of one year. Chapter three also includes a variety of techniques and visual materials designed and employed by the author under the immersion programme.

Conclusion, a summary in Polish, a list of bibliography and appendices conclude the thesis.

CHAPTER I

Some Attempts to Teach English to Young Learners (YLS)

'In my opinion, there are no methods because "method" implies a formula and there is no formula for teaching anything. Teaching, like therapy, is a fine art, not a science. Science can give us some marvelous tools, but how we apply those tools depends upon the talent and training of the instructor.'

James J. Asher

Since the age of compulsory English education is becoming lower and lower in countries around the world, Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) has become a separate field of study. It is believed that starting to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to children before they are 12 or 13 years old results in more proficient speakers of English (Nunan 1999). However, there is no empirical proof which might support the idea that an early start in English language learning produces better English speakers (Nunan 1999). Many factors contribute to the levels of proficiency, to mention only the type of programme and curriculum, number of hours, methods, techniques and activities used (Rixon 2000). However, as Rixon claims, learning a foreign language by the young child is beneficial for:

- early finding out about culture and enlarging cultural horizons
- better cognitive development of a child
- improvement of child's language awareness
- creating positive attitudes to learning other languages in the future
- higher achievement in the language in secondary school and later life (Rixon 2000).

To achieve the goals mentioned above it is important to commence learning of a foreign language at the earliest age possible.

1. Some characteristics of Young and Very Young Learners

Since the thesis concerns teaching English as a foreign language to young learners, the author made an attempt to define and characterize the target learners. One of the definitions provided by Slattery and Willis (2001, 4) is: ‘Young Learners (YL) are 7-12 years old; Very Young Learners (VYL) are under 7 years of age’. According to the ‘Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ published by the United Kingdom Government Department For Education and Skills ‘The Childcare Act 2006’ defines a child as ‘being a *young child* from birth until the end of August following his or her fifth birthday.’ The author is more for the latter definition, as children under five years old are unable to read and write and this feature classifies them into the group of Very Young Learners. The significant attributes of VYLs are:

- vivid imagination; young children might have difficulty in identification what is fact and what is fiction and the line between the real and imaginary world is not clear.
- inability to decide what to learn
- a strong natural instinct to explore their environment; children tend to rely more on experiential forms of learning; their understanding comes through hands and eyes and ears. The physical world is dominant at all times.
- using language skills long before they are aware of them
- short attention and concentration span
- more interest in what is happening than to the words; They understand situations more quickly than they understand the language used.
- as children stay self-centered up to the age of six or seven they cannot see things from someone else’s point of view and are very reluctant to share. They are not eager to work in groups. (Scott and Ytreberg 1990).
- the lack of abstract thinking

- vivid temperament and lots of physical energy
- a lack of ability to read and write
- having no reason or need for learning the foreign language
- being in the process of developing cognitively, linguistically, physically and emotionally
- inability to regulate and manage their behaviour and feelings (Moon 2005).

According to Moon (2005); ‘To teach English to children successfully, we need to take account of these and other characteristics in order to provide some of the conditions which will lead to successful outcomes. These are far more important than the age of starting.’ In order to provide the best conditions for learning a foreign language to Young and Very Young learners the approach to teaching this group of learners has been changing and developing through decades.

2. Some early attempts to teach a foreign language to children.

Until the seventies the methods of teaching a foreign language to adults had been adapted to the area of teaching children. However, those methods were not appropriate to children’s cognitive and emotional abilities. According to Pamuła (2003) the early methods used in teaching a foreign language to children were:

- Audio-Lingual Method, which put an emphasis on the speaking language and automatic implementation of grammar rules without learning them. In theory it seemed to be a method suitable for children. Practically, the need of numerous repetitions in laboratory conditions made this method unattractive and discouraging for young learners.

- Audio-Visual Method, in which the sound and visual materials were presented to the learner simultaneously. Similarly to the audio-lingual method the role of speaking language and repetitions was significant. The process of teaching was structuralised in order to provide learners with safe environment. Since the structuralised exercises were not designed for children and their need for motor and emotional involvement in learning, the method appeared to fail and disappoint learners as well as teachers.
- Communicative Approach, which was rather a new tendency in teaching a foreign language than a method. The conception of communicative approach drew the attention to the fact that learning a foreign language means the ability to communicate and convey information, as well as to recognise language functions rather than grammar rules. In communicative approach the emphasis was also put on children's cognitive competence and the environment they grow in (Pamuła 2003).

In the history of teaching languages numerous methods had appeared, not only those described by Pamuła (2003). Some of them did not meet with interest of teachers, but there are also those, which are still used in contemporary language teaching.

3. Some proposals of methods used in teaching a foreign language to YL

The author is close to the view of Komorowska (2002) who suggests, that taking into consideration children's inability to abstract thinking, their vivid temperament and lack of literacy skills, alternatives are; Direct Method, Natural Approach and Total Physical Response.

3.1. The Direct Method

It is one of the earliest methods of teaching languages. In the nineteenth century Sauveur (1826-1907) decided to use intensive oral interaction and demonstration and he claimed, that a foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of the learner's native tongue. According to Sauveur's philosophy teachers must encourage direct and spontaneous use of the foreign language in the classroom, which leads to acquiring grammar rules by learners naturally. This method is based on a strong belief in the role of natural language acquisition and importance of situation and meaningful context. The teacher, ideally native speaker, uses no books and conversation in modern style is the only means of teaching and learning. Actions and pictures are used to make meaning clear. Mistakes are not corrected in order to maximize learner's self-confidence in speaking. The target language culture is, grammar alike, taught inductively (Celce-Murcia 2001).

Nowadays, the Direct Method is used in schools employing native speakers. Many pre-schools and kindergartens have implemented this method in their programmes (Komorowska 2002).

3.2. The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach was developed by Tracy Terrell, a Spanish teacher in California, and Stephen Krashen, applied linguist at the University of Southern California, around the year 1977. The outcome of their common work was a book, *The Natural Approach*, published in 1983. According to Krashen and Terrell communication is the primary function of language. They see language as a vehicle for communicative meanings and messages. They state, that 'acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language' (Krashen and Terrel 1983). Similarly to the process of first

language acquisition The Natural Approach assumes that the learner should not be forced to speak. The learner will start speaking on his own free will and when he is ready to do so. The teacher simplifies the language used, but speaks naturally. The subject of the speech is what is happening in the given moment and in the given surroundings. The teacher implements mimic facial movements, gestures, repetitions and praises every single attempt of independent learner's speech, either verbal or nonverbal. In that method there is also a strong belief that the success depends on the reduction of stress. The subconscious and spontaneous language acquisition is possible only with the presence of positive emotions at language exposure time. The Natural Approach draws attention mainly to the role of speaking and listening skills, hence it triumphs especially in teaching foreign languages to YL (Komorowska 2002).

3.3. Total Physical Response (TPR)

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method in which coordination of speech and action plays the principal role. Language is taught through motor activity. The method was developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, California (<http://tpr-world.com/>). The general objective of TPR is to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level and the ultimate aim is to teach basic speaking skills. The learners have a role of listeners and performers. They have to listen and respond with action to commands given by the teacher (Asher, J. <http://www.tpr-world.com/what.html>).

This method seems to be of a particular use in TEYL, since children develop listening competence before they develop the ability to speak. At the early stages of first language acquisition they are able to understand complex utterances but they cannot produce them or imitate. Once listening comprehension has been achieved, speech evolves naturally and effortlessly. Listening should be accompanied by physical movement (Richards and

Rodgers 2001). Of special interest is Asher's interpretation of brain lateralization studies. Brain is divided into hemispheres according to function. 'There is a difference between 'learning' a second language and *acquiring* a second language. Learning involves the left brain and acquiring involves the right brain.' (Asher, <http://www.tpr-world.com/what.html>). TPR consists in activation of both brain hemispheres, which in turn results in higher effectiveness of learning.

Even if the method of TPR might not meet with the full approval of teachers of young learners it is advisable to make attempts to include some TPR techniques into the lesson. For instance, when students' attention declines in the middle of the lesson, exercises derived from TPR may be of great help.

4. Recent decades' offers

The new model of teaching and learning a foreign language, called 'immersion model' was first established in 1965 in a suburb of Montreal, Canada. By the mid-1960s, it was already evident to the English-speaking population of the Canadian province of Quebec that economic survival there would require high level of proficiency in French. However, majority of English speakers knew little of the language and were not able to work in French and socialise with French speakers. This situation inspired a group of parents to convince the school board to establish an experimental programme in which, from the very first day of school in kindergarten, their unilingual English-speaking children would be instructed entirely in French. (Swain and Keith 1996)

4.1. Immersion programmes

Language immersion is a way of teaching a second language with the use of a second language as a teaching tool. All the in-class activities, such as mathematics, history, social studies and so forth, as well as those outside of the class, such as meals, outside playing, are all conducted in the target language. The objective of the language immersion is the bilingualism of the learners.

In United States of America, due to a growing population of children whose primary language is not English, language programmes have been widely implemented to schools. There are three main types of programmes:

- **a first-language programme** - is one in which the child's home language is the only used in the classroom. This type of programme helps develop the child's first language without exposing the child to English in the classroom. The only aim of such solution is to help children maintain their first language at an age when language loss is real possibility. However, this type of classroom is the least frequently available.
- **bilingual classrooms (partial immersion)** – its main feature is the match between the home language of the children and the language spoken by at least one of the adults. To maintain a true bilingualism in the classroom, however, both languages should be used, so the children are exposed to appropriate language models in both languages. This type of classroom is available in communities where children and educators come from the same first-language background, such as Spanish.
- **second-language classroom (total immersion)** – the most typical situation for children whose primary language is not English. There may be children from variety of first-language backgrounds and they are able to use the common language while

playing together. However, for the most part, English is the main language of interaction for both the children and the teachers (Tabors 1998).

Since immersion programmes have been included in official national curriculums mainly in the USA and Canada at the earliest stages of education, i.e. in kindergartens and pre-schools, there are numerous source files providing the reader with detailed knowledge about immersion programmes functioning in those countries. Immersion education programmes also exist in Poland. There are, for instance, English-speaking kindergartens and pre-schools around Poland where English language functions as a tool not only of communication but of learning literacy, numeracy and other subjects. Children, who have a kind of 'language bath' in such schools, come from various backgrounds. Not only foreigners' children are enrolled in this type of school but Polish children as well. The way of teaching young learners in English-speaking pre-schools appears to be a kind of a mixture of Direct Method, Natural Approach, Total Physical Response and Communicative Approach. However, no detailed research studies of nursery immersion English language teaching in Poland have been found by the author.

The following chapters are an attempt to provide the reader with detailed information on English immersion education in Poland employing The English Playhouse in Warsaw as an example and focusing on the group of children 2-3 years old.

CHAPTER II

The English Playhouse in Warsaw: Establishment and Work

The English Playhouse in Warsaw (EP) was established in the year 2003 and initially operated three days a week with one group of 5 children.

The first aim of establishment the EP was to create an English-speaking environment to provide early education for young children who were English native speakers or at least their one parent was a native speaker of English. The main feature of the EP is the use of English language exclusively. Within a few years EP extended to a significant size, as more and more parents were interested in having their children in English-speaking pre-school. Nowadays, children with different backgrounds are accepted and most often they do not speak English at the moment of joining. It also means that the school is open to Polish children. However, most children do not know Polish language. In the classroom of EP pupils are immersed in English language and acquire it in a natural way, thus it makes no difference what language children speak at home. At the moment of joining children should be from 1,5 to 5 years old. The youngest of them acquire two languages simultaneously, a native one at home and English at school.

In the school year 2008/2009 approximately 65 children were enrolled in EP. The exact number is hardly possible to be given because of a significant rotation of pupils. The rotation has been caused by changing conditions and opportunities of employment for their parents, as many parents are employed either by diplomacy units or international companies. Consequently, the families often change places and move to another country even in the middle of the school year. For those families their children's knowledge of English is of great importance.

1. The learners, the teachers and the language course

All the pupils of EP are divided into four groups:

- Bumblebees group – children ageing from 1.5 to 2.5 years and over
- Ladybirds group – children ageing from 2.5 to 3 years and over
- Butterflies group – children ageing from over 3 to around 4.5 years and over
- Dragonflies group (reception class) – children ageing from over 4.5 to over 5 years

There is an option for children under 4 years old to come on certain days of the week, 2-3 times a week. Due to this option the group may consist of more than 12 children altogether but each day of the week no more than 12 children stay in the classroom, as far as the youngest groups are concerned.

Each group is taught by qualified Polish teacher who is a fluent speaker of English. In groups of Bumblebees and Ladybirds there are also two teacher-assistants. Teachers of Butterflies and Dragonflies have one assistant per group. The assistants also speak English fluently and often are students working for their degree in teaching English to young learners. Butterflies and Dragonflies groups are supported by an extra teacher who is a native speaker of English. This teacher teaches English to older children who have difficulties in communication and learning. She also teaches numeracy and literacy in reception class, that is Dragonflies group.

In order to meet the parents' and children's needs EP operates from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and offers four programmes:

- Programme A - 8.00 - 12.30 or 13.00 if with lunch
- Programme B - 8.00 - 2.30 Hot lunch included
- Programme B+ - 8.00 - 3.30 Hot lunch and afternoon snack included

- Programme C - 8.00 – 5.00 Hot lunch and afternoon snack included

Each day is divided into following sessions:

- Free playtime
- Structured playtime (constructive and educational activities)
- Outside playtime
- Arts and crafts
- Music, rhythmic, dancing and gym activities
- Nap/quiet time
- Imaginative play

Between the sessions a 'Register Time' and a 'Circle Time' take place. The content of these meetings is strictly connected to the topic discussed over a week or two. Description of a 'Register Time' and a 'Circle Time' in the group of Ladybirds will be given in Chapter Three.

A number of activities are undertaken within the school throughout the year. Usually, they run in parallel to the changing seasons. For instance, in winter the activities include winter sports or in the spring time - gardening. Children play and learn in well equipped classrooms and in outside garden where they can also grow their own plants and flowers. The nearby slope and green meadow are used for sledging, building an igloo in winter, playing football and racing games in summer. The whole school year is divided into three terms ending at Christmas, Easter and the first week of July. Each term is divided into 2-3 weeks projects. In addition to the regular programme there are special events such as Christmas, Easter performances, a carnival party, a circus performance, a visit to the Zoo, Teddy Bear Picnic, a visit to the local Art Exhibition at Królikarnia Park, and others. For interested

parents, the school offers extra activities such as French lessons in small groups, Polish lessons, swimming and tennis lessons and ballet classes.

The programme carried out by teachers is topic-centred and follows the English curriculum, therefore it will be investigated through the British newest approach to teaching and caring for children.

2. The British Approach: Every Child Matters

The 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' programme is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to the age of 19, published in November 2004. It is the agenda, through which the British government aims for every child, no matter what their background or circumstances are, to be supported in fulfilling their need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being

In EP all the teachers and assistants are fully focused on the above aims, particularly trying to help and support children's need to develop their potential.

2.1. Early Age Foundation Stage: Setting the Standards for Learning

Within the Early Child Matters agenda the Early Years Foundation Stage framework was launched on 13 March 2007 and came into force in September 2008. It is the new framework for the provision of learning, development and care for children between birth and

the academic year in which they turn five (0-5). The primary purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide teachers and parents with information about child's level of development. This will enable the teacher to plan an effective and appropriate curriculum that will meet all children's needs to support their achievement. The EYFS framework is designed to be fully inclusive of all children's needs, recognizing the need to respond to differences of ethnicity, culture, religion or belief, home language, family background, Special Educational Needs (SEN), gender or ability. It is of a great importance to introduce EYFS framework in the EP, since children differ significantly according to the attributes mentioned above. The EYFS principles which guide the work of practitioners, also of those working in EP, are grouped into four themes:

- **A Unique Child:** every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; and health and well-being.
- **Positive relationships:** describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person.
- **Enabling Environments:** explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment.
- **Learning and Development:** recognizes that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2007).

Every child should be supported individually to make progress at their own pace. Providers have also a responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference – not only that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but also that they learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society.

All the teachers in EP focus on each child's individual learning, development and care needs by:

- helping to overcome barriers for children where these already exist;
- being alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary (EP cooperates with the private agency of psychologists, who visit the school regularly);
- stretching and challenging all children, but not pushing them beyond their capabilities, so they can continue to enjoy learning in the future.

All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability have the equal opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development. The programme should help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; respect for others; social skills; and a positive disposition to learn. In EP teachers work hard to follow above musts in order to achieve early learning goals, since by the end of the EYFS, according to Statutory Framework for the EYFS published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007, children should:

a. within communication, language and literacy

- Interact with others, negotiate plans and activities and take turns in conversation;

- Enjoy listening to and use spoken and written language, and readily turn to it in their play and learning;
- Sustain attentive listening, respond to what they have heard with relevant comments, questions or actions;
- Listen with enjoyment, and respond to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems and make up their own stories, songs, rhymes and poems;
- Extend their vocabulary, explore the meanings and sounds of new words;
- Speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control and show awareness of the listener;
- Use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences;
- Use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events;
- Hear and say sounds in words in the order in which they occur;
- Link sounds to letters, name and sound the letters of the alphabet;
- Use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words;
- Explore and experiment with sounds, words and texts;
- Retell narratives in the correct sequence, drawing on language patterns of stories;
- Read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently;
- Know that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom;
- Show an understanding of the elements of stories, such as main character, sequence of events and openings, and how information can be found in non-fiction texts to answer questions about where, who, why and how;
- Attempt to write for different purposes, using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions;

- Write their own names and other things such as labels and captions, and begin to form simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation;
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognizable letters, most of which are correctly formed. (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2007).

b. within the area of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy:

- Say and use number names in order in familiar contexts;
- Count reliably up to ten everyday objects;
- Recognise numerals 1 to 9;
- Use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems;
- In practical activities and discussion, begin to use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting;
- Use language such as ‘more’ or ‘less’ to compare two numbers;
- Find more or one less than a number from one to ten;
- Begin to relate addition to combining two groups of objects and subtraction to ‘taking away’;
- Use language such as ‘greater’, ‘smaller’, ‘heavier’, ‘lighter’ to compare quantities;
- Talk about, recognise and recreate simple patterns;
- Use language such as ‘circle’ or ‘bigger’ to describe the shape and size of solids and flat shapes;
- Use everyday words to describe position (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2007).

Having these guidelines in mind all teachers in the EP carry out the programme with parent's cooperation. In order to gain goals listed above the process of teaching and learning English in the EP is topic-based.

3. Topic-based work

In the EP Teachers do not use any textbooks, only older children are provided with workbooks to help them learn numeracy and literacy. The topic-based learning is a concept familiar to most primary teachers in the United Kingdom. It means teachers do not teach to a timetable strictly divided into lessons or periods for different subjects. History, mathematics, English and other subjects are not always taught separately. The children explore the topic, for instance colours, opposites, farm life. In their topic work children are involved in a range of activities and they learn from the perspective of the topic. In language learning it is vital that the learning fits into children's experience. A word without a sentence is less meaningful and a sentence without a context is hard to understand. Meaning comes from context. If the topic chosen is directly relevant to children's experiences or interests, topic-based learning may be more meaningful to them. Children want to search for meaning if the content of the topic is interesting. They see little purpose in studying sentences that do not make sense in their world. When they are concentrating on a particular topic, the content of the lesson automatically becomes more important than the language itself. The content provides children with a purpose for language learning and learning in general. While working on topics the children can associate words, functions, structures and situations with a particular topic. Association helps memory, and learning language in context clearly helps both understanding and memory. The advantage of topic-based learning is providing a clear context which makes learning meaningful and creates a purpose for learning and for using language (Scott and Ytreberg 1990).

In EP children work on one topic from one to three weeks. The time depends on the richness of the topic and children's interest in it. Most often teachers decide which topics to work on over the oncoming term and the Director accepts the schedule. The topics are often connected with the changeable weather and important events in the year like Christmas or Easter, particularly in groups of younger children (Appendix 1). Working on the topics demands from the teacher a long term planning and, as no textbooks are used, collecting useful materials like written and spoken texts, pictures, objects, cards and ideas. Parents are informed ahead about planned topics, thus they are able to participate. For instance, if the topic concerns cooking parents are invited to cook with children the dishes traditional in their country; when 'pets' is the topic, parents are asked to come with a pet. This is the way which allows to concentrate on certain situations and functions of the language.

Chapter Three focuses on the author's work with a group of Ladybirds in the school year 2008/2009. Since children of the Ladybirds group are very young, 2-3 years old, the process of second-language acquisition takes place simultaneously with their first-language acquisition.

CHAPTER III

The case study of the EP Ladybirds group

“Children need language to make sense of the world”

Patton O. Tabors

A description of the group, language background of children, class-room and class-work design, daily routine, as well as examples of various activities will be presented in this chapter. The process of second-language acquisition, which is divided into four periods, is described and supported with relevant examples of children’s speech and the development of their English

1. Description of the group

Ladybirds group consists of 16 children, 7 boys and 9 girls two and a half to three years old. Each day there are 12 children in the classroom, as some of them attend school only 2 or 3 times a week. The children come from the following countries: Estonia, Israel, Holland, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Poland. Two children are Polish; two boys are half English half Polish; one girl is half Dutch and half Russian; one girl is half Israeli and half Ukrainian, and one is half Estonian and half Canadian. Only two children are English and they joined the group in January 2009. It was essential to know the children’s language background to study the development of their English. Six children, who are non-English speakers, attended EP in the previous school year for a couple of weeks, so they were able to understand some English. In September 2008 five children without any knowledge of English joined the group (Picture 1).



Picture 1: The group of Ladybirds in the school year 2008/2009. From left: Magda Michalak – teacher assistant, Yuval, Mikołaj, Geva, Kinga Kejna – the teacher, Charlie, Keanu, Agnieszka Kamińska – teacher assistant, Rosie, Carla, Katherine, Guyli, Filip, Mila, Kuba and Fleurine.

In the EP children follow an immersion programme. Teachers use English to communicate not only with children but also with their parents, as well as between other teachers and teacher-assistants. It is recommended to use English while talking to Polish-speaking parents in the presence of their children. On the other hand, the teacher's knowledge of a child's home language (in the case of the author it is Polish, Russian and partly German) enables the teacher to use reflective listening and repeat ('echo' back) children's comments in English. This helps to reduce frustration and loss of motivation that may result from lack of communication between the teacher and the children.

1.1. Children's language competence

Most researchers in childhood bilingualism are close to the convention that children who are introduced to a second language during their first three years are engaged in *simultaneous* bilingualism; children who are exposed to a second language only after the age of three are said to be engaged in *sequential* bilingualism. The age criterion was set up by McLaughlin (1978) and adopted by many scholars. McLaughlin admits, that by the age of 3 the child has acquired a considerable amount of the one language, and it is, therefore, no longer a question of acquiring the two simultaneously. *Simultaneous* acquisition of two languages exists when children are exposed to two linguistics systems from a very early age and demonstrates a capacity to keep their two languages separate without language confusion. The *sequential* acquisition of a second language occurs, for instance, when a young child enters preschool where the home language is not the language used in the classroom (Tabors and Snow 1994).

Most children of the group of Ladybirds learn English as a second language in the conditions of immersion in English. From the author's point of view, despite the fact that children are enrolled in the EP at the age of around 2, in the group of Ladybirds, the *sequential* acquisition of English takes place. In September 2008 most non-English speaking children in the group had their native language established and were capable of interacting with parents in their home language, however they could not do it with the teacher in English.

1.1.1. The developmental sequence of second-language acquisition

Observation and research indicate that when a child enters an environment where a second language is used, s/he has to adjust to a new situation. The child most often realizes that an entirely new language is required with a new vocabulary and a new set of rules for

grammar and morphology. This realization is then expanded to acquire the new language, which is challenging in both social and cognitive way. In spite of individual differences in children's acquisition and learning four stages of language development are described:

- **Home language use**

For a period of time, after joining EP some children continued to speak their home language. They tried to communicate with those who knew their native language, as well as with those, who did not. Perhaps the reason was that they had not discovered yet that there was a new language being used in this new setting. This period was significant for the teacher who spoke the same first language as the child. In this period the teacher repeated child's comments in English and, although it was very tempting for the teacher, she tried to avoid any interaction in L1, as the example shows:

The teacher was sweeping the floor, while a little Polish girl (Julka) asked in Polish:

Julka: *Kingo, co robisz? Zamiatasz podłogę? /What are you doing, Kinga? Are you sweeping the floor?/*

Teacher: *I am sweeping the floor after lunch. Look, Julka, there is pasta under the chair. I have to sweep the floor.*

Julka: *Kingo, czy ty sprzątasz?*

Teacher: *Look, Julka, there is a lot of food under the table. I am tidying up. I am sweeping the floor. Do you want to help me?*

After a few weeks the similar situation happened, but this time Julka's question was posed in English:

Julka: *Are you tidying up?*

Teacher: Yes, Julka, I am tidying up. Do you want to help me sweep the floor?

It took Julka only a couple of weeks to start building her own, logical sentences in English, but most often, after the period of home language use comes the nonverbal period.

- **The nonverbal period**

When using their home language children faced social situations in which their language was not useful for communication and they abandoned attempts to communicate in that language and entered a period when they did not talk at all. However, it does not mean that they stopped communicating. They found alternative, nonverbal ways of trying to communicate with those around them. They used gestures, pointing, miming, as well as whimpering and whining if they wanted to get help or to be given a certain object. This period lasted even up to 5 months as it happened in Johanna's case. Johanna is an Estonian girl, who joined the group in September 2008. After a few weeks she was able to understand orders, but she was almost speechless. During singing she showed gestures but was unable to produce any sound. Despite this fact she was socialising with school mates thanks to nonverbal communication and felt comfortable in the classroom. Here is also one example of her communication with the teacher:

Before lunch children were asked to go to the bathroom and wash their hands. This was the daily routine and Johanna always did it with no objections. One day, however, she sat in the corner of the classroom and refused to go to the bathroom. The teacher asked her a few times to go and wash her hands but the only response was Johanna's shaking head and tears in her eyes. The teacher asked, why she did not want to wash hands and at that crucial moment Johanna pointed at the blue chair. For the teacher it was clear - Johanna wanted to sit on that chair while having lunch, so the teacher asked her if it was the reason she stayed in the corner. Johanna nodded and went to the bathroom happily. This situation repeated

several times during the week until the new routine was established and all the children were informed that Johanna's favourite chair was blue and she was allowed to sit on it during lunchtime.

That example shows how much English Johanna could understand but could not make a sentence in English so she sent the teacher a message in nonverbal way. In that case communication was possible as during the nonverbal period children collect information by watching and listening intently, sometimes talking to themselves and preparing for going public in their new language. Johanna had collected enough knowledge to send a message and understand the teacher's response. Soon Johanna began to crack the linguistic code of English and she entered the next stage of English acquisition, which is telegraphic and formulaic speech (or language).

- **Telegraphic and formulaic speech**

Telegraphic language is often one-word usage of the language, such as naming people or objects or reciting the alphabet and numerals. This type of speech is also typical of a period of acquisition by very young children learning their first language. In the classroom the telegraphic speech revolved around the identification and naming of objects in English. When children already knew the name of the object, they showed off and confirmed how to say it, like in the following examples:

- *Mila, a girl who is half Dutch and half Russian, found a plastic beluga whale on the floor. She started running round the classroom holding the plastic toy and repeating: 'baby beluga, baby beluga'.*
- *Filip, who comes from Sweden, showed the teacher a cucumber which mummy gave him for snack, saying: 'Tinia, cucumber'. ('Tinia' is how Filip pronounces the teacher's name, which is Kinga or Kinia).*

- *Keanu, from Belgium, putting a paint brush into the red paint, said: 'red, red paint'.*
- *Johanna, an Estonian girl, before she was able to use more productive language, often said: 'doggie, doggie' when she was sad and upset. A fluffy dog was her favourite toy and she wanted to cuddle the toy to cheer herself up.*

The formulaic speech is using unanalyzed chunks of formulaic phrases in situations in which others have been observed to use them. The examples are: OK, Bye-bye, Excuse me, I don't know, Help, Go away.

- *Fleurine, a girl who is Dutch, said 'go away' angrily to the boy who was trying to grab a toy from her.*
- *'Kinga, help' is very often used by all children, particularly in the cloakroom, while getting dressed.*

The use of the combination of the telegraphic and formulaic speech helped children to get involved into activities in the classroom and to participate in them in socially appropriate ways. It also helped to sound like a member of the group.

- **Productive use of the new language**

After sometime, second language learning children began to use English productively. They started to construct their own utterances and build new unique sentences. The sentences were most often grammatically incorrect but at the same time they proved that the child was developing understanding of the syntactic system in English. There are a few examples of productive language use in the group of Ladybirds, as follows:

- *Keanu, while playing 'doctor' said to his friend: 'me sick, lie in bed, doctor come'*

- *Johanna, during the circle time, stated that her mother was pregnant saying: ‘me mummy baby in her tummy’ (However, it was not true. Johanna wanted to be as important as Yuval, whose mummy was really pregnant.)*
- *While discussing ‘Pets’ topic, Filip said: ‘Parrot on the head’. The teacher could not clearly understand what Filip meant and only the next day did Filip’s mother explain that a big parrot had sat on Filip’s head when they had been spending their holiday on Cyprus and she also brought a photo of Filip and the parrot on his head.*

By April 2009, most children of the group of Ladybirds were able to use language productively, while in September 2008 only English-speaking children could do it. Individual differences have been observed in how children proceeded through the development sequence. There are children in Ladybirds group who are still in the period of telegraphic speech; they are not able to use their native language productively either.

1.1.2. Language mixing

Scholars agree on the point that ‘some language mixing at the lexical level occurs during the early stages of language development in virtually all bilingual children’ (Goodz 1994). However, language mixing rates differ a lot and mixed utterances appear more frequently in the early stages of acquisition and diminish gradually with age. There is controversy about what language mixing means. Some researchers regard language mixing as a manifestation of children’s failure to differentiate the two systems (e.g., Volterra & Taeschner, 1978), some interpret it as language confusion, others argue that children at such early stage have no linguistic system at all (Leopold 1939-1949). The author is closer to the view presented by Goodz (1994), according to which, ‘early lexical mixing does not reflect confusion of the two languages, but rather that the child, wishing to communicate and lacking

the necessary vocabulary, borrows either an inappropriate word from the same language (...) or an appropriate word from the second language.’ The examples of language mixing were also observed in the group of Ladybirds:

- *Mikołaj (a Polish boy, often travelling to English-speaking countries) was very curious one day and after observing for a while the teacher manipulating with a small object, he said: ‘May I zobaczyć?’ (‘May I see?’).*
- *Before Easter children made a vegetable salad. Mikołaj looked at the salad with disgusted expression on his face and said: ‘I don’t lubić salad’ (I don’t like salad’).*
- *Carla, a German girl, while playing with a car, said: ‘Car kaput’ (‘A car is broken’)*
- *Fleurine, a Dutch girl, who is also exposed to some Polish while staying with her Polish baby-sitter, named a squirrel in the picture - ‘Basia’ (Basia is a Polish name used to call a squirrel). Fleurine was not able to find either a Dutch or an English equivalent for a well known ‘Basia’ from the park.*
- *Yuval, her predominant language is Hebrew but she is also exposed to Russian at home, used to say: ‘Mamma Lena ba’ which means ‘Mummy Lena is coming’. The other children picked up this utterance very quickly and always repeated it when Yuval was crying in order to sooth her.*

Mixing of languages is a natural and inevitable process. As a teacher of bilingual children the author tried to be aware of it and repeated child’s first language words in English. At least basic knowledge about language mixing process is recommended for the teacher.

2. The EP Ladybirds group classroom

Children from Ladybirds group spend most time in their classroom on the first floor. Music and gym also take place in this classroom, as well as snack and lunch meals. The classroom is spacious and divided into ‘corners’. There is a reading corner, tea-party corner, a table with manipulatives or puzzles and the area for free playing. These corners also play a role of ‘safe havens’ in the classroom. Children are able to spend some time away from the communicatively demanding activities and develop competency in other skill areas besides language. Such quiet places also give them a vantage point from which they can watch and listen until they are ready to join in. It concerns children who are new in the class. There is a special board on the wall used as an area for painting, sticking or creating visuals (Picture 2).



Picture 2: The board on the wall changes with the topic. Here the topic ‘The forest comes to us’ has been visualised by children with the teacher’s help.

In the group of Ladybirds the teacher does not use a black- or whiteboard, instead the door plays a significant role for ‘Circle Times’, as all the visual aids are stuck to the door (Picture 3).



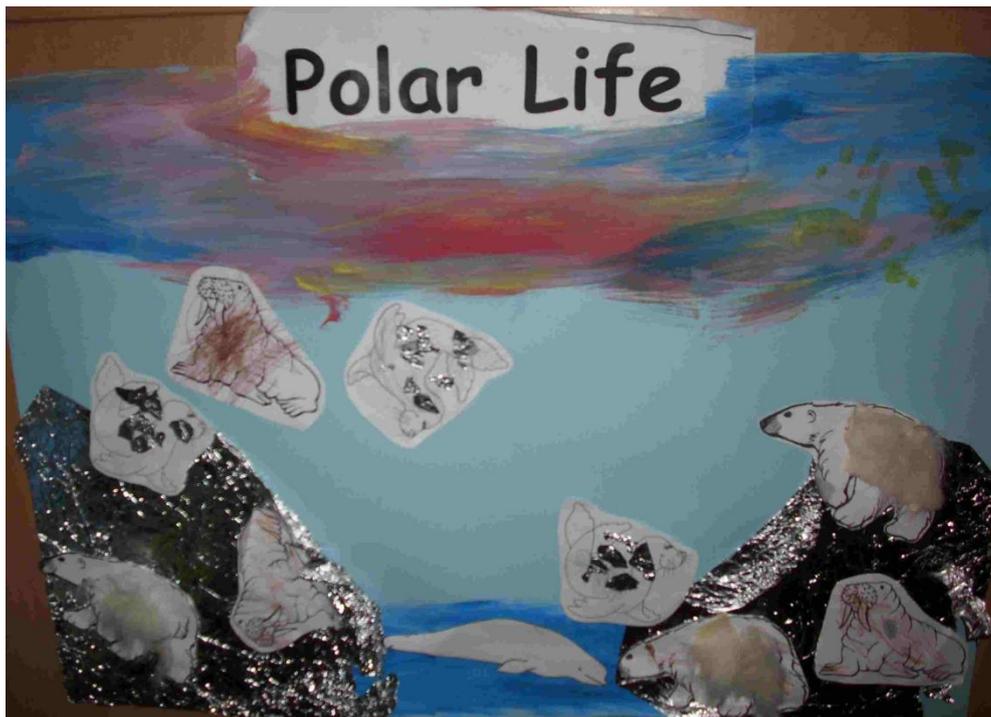
Picture 3: Visuals stuck to the classroom door.



Picture 4: A farm house made by children.

There is also one shelf devoted to various topics. Children usually help to decorate and organize the shelf. For instance, when the ‘Farm Animals’ topic was introduced, children painted the wavy cardboard green for the grass and stuck blue paper for the pond and flowers for decoration. They also painted a cardboard box brown for the farm house and stuck straw to imitate a thatched roof. The teacher helped them to cut out the windows and the door, there were even net curtains in the windows. Next children segregated plastic animals and picked up only those, who live on the farm. Those animals were put on the grass, next to the farm house (Picture 4). Such display stayed in the classroom till the end of the ‘Farm Animals’ topic. Children were able to play with animals, which helped them to memorize all the names

and phrases connected with the topic, for instance: ‘Let’s milk the cow!’, ‘The piglets are being fed by mother pig’, ‘Farmer’s wife is fetching a bucket full of water’. When certain topic is discussed children are exposed to visuals almost everywhere in the classroom. The pictures associated with the topic are on the door, on the walls, on the window sills, they are displayed also in the corridor and in the cloakroom. Children are also provided with topic-connected toys, like plastic or fluffy animals, puzzles, games, colouring pages, thus it may be said that they are ‘immersed in the topic’. The teacher’s aim is to prepare children for global reading. Thus, there are written words around the classroom. For instance, when children created a ‘Pet Shop’ with fluffy toys, the name ‘Pet Shop’ was stuck next to the shelf; if there was a display concerning polar life, the label with ‘Polar Life’ was placed above, as in picture 5.



Picture 5: Developing global reading skill by putting written signs in the classroom.

In order to develop global reading from the very early age children’s names are placed in the bathroom next to the towels. Thus, children are able to recognize their names from the very early age. In Polish kindergartens, simple pictures or shapes are attributed to

children. What is also different in comparison to Polish system of teaching reading and writing is the fact that in the EP it is not allowed to write words in block letters.

2.1. Sets of routines

An organizational aspect of the classroom that was found to be helpful for the second language learners was the establishment of a consistent set of routines for the children (Appendix 2). These routines helped the second language learning children to observe and pick up cues as to what to do and when. The daily schedule of arrival, free play, clean-up, snack time, outside play, quiet/nap time and circle time give the second language learners a set of activity structures to acquire, for instance, ‘Take your sleepers off’, ‘Put your shoes on’, ‘Sit on the carpet’, ‘Put your chair at the table’, ‘Put Lego blocks in the blue box’, and others. That allows children to act like members of the group, to feel safe and comfortable in the school. It is also helpful for the teacher, since when children are used to routines, they act in a better way and it is far easier to maintain positive discipline in the group.

There is also a set of routines established for the ‘circle time’, particularly for the morning ‘circle time’, which is called ‘register time’. The teacher always starts the ‘Register Time’ with knocking on the ‘magic’ box. The ‘magic’ box is full of props, books and visual aids, as well as stickers or stamps to reward children after the ‘circle time’. Children try to guess who is hiding in the box and will visit them this time. Usually it is a puppet or a fluffy toy, which may be associated with the topic discussed during the week, for instance it will be a cow for ‘Farm animals’ topic or a monkey for ‘Jungle animals’ topic. The puppet greets all the children individually, so they are able to shake its hand or to give it a cuddle or a kiss. The puppet never knows what day of the week it is, so every time children are asked the same question: ‘What day is it today’. As they are still very young, they rarely know the correct

answer. In order to find the proper name for the day children recite all the days of the week together with the puppet. Next the teacher puts names of the days on the floor and moves up days that are passed. One child is asked to pick up the day he/she thinks is suitable for today and stick it to the door. After a few months children know that the proper day is always at the top of the column. When the day has been established, the teacher checks the register. She reads out children's names and gives 'high-five' to each child, provided that the child is sitting nicely on the chair (Picture 6).



Picture 6: 'Register Time' in the morning. The teacher dressed up as Santa Claus greets children with 'high five'.

At the beginning of the school year, when children were younger and did not know each other, a song was used for the register. First, a puppet was hiding behind the chair and next each child did the same, while the rest was singing the following song:

Pick-a-boo, pick-a-boo,

Who is hiding there?

Pick-a-boo, pick-a-boo,

It's (name of the child) behind the chair.

While singing the last line of the song, a hiding child is supposed to jump up from behind the chair. This song helps children to memorize their names and feel like members of the group.

After checking the register the teacher counts children on the list, but whispering only, so the children do not know, how many of them came to school. To count the children another song is used:

Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer,

Where are you? Where are you?

Here I am, here I am, ready to count all of you!

One, two, three, four....

Before the song starts, children are asked to hide their hands behind them, the same does the teacher. While singing 'Here I am' children show their index fingers and use them to count themselves. To make the counting more attractive the teacher uses a small finger puppet and helps children count them. When the number of children has been established, the teacher shows them numerals from 1 to 12 (12 is maximum number of children in the class per day) and name them together with children emphasizing the numeral adequate to the number of children in the class that day. Next, three numerals are put on the floor and one child is encouraged to pick up the certain number and stick it to the door (Picture 7). Describing the weather is the following activity. One child stands in front of the group, in front of the window, and tries to describe the weather. If it is too difficult for a child, the teacher asks supportive questions, for instance, 'What is the colour of the sky today? Is it blue or gray? If it

is gray, does it mean it is cloudy or sunny today?’ When the weather conditions have been described, the child sticks a small wooden ladybird to the proper picture on the weather chart which is placed on the door (Picture 8).



Picture 7: 'It's Wednesday. Seven children came to school today'.



Picture 8: Weather chart. 'It's stormy today.'

These activities are repeated every day. If there is enough time, the teacher reads a short story or plays a simple guessing game in order to revise some vocabulary; usually one or more songs are also sung. After that it is time to sing a 'good-bye' song to a puppet and hide it back in the 'magic' box. Children, who managed to sit in a proper way during the 'register time' and tried to participate actively are given a reward, that is a small sticker or a stamp on the hand. Most often all the children are rewarded. Next, they are asked to take their chairs and put them round the tables. The teacher also reminds them to roll up their sleeves to wash their hands before snack. The 'Circle Time' takes place after outside playing. That is the time for the teacher to introduce the 'story of the day'. The story is connected with the topic of the week. Again, children are supposed to sit on the chairs in the circle. The teacher holds the book up in order to make it possible for children to see the pictures and visualize the story. If

it is possible the visualization is supported by some aids, for instance shells or sand moulds for 'At the seaside' topic. When the story has been read out, the teacher asks a few questions in order to check if the content of the book was understandable to children. The next step is to demonstrate the idea of 'arts and crafts' project. It might be a colouring-in page and the teacher presents how to paint the picture, what colours are recommended, what to stick and where. The teacher's aim always is to develop children's imagination, so the teacher only suggests what the project could look like and she let children do it on their own according to their personal view.

The positive effects of introducing routines within the 'register time' and 'circle time' were visible after a couple of weeks or months. Activities are predictable, although there are changeable elements, like numerals, puppets, books or songs, which do not allow children to get bored with the routine and make the process of acquiring English more challenging. Children are well motivated and very competitive, they are eager to participate actively and have a feeling of achievement when they are praised and rewarded by the teacher. It is also rewarding for the teacher to observe the development of children's skills and knowledge. Although they are yet around 3 they are already able to recognize numerals from 1 to 12. They also develop the skill of global reading while choosing days of the week.

3. Language techniques used in the classroom

To help get her message across the teacher uses a variety of techniques with young second-language learners. These include:

- using nonverbal communication, that is gestures, movements of the body and mime.
- keeping the message simple
- emphasizing the important words in a sentence

- repetition of important words in context
- moving content words to the end of sentence
- combining gestures with talk
- using a running commentary technique

The last technique is also willingly used by parents in teaching infants their home language. This technique consists in describing the actions which are taking place here and now, as well as objects. For instance, when the teacher was making salt dough with children, she said:

Here we've got salt and flour. What is the colour of the salt? White. Yes, it is white. First I'm taking a glass of salt and putting it in the bowl. And now Fleurine is putting a glass of flour in the bowl. Ok. What about some water? We need half a glass of water. Let Johanna pour water in the bowl. The water is cold, isn't Johanna? Thank you, Johanna. And now I will mix all the ingredients. You see? The dough is getting sticky. It's better to have it on the table, not in the bowl. It's getting harder. What am I doing? I'm kneading the salt dough now.

In general, the adult language used in the classroom helps the children not only understand what is being talked about, but also helps them begin to produce utterances in the new language.

4. Songs and rhymes

A variety of songs and rhymes are used in the teaching process in Ladybirds group. There is a set of songs that children particularly like and know and these songs are sung around the year. There are also songs and rhymes used only for the certain topic and their content is strictly connected with the topic discussed. Songs and rhymes are always accompanied by gestures, mimes or movements. Using the same songs and movements

repeatedly can help second-language learners tune in. Very often this is the time when the learner first finds her 'voice' in the new language and feels comfortable in a group situation. There is a boy in Ladybirds group who has some difficulties in speech development. He is not able to produce utterances either in his native language, which is Hebrew, or in English. However, the boy has a very good ear and singing time is his favourite time during the day. Only by songs is he able to imitate English words and even short sentences. It can be seen that the boy's fondness of singing in English lies in the possibility to 'speak' through the song.

5. Children's literature

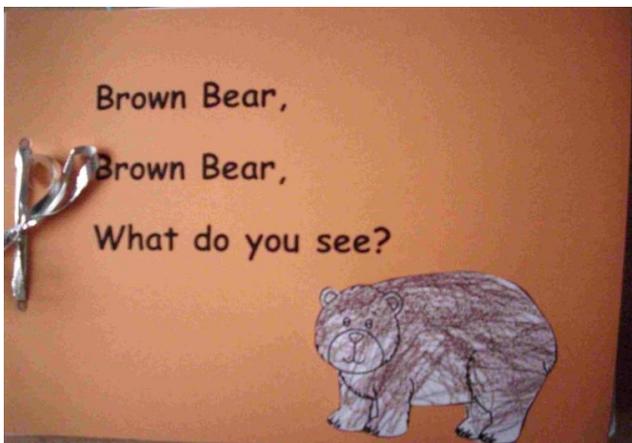
Benefits of children's literature in the process of teaching and acquiring the language were found invaluable. Songs, rhymes and children's literature offer natural and interesting medium for language acquisition. They help reinforce vocabulary and structures, as they contain predictable, repetitive patterns. Literature presents a variety of discussion topics from the literal to those that allow children to link the story to their own experiences:

One day the teacher read a story about a mouse which got lost in the river. The next day Katherine, 2.5-year-old girl, half Estonian half Canadian, was brought to school by daddy which was out of the family routine, since usually it was mummy who brought children to school. The teacher asked Katherine, what had happened to mummy. Katherine's answer was: 'She is lost. She is lost in the river'.

The example given above shows not only how Katherine linked the story to her personal situation but also how the story influenced girl's imagination.

In the process of teaching English in the EP introducing literature to children is obligatory. In Ladybirds group every day 'the story of the day' was presented to children during 'Circle Time'. Very often the same story was read the next morning during 'Register

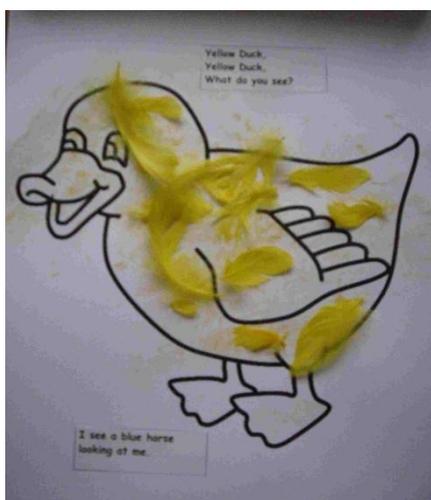
Time' in order to revise vocabulary and allow children who were absent the previous day to catch up with the group. One book, for a certain purpose, might be read several times, as it was with 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See' by Bill Martin Jr. This book was read every day for two weeks, as this was how long 'The Colours' topic lasted (for 'The Colours' topic plan see Appendix 3). By the end of the topic children were able to 'read' the book in chorus. Every day they made one character from the book for 'arts and crafts' time, thus at the end of the topic each child had their personal copy of the book to take home. The following is an example of a child's personal copy of the book (Pictures 9 - 18):



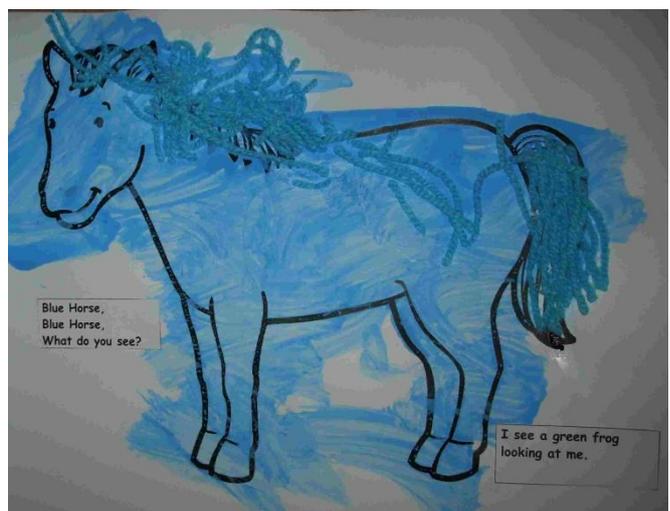
Picture 9: The cover of the book



Picture 10: 'Red bird, red bird, what do you see?'
'I see a yellow duck looking at me.'



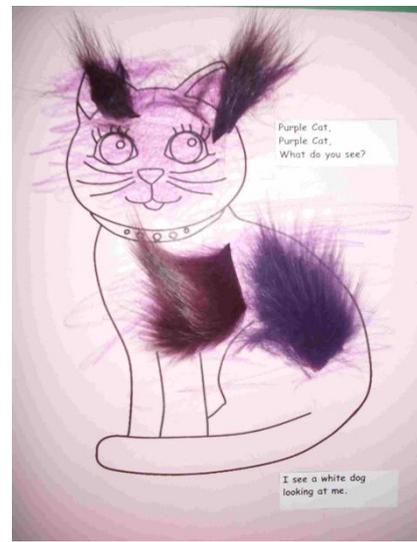
Picture 11: 'Yellow duck, yellow duck,
What do you see? I see a blue horse looking at me.'



Picture 12: 'Blue horse, blue horse, what do you see?'
'I see a green frog looking at me.'



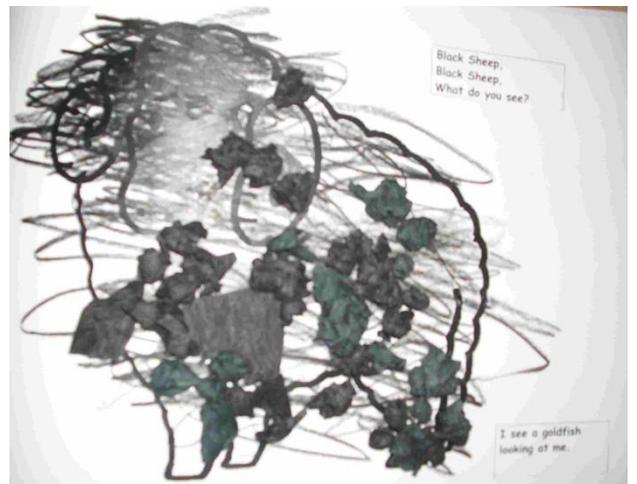
Picture 13: 'Green frog, green frog, what do you see?'
'I see a purple cat looking at me.'



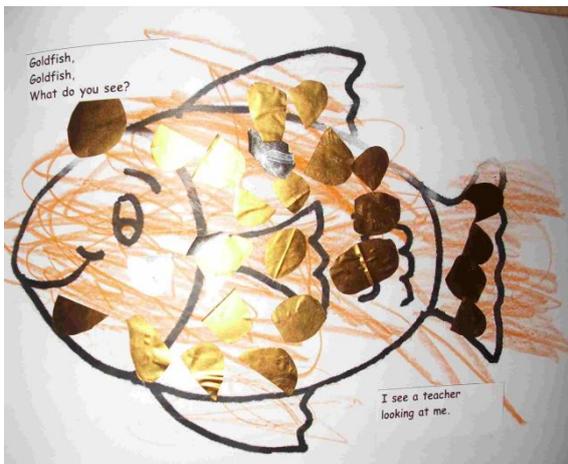
Picture 14: 'Purple cat, purple cat, what do you see?'
'I see a white dog looking at me.'



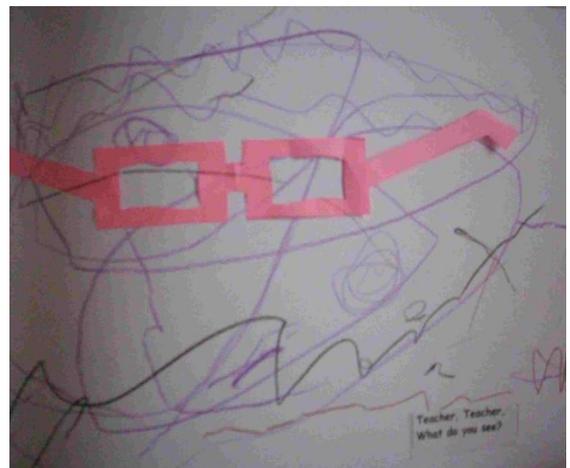
Picture 15: 'White dog, white dog, what do you see?'
'I see a black sheep looking at me.'



Picture 16: 'Black sheep, black sheep, what do you see?'
'I see a gold fish looking at me.'



Picture 17: 'Gold fish, gold fish, what do you see?'
'I see the teacher looking at me.'



Picture 18: 'Teacher, teacher, what do you see?'

Parents were asked to read this hand-made book together with the child at home and as some of them reported later to the teacher, it was found to be a great success. The main aim of introducing this book to children was to teach them colours. Simultaneously, however, this was also a pre-step to the 'Farm animals' topic, as all the characters from the book, except for the brown bear, may be found on the farm.

6. Acquiring English with all senses.

The Ladybirds children were given a chance of acquiring the language with all their senses and the teacher's attention focused not only on teaching English but also on children's sensory development. This goal was reached mainly by having 'arts and crafts' time, but not only. Each day after 'the story of the day' had been introduced and discussed children were invited to express themselves by doing arts and crafts projects. Usually the theme of arts and crafts was strictly related to the story or the whole topic of the week. 'Arts and crafts' time consisted not only in painting, sticking, drawing, colouring, cutting with scissors or carving but also in cooking, or planting in spring time. During such activities children were able to get in contact with materials of different structures and shapes (tissue paper, crape paper, cardboard paper, plasticine, fabric, fur, grain, pasta, foil, sponge, Styrofoam, and many others). Children's sensory development and integration were stimulated in parallel with the process of English language acquisition. Here are some examples:

➤ Sense of sight

To develop this sense children were exposed to various objects, pictures and visuals which were placed round the classroom. The teacher also introduced various games to improve

children's perceptiveness. For instance, there were four or five toy animals on the floor and one disappeared under the blanket. Children's task was to guess what was missing.

➤ **Sense of touch**

Children became more familiar with this sense by playing with materials like home made play dough, plasticine, pasta, water or sand (Picture 19). Nowadays, numerous books are designed to help develop the sense of touch, since they are full of differently textured pictures to be touched by a child. Children were always allowed to touch objects presented to them during circle time. For instance, in autumn they played with conkers and then they were asked to describe conkers' shape and texture. The pig playing in the muddy puddle was one of the characters for the 'Farm animals' topic. Children first coloured the picture of a pig; next they applied chocolate pudding to create a 'muddy puddle'. They used their fingers to paint with the pudding. (Picture 20)



Picture 19: Austin and Rosie playing with home-made play dough.



Picture 20: 'Muddy pig'. Finger-painting with chocolate pudding.

➤ **Sense of taste**

Cooking with Ladybirds was a very popular activity in every season of the year. Children were able to taste first ingredients then dishes which they made. For instance, when the tale ‘Goldilocks and the three bears’ was discussed children made porridge and ate it (Picture 21). To help them memorize brown colour children were treated to chocolate. For the topic about bees the teacher brought honey. The teacher made an observation that if learners particularly liked the taste of the food they were able to name this food the next day.



Picture 21: Developing sense of taste. After eating delicious porridge children were able to name it the next day.

➤ **Sense of smell**

Similarly to the sense of taste, the sense of smell was developed mainly by cooking, smelling and eating. Children were also encouraged to smell different things in their

surroundings. The teacher tried to use children's sense of smell to help them memorize English words. For instance, when the purple colour was discussed children could smell a purple flower which was sprinkled with perfume. The teacher suggested: 'This is how purple colour smells like'.

➤ **Sense of hearing**

Children were exposed to songs and music played by a record player for most of the day. There were various types of music. For instance, in the morning children usually listened to popular English songs and rhymes. During snack and lunch time the classical or relaxation music was played. For nap time children were provided with relaxation music composed especially for infants to help them fall asleep. Apart from music and songs, many topic activities were enriched by sounds. For example, when each sound of farm animals was played children pointed at appropriate picture of an animal. Children particularly liked sounds related to Halloween festival. Moaning wolves, creaking door, blowing wind made them excited and they acquired lexical items much faster.

The opportunity of acquiring English with all senses resulted in children's ability to learn and memorize new words and utterances in a brief period of time. What is more important, children were able to store new expressions in a long-term memory, which is rather singular at that age.

The case study of the group of Ladybirds taught by the author in the school year 2008/2009 closes the main body of the thesis. Some conclusions on immersion programme are presented in the following part.

CONCLUSION

The research concerned the process of teaching English to very young children through an immersion programme. The learners were an international group of children with different first languages. The British Approach: Every Child Matters was accepted.

The author's teaching and observations confirmed the effectiveness of the British Immersion Programme in teaching English to very young children.

The effectiveness was achieved through:

- the application of a variety of classroom procedures and activities drawn from The Direct Method, The Communicative Approach, The Natural Approach and Total Physical Response,
- the project works designed by the author,
- daily, several hours immersion in the target language.

The work justifies the acceptance of the British Approach to organization of Playhouse immersion programmes for very young children.

SUMMARY IN POLISH

Praca przedstawia próbę wykorzystania brytyjskiego programu 'The British Approach: Every Child Matters' do nauczania języka angielskiego 2 – 3 letnich dzieci o różnych językach ojczystych.

Rozdział pierwszy zapoznaje czytelnika z charakterystyką młodszych uczniów, której znajomość jest niezbędna do wypracowania najlepszego z możliwych podejścia do nauczania języka obcego dla tej grupy wiekowej. W dalszej części rozdziału opisane zostały wczesne metody nauczania dzieci języka obcego, tj. metoda audio-lingwalna, metoda audio-wizualna, podejście komunikacyjne, jak również metody używane obecnie, tj. metoda bezpośrednia, podejście naturalne oraz metoda reagowania całym ciałem. W ostatniej części rozdziału zaprezentowany został program zanurzenia w języku, jako jedna z najmłodszych metod. Program ten po raz pierwszy został wprowadzony w roku 1965 w Kanadzie i dotyczył nauczania dzieci języka francuskiego jako obcego. Program ten polega na wykorzystaniu języka obcego jako narzędzia do nauczania innych przedmiotów, tj. matematyka czy historia. Również komunikacja pozalekcyjna, np. w trakcie zabaw na powietrzu, spożywania posiłków odbywa się w języku obcym. Program zanurzenia w języku został wprowadzony do narodowego programu nauczania w Kanadzie i Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki Północnej. W Polsce istnieją szkoły i przedszkola wykorzystujące założenia opisywanego programu. Jedną z takich placówek jest przedszkole The English Playhouse w Warszawie.

W rozdziale drugim autorka przedstawiła krótką historię powstania przedszkola oraz cele dla jakich zostało założone. Przedział wiekowy dzieci uczęszczających do EP wynosi od 1,5 do 5 lat w momencie zapisu dziecka do przedszkola. Dzieci pochodzą z różnych krajów, praktycznie z całego świata i zaczynają naukę języka angielskiego jako obcego. Cechą charakterystyczną tej placówki jest wykorzystywanie wyłącznie języka angielskiego do

nauczania i komunikacji. Nauczyciele zobowiązani są prowadzić zajęcia w zgodzie z założeniami brytyjskiego programu nauczania, co w przypadku emigracji do innego kraju umożliwia dzieciom kontynuację nauki w podobnych placówkach oświatowych opierających swoją działalność na programie brytyjskim. Nauczanie odbywa się w ramach obszarów tematycznych zaplanowanych na okres od 1 do 3 tygodni. Przykładami takich obszarów mogą być: ‘Zwierzęta na farmie’, ‘Kolory’, ‘Środki transportu’, ‘Zwierzęta w domu’, i wiele innych. Zwykle tematy dobierane są równoległe do zmieniających się pór roku, pogody lub ważnych wydarzeń i świąt, jak choćby Boże Narodzenie. Zastosowanie obszarów tematycznych w nauczaniu sprawia, że dzieci nabywają znajomość języka obcego, jego funkcję i strukturę poprzez dany kontekst sytuacyjny bliski dzieciom, co pomaga w sposób naturalny rozumieć i zapamiętywać, a następnie wykorzystywać w mowie nowe zwroty i wyrażenia.

Rozdział trzeci to szczegółowe studium pracy w grupie dzieci w wieku od 2 do 3 lat, noszącej nazwę ‘Biedronki’. Dzieci w tej grupie pochodzą głównie z państw europejskich, kilkoro z nich posługuje się językiem polskim. Ponieważ dzieci zostały zanurzone w języku angielskim w tak wczesnym wieku, mamy tu do czynienia z zagadnieniem biligwalizmu, którego definicję znajdujemy w niniejszym rozdziale. Autorka opisała również cztery etapy nabywania języka obcego jako drugiego i poparła je charakterystycznymi przykładami zachowań zarówno niewerbalnych jak i werbalnych jakie miały miejsce wśród dzieci z grupy ‘Biedronek’. Podała również przykłady mieszania języków – ojczystego i angielskiego. Podjęła próbę przedstawienia powodów, dla których taki proces ma miejsce oraz zaproponowała reakcję nauczyciela w odpowiedzi na użycie przez dziecko jego pierwszego języka. W dalszej części rozdziału przedstawiona została organizacja klasy oraz opis rutynowych działań, jakie mają miejsce w codziennym procesie nauczania angielskiego i jego nabywania przez dzieci. Szczególny nacisk autorka położyła na opis ‘register time’ oraz ‘circle time’. Jest to czas, w którym dzieci siadając na krzeselkach tworzą koło. Nie powinny

się bawić, ale postarać się maksymalnie skupić na treści przekazywanej im przez nauczyciela. W czasie 'kółeczka' dzieci poprzez zabawę uczą się liczyć, rozpoznawać cyfry, opisywać pogodę, odgadywać dni tygodnia. Nabywają znajomość nowych słów związanych z omawianym obszarem tematycznym poprzez słuchanie czytanej im przez nauczyciela książeczki, wizualizację, rymowanki, piosenki, proste gry typu 'zgadywanka'. Autorka przedstawia również przykłady wykorzystania wszystkich zmysłów dziecka w nabywaniu języka angielskiego jako obcego.

W krótkim podsumowaniu autorka prezentuje kilka wniosków dotyczących programu zanurzenia w języku. Pracę zamyka lista pozycji bibliograficznych oraz załączniki (rozkład obszarów tematycznych w roku szkolnym 2008/2009, plan dnia w grupie Biedronek oraz szczegółowy konspekt obszaru tematycznego 'Kolory').

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Appendix 1

The topics for the school year 2008/2009 in the group of Ladybirds

MONTH	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
September	My Holidays	Holidays and Means of Transport	Back to School	Me and My Family
October	Me and My Family/Autumn	Autumn Has Come	Harvest Festival	Halloween
November	The Forest Comes to Us	The Forest Comes to Us	Winter Time	Winter Time
December	Winter Time	Christmas	Christmas	Christmas Break /school closed/
January	New Year/Winter	Winter Sports	Polar Life	Colours
February	Colours	Fairy Tales	Winter Break /school closed/	Pets
March	Pets	Circus	Farm Animals	Farm Animals
April	Easter	Easter Break /school closed/	Spring/Growing	Mini Beasts
May	Mini Beasts	Jungle/Zoo Animals	Jungle/Zoo Animals	Teddy Bears Picnic
June	In the Deep Blue Sea	In the Deep Blue Sea	Pirates	Holidays
July	Holidays	Summer Club	Summer Club	Summer Club
August	Summer Club	Summer Club	Summer Club	Summer Club

Appendix 2

Set of daily routines in the group of Ladybirds in the school year 2008/2009
(originally displayed on the notice-board for parents).



Ladybirds' Daily Routines:

- 8.30-9.00 - gathering in
- 9.00-9.15 - register
- 9.15-9.40 - washing hands and snack
- 9.40-10.00 - changing nappies and toilet/structured play
- 10.00-11.00 - outside play
- 11.00-11.45 - circle time and Arts&Crafts
- 11.45-12.15 - dancing/gym
- 12.15-12.45 - lunch/changing nappies and toilet
- 12.30 - pick-up time for programme A
- 13:00 - pick-up time for programme A+
- 12.45-2.30 - nap time
- 2.30 - pick-up time for programme B



Appendix 3

‘The Colours’ Topic Plan

- Time: 10 days
- Aims: children are capable of recognizing and naming the following colours: brown, red, yellow, blue, green, purple, white, black, orange/gold.
- Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’ by Bill Martin Jr; ‘Ladybird, Ladybird’ by Ruth Brown; ‘Barney says Please and Thank You’ by Stephen White; ‘It’s the bear’ by Jez Alborough; ‘Don’t put your finger in jelly Nelly’ by Nick Sharratt; ‘Have you seen the crocodile?’ by Colin West; ‘Jolly Snowman’ by Tettina Paterson; ‘Bunny My Honey’ by Anita Jeram; ‘Eeyore, You’re the Best!’ by Ann Braybrooks; ‘Colourful Days’; ‘Big Brown Bear’ by David Mcphail; ‘Five little ducks’.
- Songs: ‘Hello yellow’; ‘Butterfly, butterfly, don’t sit on me’; ‘Baa, baa, black sheep’; ‘Five bluebottles’; ‘How much is that doggy in the window’

Day 1: BROWN

Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’; ‘Big brown Bear’, ‘It’s the bear’.

Arts and crafts:

- the first page of the book ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear...’. Children should colour-in the picture of a brown bear and stick brown fur to it.

Other activities: tasting brown chocolate; checking if brown bears are still sleeping in their cave which was made by children in the autumn; playing a game in which children pretend to be brown bears (they walk on their fours listening to music and they lie down on the floor and hibernate when they can hear no music).

Day 2: RED

Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’ ‘Ladybird, Ladybird’, ‘Colourful Days’.

Arts and crafts:

- the second page of the book 'Brown Bear...'. Children should colour-in the picture of a bird and stick red feathers to it.

- red ladybird – children paint a picture of a ladybird and stick black dots to the bug.

Other activities: children are asked to spot red objects in the classroom and bring them to the teacher.

Day 3: YELLOW

Literature: 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?' 'Five little ducks', 'Colourful days'.

Arts and crafts:

- the third page of the book 'Brown Bear...'. Children should colour-in the picture of a duck and stick yellow feathers to it.

- yellow bananas – children stick and spread yellow plasticine on the coloring page of bananas

Other activities: children make yellow salad consisting of bananas, peaches and pineapples. They 'taste yellow colour'.

Day 4: BLUE

Literature: 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?' 'Eeyore, You're the Best!', 'Big Brown Bear'.

Arts and crafts:

- the fourth page of the book 'Brown Bear...'. Children should paint the picture of a horse blue and stick pieces of blue yarn to the mane and the tale of a horse.

- blue Eeyore – children colour-in a picture of a donkey with blue wax crayon. There is a cloud above donkey's head and they should stick a blue cotton flake to it. Pink bow goes to donkey's tail.

Other activities: children are asked to spot blue objects in the classroom and bring them to the teacher.

Day 5: GREEN

Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’ ‘Have you seen the crocodile?’, ‘Colourful days’.

Arts and crafts:

- the fifth page of the book ‘Brown Bear...’. Children should fold a green circle into half and stick it to the green A4 piece of paper. Next they make green handprints for frog’s legs. They stick eyes and a long red tongue to froggy.

- green crocodile – children colour-in a picture of a crocodile and stick pieces of green crape paper to it.

Other activities: children taste green vegetables and fruits: kiwi, cucumber, lettuce, cabbage, cress, chives, French bean, green peas.

Day 6: PURPLE

Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’, ‘Barney says, Please and Thank You’, ‘Colourful Days’.

Arts and crafts:

- the sixth page of the book ‘Brown Bear...’. Children should colour-in the picture of a cat and stick pieces of purple fur to it.

- purple collage – children stick purple pieces of different materials (e.g. crape paper, tissue paper, petals of a dry flower, string, yarn, sponge, etc.) on the purple background.

Other activities: Children smell artificial purple crocuses sprinkled with perfumes. They ‘smell purple colour’.

Day 7: WHITE

Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’, ‘Jolly Snowman’, ‘Colourful Days’.

Arts and crafts:

- the seventh page of the book ‘Brown Bear...’. The teacher cuts out parts of a white dog. Children are supposed to stick these parts appropriately to the black background.
- white snowman – children create a snowman using white cotton pads.

Other activities: children make whipped cream and ‘taste white colour’.

Day 8: BLACK

Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’, ‘Colourful Days’.

Arts and crafts:

- the eighth page of the book ‘Brown Bear...’. The teacher helps children to make small balls of black crape paper. Children are supposed to stick these balls to the picture of a sheep to make black fleece.
- black night – they should paint paper black and stick small stars and the moon.

Other activities: Black cats game. Children pretend to be cats, they walk on their fours, stretch their spines and purr when they can hear music; they ‘fall asleep’ on the floor when there is no music.

Day 9: ORANGE/GOLD

Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’, ‘Bunny, My Honey’

Arts and crafts:

- the ninth page of the book ‘Brown Bear...’. The teacher cuts out orange glossy scales for the picture of a gold fish. Children first colour-in the picture and next stick scales to a fish.
- orange carrot – children are given a picture of a bunny with a carrot. Their task is to colour the bunny and next stick and spread orange plasticine on the bunny’s carrot.

Other activities: we play bunnies (hopping to the music and hiding from the wolf). We eat carrots and ‘taste orange colour’.

10 day: REVISION

Literature: ‘Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?’

Arts and crafts:

- the tenth page of the book ‘Brown Bear...’. Children are supposed to draw their teacher’s face. Since they are very young and unable to draw details like eyes, nose, mouth, they are given paper glasses to stick to their imaginative picture of the teacher to make it more recognizable.

- different colours collage – children draw what they wish with oil pastels.

Other activities: children participate in making colourful jelly. When it is ready they put jelly of different colours to the transparent bowl. Every child should have every possible colour in their bowl. They taste it and take the rest home to share with family and revise colours together.

NOTES:

- the book ‘Brown Bear...’ is to be read to children every day

- after the topic has been completed parents should be asked to read the book made by the child together at home

- for the song ‘Butterfly, Butterfly, don’t sit on me’ the teacher needs paper butterflies in different colours. Each child is given one butterfly. The teacher walks around the classroom with his butterfly, and sings the song: ‘Butterfly, butterfly, don’t sit on me, cause you’re not yellow, (or blue, white, green, black, etc.) not yellow like me’ and while singing together with children the teacher’s butterfly ‘sits’ on children’s butterflies. If the colour of two butterflies is the same, the song goes like this: ‘Butterfly, butterfly, please sit on me, cause you’re so yellow, so yellow like me!’

- the teacher wears at least one piece of the clothing of the colour being discussed the particular day.