Shared reading for teaching English as a Foreign Language to young learners in Russia

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Shared reading for teaching English as a Foreign Language to young learners in Russia

Abstract
Shared Reading has proven to be very effective in developing language and literacy skills of children in the West. This project introduces Shared Reading as a curriculum component of English as a foreign language for young children in Russia. Review of the literature regarding the effectiveness of Shared Reading is described. The project includes two units of four lessons each that illustrate implementation of Shared Reading, oral language and other literacy activities. The project concludes with specific recommendations for dissemination of this work.

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Shared Reading for Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Young Learners in Russia

A Graduate Research Project
Submitted to the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

By
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December 2004
This Project by: Inna V. Kuznetsova

Entitled: Shared Reading for Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Young Learners in Russia

Has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Devoted to my loving husband Keith,
my family in Russia (especially to my Granny),
my best friend Elena, my American family
Rebecca and Jerry, Cliff and Rita, my goddaughter Marianna,
my close friends Nadya, Olga, Ksusha, Natasha, and Tania,
and of course Pasha.
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Introduction

My background as a teacher includes 6 years of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in kindergarten and elementary classroom settings in Russia. My educational areas are in both teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and Elementary Education in Russia, as well as in Elementary Education in the US. While I was teaching, I always had many questions in my mind: "How do I make my students interested and motivated throughout the class?" "How can I bring the authentic language into my classroom?" "How do I help the students enjoy the lessons?" "How can I organize my activities around one topic and make them connected?" "What can I do to help my students speak in class?" "How can I make learning the English alphabet and how to read and to write more interesting?" Unfortunately, in Russia, I could not find the answers to those questions. I continued teaching the English alphabet directly; the activities were not connected with each other, and my students did not seem particularly interested.

Luckily, the chance to study in the United States gave me more opportunities to explore early language literacy methods that are used here. Dr. Edmiaston, who is very knowledgeable in early literacy learning and has played a major part in the American-Russian collaboration between Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, St. Petersburg, Russia, and the University of Northern
Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, the United States, guided me to explore materials on Shared Reading for the further possibilities of using it as a tool in EFL setting in Russia.

Overview of the Project

Shared Reading is broadly used in American schools and has proven to be a useful tool in helping children acquire language and literacy (Vacca, 2000, Parkers, 2000, Clay, 1991). Shared Reading is a collaborative learning activity based on research by Don Holdaway (1979) that emulates and builds from children’s experiences with bedtime stories. Shared Reading fosters children's interest in books and facilitates their literacy learning experience. Shared Reading is a fairly new method in the US, New Zealand, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia, developed around 1979. After reading the materials and research on Shared Reading, I came to the conclusion that Shared Reading could be a useful instructional activity for young children in EFL programs in Russia. In my opinion, it is one of the most enjoyable and effective methods of facilitating literacy and young children’s language development.

Project Description

This project involves the development of topical units with a series of activities based upon the Shared Reading approach to facilitate integrated English language skills (reading, speaking, listening, and writing) for young EFL learners in Russia. It will
include creating books for Shared Reading and developing an instructional guide for EFL teachers.

Project Rationale

As a teacher of English as a foreign/second language, I wish to explore the use of Shared Reading in the EFL program for Russian children 5-7 years old who start to learn the English language. I believe that it is an excellent instructional approach for young children who are learning a second or foreign language for several reasons. First, books selected for Shared Reading provide the authentic language that the children are learning. Second, an adult’s sharing of a book with children is a natural and pleasant activity for children. The stress-free atmosphere and the opportunity to use the first language will make the Shared Reading experience very enjoyable. Third, the book will provide a context for connected language usage and activities. Shared Reading seems to be the answer to the questions I had before.

Purposes of the Project

The purposes of the project are multiple. First, I wish to identify how Shared Reading can be used in EFL settings in Russia in order to develop children’s integrated English language skills (reading, speaking, writing, and listening). Second, I will create curricula for EFL programs for young children in Russia. Third, I will introduce the instructional practice of Shared Reading into the EFL classroom.
Importance of the Project

English is a required subject in most of the elementary and secondary schools in Russia. Children who attend kindergarten also have the opportunity to learn English. In the modern Russian society English is an important part of the global culture. To get a good job or enter the University, a person must speak a foreign language (optimally English) competently. People in Russia almost have to be bilingual. In school students read authentic texts and take serious English exams. Elementary schools require that students take an English exam too. Thus, it is important for children to start learning languages at an early age. However, there is not much EFL methodology research in Russia, which creates a big problem. There are programs, borrowed from abroad, but there is no knowledge of implementing them in Russia because they are not written for Russia and the Russian EFL curriculum.

The department of Early Foreign Language Learning at Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia is taking the leadership for developing new TESOL projects for young learners. Being a part of the faculty members' team I know that my project will be of a great value and possibly included into the TESOL teaching program. When I am back in Russia I will present my research project at the Early Foreign Language Learning Conference for faculty members at the Herzen State Pedagogical University of
Russia. Learning about Shared Reading will increase TESOL students' awareness of the other new and effective ways to teach English to young learners. The Shared Reading project will bring new insights and enrich students' knowledge of new TESOL and Literacy methodology and curricula which will help them become more effective TESOL teachers.
Methodology

To develop this project I first had to become familiar with American pedagogical practice in emerging language and literacy. This entailed taking coursework in both the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages. I also reviewed the existing literature in Russia in this area. To explore the plausibility of adopting American pedagogical practice, I conducted a pilot project in my home city of Saint Petersburg.

Within this section I will provide a brief review of Russian EFL practices and research. Then I will present an overview of Shared Reading and a brief review of literature regarding this educational approach. I will conclude this section with a description of the pilot project that I implemented.

A Review of Current EFL Practices and Research in Russia and the United States

The appropriate methodology for teaching foreign languages in Russia is a very controversial area. During the period of the Soviet Union the government educational program was the only choice for all the regions in the entire country. Many teachers had to follow lesson plans that had been used at the time they went to schools themselves. Foreign languages were taught mostly for text reading purposes, and the Grammar Translation method was the method-in-use. In the 1990's when perestroika started it
became clear that if the country was not under the Soviet ideology anymore, then education could not be either. This situation was hard for educators at that time; they had to learn how to think differently. The politics and economy in Russia were very unstable at that time which certainly affected education. People had problems in getting food and they did not care about new educational programs being created.

Currently as the economy has stabilized, there are more options to develop and implement new projects into Russian education, especially into early language learning as it is a truly new and very popular component of education. Most preschools and kindergartens in Russia offer programs for learning English. According to respected Russian researchers such as Gorlova, 1996; Foturman, 1998; Minaev, 2000; Negnevitskaia, 2000; and Niketenko, 1999; the early childhood years are the most optimal period for learning foreign languages. Young children’s ability to acquire foreign languages is based on the flexibility of the brain and the speech apparatus as well as imitative abilities in producing foreign speech.

**EFL practices in Russia**

The present method used in Russia for teaching foreign languages is the Personally Oriented Method, developed by Rubinstein and Leontiev around 1970’s. This method identifies activity as necessary for children’s personal development (Gorlova, 1996, Zimniaia, 1990, Leontiev, 1967).
This method is based on the belief that children who actively interact with materials, the teacher, and peers learn more than they would as passive absorbers of the information. The knowledge and information become valuable for children because they know how they can use them. According to Vygotsky (1930), the material for the lesson has to match the Zone of Children's Proximal Development, a Vygotskian term that denotes the range where, at one end are learning tasks that a learner can complete independently, and at the other end are those tasks that cannot be completed unless assisted. Keeping the materials within this range is necessary for children's development and keeping their interest and motivation in learning. Negnevitskaia (2000) states "the main goal for early learning a foreign language is communicative competence, as well as helping a child become a part of a global culture and develop child's personality" (p.21). This is the goal of Russian EFL programs. EFL classes in Russia consist of a small group of students, usually 5-8 children, who meet twice a week for about 20-30 minutes with a specially trained EFL teacher. The class usually consists of several play situations; very often they are not connected to each other. Most of the classrooms are decorated with maps of the United States and the United Kingdom and posters with the English alphabet. Most of them have toys and color posters, but very few of them have English books, as literacy is not generally a part of the program.
At a preschool age, children get accustomed to Russian books in the regular classroom. Every pre-school has books; the teacher usually reads them when she/he has time or the children can look at the books by themselves.

In Russia literacy is not officially introduced in preschools or kindergartens; it is considered to be the elementary school's main job. In fact, the term "literacy" does not exist in Russia; we use separate terms for reading and writing. They are taught separately in schools with reading usually introduced first. Tolenov (2002) describes literacy instruction as direct, happening in the classroom desk setting. Preschools and kindergartens have to prepare children for reading and writing, but what they actually do depends on a preschool or kindergarten: some preschools and kindergartens prepare children's hands for writing, some introduce letters. Some preschools and kindergartens teach literacy as an additional course. Some parents teach children to read and to write at home. Yzorova (2002) points out that this lack of continuity in literacy experiences makes it difficult to predict what children know when they enter elementary school. Currently, serious discussions about when and how literacy should be taught are occurring. Interested in developing new horizons in early education, the Department of Childhood at Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia has established an intensive and continuous collaboration with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the
University of Northern Iowa in order to share and gain experience in the area of teaching literacy. In the near future, Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia will possibly adopt the project of implementing Shared Reading into the Early Childhood literacy program. However, as a former student in the EFL division, I am focusing on EFL settings in Russia as they need new methodology and curricula in early childhood EFL programs. My review of methodology and approaches, as well as my experience as an EFL teacher, supports the notion that a lack of methods and materials exist in Russia in regards to teaching literacy and English to early learners. I will now provide a brief review of literature regarding EFL practices in the United States.

EFL research in English-speaking countries

Since the 1980s, there has been a gradual movement away from rather narrow language teaching methods toward broader integrated approaches in EFL language teaching. These approaches encourage the teaching of all four skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—within the general framework of using language for learning as well as for communication (Celce-Murcia, 2001). According to Scarcella (1992) the isolation of skills leads to a communication deadlock. The work of Renadya and Jacobs (2002) suggests that many students’ motivation, interest, and class involvement plummet when the language is taught in a fragmented, noncommunicative way. Current EFL practices are based on the belief that language learners need numerous and extensive
opportunities for natural communication that integrates the main and subsidiary language skills in principled ways (Eyring, 2002). McKay (2002) argues that using literature as content provides two major benefits for learners: a) It is an ideal source for integrating the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and (b) it raises cross-cultural awareness. Children's literature provides an ideal context for doing this. Listening to stories and reading stories is an enjoyable aesthetic experience for young children. Using literature in EFL settings can also develop students' language awareness. Because literacy texts are unique in their ability to illustrate that what is communicated cannot be separated from how it is communicated, they provide an ideal context for demonstrating the importance of form in language learning and language use. However, reading is not used or taught in EFL settings for young learners in Russia at all. Most Russian early educators have never heard of the term Shared Reading. On the other hand, modern research in English-speaking countries demonstrates how useful Shared Reading activity can be both for the learners reading and language development.

Shared Reading can incorporate the activities for language learning into the whole situation that will help to increase and keep the learners' motivated throughout the class. Shared Reading is very interactive; it has "before reading", "during reading", and "after reading" steps. Shared Reading is a source for authentic English language that Russian materials lack. Shared
Reading is a relaxing activity, which will make learning enjoyable. Thus, the need exists for curriculum and instructional practice for EFL teachers of how to use Shared reading in EFL kindergarten classrooms for the integrated foreign language skills development.

To this end, I will now present an overview of Shared Reading and research supporting this approach.

Overview of Shared Reading

Shared Reading is a collaborative literacy activity based on research by Holdaway (1979) that emulates and builds from the children's experience with bedtime stories. Shared Reading is an interactive reading experience that occurs when children join in the reading of a big book or other enlarged text as guided by a teacher or other experienced reader. The book must be suitable for the children to be able to join in or the experience changes to a Read Aloud. It is through Shared Reading that the reading process and reading strategies that readers use are demonstrated. The experience is an enjoyable one shared by the children. Shared Reading provides excellent opportunities to demonstrate concepts about print and features of books and writing. It is in this risk-free environment of Shared Reading that children can learn to perceive themselves as readers. According to Wells (1986), Vacca (2000), Holdaway (1979), and Morrow (2005), storybook reading is a critically important factor in young children's literacy development. The bedtime reading done by parents in a
home setting is particularly effective. In Heath’s (1999) seminal analysis of story situations, she identified factors such as warm and supportive environment, one-to-one situation, regularly occurring, and lack of expectations that the child will exhibit any “reading-like” behavior. Additional factors that lead to bedtime stories facilitating emergent literacy include the children’s performing of pretend reading and children and adult’s interaction with the printed page. Children who have had such a rich background environment with bedtime stories are frequently read to before they begin school (Butler & Turbill, 2000). Butler and Turbill (2000) stated that “teachers can replicate this successful home-learning experience within the constraints of their own classrooms through Shared Reading” (p. 34).

Parkes (2000) defines two main purposes for Shared Reading. One purpose is to provide children with enjoyable reading experiences which introduce them to a variety of authors and illustrators and the ways these communicators craft meaning. A second purpose is to teach children systematically and explicitly how to be readers and writers themselves and to entice them to want to be readers themselves.

Benefits of Shared Reading

Shared Reading allows adults to model the reading process and strategies used by a reader. Hennigs (1992) stated, “Shared Reading has more benefits for the students than Guided Reading and Teacher Read Aloud, because in Shared Reading students are
able to see the print on the pages" (p. 40). The teacher deliberately draws attention to the print and models early reading behaviors such as moving from left to right and word-by-word matching. Shared Reading provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to demonstrate the integrated use of the cueing systems and strategies for reading that can be applied to unfamiliar reading. It allows the teacher to model and support students using prediction and confirming skills. Parkes (2000) stated "Shared reading is an ideal way to demonstrate how the three language based sources of information: semantics, syntax and grapho-phonics work and engage children in their use" (p. 15).

In the context of Shared Reading, students can perceive themselves as readers. Shared Reading experiences provide a scaffold for independent reading. According to Butler and Turbill (2000), Shared Reading allows the students to act as readers and interpret familiar letters and conventions such as the front and back cover, title, page, page turning, concept of word, directionality, reading the words not the picture, picture supports the text, one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken word, punctuation and its functions, and letter-sound relationships. Shared Reading correlates with the Vygotskian concept of Zone of Proximal Development because Shared Reading has material that is connected to children's existing knowledge, that is simultaneously age and developmentally appropriate, and that introduces new knowledge and information with assistance
from the teacher. Vacca (2000) describes a key characteristic of Shared Reading as "an opportunity to meet individual needs of the students" (p. 234). This approach allows less confident students to "read" in non-threatening situations. Parkes (2000) describes how Shared Reading also allows students to develop as listeners, speakers, readers, and writers. She specifically discusses learning to use prediction strategies to develop meaning in text. Such strategies include reading to discover meaning, predicting and self-correcting, using the context of the story and common sense, along with knowledge of language, and letter/sound relationships, and reading with expression.

**Conducting Shared Reading Experience**

A Shared Reading lesson may be conducted in many ways depending on the purpose set by the teacher and the reading levels of the students. Pinnell (2003), Parkes (2000), and Burgess (2002) include text selection, "before reading", during reading", and "after reading" activities as the primary components of Shared Reading approach. Each of these steps will be described briefly below.

1) For text selection, Cunningham (2000) identifies three criteria in choosing a book for Shared Reading. (a) The book should be predictable. Shared Reading of predictable books allows children to experience pretend reading. From the pretend reading they learn what reading is, and they develop the confidence that they will be able to do it. They will also develop print concepts
and begin to understand how letters, sounds, and words work. Predictable books usually do not have too much print, and their sentence patterns are very repetitive. The pictures in the book support those sentence patterns. (b) The book should be appealing to children. (c) The book should take the students some place conceptually. Vacca (2000) recommends using big books during Shared reading because the children can easily see the print and pictures.

2) Before reading the teacher discusses the topic with the students to tap their prior knowledge. The teacher states the purpose—why the book was selected. Then the teacher usually invites the students to predict the text from the cover, title, and illustrations. After that the teacher gives a short stimulating introduction. The teacher may do a picture walk throughout the book. The teacher shows the pictures of the book to the students for better understanding of the content of the book. The teacher may discuss some pictures with the children, asking questions such as "What do you think the character (name) is doing? Why do you think he is doing that? Do you think the character (name) is cold? What do you do when you are cold?"

3) During the reading of the text, the students interact with the teacher, the story, and each other; the teacher does the same. According to Hennigs (1992) the Shared Reading event puts a high premium on student involvement for it is fundamental to a literacy program in early childhood. Teale (1988) identifies the
important role teachers play stimulating children's involvement in the text reading event. Teachers become guides, facilitators, and models; they are always eager to assist children in initiating curiosity and a desire to learn about the reading process. Salinger (1993) remarked, "What teachers do affects what children will in turn do in the classroom and by extension what they will learn" (p.54).

During the first reading of the text the students are primarily involved as listeners and speakers. The teacher reads the text as naturally as possible with few stops focusing on meaning and encouraging students to join in as they are able to. The teacher also models authentic reactions to the text. While reading the teacher encourages students to talk about the text and helps them to notice the text features.

The teacher asks students to predict as they read together, drawing on their understanding of the text and their knowledge of the structure of the language. Eitaman (2002) states that, "connections to the students' backgrounds, experiences, and other literature are encouraged" (p. 24). The teacher also introduces the use of prompts to help the students predict the text and confirm their predictions. The teacher uses meaning prompts (e.g. What is happening in the story?), structure prompts (e.g. What would sound right here?), and visual prompts (e.g. Do you know another word that looks like that?).
Rereading of the text should occur several times. With each rereading, students will be able to read more text and become more attuned to different literacy components. Sometimes these additional readings can include clapping, singing, chanting, and dramatic role-playing.

4) There is a wide range of activities that can be done after the reading of the book. The teacher and the children can sing songs that relate to the book topic. The children and the teacher can organize a role play, according to the plot of the story. The teacher and the children could draw their impressions of the book or favorite characters. The children can write their own related stories. Basically, the teacher can organize all kinds of activities that are connected to the topic of the book. For example, if the teacher reads a book about leaves, after reading the children and the teacher can go outside to observe the colors of the leaves and collect the leaves for the classroom to use for science, art, and other subjects. The children can write little stories about their leaves or the colors of the leaves or just their own names.

According to Pinnell (2003), after reading, teachers should create some method of displaying the titles of the shared reading books they have used in their classroom. A "Books We Have Read Together" chart, bookworm, book train, or other motivating classroom display can be expanded as the year progresses. Children enjoy adding to the list and can refer to the list when
they wish to select a familiar book to read (Burgess, 2002). It is also important to make the books available for the children to use for their independent reading after the children are finished with Shared Reading experience. Shared Reading books can be used later on the term with more complicated tasks and activities.

I will present the research findings on Shared Reading Effectiveness.

Shared Reading Effectiveness Research Findings

Burgess (2002) conducted a study that examined the relationships between Shared Reading and oral language skills in children 5-7 years old. One group had Shared Reading experiences while the other group of young children did not. Two months later, both groups' results on an assessment of oral language skills were compared. During group time, the children were asked questions about the story which was read to them before. The children from the Shared Reading group were more active in holding a conversation; the sentences they used were longer and more complex than the sentences of the children from the second group. Moreover, the children from the Shared Reading group took the initiative to ask questions on their own. Results of this study supported the hypothesis that Shared Reading is an effective method to develop oral language skills.

Meyer, Wardrop, Stahl, and Linn (1994), in a study based on classroom observations, indicated that teachers lack the necessary training to facilitate oral language skills. They found
a negative correlation between achievement and the amount of time spent on reading to the children in the kindergarten classes. According to their study, the farther the activity moved away from activities directly related to the reading process, the lower the correlation between that activity and reading achievement. The solution strategies offered by research suggested engaging children in Shared Reading activities, community circle time, teacher facilitation, and parent involvement.

The need for implementing a well-defined approach for reading to children is supported by several studies. Teale and Yokota (2000) have voiced concerns regarding storybook reading as an approach for learning to read. They point out that simply finding high-quality literature and reading it in engaging ways will not necessary lead to significant reading results.

Many teachers simply are unaware or only vaguely aware of cognitive and social dimensions of story time (Teale, Sulzby, 1989). Research done by Hoffman, Roser and Battle (1993) indicated that 77% of primary teachers read a book with children every day. Nevertheless, they found that time spent in discussion was minimal. Less than 5 minutes were spent in discussion before the reading, and less than 10 minutes were spent after the reading. The researchers concluded, "Shared Reading is not an integral part of the instructional day and may not be realizing its full potential" (p.500).
Clay (1991) discusses educators who fall into the trap of designing one program to fit all students. Not all children come to school with the same experience and opportunities in reading in general. Neuman and Fredekamp (2000) identify how diversity in children's previous literacy experiences brings many challenges for Shared Reading. Morrow (2005) considers Shared Reading a strategy that is particularly beneficial for English learning and language development. The children develop and learn new vocabulary, the children develop dialogue and monologue skills, and get accustomed to a written language. To explore the usefulness of Shared Reading with young EFL learners in Russia, I conducted a small pilot project.

Pilot Study of Shared Reading

I explored the possible use of Shared Reading in a pilot study I conducted in 2004 in Russia in three different schools. The experiences in all these schools were similar. The total number of participants was 16. To be more specific about my study, I will describe a Shared Reading session I led in School 597. The EFL learners were kindergartners: 4 girls and 2 boys, 5-7 years old. The children had a limited EFL experience: they knew about 10 words total and some greeting clichés. The English book "How's the Weather" by Rozanne Williams (2003) was used for Shared Reading. Before reading the book I did not present any new words. I showed the book to the children and asked them in Russian to predict the content of the book from the cover. The children
easily guessed that the bird who was looking out of the window was checking the weather. After that, I led a picture walk throughout the book, paying attention to certain details to help the children understand the content in English. I asked the children about the reasons the bird was holding the umbrella and about the situations in which the children had to use umbrellas. The children seemed very excited about the new way the book was introduced to them. They shared their thoughts about the weather in Saint Petersburg and how bad it could get. The most difficult condition to guess was "a foggy day" because there are not many foggy days in Saint Petersburg. I made hints about bad visibility to help them guess the picture of the foggy day. Luckily, a boy remembered that he had seen fog early in the morning when he has gone to the forest with his parents.

During reading I spoke only in English, showing the pictures and pointing at each word. When I was in the middle of reading the book, the children spontaneously engaged in echo reading. The children hearing the similar pattern started repeating it. The most obvious pattern was "day" as most of the sentences of the book finish with this word (e.g. It’s a rainy day. It’s a foggy day). I read the book twice to the children. When I was reading the second time I repeated each sentence twice. I encouraged the children to repeat the sentences after me and they did so. After the second reading, one girl said that she wanted to read the book. Her "reading" was pretty good; the mistakes she made were
mostly phonetic. Twice she asked me to help her and I just started the sentence for her. "It's a sunny..." and she finished "day". Her success made her very happy and very excited. She kept telling us that she knew how to read English books.

After reading, the children and I went for a walk. It was a sunny day. I took the book with me and asked the children which picture showed a sunny day. The children found the picture in the book and I read it to them again. As the children were playing they screamed in English "It's a sunny day!" When we returned back to the classroom I asked the children to make a drawing of the weather outside and to write a story about the weather. I promised that I would write their names in English and they could take their works home and show their parents. Each child drew something. Most drawings had the sun and the clouds, and some had flowers. Two girls wrote their names in Russian, but the other children did not write anything. They told me they were afraid to ruin the drawing because they did not know how to write. I encouraged them to turn the page over and write on the back side. Some children wrote some letters, and one girl wrote the word flowers in Russian (цветы) and asked me to write the same word in English. When discussing her story that girl said that she liked the letter "f" in "flowers" and said that it looked like an elfish symbol from "The Lord of the Rings." I wrote this letter separately for her again and she copied it six times. She pointed at her drawings and "f" letters and read in Russian
"It's summer. It's a sunny. It's a lake in my country house."

The children did not want to leave the classroom when their parents came for them. They wanted to do more drawing and reading. The children appeared to enjoy the Shared Reading greatly. They wanted me to come again and bring more books, and their parents told me that the children were really excited after the English lesson.
The Project

Shared Reading as the Key Element of the Lesson

The goal of my project is to introduce Shared Reading as an effective tool for teaching four language skills to early EFL learners in Russia. Shared Reading of a written text will serve as the key of the lesson and provide a connection between all the activities carried out during the lesson. Shared Reading will not be a typical learning experience for Russian children, so it is necessary to introduce Shared Reading first as an activity.

Parkes (2000) stated that through Shared Reading,

"the teachers implicitly and explicitly model reading and writing behaviors, skills, and strategies. Each time this is done children learn about:

- book and print conventions (through the talk that accompanies choosing a book, looking at the cover, reading the title, talking about the pictures, turning the pages, noticing letters, and identifying words
- punctuation
- phonemes
- letter and letter sound relationships
- words
- syntax (as it is modeled)
- semantics (as it is used to predict)
- how readers read (as it is modeled)
- the joy and enlightenment that come from reading" (p. 26)
Through Shared Reading teachers model listening strategies (listen to understand the content of the book) and dialogue and monologue skills (as it is modeled in the book). Teachers help children feel the success because it is possible for them to complete the task, and dialogue and monologue skills (as it is modeled in the book).

My project presents two sample units organized around Shared Reading experience. Each unit has four lessons, developed around a specific book. Each unit has a book for Shared reading. All the activities in the lessons are connected between each other and the book for Shared Reading. The units are aimed at beginning EFL learners, ages 5-7, who attend kindergarten in Russia.

The topic of the first unit is Wild Animals and the topic of the second unit is Pets. The reasons for choosing animals as first topics are children's interest in animals, children's knowledge about animals, similarities between some animal names in Russian and in English, and the variety of activities that can be done with animal-cards, stuffed animals and drawings. Each unit has a book for Shared Reading to be read and reread during the four lessons of the unit. The book for the first unit is At the Zoo. The book for the second unit is I Have. Initially the sessions will require more teacher's guidance and assistance using the Russian.

Letters are introduced in the second unit in non-alphabetical order. However, there is a chance that letter introduction can be
postponed depending on the age and EFL experience. In addition, extension activities are provided. By all means, it is important to facilitate children's understanding of the relationship between sounds and letters. Thus, high frequency letters and sounds will be introduced first. It is easier for the children to acquire English consonants than English vowels, so consonants will be introduced first.

In Unit II the teacher uses cloze procedures. Parkes (2000) defines the use of cloze procedure as "leaving gaps in the flow of oral or written language and inviting children to fill the gaps with words that maintain meaning" (p. 34). Oral and written clozes are used in Unit II and Shared Reading Extension. The teacher will have a step-by-step guide for the first eight lessons. The books and other necessary materials can be made by the teacher. The parents will also receive regular-sized copies of the big book and thus, have their own copy to practice reading with the children at home. The teacher is responsible for making handouts for the parents. It is important that the teacher writes the names of the children in English and creates English name tags (e.g Sereza). The children will be able to see their names and the names of the other children in the classroom. The children will be able to connect letters and sounds of the units with letters and sounds in their names.

The teachers can add information and materials to the lessons as they go on. The teachers can make these lessons as models for
implementing Shared Reading and can make their own lesson plans for Shared Reading activity and set their own goals and objectives. I hope that these units will help teachers start exploring the benefits Shared Reading has to offer in EFL programs for young children.

Table 1. Content of the Unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Songs</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Communicative patterns</th>
<th>The concept of Print</th>
<th>Letter Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit I</td>
<td>At</td>
<td>Hello, What's Your Name?</td>
<td>Zebra, Elephant, Snake, Tiger, Crocodile, Bear, Monkey, Giraffe, Wolf, Lion</td>
<td>I see, Hello, Hi, Good bye, How are you?, I am fine, What's your name? My name is..</td>
<td>Reading, Left to right, Reading every word, Pictures reflect content</td>
<td>/s/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit II</td>
<td>I Have</td>
<td>Hello, My Pets</td>
<td>Dog, Parrot, Fish, Rabbit, Parakeet, Blue, Green, Black, Purple, Pink, Red, Good, House, Big, Pets</td>
<td>I have, I love, It's..</td>
<td>Writing is left to right, Letters Stand for Sounds, Each letter describes a sound, Spaces between words</td>
<td>Ss /s/, Pp /p/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Materials for the Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Teacher materials</th>
<th>Student materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit I</td>
<td>Big book <em>At the Zoo</em></td>
<td>Little book <em>At the Zoo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tape with the songs</td>
<td>Tape with the songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A tape recorder</td>
<td>A work book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The English Alphabet poster</td>
<td>Handouts with new vocabulary and new songs with the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White paper A4</td>
<td>translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White paper 30*60 cm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colored pencils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Markers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cut outs from the magazines or wild animal stickers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wild animal cards with the animal names written on them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit II</td>
<td>Big book <em>I Have</em></td>
<td>Little book <em>I Have</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tape with the songs</td>
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<td>Cut outs from the magazines or domestic animal stickers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic animal cards with the names of the animals written on them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Color cards with the names of the colors written on them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 1: Wild Animals

Goals

1. Introduction to the English language.
2. Introduction to Shared Reading
3. Introduction to English written language
4. Introduction to the meeting/greeting clichés.

Objectives

1. The students will acquire names of wild animal including these nouns: zebra, elephant, snake, tiger, crocodile, bear, monkey, giraffe, wolf, and lion.
2. The students will acquire conversational clichés: hello/hi; what is your name/my name is; how are you/I am fine; good bye.
3. The students will acquire the expression I see.
4. The students will acquire random words like clap.

Materials of the unit

1. Big book of the unit: At the Zoo (Kuznetsova, 2004)
   “I see a zebra; I see an elephant;
   I see a crocodile. I see a snake.
   I see a tiger. I see a bear.
   I see a monkey. I see a giraffe.
   I see a wolf. Oh, wow I see a lion!
   I am at the Zoo!”
2) Songs of the unit: Hello (Kuznetsova, 2004)
   “Hello, hello, hello to you
Hello, hello, I am glad to see you
Hello, hello, how are you?
Hello, hello, I am fine, thanks and you?"

What is Your Name? (Kuznetsova, 2004)

"What is your name? What is your name?
My name is Tom. My name is Tom
Hello, Tom! Hello, Tom"

1.1. Lesson

Objectives

1. To introduce the learners to Shared Reading, by using an English book.
2. To teach the learners new vocabulary: zebra, elephant, snake, tiger, crocodile, bear, monkey, giraffe, wolf, and lion.
3. To teach the learners how to use expression I see.
4. To practice ways of greeting and saying goodbye.

Teacher materials

Big book At the Zoo, sheets of blank white paper A4 cut in half, a tape recorder with a tape, a big piece of a cardboard paper, a marker, and animal cards with the names of the animals written in English.

Children’s materials

None

Comments and notes

The book should be in the classroom covered with something. The book is going to be a surprise for the children. The tape
recorder should be turned on, and the tape should be ready to start.

Take home assignment
A copy of the song and its translation for the parents to practice at home.

Time limit
30 minutes.

Lesson Plan

Warm-Up

Practice the greetings: "Hello/ Hi", questions: "How are you?" with each child. The teacher helps each child participate in the conversation. If the children need it, the teacher models the traditional greetings. The teacher also reminds the children about the way to say "Yes" and "No" in English. 2 minutes.

Shared reading of big book At the Zoo

Before reading. The teacher leads a conversation about books asking the students in Russian questions such as:

-Do you like to read books? Who usually reads books to you?
-Do you like to look at pictures in the book?
-What do you need to do when the book is read to you?
-If you have a question during the class what shall you do?

At the end of the conversation the teacher writes down a set of rules for the classroom in Russian on the cardboard paper with a marker and reads them with the students again. The teacher shares with the children that their friends in England and America also
like to read books. The teacher tells that the students that the
students are going to see a special kind of book the children
from England and America read. The teacher reminds the children
that the book will be in English, and the children will have to
be very attentive to understand it. In introducing the book to
children, the teacher asks them to predict what the book might be
about by looking at the cover. The teacher leads a picture-walk
throughout the book drawing the children’s attention to certain
details of the pictures to help the children understand the
content of the book in English. Questions such as "What is this
animal?" are discussed in Russian or in English. 10 minutes.

During reading. The teacher reads the book to the children in
English, explaining the word "to see" with gestures, and then
asks the children in Russian what it means. The teacher asks the
children in Russian "What does 'I am at the Zoo' mean?" The
teacher does not comment upon the text during reading, as the
children have to be immersed into English speech as much as
possible. The teacher encourages the students to do echo reading
when the teacher reads the book a second time. 8 minutes.

After reading. The teacher tells the students in Russian to
imagine being at the zoo. The teacher shows an animal card (the
animals should be the same as those in the book) and names the
animal in English. The students repeat the animal names. The
teacher gives the students paper and markers and asks them to
draw the animals they saw at the zoo. The teacher helps the students write their animals' names in English. 7 minutes.

Wrap-Up

The children and the teacher form a circle and listen to the song in English.

_Hello_

_Hello, hello, hello to you_

_Hello, hello, I am glad to see you_

_Hello, hello, how are you?_

_Hello, hello, I am fine, thanks and you?_

The song is repeated three times, and the children are encouraged to sing it together with the teacher. The children and the teacher say good bye to each other in English. The students leave. 3 minutes.

After the lesson the teacher hands out little books "At the Zoo" to the parents so that they can practice reading them at home. The teacher hangs students' works on the wall. The teacher makes a poster in English which reflects greeting clichés (Hi, Hello, How are you?).

1.2. Lesson

Objectives

1. To practice animal-names and the structure to see from the previous lesson.

2. To practice greeting and saying good-bye.

3. To practice Yes and No.
4. To introduce the children to the concepts of print (direction of the text, reading from left to right, top-to-bottom, page turning).

Teacher's materials

Big book At the Zoo, English alphabet on the wall, pictures the children drew during the previous lesson on the wall, animal cards, the poster with greeting clichés on the wall, and a tape recorder with a tape in it.

Children's materials

None

Comments and notes

Make sure the tape is in the tape recorder, ready to go.

Take home assignment

None.

Time limit

30 minutes.

Lesson Plan

Warm-Up

Practice the greetings: Hello/ Hi, questions: "How are you?" with each child. The teacher points at the poster with greeting clichés while leading the conversation. The teacher helps each child to participate in the conversation. If the children have forgotten the words, the teacher models conventional greetings and responses.
The teacher and the children form a circle and sing the Hello song with the tape.

"Hello, hello, hello to you
Hello, hello, I am glad to see you
Hello, hello, how are you?"

The teacher turns off the tape recorder and together with children sing the song incorporating each child's name and addressing that child (e.g. "Hello, hello, hello to you, Masha" etc). 10 minutes.

Shared Reading of big book At the Zoo

Before reading. The teacher points at the children's animal drawings and asks them to remember their stories about the zoo. Using the animal cards the teacher reviews the names of the animals with the children. The teacher reminds the learners about the way to say Yes and No in English. Then the teacher and the children play "Yes/No" game (e.g. the teacher shows a card with a lion and says "Giraffe", the children are supposed to say "No"). The teacher also helps the children practice the expression I see. The children and the teacher form a circle and take turns saying each others names e.g. "I see Masha" etc. 10 minutes.

During reading. The teacher rereads the big book pointing out the concept of print (directionality of the text, reading from top to bottom and left to right, turning one page at a time). The children are encouraged to read along with the teacher. 5 minutes.
After reading. The teacher and the children play the game "Simon Says" e.g. the teacher says "I see a lion" and the children are supposed to act like a lion. They practice once and then the game goes on, each child has a turn to lead the game. 8 minutes.

Wrap-Up

The children and the teacher say good bye to each other. As the students leave the teacher reminds them to sing the song at home. 1 minute.

1.3. Lesson

Objectives

1. To review and practice animal names and the structure to see from the previous lesson.
2. To practice greeting and saying good-bye.
3. To introduce the students to English print
4. To introduce the students to the English alphabet
5. To teach the students to use getting acquainted clichés (e.g. What is your name? My name is...).

Teacher’s materials

The English alphabet on the wall, big book At the Zoo, animal cards, tape-recorder with a tape, stuffed animals, the poster with greeting clichés on the wall, a board, and chalk.

Children’s materials

Workbooks.
Comments and notes

Cover the English alphabet as it is going to be a surprise. Have the tape-recorder ready to go. The children should not see the stuffed animals until the activity begins.

Prepare a handout with the new song and translation for the parents to practice at home with the children. Prepare a handout of the words covered in the first unit with translations and staple them in the students' workbooks after the lesson.

Take home assignment

Staple the new song in the children's work book with the translation. The children should review the names of the animals at home.

Time limit

30 minutes.

Lesson Plan

Warm-Up

Practice the greetings: Hello/Hi, questions: How are you? with each child pointing at the poster with greeting clichés while leading the conversation. The teacher helps each child to participate. If the child has forgotten some words or phrases, the teacher reminds them about the ways to say that. The teacher and the children get in the circle and sing the Hello song listening to the tape.

"Hello, hello, hello to you
Hello, hello, I am glad to see you
Hello, hello, how are you?"

The teacher turns off the tape recorder and with children sings the song adding each child's name (e.g. "Hello, hello, hello to you, Masha" etc). The teacher introduces ways of getting acquainted to the students. The teacher leads the following conversation with the students. "You like your new friend, but you do not know what his/her name is. What should you do? How can your ask her or his name in English?" The teacher and the children practice introduction and greetings. 5 minutes.

Shared Reading of big book At the Zoo

Before reading. The teacher reviews the animals, using the pictures in the book. The teacher opens the book and says: "Dear friends, yesterday when I was reading this book and I noticed an interesting thing. Look!" The teacher draws the children's attention the print. "What do you think it is? Do you know what those symbols are? Do you know what they stand for?" The teacher should try to lead the conversation to the connection between the sounds and the letters. The teacher should illustrate the connection with an example. Pick a child's name (e.g. Sereza). The teacher can show the picture of the snake and ask. "SSSereza and SSSnake, what do they have in common? The teacher uncovers the alphabet. "The children will probably answer "they both have s and then the teacher should show the letter s on the board with the English alphabet. If they do not say this, the teacher spells both words on the board and show the children the letter s in
both words and then shows this letter on the alphabet chart. 10 min

During reading. The teacher rereads the big book, pointing at the words as reading and the students read with the teacher. 3 minutes.

After reading. The teacher takes the stuffed animals and asks the students to practice getting acquainted using the animals (E.g. What's your name? My name is Tiger). The students are asked to open their workbook and write the name of their favorite animals at the zoo. If the majority of the students do not know how to write, the teacher shows the students the ways of writing (Wave writing, one letter writing, the whole word writing). 8 minutes.

Wrap-Up

The children and the teacher sing the What's Your Name? song together in the circle.

“What is your name? What is your name? My name is Tom. My name is Tom Hello, Tom! Hello, Tom!”

The children and the teacher say good bye to each other. The students leave. 3 minutes.

1.4 Lesson

Objectives

1. To review the material from the previous lesson.

Teacher's materials
Big book *At the Zoo*, paper A4 cut in half, stickers with animals, or cut-outs from the magazines, glue, tape-recorder with a tape animal-cards, little stuffed animals (a dog, a cat, and a parrot). The poster with greeting clichés and the English alphabet are on the wall.

**Children’s materials**

Little books *At the Zoo*.

**Comments and notes**

Put the stickers, glue and paper away before the activity begins.

**Take-home assignment**

None.

**Time limit**

30 minutes.

**Lesson Plan**

**Warm-Up**

The teacher and the children greet each other in English sayings *Hello/ Hi, How are you/ I am fine*. The teacher points at the poster with greeting clichés while leading the conversation. The teacher pretends to forget the children’s names (something happened to her/his memory), and asks the children “What’s your name?” 5 minutes.

**Shared Reading of big book *At the Zoo***

**Before reading.** The teacher draws the students’ attention to the English Alphabet again, and asks them to be attentive and follow the print with their eyes as he/she reads. 2 min
During reading. The teacher groups the students in pairs to read their little book. They take turns "reading" the book to their partner. Children then return to the large group. One student leads the reading with the other students joining in. If some students do not want to read in front of the whole class, the teacher might find some other time to read with them. While the students are reading the book, the teacher might comment on the student's fluency. 10 min

After reading. Students are asked to select their favorite animal, glue or stick it on a piece of paper, and then write the name of this animal (animal cards will be available). The teacher collects the pieces of paper and makes them into a book. The teacher asks each student to read the book in English or in Russian. 10 min

Wrap-Up

The children and the teacher sing the What's Your Name? song together in the circle.

"What is your name? What is your name?
My name is Tom. My name is Tom
Hello, Tom! Hello, Tom!"

The children and the teacher say good bye to each other as the students leave. 3 minutes.

The teacher makes a Zoo Book with the latest children's works and then gives the book to the regular classroom so that the children can use it.
Unit 2: Pets

Goals

1. Introduction to English letters.
2. Model more concepts of print.
3. Introduction to descriptional clichés.
4. Review of the previous material.

Objectives

1. The students will identify pets by name including: dog, cat, parrot, parakeet, fish, and rabbit.
2. The students will identify basic colors: blue, green, black, purple, pink, and red.
3. The students will use descriptional cliché It’s.
4. The students will use the expression I have.
5. The students will identify random words like friendly, big, and house.
6. The students will identify the concepts of print (writing left to right, spaces between words etc).
7. The students will identify the concept of word (letter/sound relations).
8. The students will be introduced to letters Ss and Pp.*

Materials of the unit

1. The big book of the unit: I Have (Kuznetsova, 2004)

"I have a big house. It’s white.
I have a cat. It’s pink.
I have a dog. It’s green."
I have fish. It’s blue.
I have a rabbit. It’s red.
I have a parakeet. It’s purple.
I have a parrot. It’s pink and purple.
I love my pets.
I love my house."

2. Songs of the Unit: Hello (Kuznetsova, 2004)

"Hello, hello, hello to you.
Hello, hello, I am glad to see you.
Hello, hello, how are you?
Hello, hello, I am fine, thanks, and you?"

My Pets (Kuznetsova, 2004)

"I have a dog. I love my dog.
I have a cat. I love my cat.
I have a parrot. I love my parrot.
I love my pets."

*The reason for learning letters Pp and Ss first is that they are both high frequency letters and they have similar sounds with Russian letters Il and Cc.

2.1 Lesson

Objectives

1. To teach children domestic pet names (dog, cat, parrot, fish, rabbit, and parakeet), and colors (blue, green, black, purple, pink, and red).

2. To introduce the children to the expression I have.
3. To review the previous material: greeting clichés.

**Teacher's materials**

Big book *I Have*, color cards, pet cards.

**Children's materials**

Pencils (red, blue, pink, green, black, and yellow) and workbooks.

**Comments and notes**

Depending on students' age and prior knowledge this lesson might be divided into 2 parts. The first part can introduce pet names only and practice them. The second part will concentrate on color names. If the lesson is divided the teacher should look up at the extension activities followed by the 2.1.lesson.

**Take home assignment**

Handouts with new words to learn and practice at home, little books *I have to take home*.

**Time limit**

30 minutes.

**Lesson Plan**

**Warm-Up**

Greet each other, and sing the song *Hello*, standing in the circle without a tape. 3 minutes.

"Hello, hello, hello to you.
Hello, hello, I am glad to see you.
Hello, hello, how are you?
Hello, hello, I am fine, thanks and you?"
Shared Reading of big book I have

Before reading. The teacher shows the new book to the children and encourages them to predict the content of the book from its cover: "What picture is on the cover? What do you think the book is going to be about?" The teacher listens to the children's opinions and then leads a picture walk throughout the book. The teacher shows every page and asks questions about the pictures on the pages such as "Who do you think it is? What color is this? Have you ever seen a pink cat? What colors can cats be? Do you have a cat at home?" The teacher lets the children guess what 'I love' means by gestures or analogies such as "What does your Mom want to tell you when she hugs you?" The teacher should lead the children to the full comprehension of the content by giving as much assistance as necessary. The teacher encourages the children to talk about what pets they have and ask questions if they did not understand something. 5 minutes.

During reading. The teacher reads the book to the children in English and repeats each sentence twice. The teacher points at each word as she/he reads the text. The students are encouraged to do echo reading. The teacher does not comment upon the text in Russian. 7 minutes.

After reading. The teacher asks the children in Russian to identify their favorite pet in the book and tell why. Based upon the children's responses the teacher chooses whether to introduce colors words or pet words first. If colors are addressed first,
the teacher introduces the color-cards by showing them to the children, pronouncing each card’s name, and encouraging the children to repeat the names of the colors. The teacher refers to the colors of the pets in the book. The teacher shows the pink card, pronounces it and encourages the children to pronounce this word too. Then the teacher asks the children: “Do you remember who was pink in our book?” Whether the children remember correctly or not the teacher repeats the correct answer “A cat” and then opens the book and reads the page with a pink cat again. When all of the colors have been introduced, the teacher shows the pet cards and introduces them in the same way that the color words were introduced. The teacher asks the children to draw a real or imaginary pet they would like to have at home using their colored pencils. The teacher assists the children in writing their names and the names of the colors of their animals. 10 minutes.

Wrap-Up

The teacher has the children describe their drawings and assists them in naming the pets and the colors. The children are encouraged to name colors in English. The teacher and the children say good bye to each other. The teacher hangs the children’s drawings on the wall. 5 minutes.

Extension activities to do if the lesson is divided:

1. The teacher makes the pet chart.
The children can mark on the chart what pets they have at home. Each child can put a cross mark or the first letter of the pet’s name for (e.g. dog-d) or copy the whole word. The teacher counts how many pets the children have.

2. Traffic Lights Game

This is a very popular game in Russia, so most children will be familiar with it. This is a variation of American game Tag. The person who leads (the first person is the teacher to model) closes his/her eyes and names a color (e.g. purple). The children who have purple on their clothes can pass near teacher and get to the safe space. Those who do not have purple on them will have to run to get to the safe space and the teacher will try to catch them. The last person the teacher catches will lead the game.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of the children</th>
<th>dog</th>
<th>cat</th>
<th>parrot</th>
<th>parakeet</th>
<th>rabbit</th>
<th>fish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pasha</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sereza</td>
<td>dog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masha</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katia</td>
<td>dg</td>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Oral cloze

The teacher reads the book *I Have* to the children, pointing at each word and pauses before a pet or color word to let the children say it. E.g. I have a parakeet. It's ________. I have a ________. It's purple.

2.2 Lesson

Objectives

1. To practice pet words and the expression *I have* from the previous lesson.

2. To practice greeting clichés.

3. To introduce letter *Pp*.

4. To introduce the alphabetical principle and sound/letter relationships (letters stand for sounds, words starting with the same sound usually start with the same letter).

Teacher's materials

Big book *I Have*, the English alphabet on the wall, pet cards, big white piece of paper, a marker, a poster with greeting clichés on it, a tape recorder with a tape in it, and a magnetic chart with two sentences to be completed with the right word (e.g. I have a ________. It is green. The words to choose from: cat dog parakeet).

Children's materials

Little books *I Have*, pencils, workbooks.

Comments and notes

Have the English alphabet on the wall. Have handouts for the parents ready to take home. The pictures that the children drew
during the previous lesson should be on the wall. Introducing letters directly as it is shown in this lesson should occur if the students are 6-7 years old or have had EFL experience. For the students younger than 6, only practicing the sounds should occur.

Take home assignment
The children will be given identical sentences from the book to be completed. E.g. Choose the right word to fill the blank. I have a cat. It is _____. Pink blue red. The children are supposed to complete the task by the next class. The parents will receive the text of the new song with the translation to practice with the children at home. The texts of the new song should be stapled in the children's workbooks.

Time limit
30 minutes.

Lesson Plan

Warm-Up
Greet each other, and sing the song Hello, standing in the circle without a tape recorder. 3 minutes.

"Hello, hello, hello to you.
Hello, hello, I am glad to see you.
Hello, hello, how are you?
Hello, hello, I am fine, thanks, and you?"

Shared Reading of big book I Have
Before reading. The teacher points at the wall where the children’s drawings are and encourages the children to name the colors represented on the drawings. Then the teacher reviews the names of the pets with the children using pet-cards. 3.5 minutes.

During reading. The teacher opens the big book *I Have* and rereads it to the children pointing at each word and pauses before a pet or color word to let the children say it. E.g. I have a ____. It’s green. The teacher rereads the book again and circles the pet words with children’s help. The children are encouraged to circle the pet-names in their little books with a pencil. The teacher rereads the book again and emphasizes the beginning sound /p/ in the words *pets, parrot, parakeet,* and *purple.* After rereading the book the teacher asks the children about the first sound of the word *pets.* The teacher and the students practice this sound together. The teacher shows the letter *p* on the poster of the English alphabet: “Children, look, when I was reading the book, I noticed that there were many letters like this. Did you notice it too?” The teacher attracts children’s attention to the words beginning with *p* and to the first letter in these words. The teacher tells the students that this letter represents the sound we were practicing. Let’s try to read this word again. “P-A-R-R-O-T” The teacher reads the book with the students again pausing before the words starting with *p* and emphasizing them each time. 10 minutes.
After reading. The teacher writes the letter Pp on the big white piece of paper. The children open their workbooks and practice writing letter Pp in them. The little books I Have are available for the children to look at. The teacher encourages the children to write more than one letter, and possibly copy the word from the book. The teacher assists the children in their writing. When the children are done, the teacher gives pet cards to the children (one card per child) and asks them to tell what pets they have. The children are expected to say the sentence in English e.g. "I have a dog". The teacher shows the chart with the sentences to be completed. The teacher has the book opened at the page identical to the sentence. The teacher asks the children about the missing word and asks one child to try all the words and see which one fits. E.g. I have a ______. It's pink and purple. Answers from which to pick: dog, cat, and parrot. 10 min

Wrap-Up

The children and the teacher form a circle and the teacher introduces the new song. The teacher reviews the meanings of what I love and I have mean. The teacher holds little stuffed pets (a dog, a cat, and a parrot). The teacher takes the pet mentioned in the song, shows it to the children and by gestures helps the children understand the content of the song. (e.g. Hugging the pet)

My Pets

"I have a dog. I love my dog."
I have a cat. I love my cat.
I have a parrot. I love my parrot.
I love my pets."
The teacher and the children say good bye to each other and then
the children leave. 3.5 minutes.

2.3 Lesson

Objectives
1. To review the letter Pp.
2. To continue modeling the alphabetical principle.
3. To introduce letter the Ss.
4. To introduce the descriptional expression It's.
5. To review the expression I see.
6. To review the wild-animal words (zebra, elephant, snake, tigem, crocodile, bear, monkey, giraffe, wolf, and lion).

Teacher's materials
Big book I Have, big book At the Zoo, the poster with greeting
clichés on the wall, stuffed animals in a box (a tiger, a zebra, a
crocodile, an elephant, a cat, a dog, a snake, a bear, a
parrot, a fish, and a rabbit), pet cards, wild animal cards,
color cards, the tape recorder with a tape, big white poster with
different markers.

Children's materials
Little books I Have, workbooks, and pencils.

Comments and notes
The teacher should collect workbooks with the completed task from the previous lesson. The teacher looks through the homework before the class. The teacher should make notes about the children's success. The mistakes, if any, should be discussed before reading. The tape recorder should be ready to go. Introducing letters directly as it is shown in this lesson should occur if the students are 6-7 years old or have had EFL experience. For the students earlier than 6, practicing the sounds only should occur.

Take home assignment
To complete the sentences, identical to the sentences in the book At the Zoo (e.g. choose the right answer. I ___ a tiger.
Answers: love see have). Review the words from the previous lessons.

Time limit
30 minutes.

Lesson Plan

Warm-Up

Greet each other, and sing the Hello song without a tape. 2 minutes.

"Hello, hello, hello to you
Hello, hello, I am glad to see you
Hello, hello, how are you?
Hello, hello, I am fine, thanks and you?"

Shared Reading of big books At the Zoo and I Have
Before reading. The teacher returns the workbooks to the students and praises the children for the good job they have done. The teacher points at the English alphabet on the wall and asks the children if they remember which letter stands for the sound /p/. The children practice the sound /p/. The teacher asks, "Do you remember in the book we read, I have a cat. It's pink." The teacher asks the children if they know what "It's" means. The teacher opens to that page and points at the expression it's. Probably some children who have practiced reading with their parents will remember this expression and will be able to tell its meaning. If nobody knows, the teacher should translate this expression. The teacher provides some examples using the animal cards (It's a tiger. It's a cat). The teacher uses animal and color cards to review vocabulary and practice the new expression It's. 6 minutes.

During reading. The teacher reads the book At the Zoo together with the children. The teacher tells the children. "I have noticed a very interesting thing. Look!" The teacher opens the book on the page about a snake. "Let's read it together again. I see a SSSnake. What sound do we hear at the beginning of snake?" The children will probably say that it starts with the sound /s/. The teacher asks the children if they remember any other English words that start with the same sound. If there are children whose names start with s the teacher can talk about the sound at the beginning of their names and write their names on the board. The
teacher opens the book *At the Zoo* and reads it with the children again, asking the children to listen and look for words that begin with /s/. The children are encouraged to read along with the teacher. 10 minutes.

**After reading.** The teacher points at the English alphabet on the wall and introduces the letter “Ss”. The children are encouraged to practice writing the letter “Ss” in their workbooks. The teacher writes the children’s names in English on a piece of a poster board. The teacher introduces the poster as “Letters We Know Chart” Each child will practice writing letters. When the chart is done the teacher will hang it on the wall and use it for other letters as well.

**Figure 2. Letters We Know Chart.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Pp</th>
<th>Ss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katia</td>
<td>Pp</td>
<td>Ss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sereza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher gets the box with stuffed animals and asks the children to play the guessing game. The teacher closes her/his eyes and takes a stuffed animal from the box. The children are supposed to say, “I see a tiger. I see a zebra.” Each time the teacher opens his/her eyes and says “Yes” if the stuffed animal and the word match and “No” if they do not. The teacher models the first turn in this game. 10 minutes.
Wrap-Up

The teacher and the children gather in the circle to sing *My Pets* song. Before singing with the tape recorder, the teacher goes over the song with the children.

"I have a dog. I love my dog.
I have a cat. I love my cat.
I have a parrot. I love my parrot.
I love my pets."

The teacher and the children say good bye to each other and then the children leave. 2 min

2.4. Lesson

Objectives

1. To review the material from the previous lessons.

Teacher's materials

Big book *I Have*, paper A4, stickers with pets or cut-outs from the magazines, glue, pet cards, color-cards, the English alphabet on the wall.

Children's materials

Little books *I Have*.

Comments and notes

Put the stickers, glue, and paper away before the activity begins. The teacher collects the workbooks and looks through the homework before the class. The teacher makes notes about the children's work. The mistakes, if any, should be discussed before reading.
Take home assignment
None.

Time limit
30 minutes.

Lesson Plan

Warm-Up

The teacher and the children greet each other. The teacher and the children form a circle and sing *My Pets* song 3 minutes.

"I have a dog. I love my dog.
I have a cat. I love my cat.
I have a parrot. I love my parrot.
I love my pets."

Shared reading of big book *I Have*

*Before reading.* The teacher reviews the vocabulary by using pet and color cards. 5 minutes.

*During reading.* The teacher and the students read the big book *I Have* together. The teacher pairs up the students for reading little books *I Have*. Each pair reads their little book. Then the children take turns reading the big book to their friends. While one child reads, the other children join in. If some children do not want to read (they do not feel comfortable or feel shy), the teacher might find some other time to read with them (perhaps after class). 10 minutes.

*After reading.* The students are asked to glue or stick stickers and cut-outs with animals on a paper and then write the
names of the animals or stories about the animals. Animal cards, color cards, and little books are available for the children to use. The teacher asks each child to read what she/he has written. 11 minutes.

Wrap-Up

The children and the teacher say good bye to each other. The children leave. 1 minute.

The teacher takes the children’s works from the wall and makes a Pet Book with their drawings for the children to use in their classroom.

Shared Reading Extension

Shared Reading provides a wide spectrum of activities to do during lessons. The sample units I enclosed in my project were introductory units to Shared Reading. However, the major benefit of Shared Reading is that the materials for the units can be used again and again and the tasks accompanying them can become more complex. Here are some examples of additional tasks that can be used with the books from Unit I and II. In Unit II I started to model written and oral cloze sentences.

At the Zoo

1. Oral cloze. The teacher pauses as he/she reads the book, pointing at the words before the animal word. I see a z_____. The children complete the sentence.

2. Written cloze. The teacher asks the students to solve a puzzle. To help the children solve the puzzle the teacher opens
the book to the picture of the tiger. On a sentence strip the teacher writes, *I see a t____*. The teacher asks the children to complete the word. The teacher continues to use the written cloze procedure having the children supply the appropriate animal name.

3. The teacher asks the children to find a specific animal name in their little books and circle it. Some children may need to see the word in print. For those, write the word on a card and place it by the child.

*I Have*

4. The teacher asks the children to fill in blanks in the story about the animals they have at home using animal cards. The cards with animal names and pictures will be available.

*My name is ________.*

*I have a ________. I love my ________.*

*I have no ________.*

*I have a ________. It’s white.*

*I want to have a ________. But my Mum will never let me.*

5. The teacher asks the students to write the correct name of the animal in the blank. The cards with animal names and pictures are available.
Who is it?

- a zebra
- a parrot

6. The teacher can make charts of the words which start with the same letter. The teacher can ask the children to raise their hands as they see a word which start with letter/sound p, as he/she reads *I Have* and *At the Zoo*. The teacher writes this word in the chart. The teacher can also draw children's attention to the different posters, children's name tags, and previous charts (e.g. greeting clichés poster).

7. Children can write or tell their own animal stories. The children can speak or write about their pets.

8. The children can underline the color words in the book *I Have* with the color these words represent.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Shared Reading is a broadly used approach in teaching early literacy in the United States. It is very effective in facilitating language learning and children's early literacy development. Shared Reading provides the opportunity to learn and develop vocabulary, reading writing, and listening skills within authentic language contexts. Shared Reading is a developmentally appropriate activity for young children in terms of age, gender, and comprehension. In addition Shared Reading is interesting and enjoyable and can help to increase learners' motivation to study the foreign language. However, Shared Reading as a method is completely new for Russia.

The goal of my project was to explore the possibilities of using Shared Reading with young EFL learners in Russia and to bring new methodology and research into the Russian EFL curriculum. The project reviewed EFL/ESL research in Russia and the United States, as well as research on Shared Reading and its effectiveness. I also conducted a small Shared Reading pilot study in Russia with EFL kindergarten children. The study was a success. Based upon my review of research, coursework, and pilot study, I developed a series of units and Shared Reading extension activities to be implemented in EFL programs with young learners in Russia.
This project is only a short overview with a few examples of how Shared Reading can be used in the classrooms. However, the development of the project will not stop at this point. The next goal in developing my project is fully implementing it in Russia. My implementation will occur in School 597, Saint Petersburg, Russia with six groups of children six to seven years old. Each group will be no more than seven children. I will be teaching English as a foreign language for four months twice a week to the children in both groups. Three groups will be introduced to Shared Reading (SR groups) and three will receive traditional EFL curriculum (control groups). The EFL material in terms of vocabulary and grammar will be the same in both groups. At the end of the term children’s language of the both groups will be compared in terms of (a) vocabulary of the units, (b) usage of expressions in the speech and its accuracy, (c) recognition of the concept of print, (d) recognition of the alphabetical principle, (e) knowledge of how to read and write English letters and words, and production of the sounds in English, (f) ability to hold a dialogue and monologue in English, (g) initiative and interest in foreign language learning.

If Shared Reading proves to be an effective method for young EFL learners in Russia, my next goal will be to develop supporting units to implement Shared Reading into the EFL curriculum. I will hold different presentations for my colleagues and teachers to introduce Shared Reading as a successful tool for
TESOL. I will translate a part of my project and have handouts in Russian for the specialists to use. I will bring media (video and photos) and show how Shared Reading is introduced in the USA in regular classrooms. I will share a sample unit with specialists and discuss their questions and comments at the round table. When Dr. Edmiaston and Dr. Beed from the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, USA, come to Saint Petersburg in March, 2005 we will present together at the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia. We will share my project and collaborative cross cultural research on phonemic awareness with faculty of the Russian University.

I will make mini presentations about the usage of Shared Reading for young EFL learners in schools in Saint Petersburg. I hope to work with the teachers on implementing this method into the EFL curriculum. I will mentor and provide the necessary assistance and guidance for the teachers.

At the same time I will present information about Shared Reading to the regular pre-school and kindergarten teachers and encourage them to use this method in regular classrooms with Russian books. I will provide the necessary guidance and assistance to implement the new method into the curriculum.

My plans will continue to develop as I carry out the steps described above. I anticipate that Shared Reading will make a significant contribution to EFL programs for young children in Russia.
References


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Vygotsky, L. (1930). Развитие ребенка [Child’s development].
Psychology, 23, 456-471.


Appendices

Appendix A

(Includes a terminology glossary)
Terminology

**Communicative Competence**

Functional competence refers to the ability to accomplish communication purposes in a language. There are a number of different kinds of purposes for which people commonly use language.

**Cross Cultural Awareness**

Ability to understand behavior from the standpoint of the members of a culture and to behave in a way that would be understood by the members of the culture in the intended way.

**EFL**

English as a foreign language

**ESL**

English as a second language

**Emergent Literacy**

A developmental stage of literacy referring to the understanding and the behaviors that children acquire as a result of encounters with print. Usually it occurs from birth to age 5-6 years. The focus during this time is to provide activities which are informal, holistic, constructive and developmental.

**Emergent Reading**

(e.g., pretend reading, re-enactment) Students exhibit attitudes, skills, and behaviors that model reading (Holdaway, 1979). They turn pages, look at illustrations and print and recreate the story through pictures or memory (Elster, 1994).
Graphophonic Information
Refers to the relationship between oral language and its graphic symbols.

Integrated Skills Approach
In terms of ESL/ EFL research in English-speaking countries since the 1980s, there has been a gradual movement away from rather narrow language teaching methods toward broader integrated approaches in language teaching, approaches that encourage the teaching of all four skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) within the general framework of using language for learning as well as for communication (Celce-Murcia, 2000).

Listening
The act of hearing attentively.

Literacy Development
A formation of attitudes, skills, and behaviors relating to the functioning of reading and writing. It includes creative and thinking processes that help in the understanding of triggering of knowledge and skill in other subject specific domains (e.g. math, science).

Personally Oriented Method
The method where the importance of the learning being active. The students have to be active to get the knowledge and use it; it should help them process and keep the knowledge better. The students should not be passive absorbers of the knowledge.

Phonological Information
Knowledge of the sounds, Includes phonemic awareness.
Phonemic Awareness.

Ability to hear sounds in words and to identify particular sounds.

Predictable Books

Books in which repeated patterns, refrains, pictures, and rhyme allow children to pretend-read a book that has been read to them several times.

Pretend Reading

Is a stage most children go through with a favorite book that some patient adult has read and reread to them.

Predictable Book

A story formatted with features that are likely to reoccur. These features include repetition of the words, phrases, sentences, rhyming, or story lines (Rasinski & Padak, 2000).

Speaking

The utterance of intelligible speech

Syntactic or Structural Information

comes from knowing the grammar or the ongoing flow of the language.

Storybook Reading Event

A storybook reading event is a social, collaborative process in which interactions between teachers and students tend to be dialogic and include scaffolding by the teacher. The group reading is followed by some extended authentic experience.

Writing
Is the process of recording characters on a medium, with the intention of forming words and other larger language constructs.

**Zone of Proximal Development**

A Vygotskian term that denotes the range where, at one end are learning tasks that a learner can complete independently, and at the other end are those tasks that cannot be completed unless assisted (Graves & Graves, 1994).
Appendix B

(includes a sample page from the book At the Zoo and a sample of an animal card)
I see a giraffe.
An Animal Card Sample
Appendix C

Includes handouts for the parents (vocabulary and texts of the songs with translation and pronunciation)
Handout for the Parents
Unit I

Vocabulary - Словарь
Zebra (эбера) зебра
Elephant (элфант) слон
Snake (эййк) змея
Tiger (тайгер) тигр
Crocodile (крокодайл) крокодил
Bear (бэ) медведь
Monkey (манки) обезьяна
Wolf (вулф) волк
Giraffe (джираф) жираф
Lion (лайн) лев
Clap (клап) хлопайте
Book (бук) книга
Good (гуд) хорошо

Expression - Выражения
I see (ай си) я вижу

Greeting clichés - Приветствия и прощания
Hello (хэллоу) привет
Hi (хай) привет
Good Bye (гуд бай) до свидания
How are you? (ну а ю?) как дела?
I am fine, thanks. (айм файн, данкс) Хорошо, спасибо
I am glad to see you. (айм глэд ту си ю) Я рад(а) вас видеть
What's your name? (вотс эй нейм?) Как тебя зовут?
My name is... (Май нейм iz...) Меня зовут...

Звук (c) произносить таким образом
1. язык между зубов, звук (c)
1. Hello, hello, hello to you
Хээоу, хээоу, хээоу тагь тёу
Привет, привет, привет тебе
2. Hello, hello, I am glad to see you!
Хээоу, хээоу, айм клэд тагь си тёу!
Привет, привет, я рад(а) тебя (вас) видеть!
3. Hello, Hello, how are you?
Хээоу, Хээоу, хая а тёу?
Привет, привет, как дела?
4. Hello, hello, I am fine, thanks and you?
Хээоу, хээоу, айм файн, энке энд тёу?
Привет, привет, у меня всё хорошо, а у тебя?
What is your name? Как тебя зовут?

1. What is your name? What is your name?
 Вот из ё нэйм? Вот из ё нэйм?
 Как тебя зовут? Как тебя зовут?

2. My name is Tom. My name is Tom.
 Май нэйм из Том. Май нэйм из Том.
 Меня зовут Том. Меня зовут Том

 Хэлоу, Том. Хэлоу, Том.
 Привет, Том. Привет, Том.
Handout for the Parents

Unit II

Vocabulary - Слова
1. Animals: (животные) животные
   Dog (дог) собака
   Cat (кэт) кошка
   Parrot (попугай) попугай
   Fish (рыба) рыба
   Rabbit (кролик) кролик
   Parakeet (канарейка) канарейка

2. Colors: (цвета) цвета
   Blue (голубой, синий) голубой
   Green (зелёный) зелёный
   Black (черный) черный
   Purple (сиреневый) сиреневый
   Pink (розовый) розовый
   Red (красный) красный

3. Random: (разное) разное
   House (дом) дом
   Big (большой) большой
   Pets (домашние животные) домашние животные

Expressions - выражаения
I have (у меня есть) я имею
It's (это) это
I love (я люблю) я люблю
My Pets - Мои домашние животные

1. I have a dog. I love my dog.
Ай хэв э дог. Ай лав май дог.
У меня есть собака. Я люблю мою собаку.

2. I have a cat. I love my cat.
Ай хэв э кэт. Ай лав май кэт.
У меня есть кошка. Я люблю мою кошку.

3. I have a parrot. I love my parrot.
Ай хэв э парот. Ай лав май парот.
У меня есть попугай. Я люблю моего попугая.

4. I love my pets. I love my pets.
Ай лав май пэзс. Ай лав май пэзс.
Я люблю моих животных. Я люблю моих животных.