Oral Communication Skills for Young Beginners: the Grammar of Speech in *Yippee! 3*

Anne Salmela
University of Tampere
School of Language, Translation
and Literary Studies
English Philology
Pro Gradu Thesis
December 2013

Tampereen yliopisto
Englantilainen filologia
Kieli-, käännös- ja kirjallisuustieteiden yksikkö

SALMELA, ANNE: Oral Communication Skills for Young Beginners: the Grammar of Speech in *Yippee! 3*

Pro gradu -tutkielma, 101 sivua
Joulukuu 2013

Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma käsittelee suullisten kommunikaatiotaitojen oppimista ja opettamista suomalaisen alakoulun englanninopetuksessa. Luonnollisen ja sujuvan puheen tuottaminen vieraalla kielellä edellyttää kieliopin ja sanaston hallinnan lisäksi kohdekielen kulttuurin ja puhekielen piirteiden tuntemusta. Puhekielen ja kirjoitetun kielen eroavaisuuksia tulisi huomioida kieltenopetuksessa jo aloittelijatasolla, jotta puhekielen piirteet tulisivat oppijoille tutuiksi ja luonnollisen puheen tuottaminen ja ymmärtäminen jatkossa helpottuisivat. Tutkielman tarkoitus on selvittää, miten puhutun ja kirjoitetun englannin kielen eroavaisuudet ilmenevät kolmasluokkalaisille suunnatuissa teksti- ja harjoituskirjassa, ja miten puhutun kielen ominaisuuksien huomioiminen oppimateriaaleissa edistää suullisten kommunikaatiotaitojen omaksumista aloittelijatasolla.

Tutkimuksen teoriaosuudessa kartoitetaan oppimista ohjaavien dokumenttien (Eurooppalainen viitekehys ja Perusopetuksen Opetussuunnitelman Perusteet 2004) asettamia ohjeistuksia kielenopetukseen kommunikatiivisen kompetenssin saavuttamiseen suullisen viestinnän osalta sekä tarkastellaan oppikirjojen roolia kielenopetuksessa. Lisäksi käsitellään puhutun ja kirjoitetun englannin kielen eroavaisuuksia ja keskustelun sekä puhutun kielen yleisimpiä ominaisuuksia. Kielenopetusta tarkastellaan myös nuorten oppijoiden näkökulmasta: millaisia vaatimuksia oppilaiden nuori ikä ja aiemman kieltenopiskelukokemuksen puute asettavat opetukselle?

Tutkimuskysymykseen ”Kuinka teksti- ja harjoituskirja *Yippee! 3* tukevat nuorten aloittelijoiden suullisten kommunikaatiotaitojen oppimista?” pyritään vastaamaan oppikirja-analyysin metodein. Teksti- ja harjoituskirjojen sisältämät dialogit on analysoitu puhutun kielen kieliopin näkökulmasta, jonka jälkeen löydetyt puhekielen piirteet on luokiteltu edustamaan joko lingvististä tai pragmaattista kompetenssia, Eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen määritelmiin perustuen.

Tutkimustuloksista käy ilmi, että *Yippee! 3*:n dialogeista löytyy runsaasti puhekielen piirteitä. Nämä piirteet edustavat enimmäkseen lingvististä kompetenssia, mistä voidaan päätellä opetuksen tavoitteena olevan sanaston kartuttaminen ja peruskielioppiin tutustuminen. Puhekielen piirteiden runsas esiintyminen teksteissä tekee niistä luonnollisen ja autenttisen oloisia, vaikka oppikirjateksteille tyypillisesti ne ovat lyhyitä ja selkeitä, jolloin luonnollisen keskustelun sekavuus ja rönsyilevyys jäävät puuttumaan. Kirjan dialogit muistuttavat silti selvästi enemmän puhuttua kieltä kuin kirjakieltä, mistä voidaan päätellä, että kirjan tekijöiden tavoitteena on ollut muodostaa oppijoille orastava käsitys luonnollisesta kommunikaatiosta kohdekielellä. Myös muutamia kulttuurisidonnaisia kommunikointitilaisuuksiin liittyviä tietoiskuja on sisällytetty harjoituskirjan sivuille, mikä entisestään vahvistaa ajatusta siitä, että kirjassa pyritään tarjoamaan autenttisesta kieliainesta kirjakielen käyttämisen sijaan. Vaikka suurinta osaa puhutun kielen piirteistä ei varsinaisesti opeteta tai harjoitella, luo niiden esiintyminen teksteissä hyvän pohjan puhutun ja kirjoitetun kielen erojen tunnistamiselle ja ymmärtämiselle tulevia kieliopintoja ajatellen.

Table of contents

1. Introduction ... 1

2. Guidelines for language teaching: the CEFR and the Finnish National Curriculum ... 5

2.1 CEFR ... 5

2.2 The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education ... 7

2.2.1 POPS 2004 ... 7

2.2.2 The 2016 National Core Curriculum for Basic Education ... 10

2.3 Communicative competence ... 11

2.3.1 Linguistic competence ... 13

2.3.2 Pragmatic competence ... 14

2.3.3 Sociolinguistic competence ... 15

2.4 Textbooks in language teaching ... 16

2.5 Young learners ... 19

3. Spoken vs. written English ... 24

3.1 Features of English conversation ... 25

3.1.1 The ‘online’ quality of conversation ... 26

3.1.2 Performance errors ... 28

3.1.3 Phatic talk and the notion of the ‘exchange’ ... 29

3.2 Grammar of conversation ... 31

3.2.1 The structure of an utterance ... 32

3.2.2 Non-clausal units ... 35

3.3 Reasons for teaching spoken English ... 37

4. Material and methods ... 41

4.1 Material ... 41

4.2 Methods ... 42

5. Representations of spoken English in *Yippee! 3: Reader* and *Yippee! 3: Writer* 44

5.1 General notions 46

5.2 Linguistic competence 49

5.2.1 Ellipsis... 51

5.2.2 Syntactic non-clausal units... 53

5.2.3 Repetition 58

5.2.4 Interjections... 60

5.2.5 Vocatives 65

5.2.6 Response elicitors and response forms 69

5.2.7 Discourse markers... 72

5.2.8 Tags 76

5.3 Pragmatic competence 77

5.3.1 Greetings and introductions 79

5.3.2 *Please* and other polite speech acts... 83

5.3.3 Imperative clauses and *let's*... 86

5.3.4 Questions, offers and requests 90

5.4 Discussion on the findings 91

6. Conclusion... 95

Works Cited 98

1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how the learning of oral communication skills, as a part of communicative competence, is incorporated into teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Finnish comprehensive school by analysing a textbook and an exercise book designed for young beginners. The textbook and exercise book used as the material for this study belong to a relatively new EFL textbook series *Yippee!*, which is designed to be used in the EFL lessons in grades 3 to 6 of Finnish comprehensive school, which covers the age group of 9 – 12 years. The research question this study attempts to answer is as follows:

> How do the *Yippee! 3: Reader* and *Yippee! 3: Writer* contribute to the young beginners' learning of speaking English naturally in real-life communication situations?

In particular, the thesis aims to find out the extent to which the chosen teaching material offers natural-sounding spoken English input, and how the learners can benefit from the material in their learning of oral communication skills, more specifically speaking and understanding 'real' spoken English, as opposed to formal written English. The research question can be broken down into the following sub-questions:

> How are the features of spoken English taken into account in the material?
>
> Which aspects of communicative competence do the spoken English features found in the material mainly represent?
>
> What kind of basis does the spoken English input offered in the material create for the development of the young beginners' speaking skills?

The analysis is carried out by a close reading of the dialogues found in the *Yippee! 3: Reader* (a textbook) and *Yippee! 3: Writer* (an exercise book) in order to see whether they include any features of spoken English. The amount and quality of the spoken English features found in the material, along with how they are dealt with in the classroom, can give an idea of how much spoken English

input the learners will receive when using the material. The findings will be discussed in an attempt to form a tentative conclusion as to how much the material assists the learners in forming a basis for both their immediate and future learning of oral communication skills.

In Finnish comprehensive school, it is possible for the pupils to begin learning their first foreign language, or the *A1*-language, already on the first grade at the age of 7, but the majority of children begin their A1 studies on the third grade at the age of 9 (Kumpulainen 2012, 48). English is clearly the most popular choice as A1 among Finnish pupils: for example, in 2010, over 90 per cent of the third graders chose English as their A1 (Kumpulainen 2012, 49). As the focus of the present study is on children beginning learning their first foreign language, only the third grade books of the *Yippee!* series will be used as the material for the study.

According to Ringbom (1998, 194), the grammatical aspects of language teaching have traditionally been emphasised in Finnish schools, as the Finnish language differs structurally from English to the extent that Finns need to devote time to understand and learn the grammatical structures of English. Tomlinson (1998, 88) states that beginners, in general, do need simplicity and rules in order to know what is correct and what is not, but that they also need to be prepared for communicating in real, natural interaction situations outside the classroom. He (ibid.) notes that beginners must not be taught to see language as strictly following the same rules in every situation, but instead they need to understand that languages develop patterns and follow different principles. Carter (1997, 59) emphasises the importance of teaching spoken English by noting that if spoken English is judged by the same standards as written English, and if the EFL learners are taught to speak in this formal written style, it can result in them producing unnatural and artificial sounding spoken English, which he considers to be as damaging to their language use as being unable to write literate English. Carter (1999, 158) notes that teachers should be aware of the other components of "standardness" in addition to grammatical rules, including vocabulary, punctuation and articulation, as they can then help the learners understand the differences between the spoken and the written forms of language.

Textbook analyses often concentrate on materials for higher proficiency levels. It is, however, also important to acknowledge the importance of the first encounters with the foreign language, as they will form the basis for future language studies, which is why the present thesis will concentrate on teaching material designed for young beginners. According to Luukka et al. (2008, 90), the influence of textbooks on teaching in Finnish comprehensive school has been considered to be so strong that they have been seen to function as what may be referred to as a "hidden curricula". Luukka et al. (ibid.) state that as textbooks create a certain frame for the teaching, they affect strongly on the teachers' conception of what is central in language teaching. They (ibid.) explain that the power of textbooks is based on the structure they give to teaching and the emphasis they put on some topics, while leaving others in the background. As the textbooks clearly have an influential role in Finnish EFL teaching, and as the contents of the textbooks largely affect the contents of teaching, they are a justifiable subject of study. Lähdesmäki (2004, 284) states that textbook analyses can be seen as useful to either the users or the writers and publishers of the textbooks, depending on the nature of the analysis. She (ibid.) explains that studies clearly focusing on the deficiencies in the textbooks and offering correction suggestions are useful to the creators of the textbooks, whereas studies describing or explaining the substance of the textbooks can find their audience among teachers and other users of the teaching materials. The present study falls to the latter category, and can be useful for comprehensive school teachers in increasing the knowledge of and interest in the differences between spoken and written English, as well as giving cause for reflection on how they could incorporate oral communication skills in their teaching.

The following two chapters of the thesis will concentrate on establishing the theoretical framework, beginning with the language teaching guidelines for Finnish comprehensive school, introduced in chapter 2, followed by an overview of the features of spoken English as opposed to written English in chapter 3. In chapter 2, the document *Common European Frame of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (hereafter abbreviated as CEFR), published in 2001 by the Council of Europe, will be consulted concerning the teaching of oral communication skills and

the notion of ‘communicative competence’. The guidelines for EFL teaching in Finnish comprehensive school found in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (hereafter abbreviated as POPS 2004), formulated by the Finnish National Board of Education in 2004, will also be discussed. In addition, the chapter will include a brief overview of the use of textbooks in teaching and of what needs to be taken into consideration when teaching languages for young learners. In chapter 3, the features of spoken English will be discussed, along with the differences between the grammar of written English and the grammar of conversation. In chapter 4, the material used for the study will be described more closely, followed by a discussion on the methods used for the analysis, which will be featured in chapter 5. In chapter 5, the texts in the material will first be searched for the features of spoken English, which will be examined from the viewpoint of the grammar of spoken English and classified as representing either the linguistic or the pragmatic aspect of communicative competence (discussed in section 2.3), depending on which aspect they are seen to represent. The findings will also be discussed from the viewpoint of oral communication skills and compared to the requirements for these skills defined in POPS 2004 for this level of proficiency. The findings of the analysis will be used to determine the aspect of communicative competence (linguistic or pragmatic) emphasised in the material, as well as the level on which oral communication skills are taken into consideration. Finally, in chapter 6, some tentative conclusions about the current state of affairs concerning the role of communicative competence in Finnish EFL teaching for beginners will be made, followed by a discussion of the avenues for further research.

2. Guidelines for language teaching: the CEFR and the Finnish National Curriculum

In this chapter, I will discuss the communicative aspects of EFL teaching from the viewpoints of the CEFR and POPS 2004, concentrating especially on young learners and beginners. The notion of 'communicative competence' will also be explored in the present chapter.

2.1 CEFR

The CEFR, officially published by the Council of Europe in 2001, was designed to be used across Europe as a basis for the planning of, for example, language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, teaching materials and assessment of language skills (Council of Europe 2001, 1). The CEFR adopts an action-oriented approach towards language; language users and learners are considered as "social agents", who use different competences to manage different tasks in various circumstances when functioning as members of society. According to the CEFR (ibid.), language users have both general competences and communicative language competences, which they can use to accomplish these tasks.

The CEFR is mainly comprised of two parts: the Descriptive Scheme, which contemplates language use and language teaching and learning, defining the notions of, for example, skills, competences, strategies and activities; and the Common Reference Levels, which include elaborate descriptions for different aspects of language proficiency, specifying the requirements for each proficiency level based on the standards given in the Descriptive Scheme. The language proficiency scales in the CEFR distinguish six different levels of proficiency as follows: A1 (Breakthrough)[1]; A2 (Waystage); B1 (Threshold); B2 (Vantage); C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency); and C2 (Mastery) (Council of Europe 2001, 23). These six levels can be divided into three broader levels: basic user, independent user and proficient user, each consisting of two of the original six levels, in the order as they are listed above. This, according to the CEFR (ibid.), reflects the classic division into basic, intermediate and advanced language skills. The Common Reference Levels include "can-

[1] Not to be confused with the term 'A1 language', referring to the first foreign language as a subject in Finnish comprehensive school (discussed in chapter 1).

do-descriptors" (ibid.) for communicative activities according to which the proficiency of the language user can be evaluated: understanding (listening and reading), speaking (spoken interaction and spoken production), and writing.

Concerning oral communication skills, the CEFR has a reference table of qualitative aspects of spoken language use, consisting of descriptors for 'range' (the size of vocabulary, the ability to talk about different topics etc.), 'accuracy' (knowledge of the structural aspects of language), 'fluency', 'interaction' and 'coherence'. (Council of Europe 2001, 28 – 29). On the beginner, or 'breakthrough', level (A1), the spoken language range consists of "a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations", and the level of accuracy requires "limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire" (Council of Europe 2001, 29). Concerning fluency, the speakers on level A1 are able to use short, isolated utterances, with frequent pauses for searching for expressions; to "articulate less familiar words"; and to "repair communication" (ibid.). In social interaction, the speakers on this level are capable of giving and asking for information on personal details, and of engaging in simple interactions, although much repetition and rephrasing is needed; and regarding coherence, the speakers can use some basic connectors, such as 'and' or 'then' to link groups of words together (ibid.).

As the CEFR depicts language users as social agents, active members of the society, who use language to interact with each other and accomplish various tasks, oral communication can be said to form the basis of all human interaction. International interaction demands linguistic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic knowledge, which, in the CEFR, together form the notion of 'communicative competence'. Section 2.3 will concentrate on communicative competence, starting with a brief historical overview, followed by a more detailed description of the term in the CEFR.

2.2 The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education

In Finland, current National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (hereafter abbreviated as POPS 2004) has been in use since its confirmation by the Finnish National Board of Education in January 2004. It is largely based on the guidelines given by the CEFR. POPS 2004 is used as a framework for the local curricula for comprehensive school education (comprising grades 1 – 9) in Finland, which covers the teaching of pupils the age of 7 – 16. A new core curriculum for basic education is currently being developed; it should be completed by the end of the year 2014, and the new curricula based on the new guidelines should be in use in all Finnish schools by the autumn term 2016. The currently used core curriculum, POPS 2004, and the pending new curriculum will both be discussed in this section, concentrating on the communicative aspects of foreign language teaching for beginners.

2.2.1 POPS 2004

POPS 2004 defines language as a means of communication, and foreign languages as a cultural subject as well as a skill subject, which demands diverse and persevering practice (POPS 2004, 138). Dufva (2004, 14) elaborates this by stating that the curriculum concentrates on the learning of both communication and studying skills, as well as the understanding of different cultures. Oral communication is emphasised at the beginner level of language teaching (POPS 2004, 138), for both the pupils who begin their foreign language learning on the third grade, which is usually the case, and the pupils who begin their language studies before that. More specifically, for those who begin learning English before the third grade, the emphasis in teaching is recommended to be in oral communication and comprehension, along with a functional and playful "preliminary introduction to intercultural differences" (POPS 2004, 138). For those who begin their first foreign language lessons on the third grade, the aim of the teaching is to habituate the learners into using the foreign language for communicating in "very concrete, personally immediate situations", starting with spoken communication and adding written communication in a gradual manner (ibid.).

In addition to teaching the communication skills, it is noted in POPS 2004 (139) that as part of the first foreign language learning, the pupils are to be taught to develop their cultural skills by guiding them towards understanding and appreciating the ways of life in other cultures, while realising ways in which they differ from their own culture, and thus helping them develop their intercultural competence. The importance of developing language studying skills as part of foreign language learning is also noted in POPS 2004 (139): developing useful studying habits and skills while learning the A1-language will form a basis for the future language studies as well.

The communicative language competences described in the CEFR are not mentioned in the foreign languages section of POPS 2004, although it is clear that the communicative aspects of the CEFR have been adopted into the curriculum, as the notion of communication and communication skills are mentioned in several instances. In POPS 2004 (138), the main aims for learning communication are described as the development of the pupils' abilities to function in basic foreign language communication situations, and habituating the pupils to using their language skills. The more specific objectives for language skills include teaching the pupils to give basic information on themselves and their "immediate circles"; to communicate in simple everyday speaking situations in the target language, resorting to the support of the other speakers if necessary; and to be able to understand, with the help of the situational context, the basic content of speech or text concerning everyday life and routine events (POPS 2004, 139). The pupils' ability to apply the lexical elements and grammatical structures of the target language in their own output is noted as one of the objectives for learning strategies (ibid.), but it can also be seen as part of the communication skills. An objective relating to cultural skills emphasises the learning to use the target language in everyday communication situations, with people representing that culture, in a way that is natural for that culture (ibid.).

As the core contents for foreign language teaching, POPS 2004 (139) offers a list of situations and topics, from the viewpoints of both the pupils' own language area and the area of the target language. The topics encompass the immediate environment including the people and things

that belong to it, such as family members and home; the school environment, including teachers and other children; living in both rural and urban environments; leisure activities related to the age group; functioning in different situations, such as shopping; and the basic knowledge of both the pupils' own culture and that of the target language. Concerning the structural content of language teaching, the main grammatical principles of the target language essential for communication are expected to be included in teaching (ibid.). The third group of content requirements is concerned with communication strategies, and includes the following: the recognition of the basic ideas and finding specific information in spoken and written texts; planning of one's own messages; and utilising non-verbal communication and the aid of the other speakers in spoken interaction (ibid.).

For determining language proficiency levels, POPS 2004 uses a scale adapted from the Common Reference Levels given in the CEFR (see section 2.1). The scale features the same proficiency levels A1 – C2, but the levels are divided into two or three subcategories, such as A1.1 – A1.3, in order to be able to determine the pupils' slowly developing language skills more specifically (Finnish National Board of Education 2004). The foreign language proficiency levels required in POPS 2004 (140) for "good performance" by the end of the sixth grade are A1.3 (functional elementary language proficiency) for speaking skills and A2.1 (initial phase of basic language proficiency) for listening comprehension. Concerning speaking skills, reaching level A1.3 requires the ability to briefly talk about personal information and people and things in the immediate environment and to manage in the simplest conversation situations, sometimes needing to rely on the help of other speakers (Finnish National Board of Education 2004, 2). There can still be some issues with pronunciation which may cause problems with understanding, and various grammatical errors occur even in basic speech (ibid.). The speakers on this level are able to utter the most familiar speech sequences and remember a limited amount of fixed phrases, basic vocabulary and simple sentence structures, but otherwise speaking may still be fragmentary (ibid.). The descriptions for the skills on this level reflect the descriptions of level A1 proficiency in the CEFR (see section 2.1). The listening skills are expected to be slightly more advanced than speaking skills;

on level A2.1, the learners should be able to understand the main contents of simple speech concerning topics that are important or interesting to them, although the understanding still requires clearly spoken standard language in normal speed, which often also needs repetition (Finnish National Board of Education 2004, 3). By the end of the sixth grade, the pupils are also expected to have the ability to engage in simple communication situations with speakers of the target language and to understand the similarities and differences between the cultures of the target language and that of their own (POPS 2004, 140).

2.2.2 The 2016 National Core Curriculum for Basic Education

Although the new national core curriculum for basic education is still under development, the Finnish National Board of Education has prepared a preliminary draft of the curriculum, which gives an impression of its main contents and principles. In the draft for the new curriculum (Finnish National Board of Education 2012), the notions of interaction and participation seem to be among the main themes. The new core curriculum will emphasise the importance of respecting cultural diversity and the interest towards international cooperation (Finnish National Board of Education 2012, 12). The awareness of the role of language in growing, learning, collaboration, forming identities and being a part of the society, as well as the role of languages as both the target and the medium of learning, is portrayed as one of the goals in the new curriculum (Finnish National Board of Education 2012, 20). According to the new curriculum (ibid.), the pupils are to be encouraged to use the languages they are learning for interaction even with lesser proficiency, and to play with languages without the fear of failure, utilising also the language resources available outside the classroom. The notion of language users as ‘social agents’ portrayed in the CEFR (see section 2.1) seems to be reflected in the new curriculum, as it emphasises the realisation and appreciation of the interactive and communicative nature of all human encounters.

2.3 Communicative competence

Byram (1997, 3) defines the notion of communication as not only sending and receiving messages, but involving a more complex social context. He (ibid.) continues by stating that even the exchange of information in a foreign language requires understanding of how the utterances will be interpreted from the listener's perspective, which then calls for understanding of the cultural context in which the communication situation occurs. Byram (ibid.) also notes that the efficiency of the exchange of information is not the only factor in determining productive communication, but the focus is on forming and sustaining social relationships. In this section, the notion of 'communication' will mainly be used in reference to oral communication, which encompasses speaking and listening.

According to Byram and Méndez García (2009, 493), the North-American linguist Noam Chomsky created the linguistic term 'competence' (an individual language user's knowledge of a given language) distinguishing it from the term 'performance' (the actual use of that language in concrete situations). Byram and Méndez García (ibid.) also note that the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure made a similar distinction in 1916, although he claimed that the notion of 'langage' is a combination of a social dimension of language, namely 'langue', and an individual dimension 'parole', whereas Chomsky's distinction of the 'competence' and 'performance' takes place only within the individual speaker. The term 'communicative competence' was originally introduced by Hymes in 1965 (see Canale 1983, 2; Kirsch 2008, 57). According to Canale (1983, 2), since Hymes' introduction of the term, the focus in language teaching began shifting from grammar towards communication. Kirsch (2008, 57) explains that in Hymes' theory, 'communicative competence' signifies knowledge of the language, the ability to adjust spoken utterances according to the context, and the ability to use language to accomplish tasks; factors which form linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic components. According to Byram and Méndez García (2009, 493), Hymes introduced the social dimension of competence by accentuating that a theory of language should include acceptability (referring to utterances by one speaker being accepted by another) in addition

to grammaticality. Byram and Méndez García (ibid.) also state that Hymes parallels the 'perfection' of language that is related to Chomsky's notion of performance, referring to ideal grammatical competence, and the 'imperfection' of language that is usually the reality of performance. Ellis (1985, 294) summarises the differences between Chomsky's and Hymes' views of 'competence' by stating that Chomsky treats the term as entirely linguistic, whereas Hymes' view of it is communicative, including the knowledge of linguistic rules, but also the knowledge on how to use them to communicate meanings.

Since Hymes' theory of communicative competence, there have been several suggestions regarding its division into smaller components. In the model of Canale and Swain (1980, 29-30) communicative competence is divided into three components: grammatical competence, including lexical items, morphology, syntax, phonology etc.; sociolinguistic competence, comprising sociocultural rules of language use and discourse; and strategic competence, consisting of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. This model was further refined by Canale (1983, 6 – 14), and discourse competence was added as the fourth component, consisting of the skills to compose spoken or written messages which are both cohesive in form and coherent in meaning. Another example is the model of 'communicative ability', compiled by van Ek (1986, 33 – 57), which consists of six overlapping competences: linguistic competence (the knowledge of vocabulary items and structural rules to be able to produce and interpret meaningful utterances), sociolinguistic competence (the ability to understand how the choice of which language forms to use depends on situational contexts), discourse competence (the ability to understand and create meaningful and coherent communication patterns), strategic competence (verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, as in Canale and Swain's model), socio-cultural competence (awareness of the sociocultural context of a given language) and social competence (the speakers' ability and willingness to cooperate in interaction with each other, involving qualities such as motivation, attitude and empathy).

The notion of ‘competence’, along with the term ‘communicative competence’, is discussed in the CEFR as well. According to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 9), the notion of ‘competence’ can be defined as “the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions”. The CEFR (ibid.) distinguishes two different types of competence: general competences, which are used for all actions, including, but not specific to, language activities, and communicative language competences, which comprise the usage of linguistic means to accomplish tasks and activities, in other words using the language for communication. The CEFR divides communicative language competences into three separate components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence, similarly to Hymes’ model discussed above. In the CEFR, the three components are divided further into smaller categories. Linguistic competence refers to the speaker’s knowledge of lexis, phonology, morphology and syntax of the target language; sociolinguistic competence covers the sociocultural dimensions of language use, such as conventions of politeness, different registers and dialects; and pragmatic competence includes the ability to use the acquired linguistic knowledge functionally, in other words producing speech acts (Council of Europe 2001, 13). All of these three competences are relevant to oral communication; in order to form utterances, the speaker needs linguistic competence, and pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences are required in using the utterances naturally in conversation situations and in avoiding misunderstandings between speakers. These three competences, as defined in the CEFR, will be discussed in the following sections.

2.3.1 Linguistic competence

Linguistic competence, according to the CEFR, consists of six different components: lexical competence, grammatical competence, semantic competence, phonological competence, orthographic competence and orthoepic competence (Council of Europe 2001, 109). Lexical competence consists of both lexical and grammatical elements, the former including single word forms and fixed expressions such as greetings, proverbs and idioms, and the latter including the

closed word classes such as articles, personal pronouns and prepositions (Council of Europe 2001, 111). Grammatical competence is defined in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 113) as the ability to understand and produce well-formed language by using the grammatical resources, such as morphology and syntax, of the given language, instead of simply memorising the grammatical "rules" and repeating them as fixed formulae. Semantic competence, as described in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 115), consists of the knowledge of organisation of the meaning of words, and includes lexical (word meaning), grammatical (meaning of grammatical elements) and pragmatic (logical relations such as presupposition) semantics. Phonological competence includes the ability to distinguish and produce phonemes (or sound-units) of a given language and their different realisations, and other phonological features of the language, such as sentence stress and rhythm, prosody and intonation (Council of Europe 2001, 116). Orthographic and orthoepic competences are concerned with written language, the former consisting of the ability to understand and produce the given language in its written form (see Council of Europe 2001, 117), and the latter involves the ability to read aloud written text in the target language, which requires the knowledge of, for example, the spelling conventions of the given language in case the words to be read aloud are first encountered in their written form (see ibid.).

2.3.2 Pragmatic competence

In the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 123), pragmatic competence is divided further into three units: discourse competence, functional competence and design competence. Discourse competence is concerned with coherent language production (ibid.), in other words the ability to organise sentences, for example, according to the theme, the topic and the focus of the message; according to whether the information is new or already known; or according to the style and register of the communication situation. Discourse competence also includes mastery of the 'co-operative principle' (ibid.), which is concerned with efficient communication; according to this principle, contributions in spoken discourse should follow the maxims of quality, quantity, relevance and

manner. Functional competence refers to the use of spoken or written messages for performing communicative tasks with specific functions and understanding the way in which the process of interaction is structured (Council of Europe 2001, 125). According to the CEFR (ibid.), functional competence consists of the understanding of microfunctions, which are categories for defining the functions of single utterances, usually occurring as turns in conversation (such as asking, answering and greeting), and macrofunctions, which are categories for larger sequences of sentences with a specific discoursal function or a written genre (such as narration, commentary and instruction). Design competence, merging together with functional competence, comprises the knowledge of sequencing spoken messages according to specific patterns of interaction, such as a question-answer pair or a greeting-response pair (Council of Europe 2001, 126). It is noted in the CEFR (ibid.) that these pairs, or triplets, where the response part of the pair is followed by an additional response from the first speaker, are typically found inside longer, more complex transactions, with a specific interactional schema (such as a service encounter). The 'pairs' are also known as adjacency pairs, and the 'triplets' can be seen as different parts of an 'exchange', discussed further in section 3.1.3. According to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 128), successful interaction requires two aspects of functional competence: fluency, which refers to the ability to keep the conversation flowing; and propositional precision, which refers to the ability to formulate thoughts and propositions into clear, understandable messages.

2.3.3 Sociolinguistic competence

Sociolinguistic competence involves the ability to use a given language in a manner appropriate to the context. The CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 118) lists various features of language which are concerned with the social dimensions of language use: linguistic markers of social relations (such as the use and choice of greetings and address forms and the conventions of turn-taking), politeness conventions (such as using polite or impolite expressions appropriately and using hedges or tag questions), expressions of folk wisdom (such as proverbs, idioms and familiar quotations), register

differences (such as levels of formality) and dialect and accent (such as the linguistic markers of social class, regional or national origin and occupational group). It needs to be noted that the above-mentioned features, defined as sociolinguistic in the CEFR, are in linguistics studied in the sphere of pragmatics. As Strazny (2005, 869) explains, pragmatics studies the use of language, more specifically the linguistic choices made by the speakers in different social situations. Strazny (ibid.) notes that the study of pragmatics has developed from linguistic, philosophical and sociological approaches to the use of language. According to Munro (2001, 130), the field of sociolinguistics (in linguistics, as opposed to the definition given in the CEFR) mainly focuses on observing the speakers' linguistic behaviour and comparing it with their social backgrounds. In other words, pragmatics focuses on the situations in which communication takes place, and sociolinguistics focuses on the effect of speakers' cultural and social backgrounds to the language (such as different dialects). In linguistics, the studies of pragmatic and sociolinguistic aspects of language use are often intertwined.

2.4 Textbooks in language teaching

According to Lähdesmäki (2004, 282), textbooks have a central role in Finnish comprehensive school ELT classrooms: they are used to determine the structure and content of the lessons and to verify right answers, and even the discussion in the classroom strictly follows the vocabulary and topics of the textbook texts. Luukka et al. (2008, 90) state that in addition to curricula based on the national curriculum, which is the most important guideline for language teaching in Finland, teaching materials create the structure for teaching in the language classrooms. The study conducted by Luukka et al. (2008, 94) shows that in foreign language teaching, textbooks have a strong position in the choice of teaching materials; 98% of the teachers interviewed for their study responded that they use textbooks frequently in their teaching, and nearly as many (95%) also admitted to frequently using the exercise book related to the textbook.

Although the textbooks can be used in different ways, many teachers use them as their most important tool in teaching; the study conducted by Luukka et al. (2008, 95) shows that the teachers interviewed for the study ranked textbooks and exercise books to the top five of the most important teaching materials. Ellis and Brewster (2002, 152) state that textbooks are used by most English teachers as guidelines on what should be taught, in which order, and which methodology to use. Tomlinson (2005, 143) agrees to this in stating that research shows that the actions in language classrooms are largely determined by the course book instructions. Littlejohn (1998, 190) points out that textbooks have evolved from containing mainly reading material and translation tasks to packages with specific instructions for language teaching and learning, resulting in their increased role in structuring what is being done in the classrooms. Although the textbooks seem to define most of the structure of the language lessons in Finland and elsewhere, the language teachers do have control over how they use the textbooks, as Lähdesmäki (2004, 283) points out; they can adjust the tasks and instructions to fit their teaching purposes or use additional teaching material of their own choosing. Luukka et al. (2008, 65) also acknowledge this by stating that teachers can, with their own choices, have an influence on how much the textbook defines the teaching, which results in the same materials being used differently between different teachers. They (ibid.) do, however, point out that although teachers can use other teaching materials in addition to the textbooks and can alter the ways they use them, the role of textbooks as “institutional factors in guiding teaching” remains strong.

Lähdesmäki (2007, 54) states that certain principles, such as the variety in the selection of texts, demonstrating ‘real’ language use and stimulating the learners’ interest, have remained with the writers of Finnish textbooks for decades. She (ibid.) notes that although the modern technological resources enable the realisation of these principles better than before, authentic texts are still rare in teaching materials. Authenticity is, in itself, a problematic issue in teaching materials, as there are certain factors restricting their use in teaching. Lähdesmäki (2007, 55) mentions the high level of difficulty and the low frequency of the things to be taught, as well as

copyright issues, as the limiting factors of the use of authentic texts, and notes that although authentic materials are used in the making of textbooks, they are often considerably edited and adapted to the teaching purposes. She (ibid.) also states that the authenticity in current textbooks can be seen as an attempt to make the materials familiar and interesting to the learners, mostly through the choice of genres in the texts.

Because of the 'manipulation' of the authentic texts in the textbook making process, the representations of speech in textbooks are rather different from actual conversation. McCarthy (1991, 128) states that a transcript of natural conversation, with its interruptions, overlaps of speakers' turns, and other features, can seem rather messy, and could not be used for English teaching purposes without some clarifying alterations. He (ibid.) notes that whenever authentic dialogues are used in teaching materials, they have been altered to the point where they can no longer be said to resemble the actual data; conversations in textbooks tend to have an ordered structure with no overlapping, where all the participants take turns in a neat, orderly fashion, representing what Carter et al. (1998, 69) refer to as a "'can-do' society". Tomlinson (1998, 87) supports this view by stating that the language in textbooks is often neutral and co-operative, with clear, constant grammatical rules with only few exceptions, whereas in actual conversation, language use is often attitudinal and competitive, with varying grammatical patterns. The 'messiness' of authentic conversation can be used as justification for their absence especially in textbooks for beginners, as they can be seen as too difficult and therefore discouraging for the learners. Littlejohn (1998, 13), however, points out that this should not be a reason not to expose beginners to authentic language; short stories, songs and instructions may be used as authentic input for the learners on the beginner level.

2.5 Young learners

In the light of numerous different, often contradictory, theories and hypotheses on language learning, it can be stated that learning is influenced by the variation among individual learners and their learning environments (Jaakkola 2000, 6). Garcia Mayo (2003, 94) gives personality, motivation, learning style, aptitude and age as examples of factors affecting individuals' language learning and states that out of these factors, age has been the most extensively discussed one among researchers for several decades. As Singleton (2003, 3) points out, the topic of the potential age effects on language learning "attracts wide interest and generates fierce debate" for both theoretical and practical reasons. He (ibid.) goes on to explain that, on the theoretical level, the debate revolves around biological factors, such as the idea of "maturational constraints" affecting language learning, and on the practical level the interest is on finding the optimal age to learning a new language; there are divergent opinions on whether or not those who begin their L2 learning at a younger age have an advantage over older beginners. The optimal starting age for language learning will not be discussed here, but it can be stated that whatever the ideal age for language learning may be, young learners are different in their learning styles and motivational factors compared to those who begin their language studies at a more mature age.

When planning language instruction for young children, certain attributes that differentiate them from older learners are to be taken into account. Ellis (2002, 27) states that young children are physically very energetic and are easily bored or distracted, but are also enthusiastic and can concentrate for a long time if they are interested in the matter at hand. Broughton et al. (1978, 169) point out that even though the physically active nature of young children gives reason for including learning activities that involve physical movement into language lessons, this should be done by using purposeful activities which allow the children to utilise their natural curiosity and expressiveness, instead of using physical activity only to give the children opportunities for "letting off steam". These "purposeful activities" (ibid.) include action songs and games, drawing and colouring, dramatization and role-playing, and manipulation of real objects and puppets. Broughton

et al. (ibid.) also state that the longest period of time for primary level children to stay interested in one type of task or activity is ten minutes, or even less for younger children, which is why it is important to keep switching between different activities during the lessons. Ellis (2002, 40) notes that the motivation of the learners is related not only to the variation between different activities, but also to the nature of the work they are asked to do; if the learners feel that they are "over-guided", the work becomes too easy for them and may result in them losing interest, but the same may happen if the work is constantly too challenging.

Broughton et al. (1978, 169) recommend an oral approach in teaching languages to young children, as they enjoy imitating and acting; songs and games along with short dialogues are useful activities because of their repetitive and patterned nature, which gives the children a feeling of confidence and accomplishment in their language learning. Repetitive activities are useful in language teaching also because, as Ellis (2002, 28) notes, in addition to being excellent mimics, children may forget things more quickly than older learners, and thus repetition will help them remember the things they have learned. Ellis (2002, 40) also points out that it is common for children learning their first language to repeat words and phrases to themselves until they have learned them and are comfortable with them; and this makes repetition (with some variety) an important tool for learning foreign languages as well.

According to Dyson (1993, 131), children are natural communicators, who use speaking and writing to comprehend the world they are living in. She (ibid.) explains that young children are accustomed to communication situations that involve people and things familiar to them, and they are developing ways to learn new things and to communicate appropriately within their own communities even before beginning their school education, and it should be ensured that they have the possibility to continue learning and understanding new situations in the light of their own previous experience in the "out-of-home settings" such as the classroom. Llinares García (2007, 44) also stresses the importance of taking the children's communicative nature into consideration, and explains that what keeps young children motivated in learning a new language is the sense that they

can use it for actual communication, such as talking about their personal world and things they have, or asking for and giving information, the same things they have originally learned their first language for. Llinares García (2007, 42) notes that it is not common for very young L2 learners to display a natural motivation to use the L2 for communication, and they should be encouraged and motivated to do so by, for example, using learning activities that require the use of referential questions. Llinares García (2007, 44) also points out that, as opposed to children learning English as a second language in an English speaking country, EFL learners in a low-immersion setting need to be motivated to use English in purposeful communication activities, similar to the situations where they are used to using their L1, and that these activities should be designed to encourage the learners to start interactions in English, instead of simply answering questions presented by the teacher.

Ellis (2002, 105) states that in the beginning of learning a new language, learners cannot be expected to produce much spontaneous speech due to their limited vocabulary, but can be encouraged to memorise formulaic "chunks" of language that consist of simple routines and patterns. She (ibid.) explains that regular repetition of simple, formulaic language requires minimal linguistic competence from the learners, but gives them an impression that they can already communicate in the target language, and therefore encourages them to communicate in that language and to learn more. Examples of such language, given by Ellis (ibid.), are simple greetings ("*Hello! How are you?*" "*I'm fine, thank you, and you?*"), social English ("*Have a nice weekend!*"), routines ("*What's the date?*"), classroom language ("*Listen.*", "*Work in pairs.*", "*Good.*"), asking permission ("*Can I/May I go to the toilet?*") and communication strategies ("*Can you say that again, please?*", "*I don't understand.*", "*Can I have a … please?*"). Ellis (2002, 40) also states that children like talking, even when their vocabulary is limited, and they should be encouraged to do so in foreign language learning despite grammatical or lexical mistakes or overgeneralisation of rules, because it is important for language learners to have opportunities for meaningful communication in the target language.

According to Garcia Lecumberri et al. (2003, 117), exposure, in other words all types of contact with the target language, is one of the most important factors in language learning that is claimed to interact with the learners' age, in the sense that starting the language learning at an early age along with extensive, high quality exposure to the language is likely to produce the best results in the acquisition of the target language, to the extent of native or near-native proficiency. Exposure is a factor to be considered especially in a situation where learners are only exposed to the target language in the classroom. According to DeKeyser (2012, 455), those who learn a foreign language in a school setting have plenty of instruction but the exposure to the target language can be minimal, as opposed to immigrants who are learning their second language in a situation where they are exposed to the language in their everyday lives and acquire the language more easily even with little or no instruction. DeKeyser (ibid.) also states that in the school setting, the quality of the input to which the learners are exposed may be affected by factors such as the lack of authentic interaction in the classroom and the lack of proficiency (particularly in pronunciation) of non-native teachers. Garcia Lecumberri et al. (2003, 118) explain that the quality of the input can be measured by a scale, one end, or the 'lower' end, of which represents non-native, single-source input, and the other, 'higher' end represents authentic, natural and diverse speech. Muñoz (2003, 178) also states that in order for even the young learners to reach native-like proficiency in the target language by using their natural language-learning abilities, the level of exposure to the target language should be high, comparable with the exposure that children have to their mother tongue, whereas older children can utilise language-learning mechanisms that do not need such a high level of exposure to the target language. Concerning foreign language teaching, the school setting can rarely provide such a high level of exposure to the target language, which puts the older children at an advantage, as they are not as affected by the lack of exposure as the younger children may be. Concerning the level of the learners' exposure to English, the situation in present-day Finland is somewhere in the middle of the quality scale, as although the EFL classrooms might not offer high-quality input, the children are exposed to authentic English on their free time, when they use the internet, play computer games,

watch television and listen to music. The fact that the children are exposed to English outside the classrooms does not, however, mean that they should not receive high quality input during their English lessons. If the children are used to hearing and reading authentic English on their free time, they will probably expect to receive similar input in the school setting. The free time exposure to English is bound to increase the children's motivation to learn the language and perhaps even encourage them to try and use it themselves, and the classroom is an ideal place for them to learn and practice their communication skills. As Muñoz (2003, 178) states, sufficient exposure to the target language should be provided in the classrooms, along with meaningful interaction in that language, to make the language learning in school more effective and keep the children motivated.

3. Spoken vs. written English

As Leech and Svartvik (2002, 12) state, the most extensively used form of language in human society is speech. Spoken language differs from its written counterpart in various ways, mainly because of the different circumstances in which they are produced; speech, for example, is produced in real time and usually leaves no permanent record, whereas written texts are slower to produce and can be revised and re-read as many times as is needed (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 10). Despite the fact that there are differences between spoken and written English, most grammars of English have been biased towards the written language, mostly because it has been more available for research than spoken language. McCarthy (1998, 16) explains that as written language was so easily available for research and codification, the grammars compiled on the basis of written language became to set the norms of 'correctness' for any language use.

The major obstacle for researching the characteristics of spoken English, until recently, has been the lack of sufficient technology. Carter and McCarthy (2006, 164) note that only recently has the audio-recording and associated technology developed enough in order to collect sufficient quantities of spoken language to enable a detailed analysis and to fully describe the items and structures typical for spoken communication. Biber et al. (1999, 1038) also mention that it has not been possible to research the grammar of spoken English until the emergence of substantial computer corpora. Now that such corpora have been compiled and researched, grammars based on these corpora, such as *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al. 1999) and *Cambridge Grammar of English* (Carter and McCarthy 2006), offer specific information on the use of spoken grammar. The main features which distinguish spoken English from written English, along with the notion of 'grammar of conversation', will be discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Features of English conversation

Leech and Svartvik (2002, 12) distinguish two separate uses of spoken language: conversation, which is an unplanned, interactive and private form of speech; and public speaking, which is usually planned ahead in writing and memorised or read aloud by one person while the listeners stay silent. They (ibid.) go on to explain that conversation, where two or more interlocutors take turns in speaking spontaneously in an interactive situation, either face-to-face or via a computer or a telephone, is the more common of the two uses. McCarthy (1991, 118) lists several types of speech: service encounters; interviews; classroom talk; language-in-action (talk which involves the speakers doing something, such as cooking or fixing something) and casual conversation, to mention a few. Biber et al. (1999, 1041) define conversation as "pervasive activity among human beings", with the main function of sharing of experience and thus creating and maintaining social cohesion. They (ibid.) note that conversation can also be used for entertainment in the form of narratives and jokes, information exchange and controlling the behaviour of others (by giving instructions or orders). The beginner level goals for communication skills in POPS 2004 and the CEFR (see sections 2.2 and 2.1) consist mainly of the learning of basic language routines, such as memorising the essential vocabulary and structures and being able to engage in the shortest and simplest of conversations (such as question-answer sequences), which suggests that the characteristics of conversation would not be relevant for the young beginners. Understanding how conversation differs from the written language is, however, an important part of learning to communicate naturally in the foreign language. Although the young Finnish beginners may not be expected to learn using the different features of conversation right away, they can benefit from being exposed to them already at the early stages of language learning, as it can facilitate the development of their oral communication skills later on.

Carter and McCarthy (2006, 164) list three main features of conversation: firstly, spoken language is usually unplanned and takes place in real time; secondly, conversation normally occurs in a face-to-face situation; and thirdly, the social and interpersonal situation in which the

conversation takes place determines the choices of, for example, vocabulary and structures that will be used. According to Biber et al. (1999, 1042), conversations usually take place in situations where the interacting speakers share contextual background through immediate physical context as well as through shared knowledge of social and cultural factors. Biber et al. (1999, 1050) also state that because conversation is usually carried out in private, between speakers who know each other, it is not affected by the 'norms' of correctness and prestige which are typically expected of public written texts, and therefore the style of conversation tends to be far more informal than the style of written language. Despite the differences in formality and style between the two registers, spoken language is not to be completely separated from the written language, as Carter and McCarthy (2006, 164) point out; the two can be said to exist on a continuum rather than as clearly separate areas of language. For instance, informal written texts such as casual emails or news headlines may include 'ungrammatical' features normally used in spoken language, and formal speaking situations such as public speeches or presentations require language more restricted to the rules of the written register.

3.1.1 The 'online' quality of conversation

As mentioned above, spoken language is typically unplanned. Carter and McCarthy (2006, 168) describe it as "'online' communication", referring to its instant nature and spontaneity. Biber et al. (1999, 1048) state that most of the features of spoken language are based on the fact that speakers have very little time to plan their utterances, as the conversations take place in real time.

Biber et al. (1999, 1066) list three principles governing the online production of spoken language: keep talking (the conversation needs to be kept going); limited planning ahead (the restrictions of the working memory allow for limited time to plan messages); and qualification of what has been said (elaborating and modifying the message by adding elements as an afterthought). According to Carter and McCarthy (2006, 168), the limited planning time between utterances makes the speaker take pauses, repeat what has been said or rephrase what they have just said, and

the ‘flow’ of the conversation can be disrupted by interruptions or overlapping with another speaker, as well as by factors outside the communication situation, such as a phone ringing. Regarding the ‘flow’ of the conversation, Carter and McCarthy (2006, 166) state that speakers do not take turns neatly in comparison to written sentences; conversations are filled with interruptions by other speakers and the interlocutors often speak simultaneously or complete each other’s utterances. They (ibid.) also note that listeners in a conversation are not simply recipients; they constantly give feedback and support to the speaker by using back-channel items such as *Mm* and *Yeah*, or other types of supportive response such as *Right*. Biber et al. (1999, 1045) also mention this dynamic nature of conversation, where the speakers construct the conversation together as it progresses.

As spoken communication is often based on shared knowledge between the speakers, and because of the ‘online’ quality of conversation, there is a tendency to prefer pronouns to nouns in speech (see Biber et al. 1999, 1042; Carter and McCarthy 2006, 169). Carter and McCarthy (2006, 169) point out that pronouns are easier to construct and enable faster utterances, thus easing the flow of conversation. They (ibid.) also mention that pronouns reflect the face-to-face nature of conversation, where the speakers interact in a shared situational context and frequently refer to people or things in the immediate situation. According to Biber et al. (1999, 1042), the most common pronouns used in conversation are the first and second person pronouns, especially the singular *I* and *you*, as they are used to refer directly to the speakers taking part in the conversation. Biber et al. (ibid.) point out that the use of pronouns instead of nouns or noun phrases is only one variety of ‘grammatical reduction’ that takes place in spoken language. The other varieties of grammatical reduction are the use of substitute preforms (e.g. substituting a nominal form by *one*/*ones* or a verb/verb phrase by *do it*/*that*) and the use of ellipsis (ibid.). According to Carter and McCarthy (2006, 167) ellipsis, or omitting words which are seen as essential in written language because they can be interpreted from the shared knowledge between speakers or from the immediate situation, is common in spoken language. Omitting these words does not make the message unclear for the interlocutors in spoken conversation, whereas usually in written English

this would not be possible because written texts are typically read in a different time and place than the ones they were created in (ibid.).

According to Biber et al. (1999, 147), the interactive nature of conversation also comprises the notion of politeness and the use of respectful language in different conversation situations, such as apologies, offers, requests and greetings. For marking polite speech acts, Biber et al. (ibid.) mention that the use of certain single word inserts, such as *sorry* and *please*, is common, as well as the use of stereotypical polite openings, such as the interrogative forms *could you* and *would you*, which are used in English even in familiar and informal situations.

3.1.2 Performance errors

Biber et al. (1999, 1052) state that dysfluency is characteristic for spontaneous speech. Carter and McCarthy (2006, 166) also mention “abandoned or incomplete structures” as a common feature of spoken language, and note that this type of dysfluencies rarely cause misunderstandings, and they can be collaboratively completed by other speakers. According to Biber et al. (1999, 1052), hesitation pauses, meaning a period of silence between utterances where the speaker seems to be planning the next utterance, are the most evident manifestations of dysfluency. In addition to hesitation pauses, there are filled pauses, which are occupied by a vowel sound, sometimes accompanied by nasalisation (*uh* or *um* in AmE, *er* or *erm* in BrE), instead of silence (Biber et al. 1999, 1053). According to Biber et al. (1999, 1054), the filled pauses are used to express that the speaker still wishes to continue their turn, and the unfilled pauses often occur at points of transition, where utterance launchers (such as *well* or *okay*) are likely to be used.

Another type of dysfluency discussed by Biber et al. (1999, 1055) are repeats, which means beginning and then re-beginning the same fragment of speech. This is also a strategy to relieve the planning pressure; the same pieces of speech can be repeated as many times as the speaker needs in order to be able to continue (ibid.). The simplest type of repeats is, according to Biber et al. (ibid.), the repeating of a single word or a part of a word, which creates a momentary effect of stuttering, as

in the following example: *The problem is that* ***i- it's*** *not just a straightforward correlation.* Biber et al. (1999, 1062) note that this type of unplanned repeats are sometimes referred to as 'false starts', although the term is also used to illustrate cases where the speaker retraces what has been said and begins the utterance again with a different word or word sequence; this type of false start is also known as a 'retrace-and-repair sequence'. In speech, utterances are often left grammatically incomplete. Biber et al. (1999, 1063) give four cases where the speaker starts an utterance and fails to finish it grammatically: self-repair (the use of the retrace-and-repair sequence mentioned above), interruption (another speaker or an external factor interrupts the speaker), repair by another interlocutor (another speaker collaborates with the first speaker to complete the message), and abandonment of the utterance without an interruption.

3.1.3 Phatic talk and the notion of the 'exchange'

According to Cornbleet and Carter (2001, 28), a significant part of conversation is 'phatic talk', or small talk, in other words speech acts with the purpose of simply maintaining or creating personal relationships. They (ibid.) explain that these seemingly unimportant pieces of speech have, in fact, an important social role in facilitating interaction. Phatic talk consists of stock responses and formulaic expressions, such as '*How are you?*' / '*Fine*', and usually follows traditional patterns (ibid.). McCarthy and Carter (1995, 63) state that when people enter a casual conversation situation, recognisable beginnings, such as greetings (which may also be non-verbal, such as a wave) occur, signalling the opening of the conversation. They (ibid.) also note that in most cultures, these openings are often followed by phatic utterances, such as *Fine* in the example above. The openings, or initiations, and their responses (such as a greeting and a return greeting, or a question followed by an answer) constitute the smallest structural unit of interaction: an 'exchange' (McCarthy 1998, 52). In addition to the two functions, an exchange usually includes a third one: a follow-up, which can be a comment or a reaction to the response. Follow-ups typically used in English (but can be used for the responding function as well) include expressions such as *how nice*, *oh dear*, *I see* and

right (McCarthy 1991, 123; 1998, 52). Another structure found in conversation is an ‘adjacency pair’, in other words a pair of utterances which either function as a response or elicit responses from the hearer. Biber et al. (1999, 1045) state that adjacency pairs may, for example, be symmetrical greetings from all of the participants in a conversation, or asymmetric sequences, such as typical question-answer pairs where a question (“*Whose bowl is that?*”) is followed by the answer (“*Mine*.”).

The endings of conversations, or closings, also have a characteristic style to them. As McCarthy and Carter (1995, 65) explain, conversations affect the social relationships of the speakers as they develop, and at the end of the conversation, the social bonds that have formed need to be broken momentarily without offending any of the participants. In English, the discourse marker *anyway* is often used to signal that the speaker thinks it is time to end the conversation (ibid.) At the end of conversations in English, according to McCarthy and Carter (1995, 66), it is also common to conclude the discussed topics by using a saying or a formula such as *Well, there you go* or *Oh well, that’s life*.

Biber et al. (1999, 1045) note that English speakers have a tendency to avoid using specific expressions of quantity and quality, and the vagueness of conversation can be seen in the use of conversational hedges such as *kind of*, *sort of* and *like*, or qualitative hedges such as the *odd* in expressions such as *forty odd* or *–ish* in expressions such as *eightish*. Also ‘empty’ nouns such as *thingy* and vague coordination tags such as *or something*, *and stuff*, and *and things* that are used to express vagueness (ibid.). Carter (1999, 160) states that the hedges *like* (which is used in conversation as an alternative to expressions *for instance* or *for example*) and *stuff* are commonly used to avoid being too precise, as that would sound impersonal or too authoritative. He (1999, 161) goes on to mention that it is also common to use sets of expressions such as *quite a few* and *quite a lot* to express vagueness.

3.2 Grammar of conversation

Carter and McCarthy (2006, 167) state that the term 'standard grammar' usually refers to written grammar, and is characteristic of the language of "adult, educated native speakers". They go on to explain that there are forms of spoken English which are seen as incorrect or 'non-standard' from the viewpoint of standard written grammar of English, but which are nevertheless vastly used among the above-mentioned educated adult speakers of English, and can therefore be considered as features of standard spoken English grammar (ibid.). Carter and McCarthy (ibid.) list the following as examples of these 'non-standard' structures found frequently in spoken English: split infinitives, double negation, singular nouns following plural expressions of measurement (such as *He's about six* ***foot*** *tall*), and the use of contracted forms (e.g. *gonna* from *going to*). Biber et al. (1999, 1038) note that the same 'grammar of English' applies equally to spoken and written English; the grammar of spoken English is not, despite its frequent 'non-standard' characteristics, completely different from the standard written grammar, as most grammatical structures apply to both areas of language. According to Leech and Svartvik (2002, 10), spoken and written English share the same grammar, but its use can differ between the two transmission channels. Carter and McCarthy (2006, 168) agree to this in stating that speech and writing are not to be considered as independent areas of language, and that even though spoken grammar includes forms that are generally not found in writing, apart from written dialogues, the features of these areas overlap; forms which have been previously seen as acceptable in spoken English only, occur increasingly in informal writing.

Concerning the construction of spoken grammar of English, Biber et al. (1999, 1066) suggest that it can be helpful to regard it as a slightly different system as the written grammar, the most important difference being that spoken language occurs in real time and is affected by the limitations of memory. They (ibid.) elaborate by stating that in writing, the sentences may be retracted or reformulated, and the reader will only see the final result, but in speech, reformulating requires the addition of new utterances, without the possibility to erase what has already been said. Biber et al. (ibid.) note that as opposed to the static, architectural nature of the written grammar, the

grammar of conversation can be seen as dynamic, as speech is created and received under the online pressure, and correction or rephrasing can only be done by hesitations, false starts and other dysfluencies.

3.2.1 The structure of an utterance

Carter and McCarthy (2006, 165) note that sentences, as they are defined in the written grammar, are difficult to identify in spoken language. They (ibid.) continue by stating that the production of fitting communicative sequences and turn-taking are more important factors in speech than the formulation of grammatically acceptable sentences. Instead of full sentences, spoken language comprises small units of communication which often consist of single words or phrases, often separated by non-linguistic features such as intakes of breath, changes in pitch and pauses (ibid.). As speech rarely consists of accurate and complete sentences, Cornbleet and Carter (2001, 61) state that the term 'utterance' is preferred in reference to orally produced stretches of language. The term is used here in the same sense as it is used by Biber et al. (1999, 1072): to refer to a pragmatic unit, as opposed to a grammatical one, meaning that utterances are related to pragmatic conversational functions such as expressing an opinion or asking for information. Biber et al. (ibid.) explain that in addition to a 'simple' utterance consisting of a one-word non-clausal unit (such as *Okay*), a spoken message may also be a 'composite utterance', consisting of a 'body', which can include one or more clausal units, and 'prefaces' and 'tags', which surround the body.

Prefaces, according to Biber et al. (1999, 138), are used to define the body, consisting of a noun phrase and a co-referent pronoun which follows in the body of the message, as in the following sentence, where *Mark* is the preface referring to the pronoun *he* (quoted from ibid.): ***Mark** – will **he** be first to finish?* Biber et al. (ibid.) explain that prefaces are used to first introduce the topic and then attach the proposition, which helps the speaker to plan the message and the hearer to decode it, as it breaks the message into smaller units. Prefaces can also be referred to as 'utterance launchers', but there are other types of utterance launchers as well. Biber et al. (1999,

1073) define utterance launchers as expressions with a special utterance- or turn-opening function, which have a role in changing the direction of the conversation and also giving the speaker a break to plan the rest of the utterance, as well as preparing the hearer for the message that follows. Carter (1999, 151) uses the term 'head' to describe the same phenomena; he explains that heads have a function of orienting and providing the listeners with key information, as well as creating a shared frame of reference for the interlocutors.

In addition to prefaces (or heads), the category of utterance launchers includes fronting, overtures and discourse markers (Carter 1999, 151). Biber et al. (1999, 1074) explain that fronting (which is less common in English conversation than prefaces) refers to changing the basic English word order (SVO/P/A) by moving the complement of the verb into the initial position (O/P/A SV) in order to emphasise one element in the immediate context, such as in the following example (the fronted element is in bold type): ***Car numbers*** *I remember more by the letters than the numbers*. Overtures, or longer "ready-made" expressions, such as *I'll tell you what* are used to explicitly change the direction of the conversation, as in the utterance ***I'll tell you what*** *I've just had a thought* (Biber et al. 1999, 1075). The thirdly mentioned type of utterance launchers, discourse markers, are single words such as *well* and *right*, and are classified as inserts (other inserts that can be used as utterance launchers include interjections such as *oh* and response forms such as *yeah* and *okay*). Discourse markers will be discussed further in section 5.2.7 below.

Tags, as opposed to prefaces, are added to the utterance after the body. Carter et al. (1998, 70) refer to them as 'tails', explaining that they are used to add evaluative or attitudinal weight to the body of the message, to add emphasis, or to provide repetition and clarification for the listeners. Biber et al. (1999, 1080) define tags as "retrospective qualifications loosely attached to the preceding clausal material", and distinguish seven different types of tags (all of the examples are quoted from ibid.): retrospective comment clauses (modifying the attitudinal aspect of the body: *And then they're open seven days a week* **you say**); retrospective vagueness hedges (used when the speaker wishes for the listener not to understand the message literally: *And it was her second car*

that she'd ever had ***sort of thing***); question tags (for eliciting agreement from the hearer: *Well that little girl is cute* ***isn't she****?*): noun phrase tags (used to retrospectively emphasise or clarify the reference of the pronoun in the message: *I just give* ***it*** *all away didn't I Rudy* ***my knitting****?*); other retrospectively added non-clausal units (adding reinforcement or emotive strengthening of the message: *I mean she never liked that car.* ***Ever.***); self-supplied answers (speakers suggesting answers to their own questions: *What are you going to get –* ***some wine****?*), and vocatives (conveying an attitude towards the addressee, a positive one in this example: *Hey thanks for the note,* ***Tom****. I'll follow up on that*). Biber et al. (1999, 1082) note that tags are often combined, as in the example, where the question tag *don't it* is combined with a retrospective comment clause *I suppose*: *Depends on what you want most* ***don't it I suppose****.*

In addition to prefaces and tags, utterances may also be extended by using the 'add-on' – strategy, in other words by chaining clausal units together with coordinating conjunctions such as *and*, *or* or *but*, and also subordinating conjunctions such as *so* and *because* (see Biber et al. 1999, 1078; Carter and McCarthy 2006, 170). Biber et al. (1999, 1078) note that in conversational transcripts, the conjunction *because* is often shortened as *cos* or *'cause*. Clausal units may also be added together by juxtaposition, as in the example given by Biber et al. (1999, 1079): *You should go see it, // it's so funny*. In relation to adding information to utterances retrospectively, Carter and McCarthy (2006, 169) point out a tendency for preferring simple noun phrases in spoken grammar, as opposed to more complex structures found in writing (such as noun phrases with multiple modifiers or embedded clauses: *It's a big, six-bedroom house*); in conversation, it is common to use a structure consisting of a determiner (*a*), followed by one optional adjective (*big*), which is then followed by a noun (*house*), any additional information tagged in the end (*Yeah it's a big house, six bedrooms*).

3.2.2 Non-clausal units

Biber et al. (1999, 1069) state that the most important kind of maximal unit (i.e. an independent unit without structural connection with what precedes or follows in the conversation) in conversational syntax is the 'clausal unit', which consists of an independent clause and any dependent clauses embedded within it. There are also sequences which consist partly or entirely of grammatically fragmentary, or non-clausal, material. Biber et al. (ibid.) refer to these sequences as 'non-clausal units'. According to Biber et al. (1999, 1070), although non-clausal units can be connected to other units on semantic or discoursal levels, they are also considered as maximal grammatical units because of their inability to be syntactically integrated to the preceding or following elements. According to Biber et al. (1999, 225) non-clausal units are much more common in speech than in writing, which can be explained by the limitations of online production and the way conversation is formed by cooperation of the participants. They (ibid.) also note that as the conversation takes place in a shared context and the interlocutors know each other well, many things can be left unsaid and for the listener to conclude; and as conversation occurs in real time, the listener has the possibility to ask for clarification if necessary.

Biber et al. (1999, 1074) note that it is often difficult to divide the structural units of conversation, such as non-clausal units, into clear-cut categories, as many of them are included in several categories because they are multi-functional in their discourse roles. Although the categorisation can be difficult at some instances, Biber et al. (1999, 1082) divide non-clausal units roughly into two categories: inserts (such as *hi*), which are single words, and syntactic non-clausal units (such as *My turn?*), which can be single words, but also phrases or unembedded dependent clauses. They (ibid.) explain that syntactic non-clausal units, unlike inserts, can enter into syntactic relations with other structures in order to form larger units. Inserts are stand-alone words, but they can occur with modifiers (such as *hi there*), and they can be attached prosodically to larger structures (ibid.). Both of these categories will be briefly discussed in this section and elaborated further in chapter 5.

The difference between syntactic non-clausal units and inserts is, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1099), that syntactic non-clausal units can be syntactically described and classified by the structures and categories of sentence grammar. Biber et al. (ibid.) explain that various syntactic non-clausal units can be classified into standard phrase categories, such as noun phrases like *poor kids* or *no sweat;* adjective phrases such as *perfect* or *good for you;* adverb phrases like *not really* or *absolutely!;* or prepositional phrases like *for goodness' sake*. They (ibid.) go on to state that these units are also often attached to inserts (e.g. *Oh shame!*) or “other syntactically peripheral elements” like vocatives (e.g. *this way please* or *good play there, dude*), which are used to emphasise their discourse functions as, for example, exclamations or directives. There are also syntactic non-clausal units in the form of unembedded dependent clauses, such as a negative infinite clause *not to worry* (see ibid.). Several functional categories can be distinguished for syntactic non-clausal units, according to the different functions they perform: elliptic replies, condensed questions, echo questions, elliptic question-and-answer sequences, condensed directives, condensed assertions, elliptic exclamatives, other exclamations (such as insults), various polite speech acts, vocatives, and other phrases as prefaces and tails (or tags) (see Biber et al. 1999, 1099). According to Biber et al. (ibid.), the category of elliptic replies is the most important one; ellipsis is a common feature of conversation, as it is natural for speakers to avoid unnecessary repetition and build on what has previously been said.

According to Biber et al. (1999, 1043), the word-class of inserts is the most evident case of material which does not fit into canonical grammatical structures such as phrases or clauses. They (ibid.) go on to state that the interpretation of inserts depends largely on situational factors, expressed either by language or by other means, for example, expressions such as *sorry* or *thanks* could follow either a verbal or non-verbal action. Biber et al. (1999, 1082) note that the division between inserts and syntactic non-clausal units is not clear-cut; the different inserts can be seen to be distributed across a set of concentric circles, their placement in relation to the centre of the circles depending on their defining features. Biber et al. (ibid.) list the following features for

defining the central members of the insert category: they may appear as independent words without being attached to a larger grammatical structure, but they can also be prosodically attached to clausal or non-clausal units; they do not usually occur in medial positions in syntactic structures; they are morphologically simple; they are not homonyms of words in other word classes; and their use is defined by their pragmatic function instead of having a semantically denotative meaning. Biber et al. (1999, 1083) state that short and simple stand-alone inserts such as *oh, yeah,* and *uh huh*, which usually occur on their own as response forms, are a very common type of non-clausal unit. They (1999, 1096) also note that in conversation, the phonologically reduced forms such as *yeah* and *hi*, which are also more informal, are typically more common than the longer and more formal alternatives such as *yes* and *hello*. Biber et al. (1999) list several categories of inserts, which are classified according to their function: greetings and farewells, interjections, attention signals, response elicitors and response forms, hesitators, various polite speech-act formulae, expletives, and discourse markers.

Biber et al. (1999, 1047) note that in addition to discourse markers, vocatives (also referred to as address forms) also have a 'discourse management' function. They (ibid.) explain that similarly to discourse markers, vocatives are usually added to the beginning or to the end of a clausal or non-clausal unit, generally to identify the addressee of the message by their name or some other appellation. According to Biber et al. (1999, 1048), vocatives, or address terms, are also used to express attitudes towards the speaker and their relationship with the hearer; the category of vocatives includes forms varying from very familiar (endearments such as *honey*) to formal honorific forms (such as *sir* and *madam*).

3.3 Reasons for teaching spoken English

Leech and Svartvik (2002, 12) state that, because it is such a common everyday form of language, conversation is the most important thing to be taught to learners of English. Broughton et al. (1978, 173) emphasise the importance of teaching English in its oral form at the beginner level and for

young learners, as this will help the learners adopt the way of regarding the spoken language as equal to its written counterpart, instead of seeing it as ungrammatical or inferior in any way.

The use of spoken language and an oral approach to English teaching at the beginner level is important for the development of the learners' communicative competence. Broughton et al. (1978, 173) note that it is common for EFL learners to be more competent in reading and writing English than in speaking it, which is often a result of book-centred teaching or learning mainly by translating from the first language. If the teaching concentrates mainly in written language, the learners often transfer the language of the written texts into their spoken production; as Carter (1999, 158) states, teaching children to speak English by the rules of written, formal English grammar may result to them speaking "like a book", which refers to producing unnatural-sounding spoken language.

One reason for including spoken English and practising oral communication especially in Finnish EFL teaching is, as Ringbom (1998, 194) points out, the reluctance of Finnish learners to try to speak a foreign language unless they can do it flawlessly. This can become a problem especially if the model of 'correct' use of English comes entirely from the written registers, as the spoken grammar deviates in places from the written grammar, making the features of spoken English seem ungrammatical, hence 'incorrect', to the learners. Ringbom (ibid.) states that this attitude leads to problems in oral communication, which are caused by a lack of culture-related socio-pragmatic competences, not problems in proficiency, as the same phenomenon occurs among advanced learners as much as among beginners. The unwillingness of attempting to speak in English and the fear of making mistakes could perhaps be avoided or lessened by introducing the aspects of oral communication at the very beginning of EFL teaching, making the learners more comfortable in producing free speech in another language.

The ability to speak English, or any other language, naturally requires cultural knowledge as well as knowledge on the conversational 'rules' of the given language. McCarthy and Carter (1995, 64) state that the communicational approach to language helps to see and understand differences

between the cultures of the target language and the mother tongue, such as the use of phatic language, which might otherwise be noticed only in there being something 'off' or unnatural in the learners' oral production. In order to be able to learn about these cultural differences, the learners need to be exposed to 'real', natural English. Receiving authentic input instead of, or at least in addition to, artificial language can be stated to be of assistance in learning to use the target language. Haynes (2007, 11) states that a source of natural communication will help young learners acquire the target language more quickly than learning by simply memorising grammatical structures.

There are several opinions regarding the content of teaching spoken English, varying from the simplest of forms to the more complex features of conversational grammar. Mumford (2009, 139) sees the use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *so, because*) as important features to be taught to EFL learners, and also mentions the tendency of native speakers to link utterances together as a chain, instead of using separate sentences, as a feature worth teaching, pointing out that speaking in phrases instead of sentences can make the language sound more fluent. Carter et al. (1998, 71) mention the use of heads and tails as an important feature to be taught to EFL learners, as they allow more choice in expressing feelings and attitudes, as well as establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. McCarthy (1998, 66) states that the use of deictic expressions, which is common in natural conversation, is an important feature to be included in teaching oral communication in English. McCarthy and Carter (1995, 67) mention the use of 'language-in-action' texts (for instance dialogues where the participants are doing something, such as cooking or assembling a bookcase) as useful in EFL teaching, as they include numerous deictic expressions, which make the texts context-dependent. Another feature seen as an important addition to the English learners' repertoire is, according to McCarthy (1998, 53), the use of follow-ups. He (ibid.) points out that in the classroom context, the learners are often used to the follow-ups only being produced by the teacher, who uses them to evaluate the learner's response. In McCarthy's (1998, 54) opinion, textbook dialogues should include follow-ups, and in cases where

there is no access to natural data, the dialogues should be edited by adding follow-ups to make them familiar to the learners.

4. Material and methods

The material analysed in the present study consists of an English language textbook *Yippee! 3 Reader* and an exercise book *Yippee! 3 Writer*, designed to be used in EFL teaching on the third grade of Finnish comprehensive school. The material and the methods used for the study will be introduced in this chapter.

4.1 Material

The pair of books used as the material for the study is a part of the *Yippee!* textbook series, which is composed by Raija Kuja-Kyyny-Pajula et al. and published by WSOYpro in the years 2009 – 2012. The series includes teaching material for EFL teaching, starting from the third grade until the sixth grade of Finnish comprehensive school. The teaching material was granted a silver award in the Best European Schoolbook Awards in 2011, which is a competition co-organised by three international organisations: the Frankfurt Book Fair; the IARTEM (the International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media) and the EEPG (European Educational Publishers' Group).

The themes in *Yippee! 3 Reader* (hereafter abbreviated as Y3R) revolve around the lives of schoolchildren; the topics include pets, hobbies, food etc. The storyline of the chapters depicts the adventures of a character called Whiz, who is a 'super toy', created in a factory in Sea World, which is located underwater in a sea. Whiz joins a group of schoolchildren in a British town called Sandy Bay, learning about things that children do, such as eating, going to school and doing sports, hoping to become a real boy himself. Y3R is visually very colourful and clearly designed with young learners in mind; the chapters are brief and include plenty of pictures, and there is a variety of songs and rhymes throughout the book. Structurally, the textbook consists of 18 chapters, each with their own themes, vocabulary and structures. In the beginning of the textbook, before the basic chapters, there are five introductory sections which help the learners get acquainted with the English language with themes ranging from greetings to colours and numbers. The basic chapters are brief,

starting with only a few lines and gradually growing slightly longer as the learners' vocabulary increases. All of the chapters are written in the form of dialogues. Each chapter begins with an orienting *Start* section, which introduces the topics and vocabulary of the chapter; and each chapter is followed by an *Extra* section, which includes additional material within the themes of the chapter, either in the form of a short text or a game. The exercise book *Yippee! 3 Writer* (hereafter abbreviated as Y3W) includes a vast amount of exercises to practice all language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The exercises in the beginning of Y3W are mainly short and simple listening and speaking tasks; the amount of written exercises increases gradually. There are also regular pronunciation exercises throughout the book.

4.2 Methods

The method used for the present study can be classified as textbook analysis, conducted with the method of content analysis. Franzosi (2004, 187) describes content analysis as a systematic and objective analysis of the characteristics of messages or the contents of communicative texts. Weber (1990, 10) explains that content analysis is conducted by using specific techniques to make inferences about either the sender or the audience of the message, or the message itself. This study concentrates on the messages themselves, analysing the linguistic content in a set of dialogues.

More specifically, the study can be defined as thematic content analysis, the theme being the features of spoken English. Thematic content analysis is, according to Franzosi (2004, 187), the most common approach in the field of content analysis. As thematic content analysis requires "intimate familiarity with the input text and its characteristics" (ibid.), the first step in the analysis in this study is a close reading of the dialogues found in the material, in order to find features of spoken English, defined mainly according to the descriptions of spoken English given by Biber et al. (1999) and Carter and McCarthy (2006). After identifying the spoken English features found in the material, they will be classified according to which aspects of communicative language competence they could be seen to represent, using the definition of the said competences given in the CEFR.

The aspects of communicative competences relevant to this study are the linguistic and the pragmatic competences, as defined in the CEFR (see section 2.3). Based on the findings, the aspect of communicative competence mostly visible in the material will be identified, and the extent to which the material supports the learning of oral communication skills will be discussed, along with the correspondence of the findings to the EFL teaching requirements specified in POPS 2004.

Concerning textbook analysis, or the analysis of teaching materials in general, Littlejohn (1998, 191) points out that the analysis of the content of the material and the ways in which it is expected to be used is to be separated from how they might actually be used in the classroom situations. Lähdesmäki (2004, 282) notes that textbooks can be used and interpreted in various ways in the classrooms by different teachers, although the teacher’s guides attached to the materials may have specific instructions regarding the use of the texts and topics. For the purposes of this study, the analysis of the textbooks will be based only on their content, disregarding their actual use in the EFL lessons. It would be of interest to conduct an empirical study on the use of the materials as well, as that would give a more reliable picture of how the spoken English features and the communicative competences are actually taught in the classrooms. However, as that would result in a much more extensive and lengthy study, this remains a topic for further research.

5. Representations of spoken English in *Yippee! 3: Reader* and *Yippee! 3: Writer*

In this chapter, features of spoken English will be discussed in more detail, illustrating them with extracts of the dialogues found in the textbook *Yippee! 3: Reader* and the exercise book *Yippee! 3: Writer* (hereafter abbreviated as Y3R and Y3W, in respective order). The main focus of the analysis is on the dialogues found in Y3R. The content of Y3W is included in a 'supportive' nature; to find features of spoken language absent from the texts in Y3R, and to determine how the discovered features are treated in the material (whether they are to be taught or offered as input, or simply added to increase the authenticity or the conversational 'feel' of the dialogues). As textbooks and exercise books are usually designed to be used together, and can be seen to complement each other, it would be insufficient to only analyse one while leaving the other out completely. Keeping in mind that this is a linguistic content analysis study, and as the majority of the linguistic content of the material is found in the textbook, the main focus will be on Y3R. It needs to be noted that as the dialogue in the material is, evidently, in the written form and almost completely stripped from the dysfluencies and complexities of real-life conversation, it can be questionable to treat it as actual conversation. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, the textbook dialogues will be treated as (simplified) examples of English conversation, as various features of spoken English can indeed be found in the material.

In the first section of this chapter, some general notions on the representations of spoken English in the material will be discussed. In the following two sections, the features of spoken English discovered in the material will be classified according to which component of communicative competence (as defined in the CEFR, see section 2.3) they are more likely to represent: the linguistic competence or the pragmatic competence. After having been defined as representing either the linguistic or pragmatic competence, the spoken English features will be analysed mainly on the basis of the theory of conversational grammar established by Biber et al. (1999). As discussed in section 2.3, the definition of communicative competences in the CEFR also includes the sociolinguistic component, but as it comprises of matters of 'appropriate' language use,

such as register differences and dialectal variations, it has mostly been ignored here; the sociolinguistic aspects seem too complex to be found in a textbook designed for young beginners, so only the linguistic and pragmatic competences will be considered as relevant for this study. In the final section of this chapter, the possible effects the discovered spoken English features can be seen to have on the learning of the required oral production skills, as defined in POPS 2004, will be discussed.

The division of the spoken English features into representing either linguistic or pragmatic competence can be somewhat problematic. It is evident that at the beginning stages of foreign language learning, all of the words and expressions, which the learners encounter for the first time, serve to increase their vocabulary and structural knowledge, but at the same time, all of the features of a language exist for specific pragmatic functions. For the purposes of this study, the features are classified as representing either linguistic or pragmatic competence based on how they are treated in the material; if they are clearly 'taught' with specific conversational functions in mind, they are classified as pragmatic, but if they can be considered as mainly lexical or structural input without drawing much attention to their functions, they are treated as linguistic competence. It must also be noted that there will be some inevitable overlap between these two categories. Another notion to be made, regarding the examples extracted from the material and used to illustrate the spoken English features in the sections below, is that as the texts in Y3R are relatively short and simple, some of the dialogues may contain several different features of spoken English. Therefore, some inevitable repetition regarding some of the examples will occur. For the sake of clarity, examples will be reused in some cases, but will be numbered as different examples each time, as different matters will be emphasised in different sections. Throughout this chapter, the features under discussion will be italicised in the examples for clarification.

5.1 General notions

Y3R seems to be designed with the oral communication skills in mind, as most of the texts are in the form of dialogues, and there are numerous oral production exercises in the exercise book. The texts representing the written register are few, and some of the written texts can also be said to include spoken language features, as they are in the form of casual emails, text messages and a postcard, which often include features associated with spoken language (see section 3.1). The texts in the first chapters in Y3R are, understandably, extremely short and simple, consisting of only a few words, but the chapters get gradually longer and slightly more difficult as the pupils' vocabulary and structural knowledge increases.

As discussed in section 3.1, conversation can be classified into different types of speech, of which casual conversation seems to be the most frequently represented in the material; the settings for the dialogues in Y3R include locations such as a zoo, a park, a schoolyard, a beach, etc. There are also cases of service encounters (one at a pet shop, Y3R, 38; and one at a restaurant, Y3R, 72); classroom talk, which is also rather casual in nature (Y3R, 20; 40; 80); an interview (Y3R, 60); and some examples which can be seen as language-in-action sequences (situations where the speakers are searching for something, Y3R, 52; 64). Having said that the dialogues in the material are mostly classifiable as 'casual conversation', it must be noted that the dialogues in the first chapters of the textbook are very simple question-and-answer sequences, and 'conversation', with its turn-takings, overlapping, repetitions and interruptions (see section 3.1.1), might be too complex a term to describe this type of speech sequences:

1. Jane: How old are you?
   Whiz: Twelve. (Y3R, 23)

2. Whiz: Do you like apples?
   Peter: Yes, I do. (Y3R, 28)

Although the examples above may not be defined as ‘conversations’, they do qualify as ‘exchanges’, the smallest units of interaction (see section 3.1.3), and are therefore classifiable as linguistic representations of spoken English. The most typically occurring type of exchange found in the material is of the type seen in examples 1 and 2 above: an initiation (*How old are you?*) followed by a response (*Twelve.*), which can also be referred to as an adjacency pair. As mentioned in section 3.1.3, the exchange may also include a follow-up, functioning as a comment or a reaction to the response. Some instances of the more complex type of exchange, including a follow-up, can be found in the material as well:

3. Teacher: Sea Land? Where’s that?
   Whiz: Under the sea.
   Teacher: *I see!* (Y3R, 21)

4. Jane: How big is the farm?
   Farmer: It’s a very big farm.
   Jane: *Is it? How many cows do you have?* (Y3R, 60)

In example 3, the teacher uses the interjection *I see!* as a follow-up to Whiz’s response, in order to express that she has understood the response and finds it interesting. In example 4, Jane uses the question *Is it?* as a follow-up to the farmer's response, expressing interest and also asking a follow-up question.

Because of the simplified and straightforward nature of textbook dialogues, the unplanned, spontaneous nature of conversation discussed in chapter 3 above is hardly visible in the material. This is understandable, as the textbook is designed for young beginners, who would probably be confused by more complex dialogues. There are, however, some cases where the real-time nature of spoken interaction is being somewhat imitated; interruptions and false starts are common in conversation, and there are indeed a few occurrences of both in the material (see section 3.1). Two examples of interruption can be found:

5. Dad: Fantastic! This toy can talk!
   Peter: He isn't a toy! He's a…
   Whiz: *I'm a boy!* I'm a boy! Jane is my big sister! (Y3R, 49)

6. Peter: And here is…
   Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah! (Y3R, 57)

In example 5, Whiz interrupts Peter's father in order to set him straight about him being a real boy instead of a toy, and in example 6, Peter interrupts himself as he gets scared by Whiz's costume. Example 6 can also be interpreted as a false start, as Peter begins an utterance which he then 'restarts' by screaming, but as this is an involuntary reaction to being frightened, it will here be classified as an interruption. The following example of a false start is found in the material:

7. Whiz: Sweet heart? *I don't have a…*
   Peter: Are you alright, Whiz?
   Whiz: I… I… I have a heart! (Y3R, 85)

In example 7, Whiz stops mid-sentence as he realises he does have a heart, which means he has become a real boy instead of a toy. As Peter asks him whether he is feeling well, Whiz re-begins his turn by stating that he has a heart. There is also a case of dysfluency in Whiz's last utterance; the 'stuttering' effect is caused by a repeat, which will be discussed in section 5.2.3.

Another type of dysfluency, discussed in section 3.1.2, is the occurrence of hesitation pauses. The pauses may be either silent or filled with hesitators, which is a category of inserts, comprising expressions (*uh/um* and *eh/erm*) which are used to fill the hesitation pauses in order to give the speaker a possibility to take a break in the middle of their message, and to signal that they still wish to continue talking (Biber et al. 1999, 1092). Hesitators are not found in the material, but there are a few instances which could be interpreted as silent pauses:

8. Jane: *Here is… a witch*. She has beautiful hair. She has lovely eyes. But what an ugly nose!
   Peter: *And next… a tiger*. He has black and yellow clothes. He also has sharp teeth. (Y3R, 56)

9. Whiz: So, what's ice hockey? Do you eat it?
   Jeff: *??!!* (Y3R, 33)

In example 8, the pauses, indicated by "…", can be seen as pauses where the speakers take a moment to think about how to describe the other children's party costumes. It could also be interpreted as either adding dramatic emphasis, or as simple pauses while, presumably, the children being introduced are posing in their outfits. In example 9, Jeff's turn, transcribed as *??!!*, could be seen as a non-verbal reaction, signalling surprise at Whiz's strange question; although it might not qualify as a silent pause within an utterance, as it is the only 'utterance' in Jeff's turn, it is nevertheless a pause, or a gap, in the conversation and clearly has a communicative function.

5.2 Linguistic competence

Linguistic competence, as defined in the CEFR (see section 2.3.1), includes lexical, phonological and syntactical knowledge of language as a system, regardless of pragmatic functions or sociolinguistic values, which on the beginner level can be seen to consist of a basic vocabulary (such as numbers, colours, weekdays, adjectives describing moods or emotions, hobbies, family members etc.), along with skills to pronounce the words and understand them in others' speech; knowledge of elementary grammatical structures (such as the use of articles, personal pronouns, prepositions, questions and imperatives); and the ability to write the learned words and read aloud simple written passages. The choices of themes and topics in the textbook material seem to reflect this, and they can be said to follow the guidelines for English teaching given in POPS 2004, discussed above in section 2.2.1. According to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 110), the knowledge of lexical elements and the ability to use them is classified as belonging to the field of linguistic competence. The category of lexical elements includes fixed expressions, which are sets

of words used as wholes, such as sentential formulae, phrasal idioms and fixed frames. Sentential formulae includes expressions which realise pragmatic microfunctions (see section 5.3), such as different greetings. Another group of lexical elements consists of fixed frames, such as "*Please may I have...*" which can be completed by inserting appropriate words or phrases (Council of Europe 2001, 110). The lexical competence also includes the knowledge and use of grammatical elements, which are the closed word classes such as articles, prepositions and question words (ibid.).

The grammatical aspect of linguistic competence consists of the knowledge of the structural principles of the language, and the ability to produce phrases and sentences in accordance with these 'rules' (Council of Europe 2001, 112). Regarding the grammatical features usually associated with spoken English, one of the most common features to be observed throughout the material is the use of contractions; Biber et al. (1999, 1048) define them as reduced enclitic forms of the verb and of the negative particle, such as *it's* and *can't*, and state that their use is a common effort-saving feature of conversation. In addition to the use of contractions, the use of ellipsis is another time-saving feature of conversation; ellipsis will be discussed further in section 5.2.1 below.

Another grammatical feature associated with conversation which frequently occurs in the material is the use of deictic items. According to Carter and McCarthy (2006, 166), the use of deictic items, or words referring to something beyond the language of the conversation (such as *this*, *that*, *then*, *yesterday*, *there*, and *now*), is a feature of conversation which is used to refer to the people and things in the immediate situation, and which can make the transcript of the conversation incomprehensible to an outside reader. Biber et al. (1999, 1043) also state that deictic items are common in conversation, and their use is frequent especially in private conversations. Both the use of contractions and deictic items can be classified as representing linguistic competence; the former belonging to the field of grammatical competence, and the latter to that of lexical competence.

Yet another feature in spoken English which can be classified as representing the grammatical aspect of linguistic competence is the use of the add-on strategy, which means linking clausal units together by using coordinating conjunctions (see section 3.2.1). The add-on strategy is,

to some extent, found in the material, although the chained clausal units are separated by full stops in the texts:

10. Teacher: How can you get to Sea Land?
    Whiz: Only by sub. You can't take a taxi. *And* you can't take a train. (Y3R, 81)

11. Whiz: How about vegetables? What's your favourite?
    Gadget: Carrots, peas, tomatoes, beans. *And* don't forget to eat your greens! (Y3R, 30)

12. Whiz: I come on foot. *But* sometimes I come by sub. (Y3R, 80)

13. Gadget: I have a frog. *But* I don't have a dog! I have a rat. *But* I don't have a cat!
    Peter: I have a snail. *But* I don't have a whale! (Y3R, 37)

In examples 10 and 11 above, the conjunction *and* is used to chain the units together, and could be seen as representing the add-on strategy. In speech, the full stops visible in the texts would presumably be realised as small pauses between the utterances. In examples 12 and 13, the conjunction *but* is used to chain the clausal units together. Units can be added to other units also by juxtaposition, without any coordinating conjunctions (see section 3.2.1). There are no clear instances of this type of add-on strategy in the material. The add-on strategy is not taught in the material; and the coordinating conjunctions occur mainly in the lexical sense, in the form of grammatical elements to be memorised.

5.2.1 Ellipsis

As discussed above, it is natural in speech to use different types of time-saving devices to keep the conversation flowing. One of these devices is grammatical reduction, such as replacing nouns or noun phrases with pronouns, the use of substitute preforms (see section 3.1.1), the use of contracted forms discussed above, and the use of ellipsis. Ellipsis, or the omission of specific words from the utterances, is common in spoken language, and it occurs in various different forms. Ellipsis occurs

often in non-clausal units, which are discussed in sections 3.2.2 above and 5.2.2 below, but it is also commonly found in clausal units. Biber et al. (1999, 1105) explain that the difference between non-clausal units and ellipted clausal units is that the latter can still be analysed in terms of subject, verb, object, predicative or adverbial, although some of these elements are ellipted. Ellipsis in clausal units is here classified as representing linguistic competence, as it is a grammatical feature of conversation, with no specific communicative function apart from making the utterances shorter and avoiding repetition.

According to Carter (1999, 154), ellipsis in spoken English is usually of the situational type, in other words it touches people or things in the immediate situation, often entailing ellipsis of personal subjects when it is clear who is being referred to. He (ibid.) also notes that ellipsis in speech often occurs with verbs of mental process, for instance *think so* and *wonder if they'll be coming to the party*, and that in many cases elliptical structures resemble fixed expressions, such as *seems worth it* or *absolutely right*. Ellipsis in conversation can be classified as either initial or final ellipsis, although medial ellipsis also occurs, but less frequently.

Biber et al. (1999, 1105) define initial, or situational, ellipsis as the omission of words which have a contextually low informational value at the beginning of a turn or a clause; the main types are the ellipsis of subject, ellipsis of operator and ellipsis of subject and operator. Carter and McCarthy (1998, 64) state that initial ellipsis exemplifies how context-bound spoken language is, as in English, whenever entities are retrievable from the immediate situation, structural items can be omitted. Initial ellipsis is not found in many instances in the material, but a few examples do occur, all of which are of the following type:

14. Whiz: I'm in Jane's kitchen. *Nothing here*! (Y3R, 64)

Example 14 can be seen to represent ellipsis of subject and operator; the utterance *nothing here* is ellipted from *there is*/*there's nothing here*. The other types of initial ellipsis are not found in the

material. Final ellipsis, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1106) refers to the omission of any words which follow the operator, in other words ellipsis of the finite auxiliary or copula. Examples of final ellipsis are found in the material in various instances:

15. Whiz: Do you like apples?
    Peter: *Yes, I do*. (Y3R, 28)

16. Peter: Great! You can dance very well.
    Sparky: Thank you. But I can't sing.
    Bossy: *I can*. Listen. (Y3R, 44)

There are numerous question-answer sequences similar to example 15 found throughout the book. In example 15, there is omission of *like apples* in Peter's reply *yes, I do*, and in example 16, the verb *sing* is omitted from Bossy's utterance *I can*. Medial ellipsis, as defined by Biber et al. (1999, 1107), refers to the omission of the operator, in other words the finite auxiliary or copula, such as *you better* as opposed to *you'd better* or *I gotta go* as opposed to *I've gotta go*. Biber et al. (ibid.) note that medial ellipsis is common in the semi-modal expressions *had better*, *have got to* (often spelled *gotta*) and *be going to* (often spelled *gonna*), as in the examples above. Biber et al. (ibid.) also mention the formulaic greeting *How are you doing*, used in American English, as an example where medial ellipsis occurs; the greeting is often ellipted in the form *How* <-> *ya doing*. There are no instances of medial ellipsis in the material. In addition to ellipsis in clausal units, it occurs also in syntactic non-clausal units, which are discussed in the following section.

5.2.2 Syntactic non-clausal units

Syntactic non-clausal units can be divided into several sub-categories, the most important of which is that of elliptic replies (see section 3.2.2). According to Biber et al. (1999, 1099), elliptic replies are used to avoid needless repetition of what has already been said, and mention an elliptic reply to a *wh*-question as the most typical case of anaphoric ellipsis, in other words ellipsis where the

omitted content can be recovered from the preceding utterances. Various examples of elliptic replies are found in the material, examples 7 – 9 representing elliptic replies to *wh*-questions:

17. Teacher: Sea Land? Where's that?
 Whiz: *Under the sea*. (Y3R, 21)

18. Peter: What is it?
 Gadget: *A factory*. For super toys. (Y3R, 37)

19. Jane: How old are you?
 Whiz: *Twelve*. (Y3R, 23)

In example 17, the reply *Under the sea* is ellipted from "Sea Land is under the sea", in example 18 the reply *A factory* is ellipted from "It is a factory", and in example 19, the reply *Twelve* is ellipted from "I am twelve years old", all three representing anaphoric ellipsis. Elliptic replies may also occur in another form; the question and the assertion can be reversed, so that the assertion elicits a question as a response (Biber et al. 1999, 1099). Although this is, according to Biber et al. (ibid.) less typical than the above-mentioned type, there are a few occurrences of it in the material:

20. Farmer: It's a very big farm.
 Jane: *Is it*? (Y3R, 60)

21. Whiz: But I don't play ice hockey.
 Jeff: *Why not*? (Y3R, 32)

In addition to the above-mentioned types of elliptic reply, Biber et al. (ibid.) state that an assertion can also elicit another assertion as a reply. There are no clear examples of this in the material, apart from the dialogue below, which could be seen to represent this type of sequence:

22. Gadget: OK, friends. Where's my ruler?
 Whiz: *It's behind the laptop.*
 Gadget: *No. Cold.* (Y3R, 40)

In example 22 above, the children are playing a game in the classroom, where professor Gadget has hidden his ruler and the children are looking for it. The sequence between Whiz and Gadget could be seen as an example of the above-mentioned assertion-assertion pair, as Whiz's assertion *it's behind the laptop* could be interpreted as a question (”Is it behind the laptop?”), to which Gadget replies with another (elliptic) assertion *No*. However, Whiz’s remark could also be seen to function as a guess, thus making it a presumed answer to Gadget’s question. Yet another type of elliptic reply, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1100), is a sequence where a question elicits an elliptic question. Some instances of this type are also found in the material:

23. Whiz: Hi, Mary! How are you?
    Mary: I’m fine, thanks. *You?*
    Whiz: *Fine*. (Y3R, 24)

24. Whiz: Do you like bananas?
    Peter: No, I don’t. *Do you?*
    Whiz: I don't know. (Y3R, 28)

25. Peter: Can you help me, please?
    Whiz: Sure. *How?* (Y3R, 46)

In example 23, the question *How are you?* is ellipted into *You?*, and the elliptic question elicits in turn an elliptic answer *Fine* (ellipted from *I’m fine*). In example 24, the question *Do you?* is ellipted from the question *Do you like bananas?*, and in example 25, the question *How?* is ellipted from the question *How can I help you?*.

In addition to elliptic replies, other types of syntactic non-clausal units can be found in the material; instances of condensed questions, echo questions and elliptic exclamatives are found in the textbook dialogues. The category of condensed questions, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1100), includes questions where situational ellipsis (omission of words of low informational value) is used, such as *More sauce?* (ellipted from *Would you like more sauce?*). This is illustrated in the following examples from the material:

26. Jane: Do you want some ice cream?
Peter: Yes, please.
Jane: *Vanilla? Strawberry?*
Peter: All of them, please. I love ice cream.
Jane: There you are.
Peter: Thank you.
Jane: *Jelly? Juice?*
Peter: No, thanks. (Y3R, 73)

27. Whiz: Do you have any frogs? I like frogs.
Man: Yes, I do. *What colour?* I have purple, yellow, orange, red… (Y3R, 38)

In example 26, Jane's two utterances (in italics) represent the former type of condensed questions, functioning as offers; the first one referring to different flavours of ice-cream, the second one referring to other food and drink items presumably available on the table. In example 27, a man working at a pet shop utters the question *What colour?*, enquiring the colour of frogs Whiz likes or wants to buy. Biber et al. (1999, 1100) also mention condensed questions which begin with expressions *How about* and *What about*, and usually lack a main verb (Biber et al. 1999, 1100), which can also be found in the material:

28. Gadget: Grapes and plums, and lovely lemons. Green and yellow watermelons!
Whiz: *How about* vegetables? What's your favourite? (Y3R, 30)

29. Teacher: How do you come to school?
Mary: By bus or by bike. *What about* you, Mrs White?
Teacher: I come by car. *What about* you, Whiz?
Whiz: I come on foot. But sometimes I come by sub. (Y3R, 80)

In the case of condensed questions, Biber et al. (1999, 1100) note that there is no certainty as to which specific words are ellipted, but their interpretation relies nearly entirely on the context. As can be seen in the examples 26 – 29 above, the exact utterances from which the condensed forms have been derived are difficult to formulate, but nevertheless their meaning is clarified by the surrounding utterances.

Echo questions, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1101), include repetition of parts of what has just been said, in order to ask for confirmation; either because the hearer has not heard or understood the previous remark, or because they are finding it difficult to believe. Some instances of echo questions are found in the material:

30. Whiz: I'm from Sea Land.
    Teacher: *Sea Land?* Where's that? (Y3R, 21)

31. Whiz: I come on foot. But sometimes I come by sub.
    Teacher: *By submarine?* When? (Y3R, 80)

32. Mary: Are you twelve years old?
    Whiz: No. I'm twelve **months** old.
    Mary: What?! *Are you only one year old?* (Y3R, 25)

In example 30, the teacher is asking for clarification by repeating the words *Sea Land*, as she does not know the location of the place, and in 31, the teacher seems to find it odd that Whiz claims to come to school by submarine, so she repeats the word, asking for confirmation, perhaps, that she has heard Whiz's utterance correctly, or for further information on Whiz's school transportation. In example 32, Mary is expressing disbelief and requesting for confirmation with the question *Are you only one year old?*; this is not an exact repetition of Whiz's utterance, but it can still be seen as an echo question, as the interpretation of *twelve months old* is the same as of *one year old*.

Elliptic exclamatives are defined by Biber et al. (1999, 1102) as exclamative clauses with ellipsis of a pronoun subject and a form of the verb; some examples of this can be found in the material:

33. "Mr Duncan also has a goat, a sheep, a cat and a dog. *What a farm!*"
    (Y3R, 62)

34. Whiz: *What a lovely week!* (Y3R, 69)

In both of the examples above, the exclamations (*what a farm / a lovely week*) have an ellipted subject *it* and an ellipted verb *is*. Example 33 is extracted from one of the few written passages in the material; it is a written version of Jane's interview of a farmer.

In section 3.2.2 above, exclamatives, including insults, are also mentioned as members of the group of syntactic non-clausal units. Understandably, insults are not found in the material, but as Biber et al. (1999, 1103) notes, there is also a group of less offensive exclamatory phrases and words, some of which are found in the material as well:

35. Whiz: *Oh dear.* I feel funny. I have jelly in my tummy. (Y3R, 73)

Biber et al. (1999, 1103) explain that the expressions *dear* and *dear me* are used to express emotions such as disapproval or regret, as can be seen in example 35 above. This type of exclamations could also be seen as belonging to the group of interjections, which are classified as inserts, as the division between inserts and syntactic non-clausal units is not clear-cut in all cases (see section 3.2.2).

5.2.3 Repetition

Biber et al. (1999, 1049) state that in conversation, it is common for speakers to repeat parts or all of what has just been said, which helps to lessen the pressure of planning the next utterance. Repetition is here classified as linguistic competence, as it's use is not emphasised or practiced in the material; it seems to function as added 'spice' to make the dialogues more conversation-like, or in order to emphasise certain grammatical or lexical features in the texts. The following examples of repetition are found in the material:

36. Peter: Do you drink?
Whiz: No, I don't. But I need energy.
Peter: *You need energy*. But from where? (Y3R, 29)

37. Whiz: I have a brain. It's a computer.
Peter: Do you have a heart?
Whiz: *Do I have a heart?* (Y3R, 37)

Biber et al. (1999, 1049) refer to the repetition found in the examples above as 'local repetition'. In example 36, Peter repeats the last part of Whiz's utterance, *you need energy* before asking where he gets energy from, perhaps to give himself time to consider Whiz's message and to plan the follow-up question. In example 37, Whiz's repetition of Peter's question expresses Whiz's unawareness of whether he has a heart; he is repeating the question *do I have a heart* perhaps to professor Gadget, who is standing with them in the situation, or perhaps to consider the matter himself. There is also another case of repetition in the material; an interviewer repeats the answers of the interviewee:

38. Farmer: I have fifty-seven cows.
Jane: *57*. Are all the cows from England?
Farmer: No, some are from America. Twenty-six, I think.
Jane: *26, from America*. OK. Do you have pigs?
Farmer: Yes. From Canada. A hundred and ninety.
Jane: *190*! (Y3R, 60 – 61)

Here, Jane is interviewing a farmer for a school magazine, asking him questions about his farm. She repeats the numbers from the farmer's answers, perhaps to indicate that she is making notes. Another reason for including this type of repetition to the text is probably the introduction of numerals, as numbers from 20 to 100 are mentioned as one of the topics of the chapter where this dialogue is found, so the numbers are repeated to give them special emphasis in the text. Yet another case of repetition is found in the material, here, the speaker repeats his own words:

39. Whiz: This is a nightmare. But I can learn. *I can learn. I can learn…*
(Y3R, 30)

Example 39 takes place in a setting where Whiz is dreaming, and the extract is found inside a thought bubble. He is repeating the utterance *I can learn*, supposedly, to convince himself of his ability to learn the names of different fruits and vegetables.

According to Biber et al. (1999, 1055), there is also a type of repetition where the speaker begins and then re-begins the same unit of speech, which is called a 'repeat'. Repeats are a type of dysfluency (see section 3.1.2), and are often used to gain planning time for the next utterance (ibid.). There is one instance of repeats in the material:

40. Peter: Are you alright, Whiz?
Whiz: *I… I… I* have a heart! *I have a heart!* I'm so happy! (Y3R, 85)

In example 40 above, Whiz discovers that he has a heart (which he has not been sure of, as it is unclear whether he is a toy or a child), and seems to be struggling to find words as he is surprised and emotional. He is repeating the pronoun *I* until he has planned the rest of the utterance, creating a 'stuttering' effect. In example 40, there is also a case of repetition; Whiz repeats the utterance *I have a heart*, as he is excited about his discovery and perhaps wants to emphasise it by repeating it intentionally, as opposed to the unintentional repeat at the beginning of his turn.

5.2.4 Interjections

Another spoken English feature classifiable as a part of linguistic competence is the group of interjections. Inserts which can be classified as interjections, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1083), have an exclamatory function which is used to convey the emotion of the speaker; they are used in the material to express emotions such as surprise, delight and displeasure. Biber et al. (ibid.) state that the most common interjection *oh* is often characterised as a discourse marker, as it is used both to introduce and to respond to utterances. *Oh* often occurs in combinations with other inserts, such as *Oh yeah*, *Oh yes*, *Oh no*, *Oh aye* (regional BrE), *Oh well*, *Oh God*, *Oh I see*, *Oh right* (see ibid.).

The usual function of the insert *oh* is, according to Biber et al. (ibid.), to express surprise or emotive arousal, so it can be used to introduce or respond to an utterance which can be seen as new information, which the speaker has just noticed or discovered. Some instances of the common combinations of *oh* and other inserts are found in the textbook:

41. [In a caption] I go shopping. I hate shopping. *Oh no!* (Y3R, 69)

42. Jane: Where are we now, by the way?
Guide: 'You are here'. On the map. Do you see?
Jane: *Oh yes.* We're next to the flamingoes. (Y3R, 77)

43. Whiz: I'm a boy! *Oh boy*! (Y3R, 89)

Example 41 is an extract from a chapter where the character Whiz tells what he does on each day of the week; there are pictures of different activities, along with a brief explanation representing each day. Every description ends in an interjection, the *Oh no* in example 41 expressing Whiz's displeasure about going shopping. In example 42, situated in a zoo, Jane uses the common combination *Oh yes* to express that she has just realised where they are on a map. In example 43, Whiz uses the interjection *Oh boy* to express surprise and delight. There are also other examples of the insert *oh* found in the textbook:

44. Jane: What is it? *Oh,* I know! He's in the toy shop again! (Y3R, 53)

45. Mayor: I'm the Mayor of Sandy Bay. You **were** a super toy. But now you are a boy.
Gadget: Say something, Whiz. Don't just stand there!
Whiz: What? How? Who? Me? *Oh,* thank you. Thank you so much. (Y3R, 89)

46. Jane: *Oh,* look! Big cats! Lions and tigers! (Y3R, 76)

In example 44, the children are looking for Whiz who has gone missing, and discuss where he might have gone. Jane uses *oh* to convey her sudden realisation of Whiz's possible whereabouts. In

example 45, Whiz uses *oh* to express surprise and delight for the Mayor's declaration that Whiz has finally become a real boy. The beginning of Whiz's turn could also be seen as a set of false starts (see section 5.1), as he seems to be taken by surprise and is struggling for words. Lastly, in example 46, Jane is looking at a map of the zoo and notices that they are about to see lions and tigers, and expresses her delight caused by this new information to the others by using the interjection *oh*.

Biber et al. (1999, 1084) list *ah* and *wow* as less common and less routinely used interjections to convey emotions. They (ibid.) also state that *ah* and *wow* usually express more intense emotions than *oh*. *Wow* is, according to Biber et al. (ibid.), normally used to express positive surprise, even delight. Instances of both *ah* and *wow* are found in the material:

47. Jane: Is he at the post office?
    Peter: No. He isn't there. *Ah!* (Y3R, 53)

48. Gadget: Welcome to Sea Land.
    Children: *Wow!* (Y3R, 36)

49. Peter: *Wow!* I can't believe it. How can you be so fast? (Y3R, 46)

Example 47 is found in the same dialogue as example 44 above, where the children are looking for Whiz. Here, Peter uses the interjection *ah* to express his relief at realising where they are going to find Whiz. In examples 48 and 49, *wow* is used to express positive surprise: in 48, the children are in a submarine visiting an underwater land, and are impressed by what they see from the windows, and in 49, Whiz cleans up Peter's room in an instant, which amazes Peter. Another interjection used to express delight is *yippee*. Biber et al. (1999, 1085) state that *yippee* is a rare interjection in conversational English, and it can also be used in an ironic sense. *Yippee* occurs several times in the material, and it is also the title of the textbook series:

50. Whiz: I'm happy! I can drink and eat! *Yippee!* (Y3R, 53)

51. Mary: The surprise is a trip.
Jane: In the super sub!
Peter: *Yippee!* Let’s go! (Y3R, 73)

In all of the examples found in the material, *yippee* is used to express delight or surprise; there are no instances of an ironic use of the interjection. Biber et al. (1999, 1084) also mention interjections *oops* and *whoops*, which are used in the occasion of a small mishap, such as the speaker spilling something. There is one instance of *oops* in the material:

52. [In a caption] It’s snowy. I go skiing. *Oops!* (Y3R, 68)

In example 52, *oops* is attached to a picture of Whiz accidentally getting his skis tangled up.

The above-mentioned interjections mostly express positive emotions. Biber et al. (1999, 1085) also list interjections which are used to convey unpleasant emotions and describe their meanings as follows: *ugh* is usually associated with disgust; *ow* and *ouch* are used to express (typically physical) pain; *aargh* and *urgh* normally convey pain and displeasure; *tt* (an alveolar click, which is often repeated) is used to express some degree of regret or disapproval; and *hm* is associated with lack of enthusiasm. These 'negative' interjections are not widely represented in the material; only one negative interjection is found:

53. [In a caption] I go rollerblading. I don’t like it. *Ouch!* (Y3R, 69)

Example 53 is attached to a picture of Whiz falling over in his rollerblades, which indicates that the interjection *ouch* is used as an expression of pain. In reaction to negative experiences, the interjections may also be combined with expletives, or taboo expressions, such as *Oh hell!* (Biber et al. 1999, 1094). Biber et al. (ibid.) state that expletives, which can also occur on their own as inserts, can be divided into taboo expletives, referring to one of the taboo domains of sex, religion

or bodily excretion (such as *shit* or *bloody hell*), and moderated expletives, which are euphemistic in that they are phonetic modifications of their taboo origin or cases where the original word is substituted by a related word, for example *gosh* (phonetic modification) and *goodness* (substitution of the original word) for *God*. As the material is designed for comprehensive school children, it does not include expletives.

Biber et al. (1999, 520) notes that adjectives can be used as exclamations as well, similarly to interjections; and some of them can indeed be categorised as inserts. This type of exclamative use of adjectives is widely visible in the material:

54. Guide: They're lovely.
    Jane: *Beautiful!* And where are the penguins? (Y3R, 77)

55. Whiz: Sea Land is under the sea.
    Mary: We know. *Cool!* (Y3R, 81)

56. Whiz: Twelve, fifteen, twenty-four. Twenty-six!
    Gadget: *Amazing!* Well done! (Y3R, 41)

In addition to the various interjections mentioned above, the material contains some miscellaneous interjections, most of which are onomatopoetic:

57. [In a rhyme] I'm eating macaroni! *Yum-yum, hip-hip-hooray!* (Y3R, 51)

58. Peter: And here is... *Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!*
    Whiz: I'm not a monster! I'm Whiz! (Y3R, 57)

59. [In a caption] I go to sleep at nine. *Zzz zzz zzz…* (Y3R, 69)

60. [In a caption] I play with Jane and Sandy. *Woof!* (Y3R, 68)

61. Jeff: Can I have some juice, please?
    Mary: There you are, Jeff.
    Jeff: Thanks. *Yummy!* (Y3R, 73)

62. Pigs: *Oink oink oink…* (Y3R, 61)

63. Gadget: *Hmmm…* (Y3R, 37)

In example 57, the interjection *hip-hip-hooray* conveys delight, and both *yum-yum* in 57 and *yummy* in 61 are used to express the deliciousness of the food or drink the speaker is, or will be, enjoying. In example 58, the onomatopoetic *Aaaaaaaaaah* is used to show that Peter is screaming, because he is scared by Whiz's Halloween costume. Examples 59, 60 and 62 are all onomatopoetic, the first representing snoring sounds, the second illustrating the barking of a dog, and the third one imitating the sounds made by pigs. In example 63, the onomatopoetic *Hmmm…* expresses that the person is thinking; this could also be seen as a filled pause, but as it is inside a thought bubble and occurs on its own instead of in a combination with another utterance, it is here treated as an onomatopoetic interjection. Most of the interjections, including the animal noises, are translated in the vocabulary section of the material, and thus it can be stated that interjections have been included in the material to increase the learners' vocabulary; there is also an exercise on interjections in the exercise book (Y3W, 172), where the learner needs to connect the English interjections with their Finnish counterparts.

5.2.5 Vocatives

Vocatives, or address terms, such as first names and terms of endearment, are found throughout the material. They seem to be used mainly on a lexical level in the material; they occur in several texts, but the only instance of an explanation regarding their use is found in the exercise book, in a small 'cultural information' box in a corner of a page (Y3W, 21), explaining that teachers are not addressed by using their first names in English, referring to the level of formality in addressing 'superiors'. The use and choice of appropriate vocatives in different speech situations is classified in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 119) as a part of the sociolinguistic competence, but as they

seem to serve mainly as lexical input, they will here be classified as representing linguistic competence.

Biber et al. (1999, 1112) list three functions for which vocatives are normally used: firstly, as attention signals (to attract the attention of the addressee); secondly, to single someone out as the addressee; and thirdly, to define or maintain social relationships. They (1999, 1108) state that vocatives are frequently used in English conversation, especially in situations with more than two interlocutors. There are various different vocatives which, as described by Biber et al. (ibid.), represent both ends of a relationship scale from very familiar or intimate, such as family terms or forms of endearment, to distant and respectful vocatives, such as titles followed by surnames or honorifics. The choice of vocatives depends on the level of familiarity between speakers, and as Biber et al. (1999, 1112) point out, vocatives are used to express familiarity considerably more often than to express respect. The material includes several instances of vocatives, both familiar and more respectful ones:

64. Mother: Thank you, *sweetheart.* (Y3R, 85)

65. Teacher: How do you come to school?
Mary: By bus or by bike. What about you, *Mrs White?* (Y3R, 80)

The endearment term *sweetheart* in example 64 represents the familiar type of vocatives, whereas the use of a title and a surname *Mrs White* in example 65 is situated on the more respectful end of the scale, which is typical for a student addressing a teacher in English.

According to Biber et al. (1999, 1111), the vast majority of vocatives used in normal conversation are first names, both in their full forms and in shortened, familiarising forms (e.g. a shortened form such as *Chris* for *Christopher*, or a hypocoristic form ending in -y / -ie,, such as *Chrissy*). This can also be seen in the material, as most of the vocatives found in the texts are indeed full first names. Interestingly, Biber et al. (1999, 1110) note that as vocatives are mostly used to

express familiarity, the familiarising forms of first names are often favoured over the full names in personal address, but the textbook does not contain a single instance of these forms.

Biber et al. (1999, 1112) point out that as the use of first-name vocatives expresses friendship or acquaintance in spoken English, the failure to use this type of first-name address can be interpreted as rude, and the hearer may think that the speaker does not remember the name of the addressee. This is a piece of cultural knowledge that can be considered useful for the Finnish children learning English, as first-name vocatives are remarkably less common in conversational Finnish. However, Biber et al. (ibid.) note that vocatives are left out in English conversation situations among close associates, where the participants are certain of their mutual relationship, such as family members, and where there is no need for the addressee-identifying of the relationship-maintaining role of the vocatives.

Biber et al. (1999, 1103) state that vocatives can occur on their own or with inserts, but are also often used as prefaces or tags to, for example, imperatives or declarative clauses. Regarding the position of the vocatives which are attached to inserts or longer units, Biber et al. (1999, 1111) state that a vast majority of them are used in the final position, which is to say that they follow the unit to which they are attached. The same can be seen in the material; most of the vocatives found are full first names in final positions:

66. Whiz: Hi, *Mary*! (Y3R, 24)
67. Gadget: Do you like fruit, *Whiz*? (Y3R, 30)
68. Gadget: Very good, *Peter*! (Y3R, 37)
69. Peter: Are you alright, *Whiz?* (Y3R, 85)

According to Biber et al. (1999, 1111), vocatives are also, but less frequently, found in the initial position (preceding the conversational unit it is attached to) and medial position, where the vocative

is either in the middle of a conversational unit or between two separate units. There are no instances of medial vocatives, but one initial vocative is found:

70. Fiona: It's raining cats and dogs!
Whiz: Cats and dogs? *Fiona,* please put on your wellies. (Y3R, 86)

In example 70, Whiz is hosting a radio show, where the listeners can send text messages. He answers Fiona's text message, and uses the first-name vocative to single her out as the addressee for a proposition to wear rubber boots. Vocatives are sometimes used with imperatives, which can be seen in example 70, where the vocative has a softening effect on the proposition. Initial vocatives are, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1112), usually combined with longer conversational units, which is also the case in example 70, where the vocative is followed by the clausal unit *please put on your wellies*, while final vocatives are normally paired with shorter units, as can be seen in examples 66 – 69 above. Stand-alone vocatives also occur in the material:

71. Guide: Who's that naughty boy?
Jane: *Whiz!* (Y3R, 77)

72. Whiz: *Ginger!* She's here! (Y3R, 65)

In example 71, Jane sees Whiz swimming in a penguin pool at a zoo, which is of course not allowed, and uses the first name vocative *Whiz!* both to express surprise and to seek the addressee's attention. Example 72 represents the attention-seeking function; Whiz is trying to rescue a cat from a burning house, and is shouting the name of the cat in order to find her.

For the reason that it is more common for the vocatives to express familiarity than respect, occupational vocatives, or status vocatives, such as *doctor* are rare in normal conversation, as are personal pronouns such as *you* and *everyone* (Biber et al. 1999, 1110). The material includes a few instances of these types of vocative:

73. Curly: Is it in the pencil case?
Gadget: Red hot! Well done.
Curly: Thank you, *professor*. (Y3R, 40)

74. Jane: Welcome, *everyone*. (Y3R, 56)

75. Whiz: I'm not a monster! I'm Whiz! Take it easy, *everyone*! (Y3R, 57)

76. Children: Happy birthday, Peter!
Peter: Thank you, *everyone.* (Y3R, 72)

The instance of the occupational vocative *professor* in example 73 is used in a school setting, in a dialogue between a pupil and a professor. The situation can be seen as more formal than everyday conversation, which explains the use of a more respectful vocative. In examples 74 and 75, the otherwise rare pronoun vocative *everyone* is used in a party setting; in 74 by Jane addressing her party guests, and in 75 by Whiz trying to calm down the children who have been frightened by his party costume. *Everyone* is also used in example 76, where Peter is addressing his whole group of friends at once.

5.2.6 Response elicitors and response forms

Biber et al. (1999, 1089) describe the inserts functioning as response elicitors as general question tags, which are used to the message having been understood, such as *Huh?*, *Eh?*, *Alright?*, *Right?*, and *See?*. These inserts are here classified as representing linguistic competence, as they are, similarly to the interjections and vocatives discussed above, not particularly taught in the material, and can be seen as simply lexical input. Again, it is clear that these inserts have the pragmatic functions of asking or answering, but as their use is only clear from the context and they are not expected to be practised, they will not qualify as pragmatic competence for the purposes of this study.

Biber et al. (1999,1089) point out that "*Right?*" can be seen as an exception from the other response elicitors, as it requires a verbal response from the addressee. These forms are normally

used in informal situations, and they can be preceded by statements, directives or questions, as can be seen in the following examples from the textbook:

77. Whiz: You drink ice tea. *Right*?
Jeff: Right.
Whiz: You eat ice cream. *Right*?
Jeff: Right. (Y3R, 33)

78. Jane: Yes! We're all here! Can we see the monkeys?
Guide: A little later – *all right?* (Y3R, 76)

79. Whiz: Hello, Sunil! Wear a hat, *OK*? (Y3R, 86)

In example 77, "*Right?*" follows the statements "You drink ice tea" and "You eat ice cream", turning them into questions. In example 78, a statement is followed by "*all right?*" which elicits a signal of understanding and acceptance from the addressee, and in example 79, a directive is followed by "*OK?*" which softens the directive and, again, calls for a signal of acceptance from the addressee.

Response forms are, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1089), "brief and routinized responses to a previous remark by a different speaker", which include responses to questions (such as *yes* and *no* and their variants), responses to directives (such as *okay*), and responses to assertions (backchannels such as *uh-huh*, *mhm*). Concerning the responses to questions, Biber et al. (1999, 1090) note that in conversational English, the more informal *yeah* is more frequent than *yes*, and that forms such as *yep*, *nope*, and also *uh-huh (*for *yes*) and *huh-uh* (for *no*) are also commonly used. The material does not include any examples of the above-mentioned responses; only the 'basic' forms *yes* and *no* are found in the texts.

Biber et al. (ibid.) also mention *okay*, *right* and *alright* as response forms, and state that *okay* can be used as a response to directives, but also to various other speech acts which relate to "future actions, such as suggestions, offers, advice, and permission-giving", whereas *right*, in addition to the similar type of use as *okay*, serves as a response form which indicates agreement. In the material,

the response form *right* can be seen in example 77 above, where it is used to express agreement with the speaker asking whether the addressee drinks ice tea or eats ice cream. In addition to three instances of the response form *okay* (spelled *OK*) in the textbook, the word *sure* is also used to express agreement and compliance, and can be seen as a response form:

80. Peter: Can you help me, please?
    Whiz: *Sure*. How?
    Peter: Can you clean my room, please?
    Whiz: *No problem!* (Y3R, 46)

81. Peter: Can I have some pizza, please?
    Waitress: *OK*. (Y3R, 71)

82. Whiz: I'm a boy! I'm a boy! Jane is my big sister!
    Dad: *OK*. Take it easy. You're Jane's little brother. Nice to meet you! (Y3R, 49)

83. Farmer: No. Some are from America. Twenty-six, I think.
    Jane: 26, from America. *OK*. (Y3R, 61)

Example 80 includes the use of *sure* as a response form; Whiz is using it to express that he agrees to help Peter. Whiz also uses the fixed expression *no problem*, which can also be classified as a response form to express compliance to Peter's request. In examples 81 and 82, the response form *OK* is used to express agreement, in the first example a waitress takes an order for pizza, and in the second one Peter's father calms Whiz down by seemingly agreeing to his opinion. In example 83, Jane interviews a farmer and writes down his answers, so she uses the response form *OK* to notify the interviewee that she has written the answer down and is ready to continue the interview.

According to Biber et al. (1999, 1091), response forms can also be used as a response to statements, to signal that the hearer has received and understood the message. This type of inserts functions as backchannels, which are indicators of the conversation being in progress, and of the speakers keeping in touch with each other. Biber et al. (ibid.) state that the use of the inserts *really* and *I see* as backchannels indicates a higher level of interest to the speaker's message than the use

of the reduplicative forms *uh huh* and *mhm*. There is an instance of *I see* used in the backchanneling function in the material:

84. Teacher: Sea Land? Where's that?
Whiz: Under the sea.
Teacher: *I see!* (Y3R, 21)

Here, the teacher uses the backchannel *I see* to express that she has understood Whiz's explanation of the location of Sea Land, and is fascinated because she has not heard of such a place before.

5.2.7 Discourse markers

Discourse markers form yet another category of inserts. Carter (1997, 60) states that discourse markers allow the maintenance of informal interaction, and removing them from casual discourse would result to the speakers sounding as if they were giving a public speech. Biber et al. (1999, 1046) explain that discourse markers, often situated at the beginning of an utterance, have two roles: to signal a change in the progress of the conversation (such as a change of topic with markers *but* and *so*, or returning to an interrupted topic by using the marker *anyway*) and to signal an interactive relationship between the message, the speaker and the hearer. Carter and McCarthy (2006, 167) also mention the use of *right* and *now* as discourse markers to finish the ongoing topic or phrase in the conversation and to move on to another topic. Biber et al. (1999, 1074) state that it can be difficult to define which items should be included in the category of discourse markers. They (ibid.) exemplify this by noting that many words which are classified as discourse markers have an adverbial function as well as a discourse marking one; for example the words *well* and *now* are classifiable as both circumstance adverbs and discourse markers. Their classification of discourse markers includes the interactive uses of inserts *well*, *now* and *right*, and also the use of finite verb formulae such as *I mean* and *you know* (ibid.). Discourse markers, as all of the other inserts, are used to realise specific functions in conversation and could therefore be classified as representing

pragmatic competence, but as they are not widely found in the material, and when they are found, they can be seen as lexical items added in the dialogues to make them seem more authentic, and hence are here defined as belonging to the field of linguistic competence.

Carter and McCarthy (2006, 59) note that the category of discourse markers also includes sets of lexical items for signalling functions, such as expressing shared knowledge with *you know* and stating existing knowledge with *you see*. These sets of items can be classified as fixed expressions, which are used as wholes, thus belonging to the field of lexical competence. Biber et al. (1999, 1075) also mention the use of the term 'discourse marker' in reference to a category of utterances which consist of more than one word, and note that they usually resemble comment clauses in form, such as *I mean, see*, *now then* and *mind (you)*, in addition to the afore-mentioned examples given by Carter and McCarthy. Biber et al. (1999, 1086) point out that certain inserts which are mainly associated with other functions, such as *oh* (an interjection) and *okay* (a response form), may also be considered as belonging to the category of discourse markers, in an 'utterance launching' function, in other words preparing the hearer for the message that follows. In addition to the above-mentioned discourse markers *well*, *right* and *now*, Biber et al. (1999, 1074) mention adverbs as possible utterance launchers; stance adverbs such as *anyway* or linking adverbs such as *so* and *then* are often used to introduce utterances. Discourse markers are not widely represented in the material; *well* and *right* are not used in the texts as discourse markers, but one instance of *now* is found:

85. Jane: *Now*, a friendly ghost. She has a white t-shirt. And white jeans. She has a white face. And white hair. (Y3R, 57)

In example 85, *now* can be seen as an utterance launcher (see section 3.2.1); Jane introduces and describes the children in their party costumes. According to Biber et al. (1999, 1070), *but* is

commonly used as a turn-opener, creating a contrast to what has been said. There are instances of *but* which can be seen as utterance launchers in the material:

86. Jane: She has beautiful hair. She has lovely eyes.
    But what an ugly nose! (Y3R, 56)

87. Peter: You can dance very well.
    Sparky: Thank you. *But* I can't sing.

88. Peter: Do you drink?
    Whiz: No, I don't. *But* I need energy.
    Peter: You need energy. *But* from where? (Y3R, 29)

In the examples above, *but* is not a turn-opener, as it occurs in the middle of a turn, but it can be seen as an utterance launcher, as it creates a contrast, or a change of perspective, to the previous utterances. In example 88, which is a part of a dialogue where Peter asks Whiz which food he likes, Whiz tells Peter that he does not eat or drink, but begins a new utterance to elaborate that he needs energy. Peter also uses the utterance launcher *but* to ask another question, enquiring about Whiz's sources of energy. Peter's last utterance can also be classified as a condensed question, discussed in section 5.2.2. Additionally, Biber et al. (1999, 1074) also mention adverbs as possible utterance launchers; stance adverbs such as *anyway* or linking adverbs such as *so* and *then* are often used to introduce utterances. Some instances of *so* at the beginning of a question are found in the material:

89. Whiz: You eat ice cream, right?
    Jeff: Right.
    Whiz: *So*, what's ice hockey? Do you eat it? (Y3R, 33)

In example 89, Whiz is trying to understand the word 'ice hockey', comparing it with other compounds with the word 'ice' in them, using utterance launcher *so* to indicate that he has reached a conclusion, for which he is asking for confirmation. Another utterance launcher found in the material is *OK*:

90. Gadget: *OK*, friends. Where's my ruler? (Y3R, 40)

In example 90, which takes place in a classroom setting, professor Gadget is asking the pupils to guess where he has hidden his ruler as part of a game. He uses the insert *OK* to get the attention of the children and to signal the beginning of the game. Here, *OK* can also be seen as an attention signal.

Other types of utterance launchers are prefaces, which are units attached to the beginning of a message in order to create emphasis or introduce the topic; fronting, which involves changing the basic word order; and overtures, which are longer, fixed expressions used for changing the direction of the conversation, such as *let's see* (see section 3.2.1 for discussion on these features). There are no examples of fronting in the material, but at least one instance of an overture can be found:

91. Jane: Where is Whiz now?
Peter: *Let's see*. He isn't at the airport. (Y3R, 52)

In example 91, Jane asks Peter about Whiz's whereabouts, but instead of answering her, Peter changes the conversation into a 'language-in-action' sequence (see section 3.1), where the children try to locate Whiz on a GPS map. The fixed expression *by the way* could also be seen as a discourse marker, adding information or a 'side remark', which changes the topic of the conversation (similarly to *anyway*):

92. Jane: Where are we now, *by the way*? (Y3R,77)

Example 92 is extracted from a dialogue between the children and a zoo guide; they are looking at a map of the zoo area and discussing whether lions and tigers are dangerous, and Jane changes the topic by asking the guide about their location on the map, adding the expression *by the way* to the

end of her utterance. This expression could be classified as an overture, despite that it has been placed at the end of the utterance instead of an initial position.

5.2.8 Tags

As opposed to prefaces, which are attached to the beginning of a message, tags are found after the body of the message, adding emphasis, providing clarification or repetition. From the different types of tags listed in section 3.2.1 above, instances of retrospective comment clauses and self-supplied answers are found in the material:

93. Jane: Are all the cows from England?
Farmer: No. Some are from America. Twenty-six, *I think*. (Y3R, 61)

94. Whiz: You eat ice cream, right?
Jeff: Right.
Whiz: So, what's ice hockey? *Do you eat it?* (Y3R, 33)

In example 93, Jane is interviewing a farmer for a school magazine, and is asking about the origin of the cows on the farm. The farmer adds a retrospective comment clause *I think*, commenting on the information (the amount of American cows) in his utterance, expressing a level of certainty with a slight possibility of error. Biber et al. (1999, 1081) explains that the use of a self-supplied answer turns *wh*-questions into *yes-no* questions, where the speaker offers an answer which they believe is the most likely. Example 94 can be seen to include a self-supplied answer, as Whiz first asks what ice hockey is, then suggests an answer of his own, although it is also in the form of a question: *Do you eat it?*. Biber et al. (ibid.) note that vocatives (see section 5.2.5) are also used as a type of tags. There are also some instances of retrospectively added non-clausal units in the material:

95. Peter: What is it?
Gadget: A factory. *For super toys*. (Y3R, 37)

96. Jane: That little boy can’t swim. He’s in trouble.
Peter: We must do something! *And fast!* (Y3R, 84)

In the examples above, a non-clausal unit has been added to the end of the utterance to give additional information or to clarify the original message. In example 95, professor Gadget adds a non-clausal unit *for super toys* to his utterance, perhaps to clarify his message or to add emphasis to the fact that his factory is making super toys by moving the information to the end of the utterance. In example 96, the children are at a beach and they notice that a small boy has been swept up by a wave. Peter adds the non-clausal unit *and fast* to his utterance to clarify that he believes they need to act fast to help the boy. These examples do not completely fulfil the criteria for tags as defined by Biber et al. (1999, 1081); they state that tags usually repeat the content in the preceding clausal unit (for example, a pronoun used in the clausal unit is repeated in the tag by replacing it with a full noun phrase for clarification), but as they are retrospectively added units which have the function of qualifying and clarifying what has been said, they are here classified as tags.

According to Biber et al. (1999, 208), question tags are very common for English conversation. Question tags are usually added to declarative clauses, and are normally opposite in polarity with the declarative clause (see ibid.), as in the following example: It's a big farm, *isn't it?*, where the question tag is the *isn't it* added to the end. Although the question tags are commonly found in conversation, they are absent from the material.

5.3 Pragmatic competence

As discussed in section 2.3.2, pragmatic competence is concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources, and can be divided into discourse competence, functional competence and design competence. Discourse competence, which involves skills in producing coherent messages and following the ‘co-operative principle’ (see section 2.3.2) for effective communication, can be too complex a feature to be included in young learners’ teaching material. For young learners,

according to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 123), discourse skills are usually embedded in the mother tongue education, and foreign language learning normally begins with using short, sentence-length turns and the importance of mastering the components of discourse competence (such as coherence and cohesion) increases only at higher proficiency levels. Pragmatic competence, as defined in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 13), also includes the ability to identify different types of texts (such as anecdotes, debates and formal letters) and to recognise forms of irony and parody, all of which can be expected to be found in higher proficiency levels.

Pragmatic competence is represented in the textbook material mainly in the form of functional competence, which involves the knowledge of and ability to use different utterances for different communicative function. As discussed in section 2.3.2, functional competence consists of micro- and macrofunctions. Macrofunctions, or the categories of larger speech sequences for functions such as commentary, explanation and argumentation, classifiable by their interactional structure, are not widely represented in the material. It is noted in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 125) that pragmatically competent speakers are capable of understanding, and participating in, interactional processes from the beginning to the end. This, again, can be said to be a skill which develops only at later stages of proficiency, and is not relevant in language teaching for beginners. Microfunctions, or categories of short utterances with specific functions, are more fitting to be included in teaching material for beginners, as the first steps of speaking in a foreign language involve production of simple utterances. Various examples of brief utterances with functions such as seeking information (asking and answering), expressing and finding out attitudes (emotions such as likes or dislikes, interest and surprise) and socialising (addressing, greeting and introductions) are found throughout the material. It must, however, be noted that although there are several different microfunctions found in the material, not all of them are explained or practiced; some of the features can be seen as simply lexical input, which results in them being classified as advancing the linguistic competence of the learners. The types of utterances which are used when encountering new people and meeting friends, as well as polite interaction in both familiar and slightly more

formal situations, are found in the textbook material on several occasions, and in addition, there are tasks for practising e.g. greetings, introductions, and the use of *please* in Y3W. Therefore, the insert categories of greetings and farewells and various polite speech act formulae are included in this section, along with the use of imperative clauses.

5.3.1 Greetings and introductions

The first chapters of the textbook material revolve around the themes of introductions, greetings and farewells, and asking for and giving personal information, such as age and home country. There are several exercises for practising them in the exercise book, both of the listen-and-repeat type and pair work, where the pupils can practise the utterances with their classmates. Both the textbook and the exercise book, contain examples of 'fixed frames' (see section 5.2) for introductions, such as *My name is…* and *I'm from…*, which are practised by adding suitable words to the end of the sentences. Although the fixed frames, along with fixed expressions such as *How are you?* and *Good morning!* are classified in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 110) as linguistic (lexical) competence, they are realisations of socialising microfunctions (see Council of Europe 2001, 126), which is made evident through repetition and practise in the material, and are therefore classifiable as pragmatic competence.

The category of inserts with the function of greeting or leave-taking comprises greetings such as *Hi*, *Hello* and *Good morning*, and farewells such as *Bye* and *Goodbye*. In conversation, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1085), the choice of different greetings depends on the level of formality of the situation and on how well the speakers know each other. Biber et al. (1999, 1086) explain that the length of the greeting usually expresses the level of formality of the situation and the relationship between the interlocutors; briefer greeting words such as *hi* are less formal than longer greetings such as *hello*, which, again, are less formal than "good forms" such as *good morning, good afternoon*, and *good evening* (which can be abbreviated by omitting the word *good*, resulting in greetings such as *Morning*). Several instances of greetings can be found in the material:

97. Whiz: *Hello*, Sunil!
    Gadget: *Hi there*, Pauli! (Y3R, 86)

98. Waitress: Have fun! *Bye!* (Y3R, 73)

99. Jane: *Hi!* I'm Jane!
    Peter: *Hello!* I'm Peter! (Y3R, 9)

100. Man: *Hi!*
     Woman: *Hello!* (Y3R, 8)

As can be seen in example 97 above, greeting words are often followed by vocatives (see Biber et al. 1999, 1085). A greeting and its response together form an adjacency pair (see section 3.1.3), where the first utterance elicits the other as a response.

Biber et al. (1999, 1085) state that the pairs of greetings or farewells are often symmetrical, in other words the greeting word uttered by the speaker will be returned by the addressee in an identical manner. There are not many cases in the material where this happens; in most occasions, the greetings are not reciprocated at all. Example 100 is one of the few instances where a greeting-response pair is seen: a man shouting *Hi* below a bridge is answered by a woman saying *Hello* on top of the bridge. In example 97, Whiz and Gadget are hosting a radio show and are addressing listeners who have sent text messages to participate in the radio program, and although the tone is very conversational, this can be seen as a case of public speaking rather than conversation. In example 99, Jane and Peter are not introducing themselves to each other; they seem to be greeting the reader of the textbook, so the greetings do not get responses in this instance either. In example 98, the waitress is saying *bye* to the children who are leaving the café where she has served them, and none of the children return the farewell, as this is the last line of the chapter.

Apart from example 98, all of the exchanges above represent situations where all or some of the interlocutors are young children, so the tone of the greetings is cheerful and rather informal. Instances of the slightly more formal greeting *hello* are also found in the material:

101. Peter: *Hello*. Can you talk?
Sparky: Yes, I can. I can dance, too. Look! (Y3R, 44)

102. Peter: This is my family.
Whiz: *Hello!* Who is this?
Peter: This is my mum. (Y3R, 48)

In example 101, Peter is visiting a factory where super toys are made, and he is speaking to one of the toys. In example 102, Peter introduces Whiz to his family, and Whiz greets them all by saying *hello*. In both cases, the speaker meets the addressee for the first time, which could explain the use of a slightly more formal greeting. The addressee does not respond to the greeting in either of the examples; in example 101, Sparky moves directly to answering Peter's question, and in example 102, Whiz's greeting is directed to Peter's mother (who does not speak at all in the chapter), and followed by a question directed to Peter, which Peter then answers. In both of the examples above, an adjacency pair consisting of a question and its answer is found instead of the greeting-response pair. The following extracts are further examples of greetings of a more formal nature found in the textbook:

103. Gadget: *Goodbye* from Sea Land! (Y3R, 86)

104. Teacher: *Good morning*. What's your name?
Whiz: My name is Whiz. Who are you? (Y3R, 20)

105. Man: *Good morning*. Can I help you?
Whiz: *Good morning*. Yes, please. I don't have a pet. (Y3R, 38)

The "good forms" are used in all of the examples above. The first example may not qualify as 'conversation', as it occurs in a radio show, addressed to the listeners. The fact that it can be seen to represent a public form of speech can be given as an explanation for the use of the more formal farewell. In example 104, the teacher uses the formal greeting *good morning* to address her pupils, and in this case, the newcomer Whiz. Whiz does not return the greeting, but simply answers the

question, similarly to the example 5 above. Example 105 above is the only instance of a symmetrical greeting exchange found in the textbook; it is an extract of a service encounter taking place in a pet shop.

Although the textbook material does not contain many cases of the typical greeting-response pair, the exercise book offers tasks where the greetings can be practised with a partner (see Y3W, 8; 9; 21), in a manner where both speakers greet each other. Greetings are also seen in longer exchanges, consisting of fixed expressions, in the material:

106. Whiz: Hi, Mary! How are you?
Mary: I'm fine, thanks. You?
Whiz: Fine. (Y3R, 24)

The example above is an instance of phatic talk, discussed in section 3.1.3 above. In a typical phatic exchange, such as the example above, relatively little information is shared; the phatic answer *fine* is a formulaic response to the question *how are you*, which is not expected to be answered with an actual account of the addressee's health or emotions. As noted in section 3.1.3, the main purpose of phatic talk is to maintain or create personal relationships and to ease the conversation. This type of phatic exchange is also found in the exercise book (Y3W, 29), with a model conversation similar to example 106 above, which the pupils can then practise with their classmates. Phatic exchanges could also be classified as representing linguistic competence, as they include fixed expressions which can be memorised and used as wholes, without a thorough understanding of the functions of each of the utterances.

Similarly to the adjacency pairs functioning as greetings and responses, according to McCarthy (1991, 119), utterances functioning as congratulations are usually paired with thanks as a response, and apologies are expected to be followed by utterances expressing acceptance. These other types of polite exchanges, such as offering, thanking and congratulating, will be discussed in section 5.3.2 below, along with the insert category of polite speech-act formulae.

5.3.2 *Please* and other polite speech acts

The category of inserts consisting of various polite speech-act formulae, as defined by Biber et al. (1999, 1093), includes the use of the politeness marker *please*, along with inserts or formulae which are used to perform conventional speech acts, such as thanking, apologizing, requesting, and congratulating. These speech acts are used to realise different microfunctions (see Council of Europe 2001, 126): expressing and finding out attitudes (interest, gratitude, apologies, approval, regret etc.), suasion (requests, invitations, offers etc.), and socialising (greeting, toasting etc.). Biber et al. (1999, 1093) point out that although these formulae behave as invariable items and can therefore be classified as inserts, they may also combine with grammatical constructions such as complement clauses and prepositional phrases, as in the example *Sorry to keep bothering you*. They (ibid.) also note that these formulae usually elicit a polite reply, such as a minimiser *no problem* or *you're welcome* as a reply for thanks. These formulae could be classified as part of the linguistic competence, as they can be seen as fixed expressions which the learners can memorise and make a part of their vocabulary. However, the notion of 'politeness', especially the use of the politeness marker *please*, is emphasised in the material on several occasions and the function of the different polite expressions becomes so evident that it can be considered to advance the learners' pragmatic competence. In the exercise book, occasional small details regarding cultural information in English-speaking countries, focusing mainly on the British culture, are offered. Most of these information fragments are concerned with politeness; for example, it is noted that it is common to be very polite in English conversation (Y3W, 70) and that *please* is a very important and much used word in the English language (Y3W, 171).

The insert *please*, along with inserts which have the function of thanking, are widely represented in the material, and their use even in informal and familiar situations in English is visible in the dialogues:

107. Please say *please*
And *thank you*, too
It's kind and nice
And good for you!
Pleeeeeeeeeeeeeeease! (Y3R, 71)

108. Peter: Can I have some pizza, *please*?
Waitress: Ok.
Waitress: *There you are*.
Peter: *Thanks*. (Y3R, 71)

Example 107 is a rhyme, found at a 'start' section of a chapter, which has 'politeness' listed as one of the themes. The expressions *please* and *thank you* are repeated several times in the chapter itself, which has instances of exchanges similar to example 108 (also found in the same chapter). There are also other types of polite exchanges and expressions in the material:

109. Kids: *Happy birthday*, Peter!
Peter: *Thank you*, everyone. (Y3R, 72)

110. Whiz: I'm a boy! I'm a boy! Jane is my big sister!
Dad: OK. Take it easy. You're Jane's little brother. *Nice to meet you!* (Y3R, 49)

111. Reporter: Hello. *Welcome* to Sandy Bay. (Y3R, 88)

112. Man: Good morning. *Can I help you?*
Whiz: Good morning. *Yes, please*. I don't have a pet. (Y3R, 38)

113. Whiz: Can I have them all, *please*? I love frogs! (Y3R, 38)

Example 109 is a typical adjacency pair, which consists of congratulations and thanks, and example 110 represents a fixed expression *nice to meet you*. In example 111, the interjection *welcome* is used to greet the viewers of the television show which the reporter is hosting. Examples 112 and 113 are instances of a service encounter in a pet shop, where the typical polite expressions *can I help you* and *yes, please* are used, along with the formal greetings. Because of the use of the fixed frame *can I have…please* in example 113, it could also be classified as belonging to the field of linguistic

competence. The textbook does not have instances of apologising, but some more polite exchanges, where *sorry* and *pardon* are also included, are provided in the exercise book:

114. Whiz: I'm *sorry* I'm late.
Gadget: That's OK, Whiz. (Y3W, 70)

115. Teacher: Please turn to page 27.
Jane: *Pardon?*
Teacher: Page 27, please.
Jane: Thanks. (Y3W, 70)

Example 114 represents the typical apology-acceptance adjacency pair, where the first speaker uses *sorry* to signal that he is apologising, which elicits an acceptance from the addressee. In example 115, Jane uses the word *pardon* to express that she has not heard the teacher's utterance and also makes a request for the teacher to repeat the instructions, to which the teacher responds by repeating them. There is also an instance of a farewell exchange in the exercise book:

116. Teacher: That's all for today. *Goodbye, everyone. See you tomorrow!*
Pupils: *Goodbye!*
Whiz: *Have a nice day*, Miss.
Teacher: *Thanks. You too*. (Y3W, 70)

In example 116 above, there is first a greeting-response adjacency pair, followed by another polite fixed expression *have a nice day*, to which the teacher responds by thanking and reciprocating by using an elliptic reply *you too* (see section 5.2.2 for discussion on elliptic replies). Another context where the use of *please* is emphasised in the material is with imperative clauses; they will be discussed further in section 5.3.3 below.

5.3.3 Imperative clauses and *let's*

Biber et al. (1999, 219) state that imperatives are used to ask the addressee to do (or not to do) something right after they are uttered, so they do not include any specification regarding tense or aspect. They (ibid.) also note that the subject is often omitted in imperatives; they are usually used when there is no doubt of the addressee. However, as Biber et al. (ibid.) note, the addressee of an imperative may also be singled out with a subject or by using a vocative, which can be positioned in front of the imperative clause or after it (see section 5.2.5 for discussion on vocatives). There are many instances of imperatives occurring alone, without any accompanying specification of the addressee, in the material:

117. Peter: *Look!* (Y3R, 36)

118. Whiz: I'm in Jane's kitchen. Nothing here!
Gadget: *Go upstairs!*
Whiz: Now I'm in her bedroom.
Gadget: *Look under her table.* (Y3R, 64)

119. Mother: *Help! Help!* My son can't swim. (Y3R, 84)

In example 117, Peter is addressing all of his friends, while using a non-verbal signal of pointing his finger at a submarine in the sea, wanting them to notice it too. In example 118, Whiz is inside Jane's house searching for her dog, while Gadget is outside giving him instructions in the form of imperatives. The last example, 119, is from a setting where the children are on the beach and a small boy gets caught in a sudden big wave. His mother is shouting for help; in this case the imperative *help* could be seen to be addressed to whoever can hear it, which is often the case in emergencies.

Biber et al. (1999, 220) point out that in addition to the subjects and vocatives, there are other ways of modifying imperative clauses; the politeness marker *please*, as well as the tag *will*

you or *would you*, can be used to soften the message and turn the imperative into a request. Some instances of the use of *please* with imperatives are found in the material:

120. Gadget: *Please* count them. (Y3R, 40)

121. Peter: Can you be quiet, *please*! (Y3R, 45)

122. Peter: Can you help me, *please*? (Y3R, 46)

In example 120, professor Gadget is asking his pupils to count all the rubbers in the classroom, softening the imperative *count them* by using the politeness marker *please*. Examples 121 and 122 have, however, been turned into questions by adding *can you* before the imperative, which already turns them into requests, asking for the hearer's 'ability' to do something instead of directly asking them to do it; the politeness marker *please* softens the request even further. The questions in examples 121 and 122 are instances of the use of a fixed frame *can you…please*, which is used for requests.

There is also a type of imperative clause which is preceded by *let's*, which Biber et al. (1999, 1117) explain is originally a combination of the imperative *let* and the second person plural *us*, contracted to *'s,* but has developed in spoken English into an invariant pragmatic particle, which is used to introduce clauses proposing some form of collective action for the speaker and the hearer. Biber et al. (1999, 1118) state that *let's* is commonly combined with peripheral elements, such as utterance launchers *well*, *yeah* and *okay* in American English, and *come on* and *right* in British English. In the material, all of the instances of *let's* occur without utterance launchers, as in the following example:

123. Jane: Welcome, everyone. *Let's* start. (Y3R, 56)

Example 123 is situated in a party setting, where the children are wearing costumes and Jane is about to introduce each costume to the others. Jane is using *let's* to propose that they should start the party 'program'. Biber et al. (1999, 1118) note that, in American English, *see* is the most commonly used main verb after *let's*, forming an idiomatic overture *let's see*, which is discussed in section 5.2.7. Another common verb combined with *let's*, according to Biber et al. (ibid.) is *go*, found once in the material:

124. Peter: Yippee! *Let's go*! (Y3R, 73)

In example 124, Peter is excited about a forthcoming trip in a submarine, and is addressing a group of his friends about to come along by using *let's go*, proposing that they should all accompany him to the submarine. Examples 123 and 124 above represent the use of *let's* to propose an action for both the speaker and the hearer, which is most typically the case. However, *let's* can also be used, according to Biber et al. (1999, 1117), to propose action to be performed by only the hearer; in these cases the imperative is often followed by *please*. Biber et al. (ibid.) calls this act of camouflaging an imperative with an authoritative function into a collaborative request a 'crypto-directive', and states that this type of imperative is often used by adults to ask children to do something. There is one instance in the material which could be seen to represent this type of imperative:

125. Guide: *Let's* look at the map first. (Y3R, 76)

Here, the children are at the zoo, eager to go and see the animals, and the guide asks them to look at the map of the zoo first. The proposal to look at the map can be seen to be directed to the children, as the guide herself is probably familiar with it already. In this example, however, the imperative is not followed by the word *please*. In the exercise book, the use of *please* with imperatives is

emphasised, and there are exercises where the pupils can practise different imperatives, telling their partners to do things such as standing up or sitting down (Y3W, 171).

Learning to use the imperative verb forms is a grammatical feature and could thus be defined as belonging to the field of linguistic competence. However, as the imperative form is taught in connection with the politeness theme and the functions of imperatives as requests or instructions are emphasised in the material, it is here considered as a representing pragmatic competence. It must be noted, that the fixed formula for requests (*can you…please*, discussed above) which increase the learners' vocabulary, and the idiomatic use of an imperative *take it easy*, seen in the examples below, are to be defined as lexical input, which places them within the linguistic competence.

An imperative which can be seen to have an idiomatic status, *take it easy*, is also found in the material. It has a function of asking the agitated addressee(s) to calm down:

126. Whiz: I'm a boy! I'm a boy! Jane is my big sister!
Dad: OK. *Take it easy*. You're Jane's little brother. Nice to meet you! (Y3R, 49)

127. Peter: Can you sing in the sea?
Bossy: Yes, I can.
Sparky: No, you can't.
Peter: *Take it easy*. You can show me later. (Y3R, 45)

The function of the idiomatic *take it easy* is to ask the agitated addressee(s) to calm down; in example 126, Whiz tries to convince Peter's father that he is not a toy, and the father appeases him by agreeing, and in example 127, Peter tries to settle an incipient argument between "super toys" Bossy and Sparky.

5.3.4 Questions, offers and requests

Regarding adjacency pairs (see section 3.1.3), McCarthy (1991, 119) mentions question-answer pairs as common examples of this type of structure, explaining that the question elicits an answer, which in turn presupposes a question; thus forming a predictable adjacency pair. These question-answer pairs are found in various forms throughout the material; for example, echo questions, condensed questions and elliptic replies (see section 5.2.2). Biber et al. (1999, 1113) explain that English conversation also contains questions which can be seen to favour one answer over another, such as rhetorical questions, question tags (see sections 3.2.1 and 5.2.8), declarative questions and conducive *yes-no* interrogatives. Rhetorical questions are absent from the material, but declarative questions (declarative clauses used as questions, marked in speech by intonation; see Biber et al. 1999, 203) are found:

128. Peter: *So, Whiz is a toy?*
 Gadget: No! Whiz is a super toy. (Y3R, 37)

In example 128, Gadget has explained that Whiz originates from a factory where 'super toys' are made, and Peter makes a conclusion that Whiz must then be a toy instead of a boy. Biber et al. (1999, 203) notes that the use of *so* is a signal of the speaker making a conclusion; here, Peter is using a declarative question preceded by *so* to ask for confirmation for his thoughts.

According to Biber et al. (1999, 1113), another type of questions eliciting a certain type of answer are conducive *yes-no* questions. They include either a negative word, which can be the particle *not* or *n't*, or an assertive word such as *some* or *someone*. There are instances of the use of *some* in assertive questions in the material, functioning as offers:

129. Jane: Do you want *some* ice cream?
 Peter: Yes, please. (Y3R, 73)

In example 129, Jane is offering Peter ice cream, using the assertive word *some* to add assertive force to the question, as opposed to the more neutral *yes-no* question "Do you want ice cream?" or the non-assertive form "Do you want *any* ice-cream?". Biber et al. (1999, 1116) point out that assertive questions with *some* are normally used as 'commissive' speech acts, for instance invitations and offers, as in example 129 above, where the speaker offers something for the hearer, politely encouraging acceptance by using the assertive form. Biber et al. (ibid.) also note that assertive questions are used in requests as well; the assertive forms are used in requests to suggest future action which the speaker considers to be possible:

130. Peter: Can I have *some* pizza, please?
Waitress: Ok. (Y3R, 71)

In example 130, Peter assumes a 'yes' answer to his request for pizza at a restaurant by using the assertive form *some*. There are no examples of the negative, or non-assertive, type of conducive *yes-no* interrogatives found in the material. In this example, similarly to example 113 above, Peter uses a fixed formula *can I have…please*, which can be classified as linguistic competence. Similarly, the other types of questions discussed in this section can be seen as formulaic in nature, resulting in them being deemed as lexical or structural items, but have been, again, classified as pragmatic competence for the reason that their microfunctions as questions and offers are made clear for the learners.

5.4 Discussion on the findings

The spoken English features found in the material are short and simple, and the more complex features of conversation are not found, which is to be expected for a textbook designed for beginners. The features of conversation which can be deemed ungrammatical from the viewpoint of written grammar, such as split infinitives, double negation or the combinations of singular nouns

and plural expressions of measurement (such as *He's about six* ***foot*** *tall*), are not found in the material, as that might interfere with the learners' understanding of the basic grammatical structures. Factors influencing the choice of structural items in the material are that the learners using this material are beginning their third grade of comprehensive school, and are approximately 9 years of age, which means they have not yet learned many grammatical structures in their first language, and that new structures and words need to be introduced in a slow pace and with repetition. English is often the first foreign language for the third graders, in which case they have not yet acquired language learning strategies. This needs to be taken into account in the pace and content of teaching. The age of the learners also affects the lexical content of the material; in POPS 2004, the main topics listed for comprehensive school English teaching revolve around personal things and the pupils' immediate surroundings (see section 2.2.1). The material has clearly been designed mainly with the learning of the basic vocabulary and structures in mind; in the exercise book, there are plenty of 'listen and repeat' vocabulary and pronunciation exercises (see for instance Y3W, 14; 25; 52) and several new words are introduced in every chapter of the textbook. Both the textbook and the exercise book are filled with brief songs and rhymes, which feature the new words and structures introduced in the chapters, to help the learners memorise them. The exercise book includes a vast amount of drill-like exercises for practicing structures and vocabulary, either exercises where the pupils can repeat ready-made dialogues (such as greetings and introductions), or exercises with fixed formulae which can be completed by choosing from a set of words given on the page (see Y3W, 68). Drills of this type occur throughout the exercise book, and seem to be the most frequently used way to activate the pupils to producing speech and to practice the specific structures or words. There are virtually no possibilities for producing free speech among the exercises, as the words or structures which are to be used are usually offered in advance to assist the production, which makes the 'dialogues' very limited and drill-like. It must, however, be stated that the learners on this level are largely dependent on these supportive exercises, as their vocabulary is

very limited, and this type of drilling can be said to help increase their confidence in speaking in English despite their limited skills.

Regarding the grammar of conversation, the findings show that discourse markers, which are a natural and common feature of English conversation, do not occur frequently in the dialogues in Y3R. McCarthy (1998, 59) suggests that discourse markers are rarely found in textbook dialogues for the reason that their use in conversation is usually automatic, and the speakers do not notice that they are using them. It would, however, be useful to familiarise the learners with dialogues featuring discourse markers; McCarthy (ibid.) states that it has been shown that conversations stripped from discourse markers can sound unnatural and even result in comprehension problems. McCarthy (1998, 55) also discusses the 'teachability' of the use of adjacency pairs; he points out that the notion of 'appropriate adjacency' is something that can be said to develop naturally, instead of as a result of teaching, but many of the adjacency pairs themselves are formulaic in nature, and can be taught as a part of the lexical and structural content of the syllabus. The adjacency pairs found in the material represent precisely this type of formulaic exchanges, such as the greetings and introductions discussed above.

Although it is clear that the dialogues in the material depict conversation in a simplified manner, which is hardly realistic for normal everyday conversation, they do have a conversational tone to them, as opposed to language strictly following the principles of written grammar. As an example, the use of ellipsis (see section 5.2.1) is visible in the texts, although it is not 'taught' anywhere in the material, and its use exposes the learners to slightly more authentic dialogues, instead of repeating everything in order to keep the responses 'grammatical', as in "*–How old are you? –Twelve.*" as opposed to using the full sentence "*I am twelve years old*" as the response. Most of the spoken English features found in the material are here classified as belonging to the field of linguistic competence, serving as mostly lexical content to be memorised.

In POPS 2004, as discussed in section 2.2.1, the ability to communicate in the target language in a natural way regarding the target language culture is emphasised. This skill can be said

to develop as the linguistic competence increases if authentic materials are used in teaching and if oral communication skills are practised regularly. These cultural differences are, to some extent, taken into account in the material, mostly in the form of cultural information bits provided in the exercise book (such as the use of *please* and not using first names when talking to teachers). The dialogues in the textbook are mostly rather universal in nature, and although the storyline of the book is placed in England, there are no particular cultural elements visible within the texts.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to find out how much Finnish comprehensive school EFL teaching materials contribute to the beginners' learning of oral communication skills. After a close reading of the *Yippee! 3* materials and studying the list of topics and themes of the chapters, it can be stated that the main aims of the *Yippee! 3* books are to accumulate the learners' vocabulary and to introduce the basic grammatical structures. It is stated in the CEFR that at the beginner level, the oral communication consists of simple and short turns without the pressure of learning the complex components of discourse competence. This can be seen in the material, as the dialogues are very short and simple, although a few examples of the features of conversation, such as interruptions and false starts, are found.

The focus of the material being on the structures and vocabulary, it can be concluded that the material serves mainly to increase the learners' linguistic competence. This is to be expected of teaching material for beginners; as the texts in this material serve as the first English language input the learners will encounter in the school setting, they need to provide enough lexical content for the learners to be able to communicate in the most basic interaction situations, as well as to form a structural basis which the learners can begin to apply in formulating their own messages. The new words and structures are introduced slowly and in a repetitive manner to facilitate learning. The topics of the material follow the guidelines set in POPS 2004; the texts are related to school children's personal lives and immediate surroundings. The material does not provide much information on cultural factors, apart from occasional bits of information mostly dealing with politeness, such as the use of *please*. Some aspects of pragmatic competence are also visible in the material, but its role is less prominent than that of linguistic competence. Pragmatically, the material mainly concentrates on the simplest forms of introductions, greetings and farewells, as well as asking and answering simple questions, but some politeness formulae and imperatives are also introduced and practiced.

Despite the fact that the material mainly focuses on teaching new words and structures, the texts have a natural-sounding conversational feel to them. The short texts in the material include numerous features of spoken English, making them potentially very useful for the future learning of oral communication skills. Most of the features found in the texts are not necessarily expected to be taught in the classroom, but they nevertheless serve as valuable input for the learners. It is important that the learners are exposed to as authentic language as possible, although they might not yet notice all of the features involved in it. The material does, however, leave some room for improvement concerning the production of speech. Although there are numerous drill-like exercises in Y3W, the opportunities to try and produce free speech are few. This can, however, be expected as the learners' proficiency level is still very low and their abilities to speak without any assistance are limited. It would be useful to encourage the learners to practice using the foreign language without having to worry about mistakes, as that could relieve the pressure to speak even if they are not able to do it flawlessly. The material leaves it to the teachers' responsibility to allow these opportunities to their pupils, in which case it cannot be guaranteed that it will happen in all classrooms.

As has been stated, the material focuses mainly on linguistic matters on this level, but based on the amount of conversational features in the texts and the small cultural information bits included already on this beginner level material, it can be expected that the role of cultural knowledge, including the conversational matters, will increase in the following parts of this textbook series. It would, however, require further research to find whether this assumption is correct. Another possibility for further research would be to conduct a comparative study of several current textbooks for the same proficiency level, which would form a more reliable and comprehensive picture on how oral communication skills are incorporated in the teaching materials.

Although the type of input offered in *Yippee! 3* might not, obviously, yet give the learners a complete competence to engage in a natural, fluent conversation with English speakers, the learning and recognition of these simple conversational features can be useful for the learners in their future language studies, and their usefulness in possible encounters with English speakers must not be

diminished either. The potential of the material to assist in learning to understand the differences between the spoken and written registers depends, however, largely on the teachers using the material. The actual use of these materials in the classrooms is yet another interesting and important factor left untouched in this study, and a potential subject for further research. Teachers can use textbooks in various different ways, leaving out parts they consider as unimportant, often because of the pressure of time, as well as adding their own materials to the mix, so analysing the textbooks by themselves is an entirely different matter from researching their use in practice. It would be interesting to interview a number of Finnish comprehensive school teachers on how they contribute to the learners' oral communication skills in the classroom, as well as to observe classroom practices, in order to see how communicative competences are being taught on the beginner level, if they are being taught at all.

Works Cited

Primary sources

Kuja-Kyyny-Pajula, Raija, Pirjo Pelto, Elfi Turpeinen and Paul Westlake. 2010. *Yippee! 3 Reader*. 2nd ed. Helsinki: WSOYpro.

Kuja-Kyyny-Pajula, Raija, Pirjo Pelto, Elfi Turpeinen and Paul Westlake. 2010. *Yippee! 3 Writer*. 2nd ed. Helsinki: WSOYpro.

Secondary sources

Bex, Tony and Richard J. Watts, eds. 1999. *Standard English: The Widening Debate*. London: Routledge.

Biber, Douglas, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad and Edward Finegan, eds. 1999. *Longman grammar of spoken and written English.* London: Longman.

Broughton, Geoffrey, Cristopher Brumfit, Roger Flavell, Peter Hill and Anita Pinkas. 1978. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Byram, Michael. 1997. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, Michael and Marí del Carmen Méndez García. 2009. "Communicative language teaching." In *Handbook of Foreign Language Communication and Learning*, ed. Karlfried Knapp and Barbara Seidlhofer, in cooperation with Henry Widdowson, 491 – 516. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Canale, Michael. 1983. "From communicative competence to language pedagogy." In *Language and communication*, ed. Jack C. Richards and Richard W. Schmidt, 2 – 27. New York: Longman.

Canale, Michael and Merrill Swain. 1980. "Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing". *Applied Linguistics* 1: 1 – 47.

Carter, Ronald. 1997. *Investigating English Discourse: Language, literacy and literature*. London: Routledge.

Carter, Ronald. 1999. "Standard grammars, spoken grammars: Some educational implications." In *Standard English: The Widening Debate*, ed. Tony Bex and Richard J. Watts, 149 – 166. London: Routledge.

Carter, Ronald, Rebecca Hughes and Michael McCarthy. 1998. "Telling tails: grammar, the spoken language and materials development." In *Materials Development in Language Teaching*, ed. Brian Tomlinson, 67 – 86. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carter, Ronald and Michael McCarthy. 2006. *Cambridge Grammar of English: a Comprehensive Guide: Spoken and Written English: Grammar and Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cornbleet, Sandra and Ronald Carter. 2001. *The Language of Speech and Writing*. London: Routledge.

Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Frame of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DeKeyser, Robert. 2012. “Age Effects in Second Language Learning.” In *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, ed. Susan M. Gass and Alison Mackey, 442 – 460. London: Routledge.

Dufva, Mia. 2004. *Focus on Beginning Foreign Language Learning: on Predicting and Supporting English Literacy Learning in Finnish Primary School.* Turku: University of Turku.

Dyson, Anne Haas and Celia Genishi. 1993. “Visions of Children as Language Users: Language and Language Education in Early Childhood.” In *Handbook of Research on the Education of Young Children*, ed. Bernard Spodek, 122 – 136. New York: Macmillan.

Ek, Jan A. van. 1986. *Objectives for Foreign Language Learning, Vol. 1: Scope*. 2nd pr. 2000. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Ellis, Gail and Jean Brewster. 2002. *The Primary English Teacher's Guide*. Harlow: Penguin English.

Ellis, Rod. 1985. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Finnish National Board of Education. 2004. *Kielitaidon tasojen kuvausasteikko.* [Internet] Helsinki: Opetushallitus. Available from http://www.oph.fi/download/111628_KIELITAIDON_ TASOJEN_KUVAUSASTEIKKO.pdf. [Accessed 17 July 2013]

Finnish National Board of Education. 2012. *Luonnos Perusopetuksen Opetussuunnitelman Perusteiksi 2014*. [Internet] Helsinki: Opetushallitus. Available from http://www.oph.fi/ download/146131_Luonnos_perusopetuksen_ opetussuunnitelman_perusteiksi_VALMIS_ 14_11_2012.pdf. [Accessed 17 July 2013]

Franzosi, Roberto. 2004. “Content Analysis.” In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods,* ed. Michael S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman and Tim Futing Liao, 187 – 191. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Garcia Lecumberri, Maria Luisa and Francisco Gallardo. 2003. “English FL Sounds in School Learners of Different Ages.” In *Age and the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language*, ed. Maria del Pilar Garcia Mayo and Maria Luisa Garcia Lecumberri, 115 – 135. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Garcia Mayo, Maria del Pilar. 2003. “Age, Length of Exposure and Grammaticality Judgements in the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language.” In *Age and the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language*, ed. Maria del Pilar Garcia Mayo and Maria Luisa Garcia Lecumberri, 94 – 114. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Garcia Mayo, Maria del Pilar and Maria Luisa Garcia Lecumberri, eds. 2003. *Age and the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Gass, Susan M. and Alison Mackey, eds. 2012. *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. London: Routledge.

Haynes, Judie. 2007. *Getting Started with English Language Learners: How Educators Can Meet the Challenge*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Jaakkola, Hanna, ed. 2000. *HOW TO PROMOTE LEARNING TO LEARN THE FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE: Piloting the Common European Framework of Reference in Finnish Schools.* Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

Kirsch, Claudine. 2008. *Teaching Foreign Languages in the Primary School*. London: Continuum.

Knapp, Karlfried and Barbara Seidlhofer, in cooperation with Henry Widdowson, eds. 2009. *Handbook of Foreign Language Communication and Learning*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Kumpulainen, Timo, ed. 2012. *Koulutuksen Tilastollinen Vuosikirja 2011*. Tampere: Juvenes Print.

Leech, Geoffrey and Jan Svartvik. 2002. *A Communicative Grammar of English*. 3rd ed. London: Longman.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., A. Bryman and Tim Futing Liao, eds. 2004. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Littlejohn, Andrew. 1998. “The analysis of language teaching materials: inside the Trojan horse.” In *Materials Development in Language Teaching*, ed. Brian Tomlinson, 190 – 216. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Llinares García, Ana. 2007. “Young learners’ functional use of the L2 in a low-immersion EFL context.” *ELT Journal* 61, 1: 39 – 45.

Luukka, Minna-Riitta, Sari Pöyhönen, Ari Huhta, Peppi Taalas, Mirja Tarnanen and Anna Keränen. 2008. *Maailma Muuttuu – Mitä Tekee Koulu?: Äidinkielen ja vieraiden kielten tekstikäytänteet koulussa ja vapaa-ajalla.* Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, soveltavan kielentutkimuksen keskus.

Lähdesmäki, Salla. 2004. ”Oppikirja tutkijan käsissä.” In *Englannin Aika: Elävän Kielen Kartoitusta*, ed. Terttu Nevalainen, Matti Rissanen and Irma Taavitsainen, 271 – 288. Helsinki: WSOY.

Lähdesmäki, Salla. 2007. ”Intertekstuaalinen näkökulma englannin oppikirjoihin. Kuinka tekstilajivaikutteet nivoutuvat oppikirjatekstiin?” In *Kieli Oppimisessa – Language in Learning. AFinLan vuosikirja 2007. Suomen soveltavan kielitieteen yhdistyksen julkaisuja no. 65*, ed. Olli-Pekka Salo, Tarja Nikula and Paula Kalaja, 53 – 71. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopistopaino.

McCarthy, Michael. 1991. *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, Michael. 1998. *Spoken Language & Applied Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, Michael and Ronald Carter. 1995. *Language as Discourse: Perspectives for Language Teaching*. London: Longman.

Mumford, Simon. 2009. "An analysis of spoken grammar: the case for production." *ELT Journal* 63, 2: 137 – 144.

Muñoz, Carmen. 2003. “Variation in Oral Skills Development and Age of Onset.” In *Age and the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language*, ed. Maria del Pilar Garcia Mayo and Maria Luisa Garcia Lecumberri, 161 – 181. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Munro, Pamela. 2001. “Field Linguistics.” In *The Handbook of Linguistics,* ed. Mark Aronoff and Janie Rees-Miller, 130 – 149. Oxford: Blackwell.

Nevalainen, Terttu, Matti Rissanen and Irma Taavitsainen, eds. 2004. *Englannin Aika: Elävän Kielen Kartoitusta*. Helsinki: WSOY.

POPS 2004. The Finnish National Board of Education. 2004. *The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education*. Helsinki: Opetushallitus.

Richards, Jack C. and Richard W. Schmidt, eds. 1983. *Language and communication*. NewYork: Longman.

Ringbom, Håkan. 1998. “Actual, perceived and assumed cross-linguistic similarities in foreign language learning.” In *Materials Development in Language Teaching*, ed. Brian Tomlinson, 183 – 196. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Salo, Olli-Pekka, Tarja Nikula and Paula Kalaja, eds. 2007. *Kieli Oppimisessa – Language in Learning. AFinLan vuosikirja 2007. Suomen soveltavan kielitieteen yhdistyksen julkaisuja no. 65*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopistopaino.

Singleton, David. 2003. “Critical Period or General Age Factor(s)?” In *Age and the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language*, ed. Maria del Pilar Garcia Mayo and Maria Luisa Garcia Lecumberri, 3 – 22. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Spodek, Bernard, ed. 1993. *Handbook of Research on the Education of Young Children*. New York: Macmillan.

Strazny, Philipp, ed. 2005. *Encyclopedia of Linguistics.* Vol. 2. New York: Fitzroy Dearborn.

Tomlinson, Brian, ed. 1998. *Materials Development in Language Teaching*. 6th pr. 2003. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tomlinson, Brian. 2005. “English as a Foreign Language: Matching Procedures to the Context of Learning” in *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, ed. Eli Hinkel, 137-153. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Weber, Robert. 1990. *Basic Content Analysis.* 2nd ed. Newbury Park: Sage Publications Inc.