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Writing as a New Component of English as a Second Language Programs For Young Russian Children

Abstract

This project is based on the fundamental idea that oral and written languages develop simultaneously and mutually support development of each other. Reading and writing are two language processes which are impossible to separate from each other, whether learning one's native language or a foreign language. However, in Russian English Foreign Language (EFL) programs this is not the case. The main focus for five and six year olds in these programs is oral communication, the ability to speak with your partner and comprehend what is being spoken. For young learners writing may facilitate language development. The language becomes not just an object of academic interest but a real means of interaction among the children and their teacher. Integration of oral and written language promotes the learning of real content and real reasons for using the language. For this purpose, the following project describes different ways of engaging children in language learning, both in their native language and in English as a second language. It introduces an EFL curriculum with new instructional practices for Russian children ages five and six that include writing. Within the framework of this study a pilot study on three emerging writing approaches (Modeled, Interactive, and Independent Writing) is described. Findings from the pilot study suggested positive results in implementing writing approaches. This is an initial step in identifying the ways of incorporating writing into the EFL curriculum.

Writing as a New Component of English as a Second Language
Programs For Young Russian Children

A project
Presented to
the Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Elementary Education

by
Elena Voronina
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Introduction

Foreign languages play an important role in Russia. Life in our modern society requires an education that prepares citizens to effectively communicate with others across the world. In Russia, students receive instruction in two or three foreign languages to prepare them to navigate in today's world. Communicating in different languages facilitates cooperation with other people and increases information as well. Such collaboration between countries has led to the necessity of establishing a "universal language," so people can communicate easily across different cultures. English serves this role in Russia. Thus, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs play an important role in children's education in Russia.

Overview of the Project

Many Russian children have the opportunity to study English in their kindergarten programs. Early childhood is an optimal time for language learning. Young children acquire four language skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking much more easily and faster than in any other age.

This project entails the introduction and development of a new component of a curriculum that facilitates the acquisition of English by Russian children ages five and six. Specifically, it introduces writing modeled and assisted by the teacher as an integral component of the (EFL) curriculum and instructional practice for young children. This section of the paper provides a rationale for the inclusion of writing as a component of this EFL program and delineates the projected purposes of this curricular component. A discussion of the importance of this project follows. The chapter concludes with a definition of terms necessary to fully understand this curricular component.

Project Rationale

The project rationale is based on the fundamental idea that oral and written language develop simultaneously, influencing each other very early in children's lives (McGee & Richgels, 2000; Schickedanz, 1999; Tompkins, 2003). Reading and writing are two processes which are impossible to separate from each other, whether learning one's native language or a foreign language. When children make their first attempts to read, they see the print. They not only want to understand it but also want to write. By imitating what they see adults doing in their everyday life, children write messages to be read and understood.

In Russian EFL classrooms we do not see this wonderful unity of the two language processes. Though many language approaches (participatory approach, whole language approach, community language learning, etc.) focus on the integration of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, it is not happening with kindergarteners in Russia (Larsen-Freeman, 2002). The main focus in an EFL classroom for five and six year-olds in Russia is oral communication, the ability to speak with your partner and comprehend what is being spoken. Reading for the most part includes learning the English alphabet. Writing would not typically be a priority, despite the fact that many cross-cultural studies show the importance of integrating reading and writing within the EFL curriculum (Krashen, 1981; Vernon & Ferreiro, 1999).

For young learners writing may facilitate language development. In addition, learners rapidly gain a true picture of the richness and complexity of the language. The language becomes not just an object of academic interest but a real means of interaction among people. Integration of oral and written language promotes the learning of real content and

real reasons for using the language. Writing is one essential component of the whole process of language development and encourages mutually supportive growth in the other forms of reading, listening, and speaking (Oxford & Scarcella, 1992).

Purpose of Project

There are dual purposes for this project. The first specific purpose of this project is to increase children's engagement in language learning, both in their native language and in English as a second language. The second purpose of the project is to introduce an EFL curriculum for Russian children ages five and six that includes writing. These purposes both lead to important benefits for young children in EFL programs in Russia.

Importance of the Project

This project provides actual curriculum with new instructional practices for EFL programs for young children in Russia. Specifically this project supports the relatively new EFL program for young children in kindergarten programs in Russia. The Early Childhood Institute of Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia has taken a leadership role in developing an EFL curriculum and designing special instructional activities for young children. The current project will expand on this existing program by incorporating writing within the EFL curriculum and instructional practices.

The anticipated benefits of this project are twofold. First, young children who experience the English language in an integrated and purposeful communicative environment are more likely to become effective communicators. They will have the opportunity to communicate in English for real purposes, a condition which facilitates language acquisition of young children. Second, this project provides new instructional methodology that can be included in the Russian EFL teacher preparation programs.

Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia is known for its pioneer efforts in developing early childhood EFL teacher preparation in Russia. It is an ideal institution to be involved in this collaborative project.

For a better understanding of this project this section will conclude by defining two terms relevant to this project - literacy and kindergarten. Readers, because of differences between Russian and American terminology, could potentially misinterpret these terms.

Definition of Terms

Because of the differences in educational systems, language structure, alphabetic and sound structures, as well as cultural backgrounds between Russia and America, educational vocabulary is also different. First and most importantly is the definition of *literacy*. In America, the term *literacy* means the competence “to carry out the complex tasks using reading and writing related to the world of work and to life outside the school” (*Cases in Literacy*, 1989, p.36). In Russia, there is no such a term. It does not exist in Russian vocabulary. Reading and writing are not considered to have a connected relationship in children’s development. Instead Russian educators refer to two processes, reading and writing. Early childhood curriculum and instruction focus on the development of the language sound system (phonemic awareness) for reading and hand preparation for writing (fine motor skills, and eye-hand coordination). Early childhood teachers prepare children for learning to read in the elementary school by practicing phonemic awareness. They prepare child for writing by training motor skills.

Russian and American educators also use different terms for early childhood programs. The term “*kindergarten*” is particularly confusing for American readers. The term *kindergarten* in Russia refers to the program for children ages three to seven years

old, as well as the school the child is attending. Within the kindergarten, children are divided into classrooms for three year olds, four year olds, five year olds, and six year olds. Some kindergartens have classes for the six and seven year olds; some do not. According to the new educational system in Russia, children are required to attend school at age six (instead of seven as it was before). However, this new policy currently is implemented only in a pilot program in some cities, including Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Also some kindergartens include a special class for children ages two and three whose parents work and cannot stay home with their children.

The description of this project is organized in the following manner. First, the methodology section includes a comparison of Russian and American beliefs and practices regarding emerging language and literacy learners. A review of research follows. Then three emerging writing approaches (Modeled, Interactive, and Independent Writing) commonly used in the United States are described in detail. This section concludes with findings from a pilot project conducted in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The third section provides the reader with a detailed description of this project. The final section offers conclusions and recommendations for early childhood EFL programs in Russia.

Methodology

Fruitful collaboration between Herzen State Pedagogical University's Institute of Childhood in Russia and the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), U.S. started in 2002 when early childhood faculty from both institutions met in Saint Petersburg, Russia to discuss current issues in the field and identify potential areas of research and curriculum development. One outcome from this discussion was my enrollment with another Russian student in the Master of Arts in Education program here at UNI. Our Russian institution charged us with the responsibility of studying the research, curriculum, and other pedagogical practices in language and literacy development of American children. In the spring of 2004, professors Dr. Penny Beed and Dr. Rebecca Edmiaston were invited to Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Saint Petersburg, to discuss language and literacy development of children in Russian kindergartens, to observe Russian children learning reading and writing in kindergartens, and to give presentations on literacy development of American children.

Their visit helped to clarify the main purpose and goals of this project. The idea of this project is fairly new for Russian pedagogy because writing is not taught in kindergarten programs. Classroom observations and interviews with Russian early educators led the two American professors to agree that writing could indeed be a viable component of early childhood EFL programs in Russia. A review of American research and pedagogical practices further justified the general idea of the project which is the introduction of writing as a critical component of the EFL instructional program for Russian children ages five and six.

The discussion of the steps undertaken to complete this project first include a comparison of emerging literacy pedagogical practices and research studies from the United States and from Russia. It will provide readers with a perspective of American and Russian views regarding literacy development, their differences and similarities. Next, I present a brief overview of research regarding writing and emerging language and literacy development followed by a detailed description of three commonly-used emerging writing instructional approaches. I conclude with a pilot project carried out in Saint Petersburg, Russia, in which Americans' methods for literacy development (Modeled Writing, Interactive Writing, and Independent Writing) were practiced in an EFL setting.

Comparison of Russian and American Emerging Literacy Methods

In this section an overview of Russian literacy methodology, Russian emerging literacy curriculum and methods, EFL instruction in Russia, an overview of American literacy, review of research on emergent writing, and instructional approaches for emerging writers will be described.

Overview of Russian Literacy Methodology

Standards are required for all early childhood programs and provide the guidelines for Russian literacy programs. As standards change, literacy programs also change. Early childhood educational programs did not have standards until 1999. There was a great need for educators and parents to know what a typically developing child could do and know by the end of kindergarten. Policymakers also believed identified standards would facilitate a smooth transition for children from kindergarten to primary school. The Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation determines standards. They are reviewed every four

years because of ongoing educational research, development of new methods, approaches, theories, and new technologies and opportunities coming into the classrooms.

Literacy Standards. Standards address the different areas of child development such as mathematical, art, physical, and ecological development. For the purposes of this paper, only the standard of speech development, which addresses literacy development, will be described. Speech development includes (a) the development of the language sound system (phonemic awareness of the sounds) and (b) hand preparation for writing. Each component will be discussed below.

The development of the language sound system, commonly referred to as phonemic awareness, focuses on children's correct pronunciation of sounds (Matveeva, 1994). (Russian titles appear in English in the text of this project, and in Russian in references). Children work toward clear articulation of the sounds of Russian by practicing specific vocal exercises. For example in "Exercises of a Happy Tongue" the child performs movement such as the tongue wakes up (stretching the tongue like when you are yawning), touches the ceiling, etc. These exercises are followed by activities meant to develop the child's ability to blend letters and sounds (vowels and consonants) and small syllables. Children develop the ability to recognize different sounds, to define how long /short a sound is, to count how many sounds are in a word, and to identify where the stress in a word is placed. They pair words according to sounds they hear, and lastly learn to connect it with print. Emphasis also includes work on intonation and expressive speech (happiness, sadness, etc.). The development of the language sound system focuses on developing the children's interests in written Russian language. Words can have different structures, meanings, and origins. It is important that children value their native language

by itself for its beauty and not only as a mean of communication. This goal is addressed through different puzzles, guessing games, and word games that are based on words with multiple meanings. As the sound system is mastered, children began to read simple texts.

Children's preparation for writing starts with motor skills development of the hand. This includes muscle development through different finger exercises or finger play including: drawing, crafts, origami, and applications (cutting different shapes from a paper and gluing them on another piece of paper), as well as sensory development through recognition of color, shape, texture, size, etc. (Malzeva, 2000).

To identify how these standards are operationalized in curriculum and instructional practice, I examined the following literacy programs for children ages four through six years old: *Teaching Reading and Writing Using Elkonin's System* (1993); *Hand Preparation for Writing* (Matveeva, 1994); *Lines and Dots* (Maltzeva, 2000); *Text Books for Kindergarteners* (Likova, 2001); *Preparation for the School* (Nefedova, 2002); *Hand Preparation for Writing. Home School* (Visotzkya, 2002); *School for Kindergartens. Hand Preparation for Writing* (Gavrina, 2003). These programs exemplify the main components and instructional practices in Russian literacy for young children and will be discussed below.

Russian Emerging Literacy Curriculum and Methods

Unlike curricula in the United States, where emerging literacy includes the synchronous teaching of reading and writing (Combs, 2002, Tompkins, 2003), Russian emergent literacy curriculum includes only two components: phonemic awareness and preparation of the hand for the writing. Many Russian educators including Gavrina (2003), Nefedova (2002), and Visotzkya (2002) do not believe that kindergarteners are ready to

write because of their level of physiological development that includes poorly developed motor skills and poor coordination of movements. Thus, writing instruction is postponed for children until the end of kindergarten and beginning of first grade.

Overall, the content of the literacy program for kindergartens includes: instruction in phonemic awareness, analysis of words, preparation for writing, development of oral speech, and listening to teacher reading and narrating of text. Such content takes into consideration the real abilities of children in their acquisition of elementary language skills. All parts of kindergarten preparation are tightly connected. These components are briefly described below.

Phonemic Awareness. Phonemic awareness within literacy programs is viewed as the prerequisite for reading in the primary grades and acquiring Russian graphics. Goals of phonemic awareness include: introduction to different sounds of the Russian language, articulation of sounds, identification of the main sound groups, discrimination of vowels and consonants, definition of the quality of consonants (hardness and softness), and syllabication of words. Educators such as Elkonin (1986), Likova (2001), and Nefedova (2002) believe that before children can read they must be able to hear separate sounds within the words and be able to divide syllables into separate sounds. Elkonin (1986) defines word analysis as the “intellectual action for establishing sequence of sounds in the word” (p. 12), and maintains that the teaching of phonemic awareness and word analysis must precede the teaching of reading. Phonemic awareness also provides a firm foundation for the transition from reading to writing. By improving the ability to hear sounds, define their quality and order in the word, correlate sounds with letters (in this

phase print letters), and mark hardness and softness of the consonant sounds by the letters, the foundation for further acquisition of Russian spelling is fostered.

Instruction in Word Analysis. Reading is taught using a reductionist model. Children are first introduced to different sounds in the Russian language. They imitate them and are encouraged to associate them with some familiar sounds they can hear around them. For example: the Russian sound /P/ – the sound of a car or a tiger, the Russian sound /Y/– the sound of a train, etc. Teachers then introduce children to vowel sounds (/A/, /O/, /U/ and /Y/), which are easier to pronounce than consonants. During group time the teacher shows a vowel card to the children accompanied by subject or object starting with this letter just as in American alphabet cards. For example, the sound /A/ is represented by a picture of an Apple.

Maltzeva (2000) proposes the following sequence in literacy instruction. Children are first introduced to simple consonants - /B/, /П/, /H/, /M/, etc. - that are frequently used in the language. They practice pronouncing these individual sounds, trying to reach the most clear and proper level of pronunciation. Teachers also define and distinguish vowels from the consonants.

Teachers do not directly teach specific letters, but rather provide simple symbols or symbolic representations for remembering how to specify a vowel or a consonant. There are different ways to do this. The most common is for a red circle to stand for a vowel and a blue circle for a consonant (Likova, 2001). It helps children not only visually define a sound, but also, in the future, can be applied to find syllables and read them.

After children know some vowels and consonants they practice reading nonsense syllables – the combination of already known vowels and consonants - by blending

different sounds together, for example: /PA/ – /PO/ - /PE/, /MA/ – /MO/ - /ME/, /KA/ – /KO/ - /KE/, etc. Teachers focus children’s attention on small words that follow the same pattern such as: consonant – vowel – consonant (CVC) in words such as *ДОМ* (house), *ЛЕС* (forest), *ПАП* (steam). Each of these words would have a card with its picture, red and blue symbols, and letters (see Appendix A).

After practicing the CVC structure, teachers introduce children to a more complex structure, the two syllable construction (CVCV). For example: *РУКА* (hand), *КОЗА* (goat), *НЕБО* (sky). At this time children also learn how to define syllables, how to stress the syllables in the word, and how to read syllable by syllable. To accomplish this children practice segmenting words into the individual sounds. Following the above practices, children begin reading text with familiar words. Along with these phonics activities, children also learn about the structure of text and story elements.

Preparation of the Hand for Writing. Instruction in this component includes the development of physical skills (the right body/hand position during the writing, the position of the copy book, the right way of holding a pencil or a pen), and the development of spatial relationships (how to find a new line, settle down on the page, simple forms of objects in drawings). Children develop fine motor skills through making different patterns from straight, curved, banded lines, ovals, and half ovals. Maltzeva (2000) also suggests painting activities in which children emulate these strokes by drawing mushrooms, flags, barrios, nuts, etc. Children also shade simple subject drawings using a color scale. Later they acquire primary writing by writing elements of the words such as *з*, *ж*, *л*, and individual letters.

In conjunction with hand exercises, children are learning the vocabulary of handwriting: *new / working line, top ruler, bottom ruler, additional ruler*, as well the ability to write the elements of letters, such as straight line, oval, stick with the half of a circle at the bottom, upwards, on the bottom and on the top, prolonged stick, bottom loop, top loop, oval, half oval, and more (Visotzkya, 2002). Children learn not only to write letters comprised of these elements but also to connect them into syllables and words. They write one and two syllable words copied from a model focusing attention to the correct width and height of the letters, proportionality of the letter elements, the right incline, and equal distance between words in the line.

Speech Development. Likova (2001) describes speech development in the literacy programs as a focus on the quality of children's speech (clear, connected, and appropriate volume) and the enrichment of their vocabulary. Children are taught to pronounce words by saying each word and separating the sounds within the word. Different aspects of oral speech, tone, volume, and speed of the speech, are developed by listening to teacher read-alouds. Children learn appropriate intonations within the sentences by composing a dialogue, identifying questions and answers about it, or reproducing dialogues from fairytales they have heard.

Listening to Stories. Kindergarteners develop the ability to listen attentively, understand the main idea of a text, and to develop a love of literature by listening to stories read and narrated by the teacher (Matveeva, 1994). Through listening and discussing classic children's literature, children come to understand the meaning of depicted situations, form a correct estimate of the characters, express personal attitudes toward them, and identify a variety of genres such as fairytales, stories, poems, puzzles. Teachers

also acquaint children with pieces of oral folk art (poteszki, tongue-twister, and riddle), stories and fairytales of Russians before the revolution, contemporary writers, and native poetry. Children learn to define the genre of a literature text, feel its atmosphere, and examine authors' attitudes toward events and character happenings. In the process of listening, children are exposed to primary concepts about writers, poets, and illustrators. Listening also creates positive effects upon children's imagination as well as developing and enriching their active and passive vocabulary. As a conclusion, Russian programs address preparing children for reading and writing, but they do not engage them directly in reading and writing.

EFL Instruction in Russia

Russian children start learning a foreign language - mostly English - at the ages of four to five. Zaporozetz (1996) notes that early childhood is a sensitive period for learning foreign languages. The language skills of writing, reading, listening, and speaking are acquired much more easily and quickly than at any other age (Oxford & Scarcella, 1992). This is also the best age for learning pronunciation and speech intonation patterns. Kindergartens with a foreign language specialization offer EFL programs as a part of the curricula with two lessons per week, generally in the mornings. Other early childhood programs provide English language instruction in the after school program for an additional charge. However, reading and writing in English are not included in EFL instruction for children ages five and six years old. Rather, oral communication and development of the vocabulary are targeted.

EFL instruction occurs in a special classroom decorated with the English alphabet, pictures, posters, words, and other materials that reflect aspects of the English speaking

culture. This environment helps children to move from their cultural reality into an English language setting. Children usually study in groups of six to seven. The EFL teacher is not the classroom teacher, but a foreign language specialist who comes during this lesson time. The EFL teacher's primary role in the classroom is to help children acquire English language through scaffolding and developing of language structural patterns, meaningful oral communication, and vocabulary development.

For young Russian children, communication and vocabulary are the main emphasis of EFL instruction. Vocabulary is developed through topics related to children's everyday life, so they can make connections to their own life experiences. New material is introduced through play that provides opportunities for interesting and meaningful activities. The traditional curriculum for EFL instruction includes the development of language structure, vocabulary development, and grammar development. For acquisition of these the following activities may be used: greetings, singing songs with dancing, drawings, tasks in the copy/text books, and practice of previous vocabulary and simple **grammar** structures (I like, I can, I see). Teachers engage children in many exercises, such as **games**, poems, songs, and interaction with colorful materials. By the end of the academic year and on some holidays, children usually perform small pieces from a fairytale or pretend play to show their achievement in learning the English language.

My review of "literacy" instructional programs in Russia indicates strong **methodology** in phonemic awareness and word analysis. However, young children do not **engage** in writing for real purposes or communicative functions. I now present an overview of American emerging literacy beliefs and practices.

Overview of American Literacy

Initially literacy in America was defined as the ability to read and to write. Today the term *literacy* means the competence “to carry out the complex tasks using reading and writing related to the world of work and to life outside the school” (*Cases in Literacy*, 1989, p.36). However, researchers have found that literacy involves much more than reading and writing. Heath (1983) found that literacy in the “real world” involves experiences such as reading signs, writing letters, and giving oral and written messages to others or leaving them for oneself. Educators are also identifying other literacies, such as visual literacy, the ability to create meaning from illustrations and “computer literacy”, which stands for the ability to communicate through technology in real-world situations by reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking. Hirsch (1987) called for another type of literacy, “cultural literacy,” as a way to introduce children to the major ideas, and ideas from past cultures that have defined and shaped today’s society. To conclude, literacy is not a prescription of certain books to read or concepts to define, but literacy “is a tool, a way to learn about the world and a means to participate more fully in the technological society of the 21st century” (Tompkins, 2003, p.3).

Reading and writing develops synchronally, over time and across children's experiences, influencing and integrating each other. Research has documented the ways in which reading, writing, and oral communication (listening and speaking) reinforce and support each other in the literacy learning process (Larsen–Freeman, 2000; Oxford & Scarcella, 1992). Read (1975) and Beers (1980) have illustrated that invented spellings (writing words the way they sound) could only occur as a result of children's

comprehending that oral language sounds are represented by written symbols. Marie Clay (1975), a New Zealand educator whose work has strongly influenced American literacy instruction, proposes that children learn a series of principles, and evidence of this learning is visible in their drawings and attempts to write.

Emerging literacy practices in the United States are based on the belief that children learn to read and to write as they use language, and they learn language as they read and write. Taylor (1983), in her research with families, stresses that parents do not deliberately try to teach their children to read or write. Rather, families share social context, stories, and experiences, and it is in language interactions in meaningful social and cultural settings that the desire for, and models for, using the language is found. When language is needed to function, it is learned naturally.

American literacy practices are heavily influenced by the work of Russian theorist Lev Vygotsky. A Vygotskian approach to literacy development emphasizes social interaction because all learning first takes place in a social context. It focuses on the social aspect of young children's literacy behaviors, especially on using routines to learn about written language. In order to build a new concept, children interact with others who provide feedback for their hypotheses or who help them accomplish a task they could not do on their own. Vygotsky (1962) pointed out the importance of teaching within the child's zone of proximal development, which is "an opportune area for growth, but one in which children are dependent on help from others" (p. 56). Working in the zone of proximal development allows a child to complete some parts of a task but the other part requires adult's or older children's advice or help. Scaffolding provides this necessary help and support to aid a child in completing a task which is difficult to complete on his own.

For Vygotsky (1962), all learning involves movement from doing activities in a social situation with the support of a more knowledgeable other to internalizing language and finally being able to use this knowledge alone without help.

According to Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, and Johnson (2000), and Tompkins, (2003), children pass through identifiable stages of development while they acquire written language. The first stage is emergent reading and writing where children are engaged in a kind of pretend reading and writing. The second stage is early reading and writing in which children use finger point reading, word-by-word reading and writing, read-alouds, and they also may write a few words or lines. The next stage is transitional reading and writing, when children approach fluency in the language. The final stage includes both intermediate and advanced reading and writing. Within this stage children are able to write and read fluently with expression, develop a variety of reading and writing styles and genres, and their writing shows personality, problem solving, and reflection in the text. A body of research specific to writing and children's literacy development has been conducted and will be presented.

Review of Research on Emergent Writing

The following section will be focused on writing, particularly on the work of different researchers who have studied emergent writing. Children often show interest in graphic representations that are meaningful, such as their name and environmental print within the first three years (Clay, 1975). This indicates that children begin to abstract concepts about print very early in their development. The National Research Council research confirms that these highly sophisticated conceptual understandings about print occur through playful and exploratory activities (Robinson, Ross, and Neal, 2000). Clay

(1975) in her seminal research identified a variety of writing forms from children's writing samples, such as drawings, scribbles, strings of letters, invented spelling, and conventional spellings. Interest in children's writing forms became the focus of research for the next decade.

Sulzby, Barnhart, and Hieshima (1989) conducted a study which involved 123 kindergarteners in five classrooms. They collected eight written samples from each child in the classroom over an eight month period and three other samples from individual interviews conducted quarterly. Their findings indicate that several forms of writing appear very early in development and that those immature forms continue to reappear as late as age six. Sulzby et al. (1989) summarized their conclusions by noting that first, children use a preponderance of low-level writing forms at the beginning of kindergarten. These forms change very slowly over the year. Second, children who reread their scribbling are demonstrating much literacy growth.

Kamii and Manning (1999) conducted a study to determine the point at which English-speaking children become aware that writing is related to the sounds of speech. Fifty-seven kindergarten children were individually introduced to four pairs of words - ham and hamster, butter and butterfly, berry and strawberry, and melon and watermelon - and asked to write them. These words were selected in order to discover if children began to write more letters unconventionally for longer words and if they began to write the same letters unconventionally for the same sounds. The results indicated that the four pairs of words were useful in identifying young children who had become aware that writing is related to the sounds of speech. During the five months of the study, the percentage of children who wrote more letters unconventionally for longer words rose from 28 to 68 percent. The

children also used more letters that were the same for parts of the words that sound the same.

Vernon and Ferreiro (1999) conducted a study with similar purposes to the Kamii et al. study. Vernon and Ferreiro looked at the relationship between the development of phonological awareness and the development of writing in Spanish-speaking children in kindergarten. The results of the study speak to the ongoing controversy about approaches to early literacy instruction - that is, whether children's ability to segment words into phonemes (phonological awareness) is a prerequisite for learning how to read and write. Their results indicate that phonological awareness is not an either/or phenomenon, but that it develops across levels and that this development is related to children's writing development. Vernon and Ferreiro provide two important educational implications based on their findings. First, they suggest that children's ability to benefit from systematic phonics instruction depends on their level of writing development. Second, encouraging children to write in kindergarten and first grade is an important way to stimulate the analysis of spoken words or other meaningful units.

A study carried out by Kamii and Manning (2002) examined the relationship between children's development in writing and their development in phonological analysis in a replication of Vernon and Ferreiro study described above (1999). A writing task and two oral segmentation tasks, similar to those used by Vernon and Ferreiro with Spanish-speaking kindergarteners, were completed by 68 English-speaking kindergarteners. Findings revealed a strong relationship between children's level of writing and their level of oral segmentation. The researcher's concluded that encouraging beginning readers to

write is important because children must analyze their speech when they are writing and become better able to differentiate phonemes.

Craig's study (2003), awarded the 2003 International Reading Association Outstanding Dissertation, examined the effects of two instructional approaches on kindergarten children's phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and early reading. Data were obtained from 87 children in an elementary school who were assigned to an Interactive Writing-plus group or to a metalinguistic games-plus group. The results suggested that a more contextualized approach that allows teachers to differentiate instruction advances children to new levels of competence in phonological awareness, spelling, and reading. Furthermore, the results showed that writing instruction that encourages phonemic segmentation and invented spellings provides a rich context for developing the phonological awareness and alphabetic knowledge.

Instructional Approaches for Emerging Writers

Written language is a cultural convention that was invented for the purpose of communicating and sharing information. A number of instructional approaches exist for supporting young children in their writing development. In this paper, three commonly used approaches - Modeled Writing, Interactive Writing, and Independent Writing – will be described.

Modeled Writing, Interactive Writing, and Independent Writing are in part defined by the level of support provided by the teacher (Bear, et al. 2004). The highest level of teacher support is represented in Modeled Writing in which the teacher develops the message and does all of the writing. The approach that requires the least amount of teacher support is represented in Independent Writing in which children generate a message and

do all of the writing. Between the greatest and least levels of teacher support is Interactive Writing in which both teachers and children write and compose together with varying degrees of teacher support depending on student's needs and abilities.

As teachers and adults participate with children in many varied writing experiences, the teacher scaffolds children's understanding of ways in which individuals can use written language to communicate with others. According to Combs (1996), teachers serve as models of fluent writing, support children's developing understanding of concepts about print, collaborate in the act of composition, think aloud as authors, and share some things they have learned about writing.

Modeled Writing

Modeled Writing is a teacher demonstration of writing about different activities in the classroom. During these "Modeled Writing" demonstrations, the teacher articulates aspects of the writer's thinking processes and, for example, provides children with a "model" of the teacher's thoughts and how they are organized in the process of composing written language.

Models play an important role in children's learning and it is important to start introducing models to children at a young age. McGee & Richgels (2000) point out in their textbook for preservice teachers that experiencing models helps children understand the system of written language. Models for children can be parents, teachers, more knowledgeable peers, and any other adults. However, not all children arrive at school with rich experiences in written language. For children with little experience, teachers must demonstrate meaningful and knowledgeable writing experiences to facilitate writing

development. "Modeling is especially important for children who have difficulty understanding oral directions given in English" (Tompkins, 2003, p. 16).

Teachers use Modeled Writing to demonstrate the following: (a) fluent writing, (b) the use of writing strategies, such as predicting, monitoring, and revising, (c) procedures for beginning new writing, and (d) information about how writing conventions and other skills work (Combs, 2002). Teacher modeling of writing process activities can be used with children at all developmental levels. Teachers address these purposes by using Modeled Writing across a variety of contexts. Specific examples of Modeled Writing such as morning message, daily riddle, and daily news follow.

Morning Message. The morning message provides a format to model the use of language for the purpose of sharing information and to preview skills or classroom activities. A typical morning message involves a teacher writing on chart paper as the children watch. According to Allen (2002) the message follows a set pattern such as:

Dear Children,

Welcome to school today. I am glad you are here! Today is _____, _____, 2004.

The weather is _____. Today we will _____.

Have a great day!

Your teacher,

After writing, the teacher reads the message to the class, rereads it with them, and tracks each word as she reads. Using colored markers or highlighters the teacher selects one or two skills to work on (capitalization, phonics skills, etc.). Then the teacher places

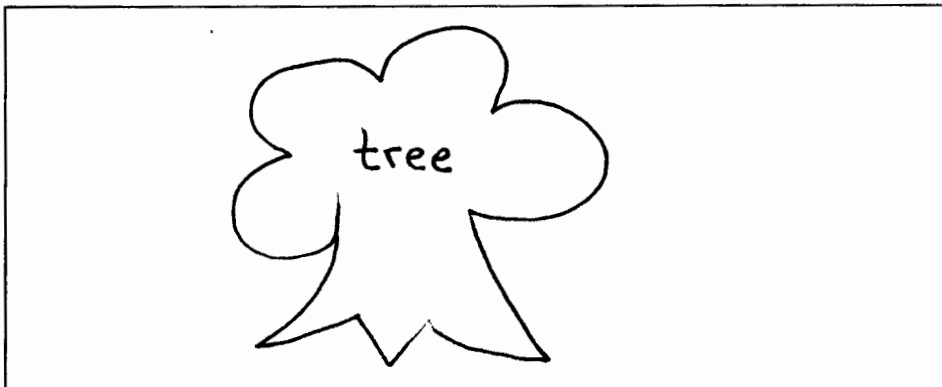
the Morning Message in the Writing Area and invites children to use the message to practice identified literacy skills.

Daily Riddle. Daily riddle provides a meaningful context through which children can develop reasoning skills and work on phonemic awareness and phonics skills. According to Kaye (1995) the daily riddle follows a set pattern. The teacher writes a common word that contains the pattern on the blank line at the top of the paper to create a riddle. For example, this word is tree. The teacher asks children: “What rhymes with tree?” and draws a picture of the tree in the box.

Figure 1. Daily riddle.

Riddle Me This!

What rhymes with _____ TREE _____?



_____ bee _____

_____ sea _____

_____ key _____

_____ me _____

_____ tea _____


_____ chee _____

The teacher reads the riddle to the class. Children are encouraged to respond with a rhyming word. They may say a word that has the pattern of sound but not the pattern of print (for example, flea) or generate nonsense words (for example, pree). The teacher puts

all the children's responses on the sheet and helps children decide which words are real and which are not.

Daily News (oral to print format). Teacher uses children's own life experiences as a source for writing (Stewart, 2002). Daily news is a dynamic, whole-group, developmental writing strategy that help children mature in their understanding of the alphabetic principle. During this activity children practice oral language, story summarization, finding the main idea, concepts about print, the alphabet, and letter formation. For example, in the activity "What's the Category?" (Allen, 2000), the teacher could discuss with children a selected category, morning sounds, by asking children to tell what sound they heard first in the morning. If they heard the neighbor's dog barking the teacher quickly sketches a dog under "My Picture".

Figure 2. What's the Category?

My Picture	Sounds and Letters In My Word	My Word
	/d/	A dog

Then the teacher slowly pronounces the first sound of the word asking: "What sound do you hear in the beginning of the word *dog*?" (/d/). The teacher also might direct children's attention to an alphabet chart helping children to identify /d/ as the sound that starts the word *dog*. The teacher writes the letter *d* under "Sounds and Letters in My Word". Then, pronouncing each sound the teacher writes the word *dog* under "My Word". Another option is to have children listen for ending or middle sounds. For example, the teacher will write *_og* for *dog* when the target sound is /d/.

Interactive Writing

In Interactive Writing the teacher and children negotiate the text together and “share the pen” – the children write what they can and the teacher fills in the rest (Tompkins, 2004). Interactive Writing, an approach developed by McKenzie (1985), is predicated on the notion that children will learn to read and write text more readily if they themselves are the authors of text and if the text is based on familiar topics or experiences. A teacher scaffolds children in spelling words correctly; expressing what they want to say in their writing, and using written language conventions so the text can be easily read (Combs, 2002). Through Interactive Writing the teacher provides authentic opportunities for writing, models the use of phonics skills for writing, increases spelling knowledge, and provides written language resource for future classroom. According to Allen (2002) the goal for this writing activity is to jointly create writing that follows conventional standards of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. This approach is used with kindergarten and first-grade writers.

Interactive Writing allows children to work in their zone of proximal development for writing tasks. Teachers provide guidance to children, scaffolding their writing efforts so they can successfully write text. “Interactive Writing works with children whose writing ability is emerging because they are in need of scaffolding support of a more knowledgeable person” (Tompkins & Collom, 2004, p. 4). “Interactive Writing provides powerful demonstrations ... that help young children make progress in their own writing” (McCarrier, Pinnell, and Fountas, 2000). Children are able to take the “supported” writing and carry what they have learned over into their Independent Writing. The Interactive Writing component is most effective when integrated throughout the day. Many skills can

be addressed during the writing of a text: letter formation, punctuation, capitalization, word boundaries, directionality, affixes, phonetic structures, vocabulary development, and spelling.

Interactive Writing is implemented through a series of steps that repeat in a cycle as the text is created. Tompkins & Collom (2004) identify six steps in Interactive Writing. The first step is to negotiate a sentence. The teacher and children collaborate to compose meaningful text that children can read. The text can be focused on a wide variety of topics and forms (letters, poems, invitations, etc.). In negotiating the text teacher takes an active role to “incorporate the teaching of skills and writing conventions into the Interactive Writing lesson” (Tompkins & Collom, 2004, p.2).

In the second step, the children and teacher count the number of words in the sentence. The teacher pronounces the agreed-upon sentence slowly, and holds up one finger for each word spoken. This supports the concept that a sentence is composed of words.

Step three starts the actual writing of words. The teacher and children recall the first word to be written. The teacher articulates the word slowly, using a technique called “stretching the word”. Children listen for the individual phonemes that make up the word. As children attend to the sounds, their phonemic awareness is enhanced.

In the fourth step the teacher and a child share the pen. The child writes part of the word or the whole word on the chart. The teacher fills in the letters that children have not yet learned. Conventional spelling is used because one of the goals of Interactive Writing is to write a text that all children can read.

Step five encourages the teacher to draw attention to the words that are already written. This step is called point and read.

Step six includes recalling the entire sentence to be written, and then going back to the third step. The teacher and children orally repeat the sentence they agreed to write to refresh their memories while focusing on keeping an entire thought in the head until they are able to write it down. The next word in the sentence becomes the new focus and steps three to six are repeated.

The teacher's purposes for Interactive Writing may include the following: (a) to practice writing high-frequency words; (b) to teach and practice phonics and spelling skills; (c) to successfully write texts that children could not do independently; (d) to have children share their writing expertise with classmates (McGee & Richgels, 2000). Different activities occur in the classroom to help teachers address these purposes: discussion / retelling personal experiences, mini-lessons on specific writing skills, and field trips (for example, children compose a thank-you letter to a local business after the field trip). Teachers use classroom activities to provide the context for Interactive Writing. Specific examples of Interactive Writing will be discussed.

Interactive Daily News. Children and the teacher "share the pen" to write daily news based on children's experiences. The What's Up activity (Allen, 2002) incorporates Interactive Writing in the daily news correspondence through the following steps: the teacher chooses five children to be class "reporters" for the week. Each day, the teacher asks one reporter to think of some type of "news" he or she would like to share with the class (about home or related to school) and identifies the main idea of the report.

Then, the teacher writes the date and the summary sentence on a piece of chart paper, pausing for children to spell some of the words or to share the pen and write them on the paper. For some words the teacher might identify letter sounds and ask volunteers to write the letter(s) that represent these sounds. After writing each sentence, the teacher stops to have the class read the sentence together, checking all words and punctuation marks. Use of correction tape and sticky notes to cover the mistakes is encouraged. The teacher thinks aloud as to why each correction needs to be made and how it should be done. Then, with the children's help, the teacher makes the necessary corrections. Finally, the teacher places the completed chart at the writing area for children to revisit.

The types of compositions that can be modeled through Interactive Writing are endless. For example, the teacher can model the writing process by writing in another genre (for example, fairy tales, realistic animal stories, mysteries, and realistic adventures), exploring different informational text structures (for example, description or compare/contrast), or functional types of writing (for example, lists, notes, labels, explanations, descriptions or records of events).

Interactive Writing can be used with a whole class, small groups, or individuals, and depends on the purposes for instruction, the needs of children, and the demands of the shared text the teacher is using. Early in the school year, emergent and developing writers benefit from the safety and security of whole-group situations. Combs (2002) identifies a variety of benefits that whole-group and small-group compositions provide. For example, whole-group writing gives children equal opportunities to learn, hear the ideas of others, and compare with those of others. Small-group writing provides more personalized

attention, fosters increased student contributions, and allows teachers to observe children's interactions more closely.

Independent Writing

Independent Writing is the level with the most student independence and the least teacher control and support. Through Independent Writing, children are prepared for the challenges of working on their own, developing an understanding of multiple uses of writing, and incorporating writing strategies. Independent Writing strengthens text sequence and supports children's reading and spelling development (Allen, 2002). Children's practices of process writing are also often referred to as writer's workshops or writing groups. They work at their own pace on the pieces on which they want to work. Here children self-select their topics and go through the five process writing stages – prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing.

Children practice writing skills at all five phases of the writing process. During prewriting, writers organize their thoughts about their writing subject before they actually write. During the drafting stage, writers use prewriting details to compose the text. Through revising, writers reread their story and think about changes that would improve their text. Editing allows for writers to check for spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors. Publishing encourages writers to neatly rewrite or type their stories and add illustrations to accompany their text (Bear et. al., 2004).

Each phase is introduced to young writers separately. Prewriting and drafting make up the majority of the writing experiences for children in kindergarten and first half of first grade. However, the teacher models the other steps in a whole-group setting so children

can experience the whole process. To do so a teacher writes the story, tells a story, and follows all five steps of the writing process with the group.

The teacher's purposes for Independent Writing may include the following: (a) to create opportunities for children to practice writing procedures, concepts, strategies, and skills that have been taught; (b) to provide authentic literacy experiences in which children choose their own topics, purposes, and materials; (c) and to develop lifelong writers (Tompkins, 2003).

Different activities occur in the classroom to help the teacher address these purposes. Children create their own messages, stories, labels, and lists using known words and invented words based on their current level of understanding of the alphabetic principle. They may refer to word walls, charts, dictionaries, word banks, or the computer as sources of help with conventional spelling. Additionally, children may use journal writing, reader response activities, process writing, writer's workshop, writing groups, letter writing, and creative story writing. They are all different activities that provide a context for Independent Writing.

Journal Writing. Journals offer children an opportunity for risk-free personal writing. The teacher introduces journal writing on the first day of school and includes it in the class schedule each day. Usually children start writing about their own experiences at home, school, or in their community by drawing pictures as a form of written expression. Later on teachers may ask them to write about stories they have read and make connections from story characters to their own life. Teachers help children generate writing topics, but do not assign them. Several types of journals are appropriate for young writers, which will be discussed.

My Draw and Tell Journal. This type of journal provides kindergarteners and early first graders with an opportunity to view themselves as writers because they can draw pictures as a form of written communication (Perry, 1990). As children learn about letter and sound connections later they can label their pictures with letter signs, words, phrases, and then sentences. When children are correctly labeling their pictures, they are ready to move to the My Stories journal format.

My Stories. The teacher invites children (late kindergarten, first and second grades) to write about their own life stories first and then illustrate their writing in their journals. As children feel more secure with their writing, they begin to write and then illustrate.

My Learning Log. Teachers ask children informally to write about what they have learned during the reading of a nonfiction book, during a unit of study, or after independent research in science or social studies. The teacher invites children to observe various classroom objects (for example, growing plants: "Today a flower started to grow from the stem. There is also one leaf") (Allen, 2002) and report their findings in a class learning log. These types of activity are used with late kindergarten, first and second grades.

Literature Response Journal. Children (late kindergarten, first and second grades) are asked to respond to stories they read individually or during small or whole-group time or to stories that have been read to the class. The teacher prompts responses by asking children questions about characters, setting, story plot, or other story elements (Kaye, 1995).

My Forever Journal. This type of activity, a school-to-home-journal, allows parents to respond to children's work (Stewart, 2002). Toward the end of the day, children write

one or two sentences that reflect the most important thing they learned that day, the thing they hope to remember forever. Each day, children take their journal home. The teacher asks the children to ask their parents to read their journals and then sign the entry or write comments about it. The following day children return their journals to school. This activity is used in kindergarten, first, and second grades.

Pilot Study

Upon completing my review of the literature on the role of writing in emerging literacy programs, I wanted to explore the use of various approaches for writing. I designed and implemented a pilot study. This study took place in June 2004, in kindergarten # 38 of the Vaseleostrovsky region of Saint Petersburg, Russia. The pilot study was conducted with two groups of children. The first group had four children from the five and six years old classroom who had one year of English language instruction. The second group was four children from six and seven years old classroom who had two years of English language instruction. During the pilot study American's methods for literacy development (Modeled Writing, Interactive Writing, and Independent Writing) were practiced in the EFL setting.

First, Modeled Writing with children of five and six years old was examined. For this purpose the activities morning message and daily news were used.

Morning message

I told the children this message was from their classroom teacher and that it had some blank spaces which they need to fill in. After writing each word in English, I translated its meaning for the children, pronounced separate sounds, syllables, and the whole word. Through my writing children saw some letters that they knew, but they

couldn't read them. They filled in the blanks by giving me the Russian equivalent. I wrote it in English, and translated it for them. (The weather is good and sunny). I reread the message pointing to each word as I was reading. The children repeated the message in Russian, translating what I was reading (Dear – Дорогие children – дети). Then, we reread this message together in English. They were excited to read it in English. I also selected to work on capitalization, but it was too easy for them because they were well familiar with this topic. They explained and pointed out all capital letters. As the morning message is not used in the classroom setting in Russia, children were not familiar with its pattern and how to fill it in, but with my help they completed it successfully.

Children also showed a great interest toward writing. When I wanted to erase the morning message, they didn't let me to do it. They liked the way it looked.

Daily news

I explained to the children that today we would write news, what happened today in their classroom. Each child orally gave me a sentence in Russian. I translated it into English and wrote it on the blackboard. (Сегодня очень, очень, очень хороший день – Today is a very, very, very good day). I reread it again pointing to each word and giving them translations. Then, we read it together and the children gave me the Russian translation. We found some similar words from our morning message and daily news: today, very, good and girls (they knew them all except the first one) in the text, read them, and gave translations.

As the children wanted to continue to write we wrote some other sentences using the same pattern from our two early writing activities. For example, today Яна, Арина, Ксюша will play, eat, sleep, go for a walk. Яна, Арина, Ксюша are very, very, very good

girls. They liked these sentences because they were about them personally. Never before had the children experienced dictating something to write down about themselves. It was absolutely new for them!

Then, Interactive Writing was practiced. For this purpose, interactive daily news was used.

Every child made up a sentence. We decided which one to write first. We recalled the whole sentence and how it was started. For example, today my godmother has a happy day (a familiar sentence from yesterday; it was easy for children to create it, and to write it afterwards). Other sentences were: Ксюша is a ryd (good) girl. Яна likes to play. My house is warm/cold/good. It was easier for children to write those letters which were phonological and had similarities to their native language (ryd – first letter is written in Russian instead of English – they both have the same sound, but we write them differently). I think if children were more familiar with the English alphabet and had more vocabulary it would be easy for them to read and write in English.

Then, Independent Writing with children of five and six years old was examined. For this purpose the activity My Stories was used.

In the beginning, children didn't want to write in English because they didn't know the English alphabet. I tried to encourage them to write by pointing out English letters, words, and sentences. As children were still confused we agreed on writing English words with the help of Russian letters. Some children just wrote the words that they knew (гёл [girl], гуд [good], бой [boy], гудбай [good buy] – Яна), (see Appendix B, example 1). Others were trying to make up sentences by asking some words or how to spell them: спринг му фаворт сизон [spring is my favorite season] – Ксюша (see Appendix B,

example 2); Вот [here it is] зовзалайк [I like], сани [sunny], айлавю [I love you], мамми [mammy] и папи [and daddy], сэнькю [thank you] – Арина (see Appendix B, example 3). A few children could remember some English letters, and they mixed them with Russian letters (mtmt, птпт – Паша). All of the children's writing was based on the Russian phonological system. They wrote down what they heard pronouncing each sound.

I wondered, “What if these children knew the alphabet?” I introduced them to the English alphabet. Although it was difficult for children to remember all the new letters, in general they could write simple phonological words in English. Also those children who could already write in their native language were more successful in trying to write in English language.

Modeled Writing with children of six and seven years old in the second group was examined. The activities morning message and daily news were used.

Morning message

Children of this age group were more familiar with the English alphabet which made reading and writing easier for them. They still mixed English and Russian letters, but it was a natural process for them. They knew vocabulary and were not so self conscious about reading. When they had to fill in the blanks, they were able to give me not only the Russian equivalent, but also some English words as well (The weather is bad and rainy. In Russian they could come up with six words to define such weather). We worked on the letter formation trying to find same patterns within the words, and the way they are spelled (today - to and day, the same last sound has play, etc.).

Daily news

Children got very excited about writing news in English. They immediately started suggesting different news from their classroom that day. Each of them gave me one short sentence in Russian. Together we translated it into English. First, a girl repeated the sentence from the previous activity (Today the weather is rainy). Other girls came up with such sentences as: I like to eat sweets, I don't like to get up early, I love you Вася, and the boy – I like to run after girls. Then each child read his/her own sentences and translated it.

Both groups of children expressed great interest and enthusiasm toward an absolutely new activity for them – writing. Even though they did not know the English alphabet, with my assistance and modeling they easily engaged in writing. The children were very happy to see their own oral language written on the blackboard. When the activity was finished children did not want the sentences to be erased. They kept asking when they would write again. They were not only excited, but also proud of their first written work.

The results of this pilot study suggest that Americans' methods for literacy development (Modeled Writing, Interactive Writing, and Independent Writing) could be successfully applied in a EFL classroom in Russia. This project is the first step towards the goal of incorporating writing into the curriculum and instructional practices to be used in Russian EFL classes with children five and six years old.

The Project

This section suggests ways that writing can be used in the EFL setting for young children in Russia. It talks about how the teacher can incorporate writing across the day using routines, introduction of print in the classroom, integrating oral language, and shared reading. A sample unit with five lesson plans is provided.

Ways to Introduce Writing

Writing can be introduced to children in an EFL setting through different ways. The most commonly used is through routines, what children do and experience every day in the classroom.

Routines

Morning message is a good writing activity to start every or every other lesson. It could follow the following pattern: Today is _____. The weather is _____. Today we will talk about, study, discuss, or describe _____. Initially the teacher uses Modeled Writing for the morning message. Later during the year it could become Interactive Writing.

Children typically talk about the weather conditions each day. It is warm, cold, rainy, snowy, or sunny. As part of a whole group daily weather activity the teacher might use a special chart with pictures depicting different weather conditions with the English name on the bottom for children to select.

The same activity could be carried out with the calendar. The teacher could ask, “What day is today?” Children would reply, “Today is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday”. The teacher could also ask, “What season is today?” Children would reply, “It is fall / winter / spring / summer”.

Modeled Writing can be also used when the teacher is introducing the topic of the day. It could be a special chart with the name of the topic that would reflect what children learned during the lesson, and pictures and phrases related to it. For example, if the topic of the day is food, the chart has *Food* written on it surrounded by pictures of vegetables, fruits, and drinks with English names on the bottom. It could later include useful expressions such as "I like / don't like ____" with a space where children can insert the food item after this expression (the expression and pictures of food are placed on the chart. Pictures have a magnet on the back side so that children can stick chosen food into the expression).

Utilizing these routine procedures the teacher not only involves children in communication, but also introduces and engages children in using writing in a meaningful context. Teacher's Modeled Writing compositions can also serve as children's initial reading texts.

Introduction of Print in the Classroom

Another way to familiarize children with writing is to include and use print within the classroom. One of the best examples of environmental print is children's name cards. Names are very meaningful to children and can be used in variety of ways. First, they could be used on an "Attendance Board" where children place their name card in the *In or Out column*. Name cards can identify children's spaces, places where they sit, study, sleep, etc. The teacher encourages children to use these models when writing their names on their works and projects. For example, the teacher asks children: "What is your favorite food? Could you draw it?" When the painting is finished children sign their name. Some

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may only put the first letter of their name initially and later the whole name on the painting.

Before using the name cards in English the teacher must be sure that children recognize their names in Russian. Only then would children's names be "translated" into English with English spelling. For example, the Russian name *Саша* will be Sasha in English.

An alphabet chart can be another useful source for introducing print to children. The teacher can refer to it when speaking about children's names, the topic of the day (for example, if the topic is food - Apple, Orange, etc.), as well as singing the ABC song and following the chart. Children can play guessing games when one child says a letter and the other locates it on the chart.

As children start to learn more and more words, printed labels for these objects could be placed in the classroom. Children would see name cards of different objects in their classroom, such as table, chair, pen, pencil, bed, etc., as well as some words from the topic of the day.

Shared reading

During the EFL lesson children are frequently introduced to a story based on their topic. Children "read" this book together with the teacher and discuss events happening in it. There are many writing activities that can accompany shared reading experience. One of the activities could be making a pattern book with children. For example, after reading the book "Brown Bear, Brown Bear" children make their own book following the same pattern. If the topic is food some of the sentences might be: "Red apple, Red apple what do you see? I see a yellow banana hanging on the tree".

Shared reading might be also incorporated with shared writing when children "write" in their journals. Children and the teacher could read the book about food, discuss their likes and dislikes, and after that, using pictures from the magazines, they "write" what kind of food do they like and they do not like.

In their journals children can also reflect not only on the books they have read, but also on other experiences such as a field trip. For example, if the unit topic is food children could be introduced to a grocery list and then make a special trip to the shop to buy all these items. Teacher could also talk with children about traditional American food and what do they do (make a grocery list) and how do they do it (so shopping only once a week). Later children can write their own grocery lists.

A Sample Unit: Food

The topic *food* for the unit was chosen to introduce children to American culture by conversing about typical American food, how it is different from Russian food, where you can get it, how you can make it, and from what it is made. For this purpose activities involving pizza are introduced through lessons. The topic *food* is also known as one of the commonly used topics for children's discussion as it is a topic children are very familiar with. Table 1 provides an overview of the unit's vocabulary, expressions, and introduction to culture. Specific plans for five lessons incorporating writing into the EFL setting are included.

Table 1. Overview of Food Unit.

Vocabulary	Expressions	Introduction to Culture
Lesson 1: Tomato, banana, apple,	I like	What do Americans eat

cheese, cookies, pizza, meat, juice, milk, tea, egg, strawberries, and lettuce	I don't like	
Lesson 2:		
Mushrooms, pepper, pepperoni, onion, and sausage	I like I don't like What do you like?	
Lesson 3:		
Previous vocabulary	I like / don't like to eat I like / don't like to drink	
Lesson 4:		
Recipe, ingredients, cup, flour, and pizza sauce	This is pizza with I'd like to have Here it is	Different types of recipes, introduction to traditional American food: pizza with pepperoni
Lesson 5:		
Cheers, chewy cheese, extra sauce, fast, serve, hot, and topping	Would you like pizza with? Hit the spot	American traditional food

Unit 1: Food

Goals:

1. Introduce children to the English language

2. Introduce children to Modeled and Interactive Writing
3. Introduction to American culture
4. Introduction to Shared Reading
5. Introduction to food vocabulary and expressions
6. To encourage children to listen and engage in conversation in English

Objectives:

1. The children will acquire English names of different types of food: banana, apple, cheese, pizza, pepperoni, cookies, meat, juice, milk, tea, egg, lettuce, crackers, strawberries, and tomato.
2. The children will acquire useful conversational food expressions: I like to eat, I like to drink, I'd like to have, I like/don't like to eat/drink, this is pizza with, and would you like pizza with.
3. The children will write a pattern book.
4. The children will write a recipe.

Materials of the unit:

1. Thematic book of the unit *I Like*, by Lee, M. (2000)

“We go to the store.

I like bananas. I like tomatoes.

I like lettuce. I like apples.

I like meat. I like cheese.

I like pizza. I like cookies.

I like juice. I like milk.

We like going to the store!”

2. Food poster cards.

By using food poster cards children will extend their vocabulary of different kinds of food, such as what children could eat for breakfast, lunch, supper, and as a snack.

3. Picture cards with the name of the food on the bottom and magnet on the back to stick it on the chart paper

4. Toys representing different food

5. A chart with Morning Message

Learners:

The thematic unit is designed for children ages five to six who are in their first year of learning English as a second language. This thematic unit is presented during the second part of the year when children are already familiar with the English alphabet, greetings, and other thematic units as colors, seasons, body parts, weather, etc. Some elements of writing have already been introduced to children (for example, Morning Message, signing their work). The lesson takes place in a special classroom for learning English language. The lesson lasts 20 minutes and takes place in the morning. There are six to seven children in the group.

1.1 Lesson

Goals and objectives

1. To introduce the children to Modeled Writing using the Morning Message
2. To introduce the children to Shared Reading by using a thematic English book on food
3. To teach the children new vocabulary: banana, apple, cheese, cookies, pizza, meat, juice, milk, tea, egg, lettuce, crackers, strawberries, and tomato

4. To teach the children how to use expressions “I like”, “I don’t like”
5. To use the expression “I like” in a meaningful written context

Teacher’s materials:

A chart with the Morning Message, thematic book of the unit *I like*, toys of different food items, picture cards with the name of the food on the bottom and magnet on the back to stick it on the chart paper when finishing the expression “I like”, and different markers.

Children’s materials:

None

Comments and notes:

As this is the first lesson of the unit, the book of this unit should be covered, so it will be a surprise for children. The teacher should prepare in advance toys and picture cards to introduce the children to the new vocabulary and to use to complete sentences.

Take home assignment:

Bring the picture of the food you like.

Lesson Plan

Warm up (3 minutes)

The children greet the teacher and each other with the following song.

“Good morning! Good morning!

Good morning! Good morning to you!

Good morning! Good morning!

I am glad to see you!”

Then the children and the teacher compose the Morning Message. As the teacher writes the message, she pronounces the words and sounds in English. Through Morning Message a new thematic unit on food is introduced.

Dear children,

Today is Monday, November 15, 2004.

The weather is warm. Today we will talk about food.

Your teacher,

Elena Ivanovna.

Connecting Oral Language, Reading and Writing

Before reading (3 minutes). The teacher shows the children the new book they are going to read and ask them in Russian: “What do you think this book is about? Can you guess? What do the illustrations on the cover tell us?”

The teacher introduces the book in English telling its name is *I like* and translates it in Russian. Afterwards the teacher asks the children in Russian: “What food do you like?”, “What food don’t you like?” During the conversation the teacher writes down all children’s responses in English on the chart. She rereads them with the children.

During reading (5 minutes). The teacher reads the book to the children, identifying the different food items by drawing attention to the illustrations. She points to the picture asking in English: “What is this?” During the reading the teacher sticks the picture cards with food items mentioned in the book on the chart. The teacher encourages the children to do echo reading when she reads the book a second time.

After reading (7 minutes). The following three steps of reading are presented.

1. The teacher compares the chart of children's favorite food and the food in the book in English. The teacher emphasizes any new vocabulary that was introduced when children shared their favorite foods by showing them toys and flash cards of different food items (banana, apple, cheese, cookies, pizza, meat, juice, milk, tea, egg, lettuce, crackers, strawberries, and tomato). The teacher also might pass some toy-food items around the class. The children learn faster when their senses are directly involved into the learning process. While showing the children toys and flash cards the teacher names the food item in English and children repeats its name after him/her.

2. The teacher introduces children to the expressions in English "I like", "I don't like" written on the chart. The teacher asks children if they can predict what this expression might mean, and then translates it into Russian. The teacher gives each child a turn to finish both sentences by choosing a picture card from the chart sticking it at the end of the sentence. The teacher encourages children to say the food they chose in English.

3. After children have practiced this expression orally and have seen it in print, the teacher asks for volunteers who would like to try to write the name of the food they like in English. The teacher tells the children that they can write it by themselves or she will help them write. If children are reluctant to write, they can dictate the food they like. When the sentence is completed, the children write the first letter of their name or the whole name depending on child's level of writing. For example, I like cheese. M (Masha).

Wrap-Up (2 minutes)

The teacher briefly reviews with children the new topic they have just started in Russian, and the new English words they learned today. The teacher also points out in Russian to the children that all their new words are on the word chart, and they can use

them during their free activity time. The teacher gives the children a home assignment of bringing a picture of their favorite food for the next class. The children and the teacher say good bye to each other in English.

The teacher writes the home assignment both in English and Russian on the parent message chart, so they will know how to help and assist their children.

1.2 Lesson

Goals and objectives

1. To introduce language in a meaningful content
2. To review and use the new vocabulary and expressions “I like”, “I don’t like”
3. To review the thematic book *I Like* and practice Shared Reading.
4. To introduce the children to the expression “What do you like?”
5. To familiarize the children with known English words in print

Teacher’s materials:

A chart with the rhyme “Good morning!” with blanks, thematic book of the unit *I Like*, toys of different food items, picture cards with the name of the food on the bottom to finish the expression “I like”, different markers, a sample of a food pattern book

Children’s materials:

Pictures of their favorite foods brought from home.

Comments and notes:

The teacher should prepare the rhyme “Good morning!” with blanks and the chart with the heading “Daily News” in advance. While making a pattern book with children, the teacher should draw children’s attention to the book and how it is organized.

Lesson Plan

Warm up (4 minutes)

The children greet the teacher and each other in English. The teacher tells the children in Russian that she forgot some of the words in their morning greeting song and asks for the children's help. With the teacher's assistance children fill in the blanks in the familiar greeting song.

“Good morning! Good morning!

Good morning! Good morning to you!

Good morning! Good morning!

I am glad to see you!”

The teacher briefly reviews the thematic topic in Russian and the new English words and expressions with the children. The teacher shows toys or picture cards of the food, and the children name it in English.

Connecting Oral Language, Reading and Writing

Before writing (3 minutes). The teacher reviews the thematic book *I Like* with children in English. Using the Shared Reading approach, they reread the book. During this reading, the teacher makes children aware of the organization of the book asking questions in Russian such as, “Where do we start reading the book? Where is the first word we will read? Where is the last word? “

During writing (5 minutes). The following three steps of writing are presented.

1. Children share the pictures they brought from home. The teacher encourages children to name the food with the expression “I like” referring to the chart they wrote during the previous lesson.

2. The teacher introduces children to the new writing activity – Daily news. The teacher presents himself as a reporter who is going to interview the children. The teacher explains in Russian that she is going to write daily news and that it is impossible without children's help. She asks "What do you like?" in English and the children reply by naming in English or showing the picture of what food he/she likes. For example, "What do you like, Masha?" "I like apples". The expression "What do you like?" should be also written on the chart in English, so the children become familiar with its written form.

3. The teacher encourages children to write their own answers on the chart or to write them with her assistance in English. After the expression is written down, the child signs it with his/her name or the first letter of his/her name.

After writing (4 minutes). The teacher points out the same pattern (I like ____ .) of English sentences in their thematic book *I Like* and their Daily News. The teacher suggests in Russian that the children write their own book about foods that they like. The children and the teacher reread and choose sentences from their Daily News and then make a pattern book in English. For example it could look like:

"We go to the store.

I like sausage. I like beans.

I like carrots. I like peaches.

I like pasta. I like sweets.

I like eggs. I like ice cream.

I like Cola. I like tea.

We like going to the store!"

If there are rhyming words, point them out to the children.

Wrap-Up (2 minutes)

The teacher briefly reviews with children what they did in class. The teacher gives children a home assignment which is to write down four sentences using the expression “I like” in their notebooks. The children also need to bring or draw a picture for their sentence to the next class. The children and the teacher say good bye to each other.

The teacher writes the home assignment both in English and Russian on the parent message chart, so they will know how to help and assist their children.

1.3 LessonGoals and objectives

1. To engage children in a meaningful conversation in English
2. To develop concepts of print, specifically the left to write sequence of print
3. To introduce children to the new expressions “I like/don’t like to eat”, “I like/don’t like to drink”

Teacher’s materials:

A chart with the Morning Message, a pattern book the children made during the previous class, flash cards with the name of the food, pattern books in which children will write (two pages bended together), scotch tape, and different markers.

Children’s materials:

Four written sentences and pictures of the food they like, which they have brought from home.

Comments and notes:

The teacher should write the Morning Message using the new expressions “I like/don’t like to eat”, “I like/don’t like to drink”. While making a pattern book with children the teacher should draw attention to the book’s illustrations and accompanying text.

Lesson Plan

Warm up (3 minutes)

The children greet the teacher and each other with the familiar greeting song.

“Good morning! Good morning!

Good morning! Good morning to you!

Good morning! Good morning!

I am glad to see you!”

Then the children and the teacher compose the Morning Message in English. As the teacher writes the message, she pronounces the words and, as appropriate, focuses on specific sounds.

Dear children,

Today is Monday, November 21, 2004.

The weather is sunny. Today we will write an *I Like* book.

Your teacher,

Elena Ivanovna.

Connecting Oral Language, Reading and Writing

Before writing (5 minutes). The following three steps are presented.

1. Child shares the four sentences he or she wrote in English and illustrates by showing the pictures brought from home. If there are any new food words the teacher adds them to their word chart with the children’s help.

2. The teacher reads the pattern book in English, drawing the children's attention to the left to right sequence of print.

3. The teacher introduces new English expressions to the children giving the translation in Russian "I like/don't like to eat", "I like/don't like to drink". The teacher asks the children to give some examples. For example, "Masha, what do you like to drink?" "I like to drink tea". "Misha, what do you like to eat?" "I like eat oranges".

During writing (8 minutes). The teacher tells children that today they are going to start writing their own *I Like* book using the pictures they brought from home in Russian. First, the teacher hands out hand-made pattern books (two sheets of paper folded in the middle). The teacher shows children where to write their first sentence in English using his own *I Like* book. Secondly, starting with the first page, children write their first sentence at the top of the page by copying those they prepared at home. The teacher encourages children to use the new expressions they learned today. For example, "I like/don't like to eat/drink". Thirdly, after the sentence is written in the pattern book, the children glue the picture at the bottom of the page to illustrate its meaning. During writing the teacher provides necessary help and assistance for children.

After writing (2 minutes). The teacher thanks the children for the great job they did in writing their own pattern books in Russian. The teacher chooses one child to share his writing with the whole class in English. Each child could then share their writing with a partner.

Wrap-Up (2 minutes)

The teacher briefly reviews with the children what they did in class in Russian. The teacher gives the children a home assignment which is to finish their pattern books if they

didn't have enough time in the class, to make a cover for the book, and to be prepared to share their book with the whole class in English. The children and the teacher say good bye to each other in English.

The teacher writes the home assignment both in English and Russian on the parent message chart, so they will know how to help and assist their children.

1.4 Lesson

Goals and objectives

1. To facilitate children's familiarity with known English words in print
2. To continue developing concepts of print with children, specifically the left to right sequence of print
3. To practice reading texts with the "I like ____" pattern
4. To introduce the children to the written genre of recipes
5. To introduce the children to traditional American food – pizza with pepperoni
6. To teach the children new expressions "This is pizza with", "I'd like to have", and "Here it is" in a meaningful context

Teacher's materials:

A chart with the Morning Message, different types of recipes from magazines and cookbooks, a pizza recipe on the chart, pictures of different types of pizza, a picture of pepperoni, picture cards with the name of the food, different markers, hand-out with recipes for each child.

Children's materials:

The pattern book they made during their previous class

Comments and notes:

The teacher should write the Morning Message modeling the new expressions “This is pizza with”, “I’d like to have”, “Here it is”. While writing the recipes with the children, the teacher should develop concepts of print by drawing children’s attention to how the recipe is organized and how it is read. For example, where is the first word we will read? What do we read next? Are there any numbers and measurements used?

Lesson Plan

Warm up (3 minutes)

The children greet the teacher and each other with “Good Morning” song.

“Good morning! Good morning!

Good morning! Good morning to you!

Good morning! Good morning!

I am glad to see you!”.

The teacher chooses two children to share the pattern book they made during the previous lesson. Then the children and teacher compose the Morning Message.

Dear children,

Today is Monday, November 23, 2004.

The weather is cold. Today we will write a recipe.

Your teacher,

Elena Ivanovna.

Connecting Oral Language, Reading and Writing

Before writing (6 minutes). The following three steps are presented.

1. The teacher introduces the children to the different types of recipes by showing different examples from magazines and cookbooks in Russian. The teacher points out to the children the same patterns each recipe has. One of the examples is written on the chart:

Figure 2. Pizza Recipe

20 grams pepperoni slices

120 grams pizza sauce

100 grams cheese

1 cup of milk

1 egg

250 grams flour

The teacher asks the children if they can guess what the recipe is for.

2. The teacher introduces the children to traditional American food – pizza with pepperoni in Russian.

3. The teacher asks the children to name topping they like on pizza, first in Russian and then in English. The teacher writes down all children’s responses and introduces the expression “This is a pizza with” in English.

During writing (5 minutes). Since the children are already familiar with pizza they write what kind of pizza they like using the new expression in English and words written on the chart. For example, “This is pizza with mushrooms”. Then the teacher gives the children recipes of pizza where they need to fill in ingredients they would like to have on their pizza. For example,

5 tomatoes

100 grams of cheese

1 cup of milk

1 egg

250 grams of mushrooms

4 onions

During the writing activity the teacher provides necessary help and assistance to all children.

After writing (4 minutes). The following two steps are presented.

1. The children share their written recipes with the whole group in English. The teacher asks the children to name the ingredients on their pizza. For example, “This is pizza with tomatoes”.

2. The teacher introduces the expression “I’d like to have” and “Here it is” in English. The children practice this expression with the teacher and each other. For example, “I’d like to have pizza with tomatoes” “Here it is”.

Wrap-Up (2 minutes)

The teacher briefly reviews with children what they did today in the class in Russian. The children and the teacher say good bye to each other in English.

The teacher writes the home assignment both in English and Russian on the parent message chart.

1.5 Lesson

Goals and objectives

1. To review and use new vocabulary
2. To introduce the children to the genre of poetry

3. To use the expression “Would you like pizza with” in a meaningful conversation in English

Teacher’s materials:

A chart with the Morning Message, an American poem *Three Cheers for PIZZA*, by Holzschuher, C. (1999), colored paper representing fruits and vegetables that the children named for their pizza toppings, slices of pizza made from cardboard, real pizza, camera, hand-outs with the poem for the children to take home

Children’s materials:

None

Comments and notes:

The teacher should write the poem *Three Cheers for PIZZA* in advance. The teacher should be sure that there will be enough imaginary toppings for all children. At the end of this unit the teacher might make a poster about how the children first made pizza and then ate it. For this reason the teacher might take pictures during and after writing activities. If agreeable with parents pizza will be provided.

Lesson Plan

Warm up (2 minutes)

The children greet the teacher and each other in English and then complete the Morning Message together.

Dear children,

Today is Monday, November 27, 2004.

The weather is windy. Today we will make pizza!

Your teacher,

Elena Ivanovna.

Connecting Oral Language, Reading and Writing

Before writing (4 minutes). The following two steps are presented.

1. The teacher reviews that pizza is a traditional food in America and asks the children if they know any other American food in Russian?

2. The teacher introduces an American poem about pizza written on a chart paper. First the teacher reads it in English and then gives the Russian translation. The teacher also asks volunteers to write the word pizza in English on the missing part of the poem. The poem called *Three Cheers for PIZZA*, by Holzschuher, C. (1999):

“P-I-Z-Z-A!

We could eat it every day!

Pizza-m-m-m-pizza.

P-I-Z-Z-A!

Pepperoni, chewy cheese,

Extra sauce and mushrooms, please.

Pizza-m-m-m-pizza.

P-I-Z-Z-A!

Make it fast and serve it hot,

Pizza sure does hit the spot.

Pizza-m-m-m-pizza.”

The teacher reviews different kinds of ingredients the children would like to have on their pizza in English.

During writing (6 minutes). The teacher shows colored paper representing fruits and vegetables (see Appendix C). The children’s task is to make their own pizza by putting the type of topping they would prefer to have on their pizza. When the slice of pizza is ready the children need to write the name of the topping they chose and their name on the back in English.

After writing (6 minutes). The following three steps are presented.

1. The teacher reads the poem *Three Cheers for PIZZA* once again with children in English.
2. The teacher introduces the expression “Would you like pizza with” in English and the children practice it with the teacher, suggesting pizza toppings to each other.
3. The teacher tells the children in Russian that there is a surprise waiting for them – they are going to eat real pizza. Each child gets a slice of pizza.

Wrap-Up (2 minutes)

The teacher briefly reviews with the children what they did today in class in Russian. Then the teacher asks the children to share what they learned new about food in English. The teacher hands out the children the copy of the poem *Three Cheers for PIZZA*, so that children can read it at home to their parents. The children and the teacher say good bye to each other in English.

The teacher writes the poem on the parent message chart, so parents will know how to help and assist their children.

Summary

In summary, writing can be an important part of the EFL curriculum. It could easily be incorporated into different units and lesson plans through such daily routines as morning message and daily riddle or by integrating oral language, shared reading and writing when a new topic is introduced. It can also be introduced by providing visual aids for children in a meaningful and colorful context such as posters, charts, and tables. Through modeling and assistance children are introduced to writing concepts. As they develop, they become able to participate in interactive writing, which moves them closer to the goal of becoming independent writers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Early childhood education in Russia has yet to introduce literacy instruction as part of the early childhood EFL program. Research in other countries demonstrates that young children can successfully engage in the early stages of writing. To explore this aspect of development in Russian children, I designed and implemented curriculum for early childhood EFL programs based on the American writing approaches of Modeled Writing, Interactive Writing, and Independent Writing. Results from a pilot study I conducted in Russia suggest that these writing approaches can be successfully integrated into the EFL setting. Children's high motivation and interest in writing exhibited during my pilot study support the implementation of writing activities in the EFL setting. This project is a beginning in incorporating writing as an integral component in educational programs for young Russian children.

The following recommendations describe future actions that need to be undertaken to implement writing in early childhood EFL programs in Russia.

First, writing, as it was described in the project, should be fully implemented into EFL program for children ages five and six. The purposes of implementation is not only to introduce the children to writing in the EFL setting, but also to identifying parts of the curriculum that would need to be modified or changed. Necessary corrections would benefit the curriculum that includes writing.

Second, as writing is implemented into EFL early childhood programs, research must be conducted to study the effectiveness of this new component. My pilot study suggested positive results in implementing writing. However, it is important to carry out further research of its effectiveness. Both summative and formative program evaluation data

should be collected and analyzed. Educators will need to conduct research in the field of writing to develop scientific background for practical teachers to find better ways to incorporate writing not only into the EFL setting, but into the curriculum in general as well.

Third, existing research on children's writing development should be disseminated in Russia. A plethora of research in the sphere of oral language and its development is known to Russian educators. However, research on how writing develops throughout early childhood years and how it could benefit the child's overall language development is not readily available.

Fourth, teacher preparation related to children's writing development needs to occur on two levels: for the students who are preparing to be future teachers in the EFL kindergarten and for the teachers who are already in the classroom. Familiarizing EFL early childhood educators with approaches for writing such as Modeled Writing, Interactive Writing, and Independent Writing and how to incorporate writing across the day using routines, introduction of print in the classroom, and shared reading will be required for writing to become a component of EFL instruction in Russia. Practical teachers in the classrooms should receive training and samples of developed lesson plans to be able to introduce writing to young children.

Finally, the collaboration between Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia and University of Northern Iowa should continue. It will benefit future cross-cultural research in the field of writing and provide useful information for practical teachers on the ways writing might be used and implemented in the classroom.

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Appendix A

This appendix includes cards to introduce children to the pattern consonant – vowel – consonant (CVC) where blue circle stands for consonant and red one for vowel. Three cards are presented: *ДОМ* (house), *ЛЕС* (forest), *ПАП* (steam).



A O M





П А Р





A E C

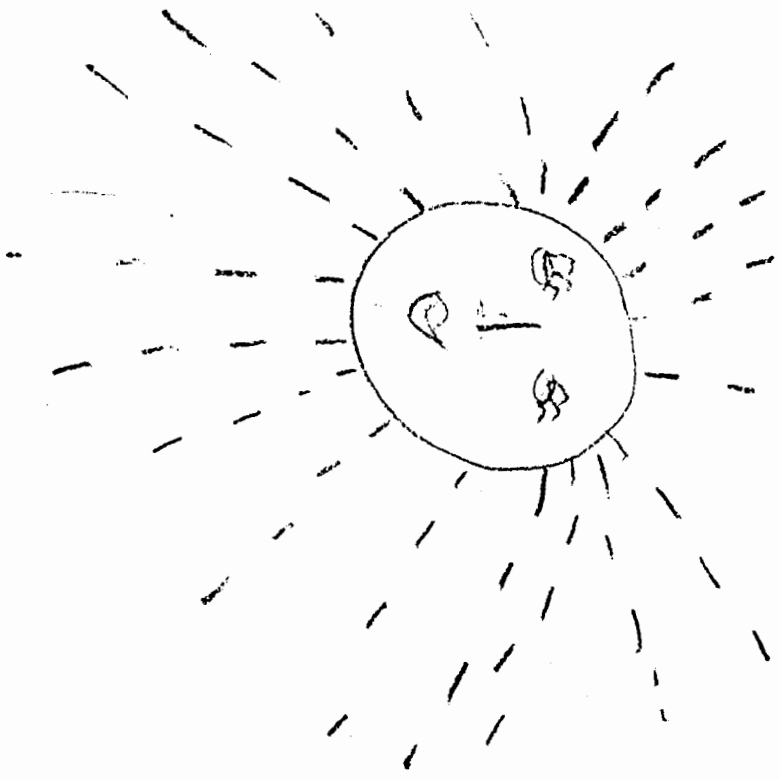


Appendix B

Samples from a pilot study.

PEA IYA
BOY IYA

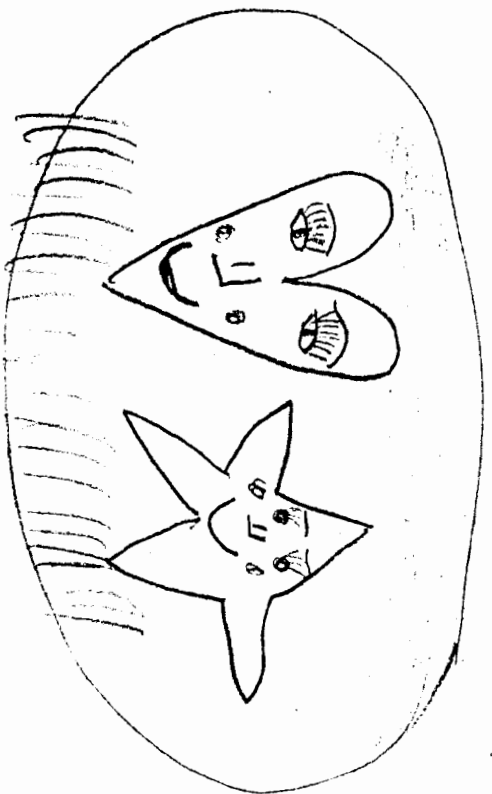
PYA BAY A ~~BT~~ BOY



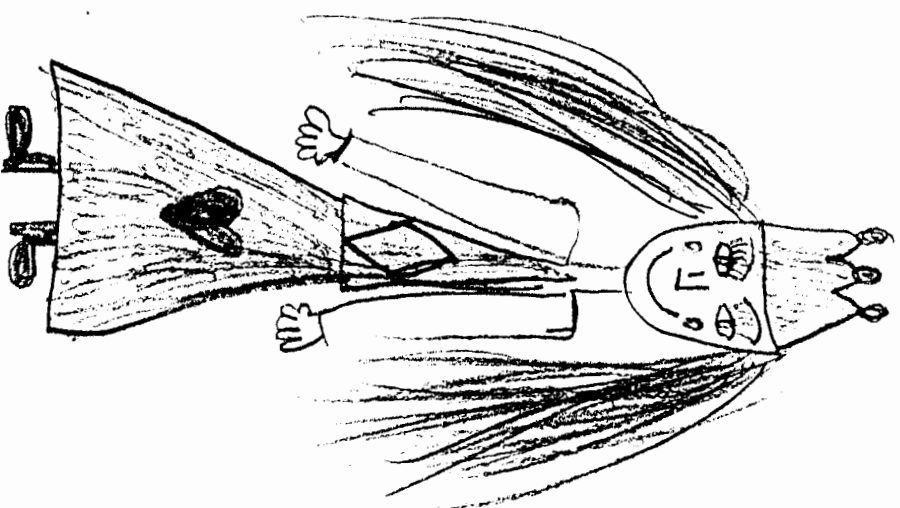
SHH A

Example 1

СПРИНН МУ ФВОРТ СМЗОН



ЖЮША



SPRINN

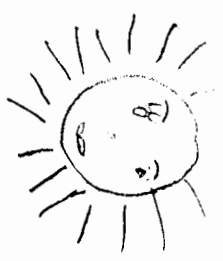
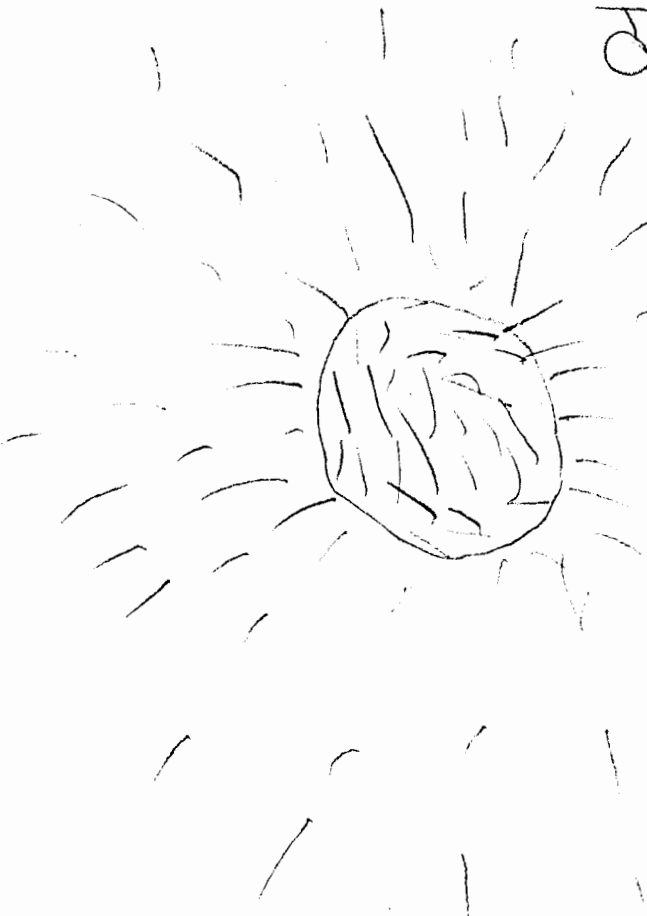
ОТ ЗОВЭЗАНАЙЖЯ

АНИ МАММИ И ПАПА

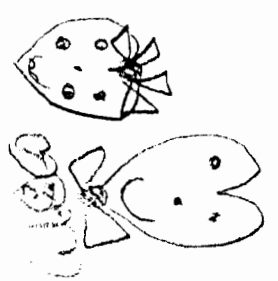
И МАВКО

ЛАВ-

А



С ДИВКО

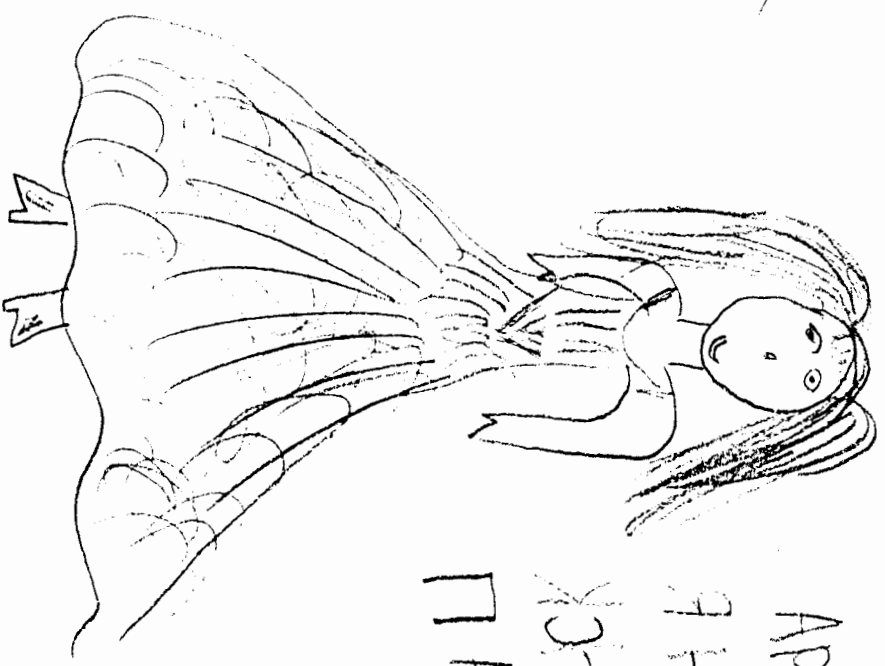


АРМЧА

ЯНА

КОДИ

ПАША



Appendix C

This appendix includes samples for pizza activities for lesson plans.

