

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE USE OF PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSONS**

MA Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the pedagogical challenges and opportunities that arise when implementing Philosophy for Children (P4C) within a 6th-grade English as a foreign language (EFL) context and how the learners engage with this approach. The theoretical part reviews values education, foreign language teaching and P4C methodology. Then the thesis outlines the action research design conducted over four sessions. The analysis highlights increased student motivation and participation and development of critical thinking skills but also revealed challenges related to language anxiety and abstract thinking. The discussion interprets these findings in relation to existing research and the conclusion highlights the implications for EFL teaching.

Keywords: P4C, EFL, values education, critical thinking, classroom interaction

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary education, it is important to foster critical thinking, democratic values, and respectful dialogue. Guiding students to develop the skills of reasoning and argumentation should start from an early age. This should be done across the curriculum, to ensure that the skills are practiced in different contexts, making students comfortable with expressing their opinions and respectfully listening to the opinions of others, even if they do not agree with them. In developing these skills, values education plays a central role and is considered an essential component of modern educational systems (Aspin 2005; Veugelers, de Groot & Stolk 2017). Therefore, there is a growing need for pedagogical approaches that integrate language learning with the development of reasoning and ethical awareness.

One pedagogical approach that addresses this need is Philosophy for Children (P4C), a method developed by Mathew Lipman in the 1970s to promote reasoning, inquiry and dialogue among students (Fisher 2005; Gorard et al 2015; Lipman 1976). P4C encourages engagement in collaborative discussions, question formulation, justifying opinions. It develops higher-order thinking skills and reflective judgement (Lipman et al 1980). While P4C has been implemented largely in first-language contexts, it is applied relatively infrequently in the EFL context, particularly with younger students because, in foreign language settings, students often face additional challenges that may influence their participation in philosophical discussions (Horwitz et al 1986).

This thesis will test the usability in 6th grade EFL classroom in Estonia. It aims to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the pedagogical challenges and opportunities of facilitating P4C in a 6th-grade EFL classroom? (2) How do 6th-grade EFL students engage with value-based philosophical inquiry?

The present thesis is structured into two primary chapters: the first chapter offers an overview of the theoretical framework on values education, foreign language teaching and

P4C. The second chapter outlines the action research methodology and its implementation. The thesis ends with presenting the main findings in the conclusion.

1. VALUES IN EDUCATION

The literature review provides the theoretical foundation for this thesis by examining values education, foreign language learning and the P4C methodology. This chapter begins by defining values in the broader school culture. It then explores the presentation of values in the Estonian National Curriculum, specifically in the EFL context. Finally, the chapter details the P4C approach developed by Matthew Lipman and reviews current research done on its implementation in foreign language settings.

1.1. Values Education in Europe

In the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (2012: 326/17), values are seen as one of the central focuses of European educational strategy, primarily framing them as the fostering of shared democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law to ensure social cohesion across member states. Values education is an umbrella term encompassing a wider range of curricular experiences and school practices aimed at fostering moral, social, and civic development (Taylor 2005: 234). The aim of it is to help develop the skill of applying concepts and terms related to moral matters and understanding the difference between right and wrong (Aspin 2005: 32). This is not only limited to the formal curriculum and includes community engagement, extracurricular activities and the broader school life in general (Taylor 2005: 234), thus being central to student growth and development (Aspin 2005: 24). As children spend a large amount of their time in school settings, educational contexts support students in learning to interact with others in the community, solve problems, and explore opportunities for community action, change, and personal enrichment (Aspin 2007: 35; Aspin 2005: 24). These are all contexts in which values are developed and put to practice.

While values education is a broader field of activities, values in education are related specifically to the values embodied by a school, which are conveyed through teaching and learning processes (Taylor 2005: 234). Values can be defined in many different ways. For instance, Sutrop and others (n. d.) define values as the relative objects of desires that guide our actions, while Johnston (2003: 9) considers values to be beliefs about what is right and good. Similarly to Johnston, Halstead (1996: 5) sees values as being connected to personal identity and integrity. This connection implies that values provide a sense of coherence and wholeness in a person (Halstead 1996: 5). Values commonly refer to something that people consider important. They are communicated through teaching and learning processes but are also embedded in the structures such as leadership, policies, language use and interpersonal relationships (Taylor 2005: 234).

In school systems, these processes are evident in teachers' moral agency, that is, whether they act as a conscious ethical role model, and the school's social climate, where interactions between teachers and students exemplify the school's ethical standards (Taylor 2005: 233-234). The interactions extend beyond the transmission of knowledge of the standards. Rather, they express the teacher's conscious ethical choice to shape the value-driven environment where the standards are lived, not just stated (Taylor 2005: 233-234). The role of sharing the values that underpin our society is seen as one of the most important parts of teaching (Tate 2005: 4). Taught values may be communicated explicitly or implicitly. The latter includes everyday practices and the former various mission statements or balanced curriculum goals, with specific attention to the moral development of students at the school (Taylor 2005: 234). Values development is considered most effective when integrated as a whole school approach (Veugelers et al 2017: 9, 181, 188).

In an ideal setting, this multidimensional strategy makes sure that values are taught across the entire school culture. This can be done through four areas, defined by Veugelers

and others (2017: 188) as follows: the area of specific value-oriented subjects involves dedicated subjects that focus on the “attitude” component of values to reflect what students’ personal values mean to them through fostering deeper internal commitment. Such subjects could be citizenship education, moral education or ethics. Common values can also be integrated into related subjects, for example, in natural sciences, in which students learn empirical facts that form the foundation for values. For example, a science class can go beyond teaching just ecological facts by linking them to various values, such as environmental responsibility, sustainability or safety. Cross-curricular activities make it possible to link values to life outside of school through practice. Finally, the democratic school culture provides a space for students to experience and practice democracy and tolerance.

The Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (2012: 326/17) lists a specific set of common values, which include human dignity, democracy, and equality. These are not just political principles but shared ideas that are to shape both public life and education, as all countries are supposed to foster democracy, tolerance and human rights. Even though the Member States share these foundational principles, they can still tailor their educational approaches depending on their history and also the social and political situation (Veugelers et al 2017: 11). Research commissioned by the European Parliament highlights that educational systems play a crucial role in shaping these common values through school curricula, culture and practices, though the implementation of the practices varies across different countries and not all countries have enough supporting measures or concrete curriculum instruments (Veugelers et al 2017: 9).

The main aim of all educational systems is to transfer their own cultural heritage (Veugelers et al 2017: 196) and to socialise people to contribute to society (Aspin 2005: 24-25; Veugelers et al 2017: 196). As values are constantly changing and being questioned,

the responsibility of defining shared values bears on both educators and learners (Aspin 2005: 24-25). Teaching values is not limited to only formal instruction but also includes developing attitudes by shifting the educational focus from transmitting knowledge to developing personal commitments to values, and understandings and environments that promote dialogue and participation (Aspin 2005: 24; Tate 2005: 8-9; Veugelers et al 2017: 18-25). In addition, when it comes to public life, attention needs to be shifted from only political participation towards democracy as a process of deliberation and consensus-building, addressing tolerance and the international dimension of values (Veugelers et al 2017: 9-10).

In the European educational policy, the teaching of common values has quite recently undergone a significant transformation. In the 1990s, education was viewed as just transferring skills to students, but in today's pedagogical approaches, it is recognised as a value-oriented process which aims to foster critical thinking, interpersonal skills and a shared moral code (Aspin 2005: 24; Veugelers et al 2017: 190, 12). For the process to be effective, it must be autonomous and the student must take responsibility for the pace, direction and evaluation of their learning process (Aspin 2005: 24). Integrating these values into the formal curriculum was significantly accelerated by the Paris Declaration in 2015 which moved values to the forefront of the political agenda to promote social inclusion and prevent marginalisation within diverse societies (Veugelers et al 2017: 12-13). Central to this is the value of democracy, which guides students to understand its place in our society (Veugelers et al 2017: 27).

1.1.1. Values Education in Foreign Language Learning

The appendix for foreign languages in the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2023) stipulates that foreign language teaching must go beyond linguistic aims and develop students' worldview and ethical concepts. This aligns with Johnston's (2003: 1) idea

of language teaching being inherently a value-laden activity. By the end of basic school, students should value diversity, communicate ethically, and recognise the value of multilingualism and cultural diversity (National curriculum 2023, Appendix 8).

The curriculum also promotes specific methodologies, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), to support knowledge in other subject areas (National curriculum 2023, appendix 8: 2) a strategy that contributes to the European Union's broader language learning goals (European Commission 2003: 8). The promotion of CLIL is linked to values education through operating within the 4Cs (content, communication, cognition, and culture) framework, where the culture aspect is seen as central to developing intercultural understandings and global citizenship (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010: 41). Integrating subject-specific content, for example social studies or science, into language lessons, provides a cognitive challenge necessary to analyse ethical issues and diverse perspectives in a foreign language (European Commission 2003: 8; Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010: 54-55). Therefore, it allows language learning to move beyond teaching technicalities and encourages pluriculturalism, which helps students to build their ethical worldviews (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010: 64).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching is recognised as a fundamentally moral pursuit (Johnston 2003: 1). Johnston (2003: xi, 1, 4) states that all teaching, including language teaching, is embedded with values and moral meaning. Various pedagogical decisions from teaching methods to the way that teachers conduct their lessons and interact with students and other teachers communicate the values they hold (Johnston 2003: 4). As teachers treat the classroom as a site for meaningful dialogue, an environment, where students reason about ethical concepts as well as practice interaction in the target language, is created (Lipman et al 1980: 173). This allows the language classroom to not just be a site for

language acquisition, but a space where exploration of language and thought are encouraged (Lipman et al 1980: 20).

1.2. Philosophy for Children

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is a concept developed by Matthew Lipman (1976: 17) for the purpose of teaching children to think critically and to reason (Fisher 2005: xii; Gorard et al 2015: 3). Lipman (1976: 18) argued that the educational system had failed to teach reasoning explicitly. Therefore, he developed the P4C programme, which adapted philosophy to fit the needs of children through dialogue, producing higher-order thinking skills (Fisher 2005: xiii; Lipman 1976: 17; Lipman 1998: 277), which allow students to go beyond simple observation and to move towards being evaluative and creative in communicating and problem solving (British Council n. d.). Philosophising gives students opportunities to think for themselves – to discuss their values, to evaluate opinions, to identify assumptions and to clarify meanings (Lipman et al 1980: 53; Williams n. d.: 1). P4C facilitates the ability to reason, finding meaning and making connections (Lipman et al 1980: 54-81). The aim of P4C is for children to be more thoughtful, considerate, and reasonable (Fisher 2005: 128). This aim is achieved, first and foremost, through classroom discussion.

The conditions created by the teacher are integral for successful discussions (Lipman et al 1980: 84). Before any discussions can happen, it is important to have conditions that encourage engagement in philosophising – the teacher must value questioning, ideas must be evaluated on the basis of dialogue, meaning that the validity of the student's thought is not determined by an authority, but rather is tested through collaborative reasoning, peer feedback and the logical flow of conversation (Lipman et al 1980: 84). Children's opinions are to be taken seriously, and a trusting environment has to be created (Lipman et al 1980: 84). Philosophy should be treated as an ongoing process, where exploration, questioning,

reasoning and meaning-making are valued (Lipman et al 1980: 84). The classroom should be a place where students develop their capacity to think for themselves (Lipman et al 1980: 85). Children must be involved in this process without knowing about the name of the programme to prevent the discussion from becoming a school subject where students seek to please the teacher. The names of any philosophers whose ideas are used in discussions should also be avoided to engage directly with the ideas and not merely memorise philosophical concepts (Lipman et al 1980: 84; Säre et al 2013). The aim is to prioritise the act of thinking over the acquisition of labels (Lipman et al 1980: 84).

P4C discussions usually follow a set structure: warm-up, introduction (stimulus presentation), questioning, discussing, review (Säre et al 2013; Gorard et al 2015: 10). Before starting the first session, guidelines should be set with students. They can include rules such as listening when someone is speaking, taking turns, and being respectful (Williams n. d.: 3). A detailed structure follows a 10-step routine (Gorard et al 2015: 10):

1. Getting set
2. Presentation of stimulus
3. Thinking time
4. Question making
5. Question airing
6. Question choosing
7. First thoughts
8. Building
9. Last thoughts
10. Review

The warm-up stage involves getting set up in a circle so everyone can see and hear one another, going over the guidelines and set rules and discussing students' emotions and

procedural expectations, such as how they expect to be listened to, their hopes for the atmosphere or their feelings about sharing their thoughts (Gorard et al 2015: 10). Then the teacher introduces the stimulus to provoke interest in reference to the “big ideas” such as truth, fairness, rights, and knowledge (Gorard et al 2015: 11). The stimuli can be a short story, poem, images, picture book, videos, and other short texts (Gorard et al 2015: 11; Williams n. d.: 3). This is followed by a short thinking time, when students think about the stimuli individually or discuss them in pairs and then share what they discussed with others (Gorard et al 2015: 11; Williams n. d.: 4). The questioning stage is split into three stages: question making, question airing, and question choosing (Gorard et al 2015: 11). First students think of questions they want to discuss in groups, then they share the questions they created, all the questions are collected and written down, and finally when the list of questions is complete, one question is chosen as a dialogue starter by voting (Gorard et al 2015: 11; Williams n. d.: 4). A discussion follows, in which students share their thoughts in small groups or pairs and then a whole class discussion follows (Gorard et al 2015: 11). The teacher must make sure that everyone who wishes to share has the chance to talk about their thoughts (Gorard et al 2015: 11). The building stage includes pupils clarifying their ideas, questioning opinions and stating their feelings (Gorard et al 2015: 11; Williams n. d.: 5). Then students share their last thoughts and review how their opinion changed, what went well and what could be changed (Gorard et al 2015: 11; Williams n. d.: 5).

The teacher has a guiding role in the discussions, to encourage students to express their ideas, create questions, and give reasons (Williams n. d.: 1). It is important that the children feel as if their ideas are valued and interesting, they are trusted to come up with relevant questions, and they are a part of a classroom community where they feel safe (Fisher 2005: 133; Lipman et al 1980: 83; Williams n. d.: 3). The teacher’s role is to facilitate the discussion by asking children what themes they wish to discuss, guiding children towards the

themes discussed in the stimulus or asking guiding questions (Fisher 2005: 131; Lipman et al 1980: 82-83). Through questioning, modelling, and timely intervention, the teacher helps students to identify themes, connect their thoughts to their experiences, and consider alternative perspectives (Lipman et al 1980: 83). Lipman (1998: 280) finds that in order for teachers to be successful at guiding the reasoning and judgments of the dialogue, they must embody the skills in practice, that is, they must mirror the practices expected in the classroom (Lipman et al 1980: 83).

Through discussions where children can ask questions and construct arguments, P4C fosters skills that create reflective and self-reliant people (Fisher 2005: 130; Gorard et al 2015: 3; Williams n.d.: 1). The ideal stage of P4C is reached gradually by participating in dialogue, where the child begins to conduct an internal dialogue with themselves, which is the foundation of independent critical thinking because it helps students draw conclusions and make connections (Lipman et al 1980: 15, 45). When this stage is reached, the classroom will be turned into a community of inquiry, which means the students are committed to the procedures of P4C (Lipman et al 1980: 45). During the process, the teacher must guide children's responses from impulsive and unreflective statements to a situation where they are open to correction by better evidence and can provide more logical arguments (Fisher 2005: 25, 130). As students learn to justify their arguments and listen to others, their understanding of peers and their values is deepened by forcing them to understand the logic behind different perspectives (Lipman et al 1980: 65). Ultimately, students reach self-reliance through the practice of self-correction as they learn to monitor their thinking processes (Lipman et al 1980: 82).

1.2.1 Philosophy for Children in EFL Settings

Extensive research has been done on the benefits of P4C in various educational settings in first language (L1) contexts (Gorard et al 2015; Säre 2010; Vaher, 2018), where it has been shown to foster learners' confidence in speaking, listening skills and overall improve their self-esteem. However, a few studies have been conducted in EFL contexts in Turkey, Taiwan, and Iran (Acar 2022; Günay & Ozturk 2023; Liao & Pian 2016). These international studies have targeted various age groups and the outcomes have often highlighted the tension between cognitive gain and linguistic anxiety (Acar 2022; Günay & Ozturk 2023; Liao & Pian 2016).

Liao & Pian (2016) conducted a course of P4C with EFL learners in Taiwan. Their study included 62 participants, aged 16-17, divided into one P4C group and one non-P4C group. The effects of instructional materials were collected through three instruments: (1) learning motivation questionnaire, (2) learning anxiety questionnaire, and (3) two reading comprehension tests. The results showed that although the P4C group's English learning anxiety was higher, they retained higher English learning motivation after the instruction and improved their English reading comprehension.

Günay and Ozturk's (2023) research explored integrating P4C strategies into an EFL classroom. The research was conducted for four weeks with 12 high school students from two cities in Turkey. The impact of the lessons was assessed by students through two online surveys, one before and the other after the P4C classes, which included multiple-choice questions and agree/disagree statements. The results demonstrated that students reported a reduced level of speaking anxiety, enhanced motivation to learn English, and improved language skills.

Acar's (2022) study investigated the P4C's approach's effectiveness on critical thinking and English speaking skills of gifted students. The sample consisted of 23 seventh

grade students in Turkey. The study was carried out with the help of a mixed method approach, which collected quantitative data through the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (X level), which measured critical thinking skills of the participants in a pre-test and a post-test using a multiple choice format, and the Cambridge English Speaking test results, using the scores of the four criteria (grammar and vocabulary; pronunciation; interactive communication; global achievement) as data to measure the speaking skills of the participants. Qualitative data was collected through reflection diaries written by the participants and evaluation tests. The diary entries were written freely in English at the end of each P4C session and the students wrote about their opinions, feelings or ideas. The study concluded that the implementation of the P4C approach had positive effects on the critical thinking skills of gifted students but it did not have a significant effect on their English speaking skills.

In the Estonian context, Roos (2016) conducted a quasi-experimental study in an EFL class where philosophical discussions were used to develop students' reading comprehension skills. The participants involved in this study were 30 students in Form 6 (School Stage II). The study aimed to determine how Philosophy-based Language Teaching (PBLT) affects English reading comprehension. Roos (2016) followed the approach of Shanini & Riazi (2010), who researched the use of P4C for teaching ESL speaking, writing and thinking skills with university students in Iran, developing what they called PBLT (Shahini & Riazi 2010: 170).

Roos (2016) used PBLT with a younger demographic, using texts that fit the language levels of the learners and found that integrating structural philosophical inquiry into language lessons helped students analyse texts on a deeper level, bridging linguistic acquisition with critical thinking. Quantitative data in this study was collected with A2 level A Cambridge English: Key Test for Schools (KET-test) which covers reading, speaking, listening and

writing skills. Roos (2016) only used the reading component for this study. The test was administered twice, as a pre-test and as a post-test. Additionally, the process was recorded four times (the first and the last session of both groups), to facilitate a detailed comparative analysis of the data. The video and audio recordings were transcribed word-for-word and then coded. Students' questions were categorised into three specific categories: procedural questions, convergent questions and divergent questions. Roos (2016) was a non-participant observer in this process, remaining uninvolved in the classroom activities to avoid influencing the participants' behaviour. During the process, she recorded personal observations and student engagement in the various stages of the process in a researcher's diary.

The study compared a test group using philosophical open-ended questions within a community of inquiry against a control group using traditional non-philosophical questions. Roos (2016) found that the post-test scores increased within the test group but the difference between the results of the two groups was not statistically significant. However, the analysis of video and audio recordings revealed a difference in classroom interaction: the test group asked significantly more open-ended questions while in the control group closed questions were predominant.

While the core process of P4C remained similar across all age groups, some modifications were needed to fit the language learning needs of younger students. For students in the II and III School Stage (Acar 2022; Roos 2016), the facilitator of P4C must place greater emphasis on linguistic scaffolding by modelling the sentences to express ideas and the use of level-appropriate stimuli. While older students in high school and university (Günay and Ozturk's 2023; Liao & Pian 2016; Shahini & Riazi 2010) can dive into abstract concepts, younger students (Acar 2022; Roos 2016) usually need a concrete stimulus, such as specific stories or picture books. Therefore, the change is not needed in the method itself, but

a strategic adjustment in the use of linguistic elements is enough to support the language learning and critical thinking.

The most consistent finding across all these studies is that P4C increases student motivation and active participation in EFL (Acar 2022; Günay & Ozturk 2023; Liao & Pian 2016; Roos 2016). Students in P4C environments engaged more freely with the material and showed higher motivation to continue learning English, despite the difficulties with some tasks (Acar 2022; Günay & Ozturk 2023; Liao & Pian 2016; Roos 2016). Furthermore, a clear shift was seen in classroom dynamics, as students moved from passive learning to a more active participation (Acar 2022; Roos 2016).

However, there were also some differences between the results of the studies. The results regarding language anxiety varied between two studies. Liao and Pian (2016) found that P4C increased language anxiety because of the taxing cognitive load of philosophising. However, Günay and Ozturk (2023) reported a reduced speaking anxiety as the communal and non-judgemental nature of P4C made it safer for students to speak up. Another varying factor was the most improved skills during the implementation of P4C. Roos (2016) and Liao and Pian (2016) both found positive trends in reading comprehension. However, Günay and Ozturk (2023) saw improvement in speaking skills, while Acar's (2022) study of gifted students did not find significant changes in speaking proficiency.

Although research across different age groups and contexts provides varying results regarding specific skill gains, the most important result is that P4C (and PBLT) fosters a significant shift from passive learning to active, motivated participation (Acar 2022; Günay & Ozturk 2023; Liao & Pian 2016; Roos 2016). For the purpose of this study, the most critical finding is that while the method application remains largely consistent, successful implementation with younger learners relies on adapting the linguistic stimulus and providing

procedural scaffolding to bridge the gap between cognitive demand and language proficiency (Roos 2016; Shahini & Riazi 2010).

2. IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION RESEARCH IN EFL LESSONS

This chapter will focus on the implementation of the action research. First it outlines the research design and procedural framework used to investigate the pedagogical opportunities and challenges of implementing P4C in a 6th grade EFL classroom. It gives a detailed description of the participants, the data collection methods and the pedagogical structure applied across the four sessions. This action research approach allows me to systematically reflect on the used teaching practices.

2.1 The Participants and Setting

The study was conducted in November of 2025 in Year 6 in a private school in southern Estonia. The students participating in the study have been learning English since Year 1 and have four English lessons per week. The English group consisted of 16 students – 6 boys and 10 girls, who were grouped together according to ability grouping. This particular group was identified as the “slower” progression tier. The relationships in this group were positive and most students were active participants, but two students did not prefer speaking tasks and were not very talkative. This provided a specific baseline to measure the “confidence-building” claims of the P4C method.

2.2 Research Methodology

The present study was conducted to examine the benefits of P4C in a 6th-grade EFL classroom. The study follows an action research framework, focusing on observing the researcher's own practices to understand a pedagogical problem. This method was chosen as reflection and analysis are teachers' core professional competencies. The emphasis on reflection in this study aligns with the Estonian Occupational Qualification Standards:

Teachers EstQF Level 7 (2025: 2), which instructs that a teacher must “analyse and evaluate his/her teaching and its impact on the development of learners”.

Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh (2005: 4) define action research as a form of reflection by practitioners on their work, where the collection and analysis of data provide the teacher with objectivity, allowing them to view the practices from a different perspective. One of the most used frameworks for this process is the action research spiral proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988: 11). It consists of four stages (Figure 1): planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart 1988: 11). By adopting the Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) spiral, it is acknowledged that the pedagogical problems are not solved in a single instance but through refining the method and implementing the changes continuously.

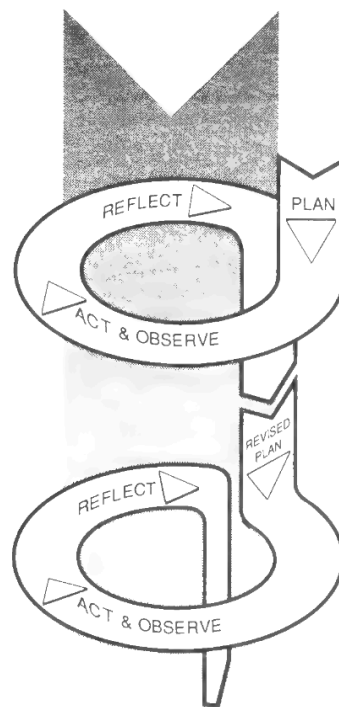


Figure 1. Kemmis and McTaggart's model of the action research spiral (1988).

2.2.1 The Study

While this study follows the core ideas of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), the specific implementation followed an adapted spiral designed to fit the four-session constraints. The framework remains mostly the same: it is used to implement P4C inquiries (acting) based on the created lesson plans (planning), while documenting classroom interactions through a research diary (observing) and evaluating the impact of P4C on students (reflecting). The action research in this thesis follows four micro cycles due to the pre-determined number of lessons I had to give during my teacher training practice. Figure 2 illustrates the specific spiral I followed. The reflection of previous cycles directly informed the planning of the following session.

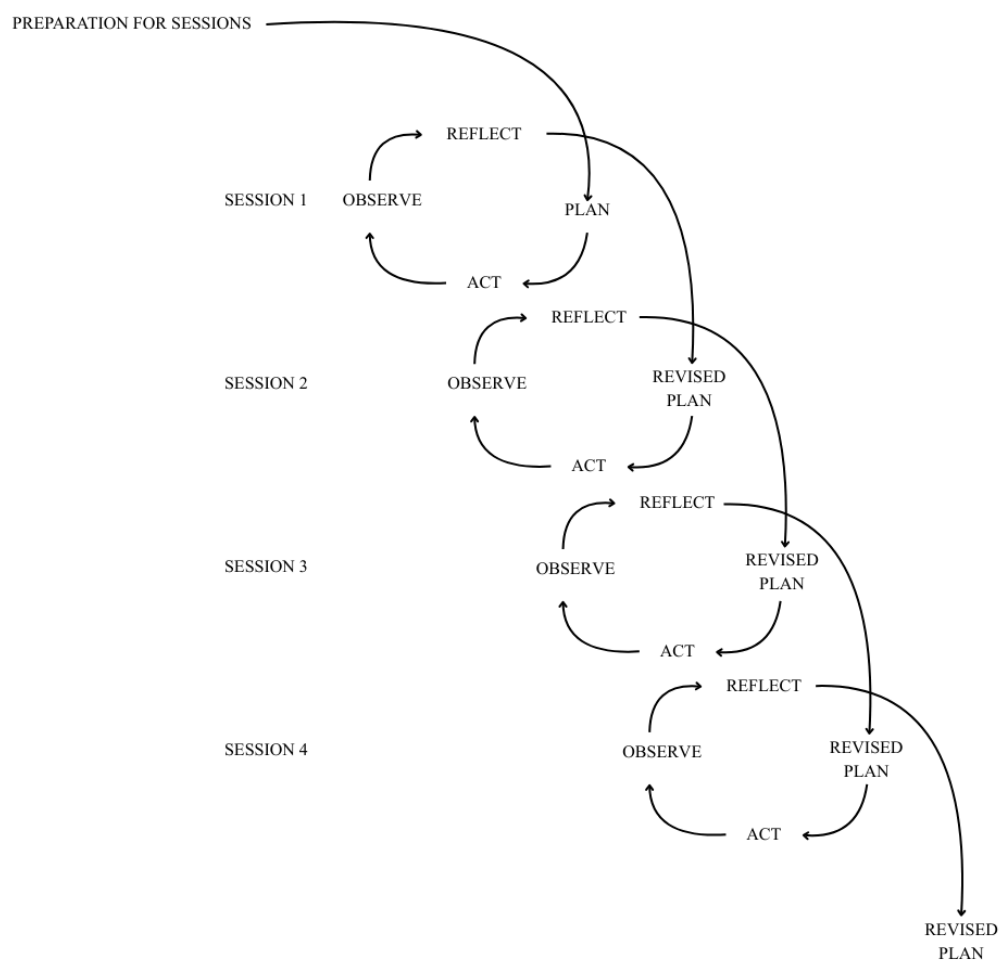


Figure 2. Action research model used in the study (based on the model by Kemmis and McTaggart 1988).

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The primary instrument for data collection was a research diary. It contained memos, which are produced for recalling a specific event (in this case a lesson) (Altrichter et al. 2005: 19). In accordance with the guidelines of Altrichter et al. (2005: 19-20), entries were written as soon after the lesson as possible (usually within 60 minutes). The entries of the four sessions focused on unexpected events, students' participation and reflection of the used tasks. In addition, specific questions were answered after each session:

- (1) What was effective and you keep for next time?
- (2) What factors impacted the outcome of the lesson (positively or negatively)?

The decision to rely on a research diary rather than recordings was primarily reached by the need to maintain the natural state of the classroom. While audio and visual recording offer comprehensive data (Cohen et al 2007: 407), the comfort of the participants was the most important consideration. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 144, 407) note that reactivity effects, which occur when participants are placed in new or uncomfortable situations, could be caused by recording devices. These effects must be minimised in order to ensure validity of the study (Cohen et al 2007: 144). In a P4C context, the objective is to foster a safe space where students can express their thoughts, therefore, the intrusiveness of a recorder could lead students to engage in a performative way, rather than authentically. Furthermore, the risk of triggering foreign language anxiety is higher when students are in uncomfortable situations, especially in a group that may already struggle in language learning. Horwitz et al (1986: 128) emphasise that students can suffer from a fear of negative evaluation, which makes them more cautious, self-conscious and often even completely silent

to avoid judgment. As anxiety can change students' true performance (Horwitz et al 1986: 126), a less intrusive data collection method was chosen. This ensured that the participants felt comfortable and secure to engage in philosophical dialogue without fearing evaluation.

The analysis of the data followed an inductive approach to make the data clear and ensure that the findings were in relation to actual classroom experiences (Altrichter et al. 2005: 121–122). The inductive approach allows the researcher to find unexpected patterns and group together the complex pieces of data (Altrichter et al 2005: 121). The process of understanding the data (Altrichter et al. 2005: 121) involved a systematic cycle of coding. The diary entries were read to identify significant moments related to research questions, through which specific codes were created. These codes were then synthesised and combined into more refined categories, and these were then interpreted to explain how P4C methodology influenced student interaction and the lessons overall. During the inductive method of coding, the categories were developed and chosen during the analysis of the data.

2.3.1 The P4C Procedure

Each of the four sessions followed a consistent pedagogical structure designed to move from concrete concepts to abstract philosophical inquiry. To ensure a systematic approach to the inquiries, Gorard and others' (2015: 10) 10-step routine was synthesised with Säre and others' (2013) three-phase structure (*ettevalmistusfaas*, *filosoofiline arutelu*, *metaarutelu*). This hybrid model was created to provide this particular group with clear scaffolding while also maintaining the depth of philosophical inquiry. The created procedure included a five-stage sequence:

1. Getting set (*ettevalmistusfaas*): Establishing rules, checking students' emotional state, and setting the physical space.

2. Stimulus and initial reflection: Presenting a story, picture, or a game. This included a dedicated ‘thinking time’ where students processed ideas both individually and with a partner. Main questions (usually 1-3 different questions) were discussed in order to get students thinking before formulating their own questions.
3. Question formulation: Students generated their own questions based on the stimulus.
4. Discussion phase: The core dialogue focusing on defining concepts, providing reasoning, finding connections and giving examples.
5. Reflection and conclusion: Addressing final thoughts, any tensions or conflicts that came up during the talk. Summary of their thoughts and feelings. Rating the discussion.

In session 1 and 3, the third stage (question formulation) was facilitated only by the researcher for the students to get familiarised with the overall procedure and not feel overwhelmed. In other sessions, the question formulation stage was included.

2.3.2 Procedure of teaching

The P4C sessions took place during my teaching practice. Before the teaching practice started, we established with my mentor teacher that Fridays would be best for discussions as the students were used to the lessons on Fridays being freer. A consistent physical routine was established in the first session, which began by arranging chairs in a circle to facilitate open dialogue. A speaking ball was introduced in the first session before going over the rules to manage turn-taking and ensure that everybody’s thoughts are listened to. Additionally visual aids and written prompts were used to support language production.

The selection of topics was a mix of curriculum-based planning and adaptive response to the students’ engagement. The first two sessions’ topics (Adventures and Wishes) were pre-planned to introduce the students to the P4C method and they aligned with the themes

being discussed in the regular English lessons at the time. This provided learners with a vocabulary base, helping to bridge the gap between language learning and philosophical discussions. The following topics (Leadership and Friendship) were chosen during the research process based on the observations of the group to fit the need of relatable and engaging content.

To keep the sessions varied and to test which stimuli engaged learners the most, all sessions used a different type of stimulus. In each session learners repeated a set of rules for a successful discussion: one person talks at a time, and everybody must listen to the person talking. The same rules were repeated by students in all sessions. I added the rule of talking only when holding the ball, to raise one's hand if one wished to speak, and to be respectful of others' opinions. Each session ended with feedback, but it was collected differently in each session.

The first session focused on the topic of "Adventure" (Appendix A). As this topic was derived from the learners' student books, the questions created for this session were developed by me. The stimulus consisted of three pictures of different situations and the learners had to discuss in pairs what the common elements of the pictures were. A key procedural element was the use of pair discussions during the introduction of different discussion points, allowing students to share their initial opinions in a less stressful environment before addressing the whole group. In this session, I took the questioning role to model the process and to reduce linguistic anxiety in the first session and an unfamiliar situation. Not all students were active in the whole group discussions, but those who were active used a lot of general phrasing rather than personal examples and created a constant need for "why" questions to elicit reasoning. The feedback in this session was verbal, the ball was passed down in the circle, giving each student an opportunity to say what they learned

from the discussion or what they enjoyed the most. As speaking was voluntary, some students passed the ball forward without saying anything.

The second session dealt with “Wishes” (Appendix B), another topic derived from what students were learning at the time in their regular lessons and, again, the backup questions for this session were prepared by me. The warm-up consisted of a brief discussion of pictures, but the stimulus for discussion shifted from visual images to a story, although the story was also projected onto the screen in order to make the comprehension easier. Similarly to Session 1, pair discussions were used to allow students to brainstorm ideas in a safer situation. For each pair discussion, I also projected the question they had to discuss on the screen as in the last session I had to constantly remind learners of what they had to discuss. While the structure remained consistent, utilising the speaking ball and established rules of respect, the students were prompted to delve deeper into definitions to test their defining skills. Some questions created before the start of the process were changed after Session 1 to include more possibilities for personal expressions. In this session students also created their own questions. The possibility to ask questions was voluntary and not many students used the opportunity, although it seemed that most wrote at least one question down. In order to get feedback from all learners, this time everybody had to show with their thumb if they enjoyed the session or not. They had the opportunity to give a thumbs-up, thumbs-midway, or thumbs-down sign. This allowed me to receive some feedback from all the students, regardless of whether they participated in the whole-group discussion or not.

For the third session, the topic of “Leadership” (Appendix C) was chosen based on the observation that the group wanted more active and creative tasks. Therefore, the stimulus for this session was a practical activity, where students had to take the role of being a leader or the person being led in different situations. The activity used was named “Three Blind Men” (Chirdon & Jones 2013: 9) and the suggested discussion questions by the authors were

also used. A significant difference in this session was the omission of pair discussions and students own question creation. I predicted that the intensity of the physical activity would be sufficient to spark a direct whole-group discussion without the need of pair discussions. However, a reflection after this session suggested that for this specific group, the lack of pair work made the discussion about the philosophical inquiries more challenging, as they lacked the safety of pre-discussions with their partners. The decision to omit students' question creation was done during the session as learners seemed to struggle with the topic itself. To end this session, learners again were passed the ball to give their opinion of what they enjoyed the most about the activity. All students gave their answers this time.

The final session focused on "Friendship," (Appendix D) a topic chosen during the process to address the social interests of the students. This time the stimulus was the students' own drawings, where they were asked to represent a good friendship without drawing people. The lesson was built upon Kaul and others' (2013: 27-32) lesson plan, using the drawing activity they proposed and some of the discussion questions. When re-evaluating the experience from Session 3, I re-introduced pair discussions, as it was clear that these were necessary for a successful discussion. In this session, the questions provided by students were most conceptual and thought-provoking, requiring minimal intervention from me during the process. To include the process of question airing and choosing (Gorard et al 2015: 10), the questions were written on the board by the students, although the handwriting was difficult to read, the level of engagement seemed to be at its peak. The final discussion ended with both verbal and physical feedback, at first everybody got the chance to say their concluding thoughts and what they viewed as the most important part of the discussion, and then they rated the discussion with their thumbs.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Addressing the ethical issues was the first and most crucial step as the participants were underage students. Participation in this study was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from the school, students and their guardians. I had an oral agreement with the school and my mentor teacher. After that, a letter informing the parents and students of the study was sent which included a clause at the end stating that if the parents did not agree with their child taking part in the study, they could withdraw their child from the sessions. No parent asked their child to be removed from this study. To ensure anonymity, all students' names in the diary and this thesis were replaced with pseudonyms. The sessions were not recorded as the primary focus was not to disrupt the students' regular learning progress.

2.5 Discussion of results

The results of this study are reported in four sections, each corresponding to a specific P4C session. Within the sections, the data is analysed to address both research questions.

2.5.5 Results of Session 1: Adventure

Three main categories emerged from coding the first research question (What are the pedagogical challenges and opportunities of facilitating P4C in a 6th-grade EFL classroom?): 1) participation, 2) discussion management, 3) philosophical depth. Table 1 illustrates the hierarchical organisation of the coding process for the first session, showing the main categories, their constituent sub-categories, and the absolute count of code occurrences found within the data.

Main Category	Sub-Category	Absolute Count
Participation		3
	passive participation	1
	active participation	2
discussion management		8

	students setting boundaries	1
	facilitating a safe space	1
	turn-taking	2
	structure of the discussion	2
	time	1
	aids	1
philosophical depth		6
	non personal examples	2
	eliciting deeper answers	4

Table 1. Categories of the first session for RQ1.

Participation. Participation was divided into active and passive participation. While only two students participated actively in the discussion circle, answering most questions and discussing the questions in pairs, the majority of the students were more active in the pair discussions. The main challenge was one student remaining passive in both the whole-group discussion and the pair-discussion, only talking for a short period of time with their partner.

Discussion management. The students set their own boundaries at the beginning of the session, agreed on the rules presented by me and by the speaking ball acting as a physical scaffold. A safe space to participate in the discussion was facilitated by pair discussions, where most students actively shared their thoughts with their partner. A key challenge emerged from managing time and depth. Turn taking posed a challenge in the discussion, as students talked in many instances without having the speaking ball. In addition, the discussion remained rather general as more time was spent on managing the turn taking, not deepening the conversation.

Philosophical depth. The challenge rose from the depth of the discussion. It was influenced by students giving general answers and not examples from their personal experiences. In addition, the most frequent facilitation task was reminding students to extend their thoughts and give reasonings to their opinions.

The second research question (How do 6th-grade EFL students engage with value-based philosophical inquiry?) was analysed into two main categories (Table 2).

Main Category	Sub-Category	Absolute Count
social engagement		5
	physical approval	1
	passive	3
	preferring to speak in pairs	1
conceptual engagement		7
	giving examples	1
	defining the word	1
	generalising their opinion	4
	repeating others' opinions	1

Table 2. Categories of the first session for RQ2.

Social engagement. Students' engagement in Session 1 was characterised by both non-verbal and verbal participation. Physical approval, that is, nodding to show approval to the set rules, indicated that the students were active, but passive participation also remained frequent. Furthermore, it was clear that some students preferred to speak in pairs and not in the whole-class discussion, as the former was less stressful for them.

Conceptual engagement. The most common engagement was generalising, with students focusing on broad opinions and not providing examples from their own lives. While the two most active students gave personal examples and defined the word "adventure", a significant part of the group repeated each others' opinions and had to be reminded to repeat the whole idea, not just say "I think the same as (*name*)."

2.5.6 Results of Session 2: Wishes

The second session focused on the concept of "wishes", exploring the definitions and personal significance. The three main categories remained the same in the coding process for

the first research question: 1) philosophical depth, 2) participation, and 3) discussion management (Table 3). However, some new sub-categories were added.

Main Category	Sub-Category	Absolute Count
philosophical depth		3
	eliciting deeper answers	1
	difficulty with understanding	1
	question creation	1
participation		9
	passive participation	3
	active participation	5
	voluntary vocal participation	1
discussion management		10
	students setting boundaries	2
	structure of the discussion	2
	ignoring the rules	1
	aids	2
	disagreement	3

Table 3. Categories of the second session for RQ1.

Philosophical depth. The challenge of achieving a deep conversation in an EFL context continued to be evident, as deeper answers had to be elicited from students to move beyond one-word responses. A notable challenge was expressed by a student at the end of the discussion as they said that it was difficult for them to keep up with the pace and language of the group discussion. However, a significant opportunity emerged from question creation, where students formulated their own inquiries (such as “Why are people jealous of each other?”) to ask their groupmates.

Participation. In comparison to the first session, the participation was more active in this session as most students talked at least once. Still, the challenge of participation remained as 4-5 students were relatively passive throughout the discussion. However, the introduction

of voluntary vocal participation served as an opportunity because all students wrote down their questions but were allowed to choose whether to share their question or not.

Discussion management. This category was the most productive, with 10 codes. An opportunity was observed as students began setting the boundaries by themselves, recalling the rules from the previous session. The use of visual aids made the structure of the discussion clearer as students could read the question while discussing it with their partner. New challenges emerged in the form of disagreement and ignoring the rules. A higher level of interest in the topic led students to talk over each other in many instances, requiring a pause in the discussion for reinforcing the set structure of talking when holding the ball. Furthermore, a disagreement between students' opinions created an enhanced attention to the maintenance of a safe space while ensuring the deepened philosophical inquiry.

New sub-categories were added to the second research question that remained in the same two main categories: 1) conceptual engagement, and 2) social engagement (Table 4).

Main Category	Sub-Category	Absolute Count
social engagement		7
	physical approval	1
	passive	2
	naming set rules	3
	talking over each other	1
conceptual engagement		10
	giving examples	5
	defining the word	1
	difficulty with understanding	1
	short answers	1
	question creation	2

Table 4. Categories of the second session for RQ2.

Social engagement. As the students were familiar with the structure of the discussion, the frequency of students naming the rules was high: not only did they recall the established

rules at the beginning of the session but they also developed a peer-regulating behaviour, for instance reminding classmates of the importance of full sentences and reasoning. While some students still remained passive, especially the two students who did not participate in the whole group discussion and struggled when paired together. Overall, the participation was active and students wanted to contribute to the conversation, which resulted in talking over each other at some points. The session concluded with everybody providing physical approval by giving feedback with a thumbs-up activity.

Conceptual engagement. Unlike in the first session, students moved past generalisation and gave personal examples to their opinions. Furthermore, the creation of questions was added to the discussion in this session. Some challenges remained in student engagement, such as providing short answers and expressing difficulty with the complexity of the conversation.

2.5.7 Results of Session 3: Leadership

The third session focused on the topic of leadership, exploring concepts of power, guidance and responsibility through a practical blindfold activity. The three main categories for the first research question remained the same as for the previous two sessions but new sub-categories emerged in the coding process (Table 5).

Main Category	Sub-Category	Absolute Count
philosophical depth		5
	eliciting deeper answers	1
	students' question creation	1
	Topic	3
discussion management		3
	students setting boundaries	1
	Aids	1
	L1 usage	1

participation		8
	active participation	7
	voluntary vocal participation	1

Table 5. Categories of the third session for RQ1.

Philosophical depth. A challenge emerged from the topic choice, as leadership seemed distant to students as they did not give as many personal examples and struggled to see themselves as good leaders. This prompted me to elicit deeper answers from the students. They kept their focus on specific occupations, such as police, presidents, teachers and politicians.

Discussion management. Notable opportunity still came from students setting boundaries at the beginning of the discussion, as they had for all the sessions. However, a challenge rose from the blindfold activity as students began to use their first language. This resulted in a need for constant reminders to only use English. Additionally, students struggled to analyse their own actions during the game which meant that the discussion had to change and new questions had to be created for the learners on the spot to guide the group towards deeper reflection.

Participation. The blindfolded task acted as a pedagogical opportunity, as it resulted in a high level of active participation and hand-raising. Another opportunity is clear from the think-write-share process, where students were given the option of voluntary vocal participation but they had to be active in the writing and thinking process. This ensured that everybody was involved.

New sub-categories emerged for the second research question in the analysis (Table 6).

Main Category	Sub-Category	Absolute Count
social engagement		8
	physical approval	1
	naming set rules	1

	talking over each other	1
	involvement in the activity	5
conceptual engagement		6
	giving examples	2
	difficulty with understanding	1
	question creation	1
	L1 use	1
	topic	1

Table 6. Categories of the third session for RQ2.

Social engagement. The engagement in this session was significantly driven by the kinesthetic nature of the main activity. Involvement in the activity was the primary mode of engagement, with students showing high levels of participation and physical approval by most students raising their hand to volunteer for the activity. While the rules were named in cooperation at the beginning of the discussion, some challenges in social regulation arose from students talking over each other by speaking to their partners instead of the group.

Conceptual engagement. Students were able to give some examples, but most of the examples focused on specific professions rather than personal experiences. The topic of leadership appeared difficult and limited the depth of the conversation. The struggle with conceptual engagement was reflected in the difficulty with understanding as students did not fully analyse their own actions after the activity. Furthermore, some students turned to L1 when they struggled with expressing themselves during the activity.

2.5.8 Results of Session 4: Friendship

The topic discussed in the final session was “friendship”. The analysis for the first research question identified the same three main categories but new sub-categories (Table 7).

Main Category	Sub-Category	Absolute Count
participation		6
	active participation	5

	passive participation	1
philosophical depth		5
	question creation	2
	topic	3
discussion management		5
	aids	3
	flexibility	2

Table 7. Categories of the fourth session for RQ1.

Participation. Active participation in the final session was at its peak, with many students answering almost every question and deeply engaging in both pair and whole-group discussions. A pedagogical opportunity emerged from the use of extensive pair discussions, which allowed all students to express themselves. While passive participation still posed a challenge, it was noted with a minority of students.

Philosophical depth. The topic served as a powerful opportunity, as it was highly personal and relatable. Unlike in previous sessions, students eagerly shared examples from their own lives, including discussions about the friends present in the classroom. A challenge remained in question creation, where the idea of students writing their questions on the board was executed poorly as their messy and small handwriting made it difficult to read and utilise in the discussion.

Discussion management. The flexibility of the discussion posed an opportunity for deeper engagement, as allowing more time for drawing and creating more pair discussions than planned allowed students to focus deeply on the topic. The use of aids, specifically the drawing task, helped to focus students' attention on the topic. However, the challenge of the speaking ball aid remained, as students often began talking at the same time without the ball, making the balancing of the need for order with the momentum of expressing opinions challenging.

The final sessions' data regarding student participation was very substantive. The findings were categorised into two main categories and 13 sub-categories (Table 8).

Main Category	Sub-Category	Absolute Count
social engagement		8
	passive	1
	naming set rules	1
	talking over each other	2
	involvement in the activity	4
conceptual engagement		6
	giving examples	4
	question creation	2

Table 8. Categories of the fourth session for RQ2.

Social engagement. The final session was characterised by a high degree of verbal enthusiasm. The discussion started, as the previous sessions had, by students naming the rules set for a successful discussion. The involvement in the activities was the primary drive for engagement, the drawing task and increased pair-work acted as the essential scaffolds for language production. While talking over each other posed as a management challenge, it also demonstrated a desire to share opinions. Some students still remained passive throughout the discussion.

Conceptual engagement. The frequency of giving examples was supported by the highly personal nature of the topic, with students moving beyond abstract definitions to describe their own social circles and relationships with pets. In addition, the capacity for question creation matured in this session. Most students were involved in the question creation process and felt secure enough to write their inquiries on the board.

2.6 Discussion of results

The aim of this study was to investigate the pedagogical challenges and opportunities that arise when implementing P4C within a 6th-grade EFL context and how the learners

engage with this approach. By utilising Kemmis and McTaggart's Action Research Spiral (1988), the study allowed for a continuous process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting across four distinct micro-cycles. This framework acknowledged that the pedagogical problems are not solved in a single instance, but through refining the method and implementing changes throughout the teaching process.

A central element to P4C is the creation of a community of inquiry, which is based on following the democratic rules of dialogue where children learn to be more thoughtful, considerate and reasonable (Lipman et al 1980: 45). Throughout the four sessions, the students grew within this structure. In the first session the use of the speaking ball was necessary as students were unfamiliar with the structure. In the second session, however, students already began self-correcting, meaning that they internalised the rules and respected each other's right to speak. One student even advocated for the importance of using full sentences and giving reasons. Still, in some instances students spoke over each other in sessions, necessitating a pause to revisit why these rules are important for a safe environment. By session 4, although students blurted out their opinions at some points, they began to demonstrate the ability to build on each other's ideas, which Gorard and others (2015) identify as a critical stage in the session.

A constant challenge was moving from pair discussions to the whole-group circle. Students were often talkative in pairs but quiet when the time came to share the discussed ideas with the group. This suggests that students might not have felt completely safe in the setting yet, aligning with Horwitz and others' (1986: 128) idea of students struggling to share their thoughts when they fear negative evaluation from others.

Another significant challenge was the students' difficulty with connecting abstract concepts to personal experience. In Session 1 (Adventure) and Session 3 (Leadership) students relied on generalities to discuss their ideas, which suggests that the topic choices

were not personal enough. To address this, I provided students with linguistic scaffolding by modelling sentences and asking them to explain their statements to elicit reasoning. Lipman et al. (1980) also suggest that the teacher's role is to guide students' responses from impulsive and unreflective to more logical arguments. This was again visible in Session 2, where one student took the lead and explained to other students as to why it is important to give reasons.

A significant opportunity connected to the use of P4C was its capacity to generate meaningful dialogue (Lipman et al. 1980) that was apparent in the discussions. In Session 2, a disagreement arose regarding the emo subculture and it provided a practical moment for values education. The framework allowed for a reminder to be respectful of others' opinions, which is one of the core goals of the Estonian National Curriculum (2023).

Student engagement with P4C showed a shift from passive learning to a more active participation, highlighted also in Acar's (2022) and Roos's (2016) research. By avoiding recording devices, the sessions tried to minimise the fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al 1986). This aimed to create a safe space where students could engage more freely. In session 4, engagement reached its peak. Students were so involved they started saying their opinions without having the speaking ball, in their opinions they discussed personal traits and their pets. Most of the students were active in discussion, the topic clearly fit their level and interests. The active participation is supported by Günay and Ozturk's (2023) findings that the collaborative nature of P4C can reduce foreign language anxiety.

3. CONCLUSION

The study examined the application of P4C in a 6th-grade EFL classroom, focusing both on pedagogical challenges and opportunities, in addition to student engagement. The study focused on integrating P4C into English language teaching lessons through four sessions and sought to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the pedagogical challenges and opportunities of facilitating P4C in a 6th-grade EFL classroom? (2) How do 6th-grade EFL students engage with value-based philosophical inquiry?

The theoretical framework highlighted the importance of integrating values education and critical thinking into foreign language teaching, with an emphasis on language teaching being inherently connected to moral and social development (Aspin 2005; Johnston 2003). This process begins from the teacher, who is seen as the moral role model, especially for younger students (Tate 2005; Taylor 2005). To promote the skills of reasoning, dialogue, ethical thinking and collaborative inquiry, P4C was identified as a successful method (Fisher 2005; Lipman et al 1980).

The findings of this study indicate that P4C can positively influence classroom dynamics by increasing student motivation, participation and engagement. This is also supported by previous research that highlights its role in creating an active learning environment (Acar 2022; Goard et al 2015; Roos 2016). The development of community of inquiry, as described by Lipman et al (1980), was gradually observed throughout the lessons, as students started building on each others' ideas and regulating their own participation.

Still, several challenges were also identified during the process. Students experienced difficulties with language proficiency, particularly when engaging with abstract concepts. Issues related to participation, such as being reluctant to speak in whole-class discussions and preference for pair work, align with Horwitz and others' (1980) research on foreign language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, the importance of linguistic scaffolding

and level-appropriate stimuli confirms the importance of adapting P4C to younger learners, as suggested by Roos (2016) and Shahini and Riazi (2010).

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that the application of P4C to enhance critical thinking skills and engagement with abstract concepts is most effective when carefully scaffolded and adapted to learners' linguistic and cognitive levels. Providing structured support through modelling language, giving examples and using level-appropriate stimuli ensures that discussions help build confidence in engaging in a whole-class dialogue. Additionally, the selection of relatable and meaningful topics can facilitate deeper engagement and encourage students to connect abstract ideas to their personal experiences.

While this action research offers meaningful insights into the integration of P4C in a 6th grade EFL context, it is not without limitations. The study was conducted over a relatively short period of time with a small, specific group of students. The small sample size and the specific ability grouping of the students mean the findings might not be generalisable to all EFL classrooms. Future research could address these limitations by implementing P4C over a longer duration to observe long-term development of critical thinking and linguistic confidence. Comparative studies involving different school types or diverse age groups would further clarify the variation of the method across different contexts. In addition, more objective quantitative measures of language proficiency to supplement qualitative data observations could provide a more comprehensive picture of the method's impact on specific language skills.

Overall, this study demonstrated that P4C is a valuable approach in EFL teaching by integrating language learning with critical thinking and values education. Its effectiveness depends on careful implementation, including the selection of topics, use of scaffolding strategies, and the creation of a safe and supportive classroom environment. These elements

are essential to students engaging meaningfully in dialogue and developing both linguistic and cognitive skills.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Session 1: Adventure

Number of participating students: 12

Time: 35 min

Notes: If students say “I wanted to say the same thing” – encourage them to repeat!

Warm-up

- **Rules** - speak only when holding a plush/ball. If you wish to say something, raise your hand, once you get the ball, you can speak.
- **Respect** - everybody's thoughts are welcome, we respect everyone's opinions.

Introduction

Pictures - Sharing opinions on the pictures in pairs.

What do these pictures have in common?

Discussion

What is an adventure to you? What does it mean? What does it include?

Why do people go on adventures?

What adventures do you dream of?

Can everyday life be an adventure?

Does an adventure have to be dangerous or exciting?

When does something stop being an adventure?

Is adventure something that happens to you, or something you create?

How do adventures change people?

Can fear be a good thing during an adventure?

Do you need confidence to start an adventure, or does adventure give you confidence?

How are some adventures more meaningful than others?

What is the difference between an adventure and a journey?

What is the longest journey you've ever done? How did you feel?

What's the longest time you've been away from home? How did that make you feel?

Can life itself be an adventure?

What makes an adventure worth it?

Conclusion

Repeating the most important questions and their answers.

Ask if anyone wishes to say something or conclude in their own words.

Appendix B - Session 2: Wishes

Number of participating students: 15

Time: 40 min

Warm-up:

1. How do you feel today, and why?
2. What rules did we agree on?
 - a. Listening
 - b. Speaking with the ball
 - c. Being respectful
3. What do you hope for today?

Pictures

What are these things?

What do they have in common?

Why do we make wishes using them?

Introduction: Story

A homeless man sat on the street with his dog. He saw a woman leaving her house and thought, "I wish I had a place like that."

A sports car with an open roof drove past, and the woman glanced round. "I wish I had a car like that," she thought.

The car stopped in traffic next to a pair of lovers holding hands at a jeweller's shop window. "I wish I was in love," thought the driver.

One of two lovers, looking at an expensive ring in the jeweller's window, thought, "I wish we had the money."

The jeweller, busy with his accounts, looked outside and saw two people chatting at a café table. He thought, "I wish I had more time."

At the café, a woman was telling her brother a funny thing her daughter had said. "I wish I had kids," the brother thought.

The homeless man's dog barked. The sister looked round and thought, "I wish I had a dog."

Now, imagine, for a moment, that each of the characters in this had said their thoughts out loud, and that the person they envied had heard. Could knowing that someone else envied something they had make each person happier with their situation, and less unhappy about not having what they want?

Discussion:

Students' own question creating.

Now think of questions you want to ask from your groupmates on the topic of "making wishes".

What are your questions, what do you wonder about?

Write down 2-5 questions.

- Why do we make wishes?
- Do you believe making wishes works?
- Where do wishes come from?
- How are wishes important? Why?
- How are wishes different?
- Do wishes come true?
- Is it possible to make your wishes come true by focusing on them?
- Why do we use special items, like lilacs, four-leaf clovers or shooting stars, to wish for things?
- Do you think that people are always dissatisfied with what they have?
- Is it helpful to feel annoyed sometimes?
- Is it possible to be content with what you have?
- If you could make any wish, should you?
- What would you do if all your wishes came true?

Appendix C - Session 3: Leadership

Number of participating students: 16

Time: 30 min

INTRO

Review of RULES

- Last week's ideas
- Respect - everybody's thoughts are welcome, we respect everyone's opinions.

Topic of the day: **LEADERSHIP** (write it down)

What does it mean?

Who is a leader?

What does a leader do?

What types of leaders exist?

MAIN ACTIVITY

Three Blind People

- A. TWO volunteers:
 - a. One closes their eyes.
 - b. I hide something in the room.
 - c. The other who saw where I hid it, leads the other person to the item by the wrist.
 - d. Nobody can say anything!
- B. TWO volunteers:
 - a. One closes their eyes.
 - b. I hide something in the room.
 - c. The other leads the blind person to the item by talking only. VERBAL CLUES!
 - d. Everybody else is quiet!
- C. ONE volunteer:
 - a. The volunteer closes their eyes.
 - b. I hide something in the room.
 - c. **Everybody** talks at the same time, giving the blind person clues.

DISCUSSION

What did you think of the first activity?

Do you think it was a good model for leadership?

How did the first activity compare to the second activity?

In what ways was it different? In what ways similar?

Do you think the third activity was an example of good leadership?

If not, what qualities made it an example of bad leadership?

If so, what qualities made it an example of good leadership?

How were the activities similar?

How were they different?

Why do we need leaders?

What would happen if we had no leaders?

Can anybody be a leader?

QUESTION CREATION TIME

CONCLUSION

A. Think of all the ways their parents are leaders.

B. Think of all the ways teachers are leaders.

C. Think of all the ways the President of Estonia is a leader.

D. Compare A, B, and C.

Now look back at the definition you wrote, do still think the same way?

The ball goes around – everybody gets to say what they liked about the discussion.

Appendix D - Session 4: Friendship

Number of participating students: 15

Time: 45 min

INTRO

How are you feeling?

- Ball
- Respect
- One person talks at a time

Reminder: Try not to just give 'yes' or 'no' answers, remember always to back up your opinions with reasons and arguments.

Who is a friend? - someone who is attached to another person by feelings of affection

What is a friendship? - a relationship between two people who like each other

DRAW: Without drawing people or any part of a person, draw what a good friendship is.

→ A representation of a good friendship.

DISCUSS: In pairs, show your partner your drawing and explain what you mean by it.

DISCUSSION

What makes a good friendship?

List the qualities on the whiteboard.

- In your drawings representing good friendships, what about those representations made them good friendships? What positive traits of friendship do they have?
- Anything else to add to the list?

Now we will discuss these items on the list.

1. **Which of these might be the most important to a good friendship? Why?**
2. **Which would make the biggest difference if it was missing? / absent? Why?**
 - a. Are these traits then absolutely necessary?
3. **If you could have a friend that had all of these traits except for one, which trait would you want it to be?**
 - a. Are these traits not necessary then?
4. **Would you like to have friends who are all perfect?**
 - a. Why do we keep friends who are not perfect?
 - b. Is there something good in having imperfect friends?
5. **Are there different kinds of friends?**
 - a. Friends who are also family, friends from school, friends from internet
 - b. What traits do different kinds of friends have?
6. **Can non-human beings/things really be friends to us?**
 - a. Can they be friends to each other?
 - b. Have you heard the phrase "a dog is a man's best friend"?

- i. What does it mean?
- ii. What traits do dogs have from the list on the board?
- iii. How are dogs better or worse friends than people?

CONCLUSION

Look at the traits on the board, think which one are you good at and which one do you need to work on? Write it down, you do not have to share it.

After the discussion, **what do you think a friendship is?**

Has your idea of a friendship changed?

How would you conclude the discussion?

What was most important for you?

Rate the discussion: thumbs

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Triin Valli

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE USE OF PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSONS

Võimalused lastega filosoferimise kasutamiseks inglise keele õpetuse tundides

Magistritöö

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Lehekülgede arv: 54

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks oli välja selgitada, millised on lastega filosoferimise meetodi rakendamise pedagoogilised võimalused ja väljakutsed 6. klassi inglise keele tunnis ning kuidas õpilased sellesse protsessi suhtuvad. Töö koosneb kahest põhiosast: teoreetiline osa käsitleb väärtuskasvatust, võõrkeeleõpet ja lastega filosoferimise metoodikat ning selle rakendamist võõrkeeleõppes. Empiiriline osa põhineb tegevusuuringul, mis viidi läbi nelja tsükliga. Tegevusuuringu raames planeeriti, viidi läbi, jälgiti ja analüüsiti lastega filosoferimise tunde. Andmeid koguti uurija päeviku abil ning analüüsiit induktiivse sisuanalüüsi meetodil.

Töö tulemused näitavad, et lastega filosoferimise meetod suurendab õpilaste aktiivsust, motivatsiooni ja osalust tunni aruteludes ning toetab ka kriitilise mõtlemise arengut. Samas, väljakutsed tõid esile raskusi abstraktsete teemade mõistmisel, keelisi piiranguid ning arutelude juhtimise keerukust.

Kokkuvõttes võib järeldada, et lastega filosoferimine on võõrkeeleõppes väärtuslik lähenemine, kui selle rakendamisel lähtutakse õpilaste keelelisest tasemest ning tagatakse piisav juhendamine ja toetav õhkkond.

Märksõnad: Lastega filosoferimine, inglise keel võõrkeelena, väärtuskasvatus, kriitiline mõtlemine, suhtlus klassiruumis

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

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