CLIL Sociology Webquest

Language development

1 Pre-reading

Read the sentences about language development and write *T* (True) or *F* (False). Then check your answers by doing an Internet search for language development. You can use these websites to help you:

www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/WhoAmI/FindOutMore/Yourbrain/Whatisspecialabouthumanlanguage.aspx

www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ab13

1	Animals and humans communicate in the same way.	*F*
2	An average person says 370 million words during their lifetime.	
3	Adults use about 15,000 words every day.	
4	In humans, the right side of the brain usually deals with language.	
5	Understanding intonation is just as important as understanding words.	
6	Babies can differentiate between different sounds.	
7	You learn about 60,000 words by the age of three.	
8	Up until the age of seven, it's easy to learn foreign languages.	

2 Vocabulary

Do an Internet search for *theories of language development* and match the words 1–10 with their definitions a–j. Which theory do you like most? You can use these websites to help you:

pandora.cii.wwu.edu/vajda/ling201/test1materials/origin_of_language.htm

webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/langorigins.html

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8352525.stm

1	the mama theory	**a**	language originated to express emotions
2	the ta-ta theory	**b**	language developed gradually through interaction
3	the bow-wow theory	**c**	language expressed a need for identity and belonging
4	the pooh-pooh theory	**d**	language was preceded by gestures and movements
5	the ding-dong theory	**e**	language emerged from play and enjoyment
6	the cultural evolution theory	**f**	language developed from the need to warn others
7	the sing-song/la-la theory	**g**	language developed from a need to deceive and lie
8	the hey you! theory	**h**	language attributed easy sounds to significant things
9	the warning theory	**i**	language began as imitations of animal sounds
10	the lying theory	**j**	sounds correspond to meaning in language

new inspiration 4

3 Vocabulary

Match these languages with some of the main language groups 1–7. Check your answers on the Internet.
Add more languages for each group. Which group does your language belong to?

Arabic Chechen English Finnish Georgian Hebrew Hindi
Hungarian Japanese Mandarin Swahili Thaï Turkish Xhosa

1 Indo-European   *English,* ....

2 Uralic   ....

3 Altaic   ....

4 Sino-Tibetan   ....

5 Afro-Asiatic   ....

6 Caucasian   ....

7 Niger-Congo   ....

4 Reading

Do an Internet search for how languages evolved. Then circle the correct words to complete the sentences.
You can use these websites to help you:

www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ab13

www.bbc.co.uk/languages/guide/languages.shtml

www.economist.com/node/18557572

www.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/science/15language.html

www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/minority-ethnic/

1 DNA evidence suggests that the origin of languages was probably in … .
   a Africa   **b** America   **c** Europe

2 Today's languages are linked by … .
   a grammar   **b** sounds   **c** words
   d a combination of these

3 Today's most widespread group of languages is … .
   a Indo-European   **b** Semitic   **c** Finno-Ugric

4 An example of a romance language is … .
   a English   **b** Flemish   **c** French

5 An example of a North Germanic language is … .
   a Italian   **b** Norwegian   **c** Romanian

6 The languages spoken by ethnic communities … .
   a have an impact on spoken English
   b do not have an impact on spoken English
   c will never change an existing language

7 English is very widely used globally because it is … .
   a idiomatic   **b** easy to speak   **c** complex

8 Experts believe that English as we speak it today will … .
   a change   **b** disappear   **c** remain the same

5 Project

Technology is changing the way language is
evolving. Research and prepare a presentation on
what impact mobile phones, the Internet and social
networking sites are having on the English language.
In your presentation you could include examples of:

- changes in meaning, grammar and spelling
- use of symbols and images
- style of communication and use of slang
- any other relevant or interesting information

You can use these websites to help you:

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1235945.stm

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7910075.stm

www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2009/oct/23/net-
   contributions-language

www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/6017629/
   Texting-is-making-English-a-foreign-language.html

thenextweb.com/socialmedia/2010/12/10/wtf-social-
   networking-is-good-for-language/

www3.open.ac.uk/media/fullstory.aspx?id=18269

new inspiration 4