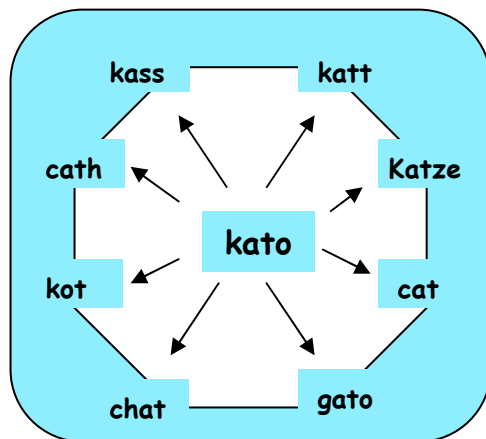


Esperanto is a neutral language — a fair language — and by using it as a *Springboard* to others you are sending the message 'All languages are equal', 'All languages are equally valuable', and 'You deserve respect as much as I do!'



What next?

From individual words it's a short step to recognising sentences.

Topics one and two in the *Springboard* course cover *colours* and *animals*. Can the children 'pair' these sentences? Which one is left out? What does it mean?

<i>El gato es blanco</i>	[Spanish]
<i>O elefante é grande</i>	[Portuguese]
<i>La rana è verde</i>	[Italian]
<i>De olifant is groot</i>	[Dutch]
<i>Tigrul este negru și verde</i>	[Romanian]
<i>La rano estas verda</i>	[Esperanto]
<i>The cat is white</i>	[English]

Can the children group all the adjectives together? Can they make a set of nouns?

Can they highlight or circle all the verbs from the list?

es é è is este estas is

Are there any similarities, any differences? What is a *verb*?

If you would like to know more about this unique method of raising language awareness, visit: www.springboard2languages.org



Raising Language Awareness ...the *Springboard* way!

Language awareness - being 'aware of language': it's something that you *almost* don't need to teach. Present comparisons, point out similarities, mention differences, elicit comments and children will draw their own conclusions. A child's awareness of language grows intuitively.

Imagine a child is taught an 'international' language, one that's based on words and grammar drawn from many different languages; one that has the added advantage of being relatively easy to learn because it has a phonetic spelling and is grammatically regular, with a system of affixes allowing words to be 'built' — in essence 'created' — by the learner.

Imagine further that a child, having learnt a small vocabulary, can, from the first lesson, be introduced to other languages and invited to compare and to notice those similarities and differences.

What might a child 'feel' when he or she realises it is possible to understand what's written? To show you what we mean, we'll invert the experiment.

Many of you will remember basic French, so imagine that this is your 'base' language. You have learnt these words amongst many others: *Le chat - est - sur - le mur*

And then you are shown this sentence in another language which you haven't learnt: *La kato estas sur la muro*.

You could have a good go at understanding it, couldn't you? And how do you feel, having understood it — a positive feeling? Imagine what a child might feel: 'I'm good at languages — I can do this!'

So we build on the positive feeling and take language awareness a stage further. The children have learnt that ALL Esperanto nouns end in an 'o' — that the 'o' is a small flag saying: 'Hi! I am a noun!'

So you can ask them to point out the nouns in the Esperanto sentence, and then ask them to 'hunt' the nouns in the French sentence. Yes — other languages have nouns in them too! The children are learning analysis, learning to transfer their skills; becoming 'language aware'.

Imagine the children have been studying 'animal' words in Esperanto and have learnt amongst others *fiŝo* and *muso*.

They understand *Mi havas fiŝon kaj muson* so now we might introduce a German sentence:

Mi havas fiŝon kaj muson. Ich habe einen Fisch und eine Maus.

We use it to discuss capitals...Yes, *fiŝo* and *muso* are flagged with an 'o' saying: 'Hi! I'm a noun' so are *Fisch* and *Maus* nouns too? Yes! But what's different about them? Ha! Other languages use capitals as well — but in a different way.

Do we use them for nouns? For all nouns? For some? Which nouns? Extend the discussion to revise the use of capitals in English.

Try Latin — why not? Many languages have evolved from common roots, diverging, absorbing, and changing on the way. Latin is a 'foundation' language.

La verda rano sidas sub la muro. Viridis rana sedet sub muro.

Talk about language evolution, language roots, language similarities; how languages are 'neighbours' and have 'families'.

Words may be similar, but sometimes the writing system is different. Compare, say Russian and Esperanto.

Jen mia kato = Вот мой кот (Vot moy kot)

Where are the similarities? Where are the differences?

You'll find that the children will contribute information from their own community languages — reading from right to left; writing vertically; using a different system to write similar words, to say the same things.

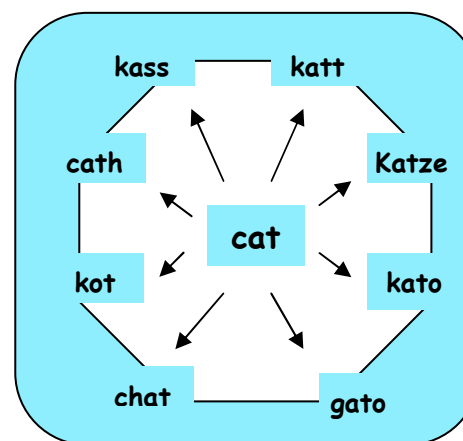
And all the while the child sees an image of a 'successful' language learner. 'I can do this!'

And best of all, the children are teaching themselves. The language awareness is not being taught by you — it's growing inside them, as you discuss and show; they feel it to be 'theirs'.

They develop an interest and a curiosity in these 'new' languages and begin to look for differences and similarities before being asked. The skills of language awareness are being developed — and they are transferable.

But why bother with Esperanto? Why not use English as the central language; after all they all 'know' English.

Yes, but then you might find children drawing wrong conclusions; that some other 'awareness' is growing inside them.



What are the children intuitively learning? What associations are they making?

That English is at the centre of all others. That it is THE international language?

But not only that: what of other community languages?

They will be learning: 'My language is better than yours' and by extension they might even be learning 'And I am better than you'.