

**Level: Upper Intermediate**  
**Lesson: 29**  
**Title: "Language"**

**Summary:**

*Lisa and Alexander are in the studio and they discuss about Lisa's three-year-old daughter who speaks four languages.*

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*Alexander and Lisa are in a studio discussing world languages. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.*

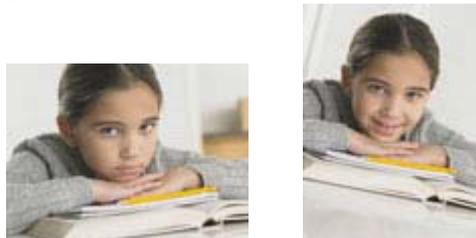
**Dialogue:**

**Alexander:** Welcome to *The Globe Show*. I'm Alexander and we're here with Lisa Keble talking about how easy it's for babies to pick up languages. Now get ready for this, Lisa's daughter, Nefeli, can speak ... 4 languages!

**Lisa:** Yeah, she speaks English, French, Greek and Russian.



**Alexander:** I know that she's learning English from you, Greek from your parents and French from her father but Russian? I mean... did you just wake up one day and your daughter started talking to you **out of the blue** in Russian?



**Lisa:** Well... not exactly, we were walking down the street when she saw a matrioshka in a store window....

**Alexander:** A what?

**Lisa:** A matrioshka! One of those Russian dolls that fit into each other... anyway, as soon as she saw that she started **reciting** a Russian poem.



**Alexander:** How on earth would she know a Russian poem?

**Lisa:** Her babysitter is Russian and she sometimes sings or reads to her in Russian. So, I guess Nefeli's **picking up** Russian was inevitable.



**Alexander:** That's really amazing!! Doesn't she get confused? She's only three!!!

**Lisa:** Well ...actually, no!



*Now answer the following question...*

What is so surprising about Lisa's daughter?

She is learning 4 languages.

*Now listen again to the dialogue. Afterwards there will be 4 questions on some details...*

**Alexander:** Welcome to *The Globe Show*. I'm Alexander and we're here with Lisa Keble talking about how easy it's for babies to pick up languages. Now get ready for this, Lisa's daughter, Nefeli, can speak ... 4 languages!

**Lisa:** Yeah, she speaks English, French, Greek, and Russian.

**Alexander:** I know that she's learning English from you, Greek from your parents and French from her father but Russian? I mean... did you just wake up one day and your daughter started talking to you **out of the blue** in Russian?

**Lisa:** Well... not exactly, we were walking down the street when she saw a matrioshka in a store window....

**Alexander:** A what?

**Lisa:** A matrioshka! One of those Russian dolls that fit into each other... anyway, as soon as she saw that she started **reciting** a Russian poem.

**Alexander:** **How on earth would she know a Russian poem?**

**Lisa:** Her babysitter is Russian and she sometimes sings or reads to her in Russian. So, I guess Nefeli's **picking up** Russian was inevitable.

**Alexander:** That's really amazing!! Doesn't she get confused? She's only three!!!

**Lisa:** Well ...actually, no!

*Now answer some questions...*

1. Alexander says, "Your daughter started talking to you **out of the blue** in Russian." What does "out of the blue" mean?

"Out of the blue" means all of a sudden and unexpectedly.

2. Lisa says "She started **reciting** a Russian poem". What does "recite" mean?

"To recite" means to read out a poem.

3. Alexander says, "**How on earth would she know a Russian poem?**"  
How does he feel when he says this?

He feels surprised.

4. Lisa says, "So, I guess Nefeli's **picking up** Russian was inevitable." What does "pick up a language" mean?

"Pick up a language" means learn a language.

*Please visit our site at [www.hau.gr](http://www.hau.gr) to find the transcripts, explanations and activities.*

## GLOSSARY

**incredible** (adjective) If something is incredible it is very difficult to believe.  
(e.g. The tricks the magician did were incredible.)

**inevitable** (adjective) Something which is inevitable is certain to happen and it cannot be avoided.  
(e.g. The accident was the inevitable since he was driving under the influence of alcohol.)

**out of the blue** (expression) If something happens out of the blue, it is completely unexpected.  
(e.g. One day, out of the blue, he announced that she was getting married.)

**pick something up** (phrasal verb) means to learn a new skill or language without formal instruction.  
(e.g. When you live in a country you soon pick up the language.)

**recite** (verb) which means to say a piece of writing out loud from memory.  
(e.g. The little girl recited the poem she had learned at school to her parents.)

**Why on earth** (informal expression) can be used to show surprise, confusion or anger.  
(e.g. Why on earth are you going on holiday to Africa, if you hate the heat?)

## ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1

Fill in the gaps with the correct form of the words from the glossary.

1. He.....French by living in Paris for 6 months.
2. Mr. Vramoushka's resignation came without warning. It was totally..... .
3. In the play at the end of the year, each chills has to..... a poem.
4. After vigorously exercising for 5 hours it was.....that she would feel tired.
5. ....did she take the job if she doesn't want to be a secretary in the first place?
6. It was.....that she passed all her exams without having studied.

### Activity 2

In formal English a possessive noun (e.g. Nefeli's) or pronoun (e.g. my / your / his etc.) is used to modify a gerund (e.g. picking).

One such example is: *Nefeli's picking up Russian was inevitable.*

Combine the following sentences using a possessive noun/pronoun to modify a gerund.

e.g. Peter won a prize. We are happy about that.

We are happy about ***Peter's winning*** a prize.

1. She wanted to come to the party. I could understand why.

I could understand.....to come to the party.

2. He fell asleep during dinner. It was embarrassing.

.....asleep during dinner was embarrassing.

3. Sally got a scholarship. It was surprising.

.....a scholarship was surprising.

4. We went on a shopping spree. It was extravagant.

.....on a shopping spree was extravagant.

## KEY TO ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1

1. picked up
2. out of the blue
3. recite
4. inevitable
5. why on earth
6. incredible

### Activity 2

1. her wanting
2. His falling
3. Sally's getting
4. Our going

