

**UNIVERZITA PARDUBICE
FAKULTA FILOZOFICKÁ**

**TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS
ENGLISH THROUGH ENGLISH
DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE**

2006

Klára KOSTKOVÁ

**UNIVERZITA PARDUBICE
FAKULTA FILOZOFICKÁ
KATEDRA ANGLISTIKY A AMERIKANISTIKY**

**VÝUKA ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA ŽÁKŮ
MLADŠÍHO ŠKOLNÍHO VĚKU
CÍLOVÝM JAZYKEM**

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

AUTOR PRÁCE: Klára Kostková

VEDOUCÍ PRÁCE: PaedDr. Monika Černá, Ph.D.

2006

**UNIVERSITY OF PARDUBICE
FACULTY OF ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES**

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THESIS

AUTHOR: Klára Kostková

SUPERVISOR: PaedDr. Monika Černá, Ph.D.

2006

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V Pardubicích dne 31.3.2006

Klára Kostková

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1. Introduction

‘In that case,’ said the Dodo solemnly, rising to his feet, ‘I move that the meeting adjourn, for the immediate adoption of more energetic remedies.’
‘Speak English!’ said the Eaglet. ‘I don’t know the meaning of those long words, and, what’s more, I don’t believe you do either.’ *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.

Assuming both Dodo and Eaglet were native speakers, we may see how difficult it is to understand when wrong words are used. On the other hand, when words that one understands or can deduce out of a context are used, then even non-native speakers can convey the meaning of a message. This is, in my opinion, particularly important when teaching languages since I believe that teaching the language through using it is the most effective way; especially with young learners who, owing to their age, have the amusing ability to grasp meaning from a minimum. Many different ways of how to convey meaning, other than translation, exist. Although these are usually more time consuming and require more responsible planning, I believe that by using them we are in the long term making better English users of our learners.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, I do not believe that teaching English through English is a generally accepted idea, even though, as Widdowson emphasises in a chapter on *Bilingualization and localized learning*, “the conventional wisdom that monolingual teaching is the best way of getting bilingual results dates back a century at least, and is a legacy of the Direct Method.” (2003:151). Since the above mentioned Direct Method, much has been written about it and many scientists, theoreticians, as well as teachers have presented their ideas. Teaching has generally gone through a long development.

However, on this theme of whether or not to teach English through English, opinions still vary. Therefore, I asked myself a question: “*Will the communicative competence of pupils being taught English through English be higher than those being taught English through Czech?*” and decided to carry out a small-scale research project on this subject through which I shall try to prove my belief to be true. Not only I perceive the role of mother tongue versus target language in language teaching as an ongoing problem and free space for improvement. For instance, the number of students from the ELTE programme at University of Pardubice who carried out an action research focusing on increasing the use of English support my assumptions; According to Černá and Píšová, 12 out of 64 students aimed at this topic during three years (2004:115). It is important to remark here that the students choose their action research topics themselves. Therefore, it can be claimed that, as also Černá and

Příšová state, Englishness of English lessons in the Czech context is one of the evergreen issues in ELT (2004:114).

Relevant theoretical information on this theme will be presented initially and will function as a basis for a part dedicated to the research itself. However, both of these parts are interrelated and are both being treated throughout the whole paper; relevant references towards other parts of the thesis will be presented in brackets, together with the page where they can be found.

Brief overview of teaching methods and approaches is presented in the first chapter, mainly those connected to the development of communicative competence in spoken English and those where the usage of mother tongue or the target language play a crucial role. The following chapter deals with the development, definitions and components of communicative competence. At the end, communicative competence in spoken English, from a practical point of view, is emphasized. Since the aim of my research is to find out how have two groups of young learners mastered the communicative competence in spoken English, the third chapter is devoted to the theme of young learners; especially to their development in a connection to first and second language acquisition. To be able to evaluate the achieved level of their communicative competence, relevant testing techniques, types of tests, as well as marking system have to be chosen out of the abundance available. These, together with test creation are dealt with in chapter five. Following chapter is dedicated to the research with support of relevant, above mentioned, background. School, teachers and pupils involved in the research are described, as well as the research methodology and creation of tools used. Last but not least, interpretation of the obtained data and their evaluation is presented.

It is to be noted, that the first person singular used throughout the paper expresses author's experience and opinions. Words written in italics are used to express terms, titles of books or chapters and asked questions. Terms used specifically by the author are placed in simple inverted commas. Square brackets are used where author's own words are added into quotations or where part of a quotation is omitted. Size font 10 is used in some tables and diagrams, as well for quotations at the beginnings of some chapters.

2. Teaching methods and approaches

Under fair teaching conditions the achievement of pupils reflects directly the emphasis which the teacher lays on the objectives he seeks. No worthwhile ability in the modern language develops as a by-product. AMERICAN AND CANADIAN REPORT

This chapter will deal with teaching methods and approaches and present a brief overview. However, for the purpose of this thesis, it will deal mainly with those connected to the development of communicative competence in spoken English and those where the usage of mother tongue or the target language play a crucial role. Subchapter 2.1. Diachronic view on usage of English and Czech language will very briefly describe the development of language teaching in Europe up to the 1900, 2.2. Synchronic view on usage of English and Czech language will continue with an overview of 20th century teaching trends from which some relevant ones will be described in more detail.

Nonetheless, much has been written about the development of teaching methods and approaches, as well as about the current ones available, both of which have been minutely described by, for instance, Howatt and Widdowson (2004), Celce-Murcia (1991) or Richard and Rodgers (2002).

Some of the terms to be used in this chapter, such as *approach*, *method*, *technique* and *syllabus* will be explained here to clarify their meaning. To answer the question of *How do the terms differ?* Anthony has provided a useful set of definitions for the first three:

An *approach* to language teaching is something that reflects a certain model or research paradigm – a theory, if you like. This term is the broadest of the three. A *method*, on the other hand, is a set of procedures, i.e., a system that spells out rather precisely how to teach a language. Methods are more specific than approaches but less specific than techniques. Methods are typically compatible with one (or sometimes two) approaches. A *technique* is a classroom device or activity and thus represents the narrowest term of the three concepts. Some techniques are widely used and found in many methods (i.e., imitation and repetition); however, some techniques are specific to or characteristic of a given method (i.e., using cuisinaire rods = the Silent Way) (cited in Celce-Murcia, 1991:5).

There is nothing to be added to this comprehensive explanation, except the term *syllabus*. Celce-Murcia describes syllabus as an "inventory of things the learner should master." (1991:9). As well as syllabuses, a great number of methods, approaches and techniques exist.

The decision as to which, or which combinations, to use out of the abundance available to make the teaching as effective as possible depends on each individual. However, to be able to make sensible decisions, one should be aware of the teaching trends, as well as to consider other factors such as the age of the learners or purpose of learning the language.

”Clifford Prator, a former professor and current colleague of [Celce-Murcia], sums up the professional ESL teacher’s responsibility nicely:

Adapt; don’t adopt.“ (Celce-Murcia, 1991:10).

2.1. Diachronic view on usage of English and Czech language

When English was first adopted as a school subject the methods employed were those inherited from the teaching of Latin. For obvious reasons this was inevitable, the majority of teachers being classical scholars or divines, unable to understand spoken English or to speak it themselves. LECTOR K.V.OLSEN

“From both a contemporary and a historical perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception.“ (Richard and Rodgers, 2002:3). Although English is considered the international language nowadays, Latin used to be the *lingua franca* and students were introduced to its grammar through their mother tongue. There have been some attempts to improve the language education since the sixteenth century, for example, by Montaigne, however, according to Celce-Murcia:

the most famous language teacher and methodologist of this period is Jan Comenius, a Czech. [...] Some of the techniques that he used and espoused were the following:

- use imitation instead of rules to teach a language
 - have your students repeat after you
 - use limited vocabulary initially
 - help your students practice reading and speaking
 - teach language through pictures to make it meaningful.

Thus, Comenius, for the first time, made explicit an inductive approach to learning a foreign language, the goal of which was to teach *use* rather than *analysis* of the language being taught (1991:4).

His thoughts, although revolutionary, did not have the power to change the attitude towards learning languages and still “the spoken language was largely ignored.“(Howatt and Widdowson, 2004:132) As Richards and Rodgers explain, later, when languages began to enter the curriculum of European schools they went on being taught using the same ways as while teaching Latin and this approach, whose main goal was not at all to develop speaking skills, became the standard way of studying foreign languages at school, thus school learning must have been a deadening experience for children (2002:4). “This ‘new‘ model later came to be known as ‘the grammar-translation method‘“(Howatt and Widdowson, 2004:132) where

“the first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language.” (Stern cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2002:5).

The principal characteristics of the Grammar-Translation Method, at least those connected to the theme of this thesis are briefly listed here:

- Instruction is given in the native language; words are taught through bilingual word lists. Typical exercise is to translate.
- There is little use of the target language.
- Grammar is taught deductively, accuracy is emphasized.
- The teacher does not have to speak the target language, hence, likewise, the result is the student's inability to use the language for communication.

(Richards and Rodgers, 2002:5, 6, Celce-Murcia, 1991:6).

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the nineteenth century was a century of reform in language teaching, especially in

the last two decades when a new interest in the scientific study of language and in the psychology of language learning prompted the developments of a genuine theoretical foundation for language pedagogy. It is not accidental that so many reformers should have been engaged in the teaching of English as a foreign language. One reason, paradoxically enough, was the rather lowly status of English in the educational pecking order in Europe, which meant that ‘experiments’ were not immediately rejected as threatening to the established order (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004:132).

An example of such an experiment, or more precisely an alternative teaching method is the Berlitz course. Mr Berlitz opened his first school in 1878 and though he did not invent the Direct Method, to be discussed later, he made it available to a wide number of students very successfully (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004:222). Richards and Rodgers assert that towards the mid-nineteenth century opportunities for communication among Europeans increased, and therefore also the demand for oral proficiency.

Since the Grammar-Translation Method failed to meet the above mentioned needs of the period, the Direct Approach was invented. It was a complete opposite to the Grammar-Translation Method, especially in the perception of native and target language:

- Instruction was conducted exclusively in target language, actions and pictures are used to make the meaning clear.
 - Grammar is taught inductively.
 - Oral communication skills are carefully built up.
 - Teacher does not have to speak the students' native language.
- (Richards and Rodgers, 2002:12, Celce-Murcia, 1991:6).

According to Savignon, there were some proponents of the Direct Method (also sometimes called the Natural Approach) in the nineteenth century who rejected the so far widely used translations, and claimed that learners should discover for themselves how to function in their new language (1983:47).

Neither of these early methods can be labeled as wrong or right, and nor has either been utterly banished. According to Richards and Rodgers, the Grammar-Translation Method continues to be widely used in its modified form, and the principles of the Direct Method are still followed in, for instance, contemporary Berlitz schools (2002:6,12).

2.2. Synchronic view on usage of English and Czech language

As stated above, the Grammar-Translation Method as well as the Direct Method may both be covered under the currently used methods. However, language teaching has gone through a great development since, and many other methods and approaches have been developed.

2.2.1. Current methods and approaches

Frysztacka-Szkróbka divides the current teaching methods and approaches into two groups: conventional and non-conventional (1997:38-46). I shall use her division, give some examples and very briefly describe those connected to the development of spoken English, or those with some special usage of native or target language.

Conventional methods cover the two already mentioned methods as well as, for instance, the *Reading Approach*, where "translation is once more a respectable classroom procedure, [...] and reading comprehension is the only skill emphasized." (Celce-Murcia, 1991:6). As a reaction to the Reading Approach and its lack of emphasis on spoken language, the *Audiolingual Method* in the United States and the *Situational Approach* in Britain developed during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Both took much from the Direct Method. As

Richards and Rodgers claim, “the focus in the early stages is on oral skills, with gradual links to other skills as learning develops.” (2002:58). Besides, the Situational Approach, according to Celce-Murcia, uses spoken language as primary and only the target language should be used (1991:7). Audiolingualism operated with some features of behavioural psychology and saw language as a habit formation (page 29). Therefore, a great emphasis was placed on accuracy, claiming that repeating of errors would lead to their acquisition. The *Cognitive Approach* responded with “language learning viewed as rule acquisition [and] reading and writing are once again as important as listening and speaking.” (Celce-Murcia, 1991:7). According to Frysztacka-Szkróbka, the development of linguistics and transformational-generative grammar (page 29) affected the emergence of this method noticeably. When one looks at the development and currently available conventional methods and approaches, it may seem that they, from the viewpoint of the role of developing speaking, go through periodical waves.

“The need of avoiding routine and the anxiety characteristic for human creative minds brought about the appearance of non-conventional methods and approaches.” (Frysztacka-Szkróbka, 1997:41). These have, by all means, strengthened the theory of language teaching by various new ideas, but for the reasons already mentioned will not be dealt with in much detail. I shall use Richards and Rodgers’s division, according to which “the quest for alternatives to grammar-based approaches and methods led in several different directions.” (2002:71). One of these is a growing interest in communication described in the next chapter, others “outside of language teaching or represent an application in language teaching of educational principles developed elsewhere.” (ibid). Examples of such are, for instance, *Total Physical Response*, *Silent Way*, *Suggestopedia* or *The Lexical Approach*, *Neurolinguistic Programming* and *Competency-Based Language Teaching*.

Not only the non-conventional methods and approaches moved away from grammar, it was also the *communicative movement* which furthermore increased the interest in communication and in the development of new approaches and methods which, as Howatt and Widdowson explain, took greater account of the way language worked in the real world and which tried to be more responsive to the needs of learners in their efforts to acquire communicative competence. (2004:326). I shall once more use Richards and Rodgers’s labeling of these. They describe five approaches: *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT), which, according to them, “marks the beginning major paradigm shift within language teaching in the twentieth century, one of whose ramifications continue to be felt today;” (2002:151); *Cooperative Language Teaching* which became quite popular since it “is

compatible with many of the assumptions of CLT;“ (ibid); *Content-Based Teaching* which is also connected to CLT as its “logical development;“ (ibid); *Natural Approach*, although not applied as widely as CLT, has had an enormous impact on language teaching; particularly Krashen’s language learning theories itself; and “the most recent version of communicative methodology“ (ibid), which is *Task-Based Teaching*. It can be seen that a great importance has been given to the development of communicative ability over the years. “In 1970 expressions like ‘communicative approach‘ were virtually unknown, by 1980 they were commonplace.“ (Howatt and Widdowson, 2004:327). The communicative approach, according to Littlewood, consists of a number of general factors which, together, contribute towards the development of the communicative ability. Communicative ability is a complex and many-sided phenomenon and foreign language teaching must broaden its scope to take account of this fact (1991:85,94).

Considering the age of the pupils who are the subject of my research, as well as the usage and aims of the above mentioned communicative approaches, I shall more closely look at the Natural Approach, preceded by detailed analysis of Krashen’s theory of second language acquisition, and at Communicative Language Teaching.

2.2.1.1. Krashen’s Theory of Second Language Acquisition

Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication – in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. STEPHEN KRASHEN

Krashen’s widely known Theory of Second Language Acquisition has had a large impact in many areas of second language teaching since the 1980s. His theory consists of five main hypotheses, all of which are supported by relevant surveys.

- The Acquisition – Learning hypothesis
- The Monitor hypothesis
- The Natural Order hypothesis
- The Input hypothesis
- The Affective Filter hypothesis

These are very closely interrelated and their proportions may differ over a period of time, for instance because of a learner’s development. Nonetheless, some parts related to this thesis

will be briefly summarized here. This summary is based on Krashen's book *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*

- The Acquisition – Learning hypothesis

The Acquisition – Learning distinction is one of the most fundamental of all Krashen's hypotheses, as well as one of the most widely known among language teachers and theoreticians. The terms *acquisition* and *learning* have commonly been used interchangeably, however, according to Krashen, there are two independent systems of second language performance: the acquired system and the learned system. The acquired system or *acquisition* is the product of subconscious process very similar to the process that we all experience while acquiring our first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language, natural communication, in which participants in the dialogue are not concentrated on the form of the utterances, but on the message itself. On the other hand, the learned system or *learning* is the product of formal instruction and it contains a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge of the language, for instance knowledge of grammatical rules. According to Krashen, *learning* is less important than *acquisition*. "Conscious learning makes only a small contribution to communicative ability." (Krashen, 1981¹). In other words, what he is saying is that communicative competence is acquired through communication, not through conscious practice of language structures. As one French proverb claims, "*C'est en forgeant que l'on devient forgeron* (One becomes a blacksmith by being a blacksmith.)" (Savignon, 1983:65).

Another area of second language research and practice that the acquisition-learning hypothesis helps to interpret is work in second language *aptitude* and *attitude*, providing a parsimonious explanation for what had appeared to be a strange finding: both language aptitude (as measured by standard tests) and attitude (affective variables [which will be dealt with later]) appeared to be related to second language achievement, but are not related to each other. It is possible to have high aptitude and low attitude, low aptitude and high attitude, or both high, or both low. [.....] Much of what is termed aptitude is directly related to conscious learning, while attitudinal factors may be more closely linked to acquisition (Krashen, 1981:19).

Attitudinal and aptitudinal factors have a high importance and play an important part in all of Krashen's hypotheses.

- The Monitor hypothesis

¹ Some of the Krashen's quotations will be unpaginated since they come from his book accessible on the internet where pages are not numbered.

This hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and shows the influence of the latter on the former. The monitoring function is a practical result of the learned grammar. According to Krashen, the acquisition part is the initiator, while the learning part is a monitor or an editor. The monitor works well only when the learner has enough time, thinks about correctness and, last but not least, knows the rule. The role of conscious learning is somehow limited in second language performance. As Krashen claims, the role of the monitor should be minor. He also suggests that there are individual variations among language learners when considering the use of the monitor. He distinguishes three types of learners on the basis of the time spent on using the monitor: - over-users are learners who use the monitor all the time

- under-users are learners who have not achieved the conscious knowledge of language, or those who have decided not to use it
- optimal users are learners that use the monitor appropriately.

The level of monitor usage may be in connection with a person's psychological profile.

- The Natural Order hypothesis

The Natural Order hypothesis suggests that acquisition of grammatical structures follows a natural order which is in some way predictable. It is predictable in the way that some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others late. Generally, this order of achieving grammatical structures was not proved to be connected to the knowledge of mother tongue, nor to the learner's age. Krashen, however, says that the knowledge of this order should not be applied to language teaching. He rejects grammatical sequencing when the aim is language acquisition.

As already seen in Krashen's Monitor and Natural Order hypotheses, he has a strong view on the role of grammar in language learning. According to him, the study of the structure of the language can have general educational advantages and values at the level of higher education. However, it should be clear that studying the language irregularities and formulating rules about the target language is not teaching a language, but rather teaching linguistics. The only level on which grammar teaching can increase language acquisition is when students are interested in the subject and the target language is used as a medium. A situation where the teacher is skillful enough to present and explain the subject in the target language and the learners understand, then the teacher talk meets the requirements for the comprehensible input (which will be talked about in The Input hypothesis) and the classroom becomes an environment suitable for acquisition. On a certain level this is a subtle point since the learners are in a way being deceived by making them believe that it is the subject

matter itself, the study of grammar, that is responsible for their progress, whereas in reality their progress comes from the medium, not the message. As will be discussed later in The Affective Filter hypothesis, any subject matter that holds the learner's interest will play a great role in second language acquisition. However, for the purposes of teaching young learners, grammatical structures would very rarely, if at all, be the subject matter presented in the target language.

- The Input hypothesis

Krashen's Input hypothesis explains how, in his view, learners acquire second language. In other words, this hypothesis is his explanation of how second language acquisition develops, so the Input hypothesis only considers *acquisition*, not *learning*. According to this thesis, the learners improve in agreement with the Natural Order hypothesis when they receive second language input that is one step beyond their current level of linguistic competence. For instance, if a learner is level I, then, according to Krashen, acquisition takes place when the learner is exposed to a comprehensible input that is level I+1.

- The Affective Filter hypothesis

The Affective Filter hypothesis embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play an important, facilitative, but not-casual, role in second language acquisition. In his book, Krashen minutely explains all the personality factors covered under the 'affective variables' and supports his ideas by several surveys held by Krashen himself or by other language theoreticians. The variables creating The Filter include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence and self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped to acquire second language, while on the other hand, learners with low motivation, low self-esteem and weakening anxiety can unconsciously build a mental block which prevents comprehensible input from being used for language acquisition.

Performers with high or strong filters will acquire less of the language directed at them, as less input is 'allowed in' to the language-acquisition device. The presence of such a filter, according to Dulay and Burt, may explain which of the alternative models the acquirer will internalize (e.g. why children acquire the dialect of their peers rather than of their elders), why acquisition prematurely ceases in some cases, and often what parts of language are acquired first. Thus, attitudinal factors relating to language acquisition will be those that contribute to a *low effective filter* (Krashen, 1981:22).

In other words, when the filter is not present it impedes language acquisition. On the contrary, positive effect is necessary for acquisition to take place, although not sufficient on its own.

For the purpose of this thesis, Krashen's view on the role of the first language should be also concentrated on. "The topic of 'first language interference' has had an unusual history in second language acquisition research and practice." (Krashen, 1981). It was believed that one of the main sources of errors made by language learners was their mother tongue. Nonetheless, several empirical studies of errors proved this theory not to be completely right. "These findings have led several scholars to question the value of contrastive analysis and to argue instead for error analysis." (Krashen, 1981). Krashen's three main research findings concerning the role of first language are that:

1. First language influence appears to be the strongest in complex word order and in word-to-word translations of phrases.
2. First language influence is weaker in bound morphology.
3. First language influence seems to be strongest in 'acquisition poor' environment (Krashen, 1981).

The first two above mentioned findings support the idea that making errors is not connected to the understanding or, more precisely, the not understanding, of the difference between the first and second language. Krashen supports his ideas by various sources, among which we may also find some of Dušková's and her straight comparisons of Czech as first and English as second language. However, the most valid finding for young learners language acquisition is Krashen's third, which considers the environment which influences the children. First language influence can, according to Krashen, be considered as unnatural. It is better to give the learners, children, as well as adults, sufficient time to feel ready to start using the acquired language by exposing them to second language environment.

Perhaps the 'silent period' observed in natural child second language acquisition corresponds to the period in which the first language is heavily used in 'unnatural' adult second language performance. The children may be building up acquired competence via input, and several recent studies (Gary, 1974; Postovsky, 1977) imply that less insistence on early oral performance may be profitable for children and adults studying second language in formal settings (Krashen, 1981:68).

Krashen says that adults who are in the early stages of their second language studies exposed to The Monitor (page 10) are likely to go through more rapid process in using the target language than children. "It is a temporary advantage, however. Acquisition may be slow, but is, in the long run, much more useful when language is used for the purpose of communication." (Krashen, 1981:68).

Needless to say, Krashen's ideas have been widely discussed; both praised, as well as questioned and disagreed with by many theoreticians and teachers. For instance, Lynch asserts that:

Krashen's claims have sparked a great deal of controversy, in relation to both the background theory and classroom practise. [He] has been criticized on a number of grounds, in particular for not producing enough evidence to support his claims (1996:14).

I shall only look at a few debates about Krashen's theories.

On the theoretical level, many writers have, according to Lynch, attacked the distinction Krashen makes between acquisition and learning (1996:14). As already mentioned in detail in the part which deals with this hypothesis (page 9), Krashen believes that learning is less important than acquisition. Contrariwise, Mason, for instance, believes that:

people do seem to need the rules in order to speak in well-formed sentences. This may lead us to believe that [...] the distinction between learning and acquisition is an oversimplification (Mason, 2001, internet source).

Another rival hypothesis about learning comes from the work of Anderson and some other cognitive scientists. According to his perspective, "learning is a process of assimilation whereby new information is processed by the brain in such a way as to be incorporated in already existing knowledge." (ibid). In other words, the learners first need to learn the rules of language systematically and then they are able to acquire² the language. On the other hand, for instance, Mason supports Krashen and compares this theory to learning to drive with an instructor (teacher). The learner

² *Acquisition* is, according to Anderson, *the ability to produce correct utterances*, both orally and in writing (Mason, 2001, internet source).

learns how to use the clutch, how to learn the gear-level, how to use the brakes and so on. The knowledge is there, but the learner may not be able to use it. Thus [...] the learner may know that the word 'drowned' consists of 'drown' + 'ed', but not be able to construct the word in conversation (Mason, 2001, internet source).

As Celce-Murcia presents, some research which suggests that 'forcing communication too early without regard for accuracy can result in early fossilization. "Since a linguistic or grammatical base may be necessary before fluency can be attained." (1991:126).

Similarly, the Input hypothesis has been questioned. In my opinion, one problem with this hypothesis may be that level I, as well as level I+1, are very difficult to identify, though I believe that teachers develop some kind of intuition for how to speak so as to be understood by their pupils. I also believe that it is not enough for the learner to simply absorb the input, but they need to be actively involved in activities. However, there are more serious critiques of this hypothesis, such as that of Lydia White who claims that "by talking to learners only in simple sentences one is depriving them of input which is crucial." (White cited in Lynch, 1996:14). In other words, as explained by Lynch himself, "simplified input would provide learners with impoverished language data." (1996:14).

To conclude; if I were to agree with some of Krashen's critiques, I would partly agree with that of The Acquisition – Learning hypothesis, especially when older language learners are considered. On the other hand, however, I fully agree with Krashen and others such as Lynch, who claim that comprehension plays a crucial role when learning a language, and that to make understanding possible language has to be modified, especially at the beginning levels. Types of language modification will be dealt with in detail in chapter 4.2.2. Young learners and second language acquisition (page 33).

2.2.1.2. The Natural Approach

The best methods are therefore those that supply ‘comprehensible input’ in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are ready, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production. STEPHEN KRASHEN

Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell developed the Natural Approach³ in the early eighties based on Krashen’s theories about second language acquisition minutely described in the last chapter, therefore those will only be briefly extended.

Being based on Krashen’s hypotheses, “Natural Approach adopts techniques and activities freely from various methods“ (Richards and Rodgers, 2002:188), for instance, role-play, problem solving tasks or command-based activities, or shares some common ideas with them, for instance, with Total Physical Response in terms of supporting the silent phase at the beginning of the language study.

Target language and communication itself both play a crucial role here. Richards and Rodgers emphasise that “Krashen and Terrell see communication as the primary function of language, [thereby] their approach focuses on teaching communicative abilities.” (2002:179). Consequently, according the Natural Approach, students listen to the teacher using the target language from the very beginning providing non-linguistic cues to make the input comprehensible; the importance is seen in the exposure to (or input in) the target language, more than to the analysis or practice of it. Krashen and Terrell claim that “acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language“ (Krashen and Terrell cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2002:180). The messages should be well-formed, comprehensible at the level just beyond the pupil’s current level (page 11). Certain similarity with the much earlier **Direct Method can be seen, with the important exception that pupils *are* allowed to use their native language alongside the target language as part of the language learning process. Different descriptions of the Natural Approach present neither any formal organisation of a lesson nor any specialised tools or textbooks. It is probably needless to explain the role of grammar. As Krashen and Terrell**

³ The fact that authors of the Natural Approach relate their approach to the Natural Method has led some people to assume that *Natural Approach* and *Natural Method* are synonymous terms. [However,] there are important differences (Richards and Rodgers, 2002:178).

described in their objectives, pupils “should be able to make the meaning clear but not necessarily be accurate in all details of grammar.” (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2002:184).

Many factors described in the last chapter are to be considered while teaching in accordance with the Natural Approach, but they may, in my opinion, create a classroom that is essentially very difficult to manage unless the teacher is highly skilled. Nevertheless, this was one of the first attempts to create an overall approach rather than a specific method, and although not perfect, it has surely valuably contributed to the standard of language teaching.

2.2.1.3. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless. DELL HYMES

CLT will also be treated in more detail, within the same structure like the Natural Approach. Its origins, according to Richards and Rodgers, “are to be found in the changes in British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s.” (2002:153). CLT is often seen as an

extension of the Notional-Functional Syllabus⁴ [since] CLT also places great emphasis on helping students use target language in a variety of contexts and places great emphasis on learning language functions

(internet source A⁵).

It is also often compared to the already mentioned Audiolingual Method (ALM) and the Situational Approach, probably because of its interest in development of speaking skills. However, unlike ALM, its primary focus is on helping learners create meaning rather than helping them master the grammatical structures or acquire native-like pronunciation. “This means that successfully learning a foreign language is assessed in terms of how well learners developed their communicative competence.” (internet source A). In many sources CLT may be found as something like an ‘umbrella approach’ to language teaching; Richards and Rodgers narrow it as a “learner-centered and experience-based view of second language teaching.” (2002:158). As well as the Natural Approach, CLT also shares various techniques and activities with other methods such as pair and group work or role-play, in which learners

⁴ In a Notional-Functional Syllabus, instruction is organized not in terms of grammatical structure [...] but in terms of ‘notions’ and ‘functions.’ In this model, a ‘notion’ is a particular context in which people communicate, and a ‘function’ is a specific purpose for a speaker in a given context. As an example, the ‘notion’ or context **shopping** requires numerous language functions including asking about prices or features of a product and bargaining (<http://communicative-language-teaching.area51.ipupdater.com>).

⁵ All internet sources without an author are labeled by capital letters and can be found on page 71.

are often involved in “negotiation of information and information sharing;” (Richards and Rodgers, 2002:165); these often connected to real life situations.

Communication and target language also play a crucial role. In accordance with CLT, language learning is learning to communicate through certain general principles. Probably the most recognised list of these principals is David Nuans’s:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on the language but also on the learning procedure itself.
4. An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom (1991:279).

A few more distinctive features (only those connected to communication and target language) will be briefly dealt with here. According to Finocchiaro and Brumfit, “attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning.” (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2002:156). Here we may see a difference from the Natural Approach where learners are allowed to go through the silent period. On the other hand, a similarity to the Natural Approach is in the possibility to use the native language. “Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible. [And also] translation may be used where students need or benefit from it.” (ibid).

In comparison to the Natural Approach, there are, according to Richards and Rodgers, “numerous textbooks designed to direct and support Communicative Language Teaching.” (2002:169).

To conclude, CLT, according to Frysztacka-Szkróbka, leaves much room for interpretation and is constantly a source of inspiration for foreign language teachers (1997:45).

It can be seen that neither of the two approaches sees the learner’s mother tongue as a ‘forbidden fruit’. Nonetheless, to acquire communicative competence in the target language they again both agree on ‘the less the better’. Furthermore, it cannot be said that either is

completely right or fully sufficient; in my opinion, it is important for teachers to think of their aims, as well as of their pupils' needs and to choose the suitable from the available. In other words, to create some kind of a *compromise method* based on the awareness of the already existing ones. Of course, there is much more to be talked about considering both ELT methodology as well as the two above described approaches, but I have mainly looked at the ways of how communicative competence in spoken English may be acquired through communication in the target language.

3. Communicative competence

Collecting definitions of *communicative competence* is fun. Teachers, methodologists, and textbook writers have used the term in many interesting if confusing ways. Some use it assuredly, some tendentiously, others cautiously. Some still have trouble pronouncing it! SANDRA J. SAVIGNON

3.1. Development and definition of communicative competence

Communicative competence is a linguistic term for the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language to form correct utterances, but also to know when to use these utterances appropriately. However, communicative competence itself has gone through a long development. In this chapter I shall look at and summarise its development and definitions in order to avoid ambiguities and misunderstandings since it has been discussed and redefined by many linguists and much has been written about it.

The term first appeared in the 1960s. Frysztacka-Szkróbka labels the end of the 1960s as a period when the linguistic (structural) approach was the leading one and language was analysed based on an assumption that an utterance “is not a chaotic sequence of words but is built according to strict principles regulating the choice of words, their form and order.” (Allen and Corder, 1983 cited in Frysztacka-Szkróbka, 1997:27). At the same time, as already mentioned, audiolingualism was going through a decline when it was realised that its “practical results fell short of expectations [and] students were unable to transfer skills acquired through audiolingualism to real communication.” (Richards and Rodgers, 2002:65). It seems the time was calling for some new ideas and, as Savignon states, once *communicative competence* appeared it became synonymous with progressive, innovative teaching; everyone wanted to use the term to describe what he or she was doing (1983:1). It can be seen that *communicative competence* was neither clearly defined at the beginning, nor generally accepted, especially by those who, according to Savignon, saw grammar as the cornerstone of language study and the communicative approach towards learning languages as just ‘anything-goes-as-long-as-you-get-your-meaning-across’ (1983:1).

The above preceded Chomsky’s transformational-generative theory which also “superseded the behaviouristic view of Bloomfield.” (*Collins English Dictionary* 1991 cited in Frysztacka-Szkróbka, 1997:27). Neither did Chomsky agree with the American structuralists and their concept of natural language acquisition.

Whereas structural linguists like Bloomfield (1933) and others had focused on 'surface' features of phonology and morphology, Chomsky concerned himself with 'deep' semantic structures, or the way in which sentences are understood. Transformational-generative grammar focused on the underlying grammatical *competence* assumed to be common to all native speakers. The distinction made by Chomsky between this underlying grammatical competence and its overt manifestation in language *performance* is important for understanding Chomskyan linguistics and the reactions it provoked (Savignon, 1983:11).

In other words, the term *competence*, first used in 1965 by American linguist Noam Chomsky, describes what a person knows about the language, while on the other hand, the term *performance* describes what a person can do with the language.

Chomsky noted the similarity between the *competence-performance* distinction and that of the Saussurian *langue-parole*; but whereas *langue* is merely a 'systematic inventory of items', *competence* refers to [...] the conception of 'a system of generative processes' (internet source B).

Nevertheless, the speech of individuals does not have to reflect their grammatical knowledge directly, especially when we think of non-native speakers. Therefore, it is important to point out that Chomsky talks about native speakers and, hence, his theory

is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance

(Chomsky cited in Richards and Rodgers, 1991:70).

It is in this way, as Frysztacka-Szkróbka implies, that the term *linguistic competence* came into being. It is characterised by grammatical correctness and represents the ideal level of a language user's knowledge about the abstract structural rules (1997:27). Nonetheless, it is highly unlikely that such ideal users exist, and impossible that they would exist as non-native English speakers.

Dell Hymes, in opposition to Chomsky's view of the 'ideal speaker-listener' as "a nonexistent abstraction, looks at the *real* speaker-listener in that feature of language of which Chomsky gives no account: *social interaction*." (Savignon, 1983:11). Chomsky's competence forgets about socio-cultural background which is not only the opinion of Hymes, but also of other linguists such as Halliday, who states that "language is a mode of human behaviour (social interaction.)" (Halliday cited in internet source B). In addition, Hymes's competence "was a definition of what the speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community." (Richards and Rodgers, 1991:70). His theory is more general than Chomsky's and looks at communicative competence from more angles, which Savignon labels as four parameters, to the systems of rules that underline communicative behavior (1983:12):

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of the implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated; [and]
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails (Hymes cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2002:159).

In other words, to simplify, we cannot understand his theory to be claiming that a person X will interpret a sentence Y in a situation or context Z. There are, of course, major differences between individuals and their socio-cultural backgrounds; the way a speaker's communicative competence develops is unpredictable, in the same way that we cannot predict the path of a rock rolling down a hill.

The section above described how communicative competence was developed. Many more linguists, such as Bachman, Allwright, Campbell, Wales or Canale and Swain, have dealt with this term in various, similar or different, ways. We can see that a perfect knowledge of linguistic forms is not enough to make one a communicatively competent language user. Similarly, the individual differences in gaining communicative competence vary from learner to learner. Nevertheless, it is good that in recent language classrooms "many [...] teachers have [already] concentrated on promoting communicative competence in language learners [mainly] by using 'communicative activities'." (Celce-Murcia, 1991:125).

3.1.1. Components of communicative competence

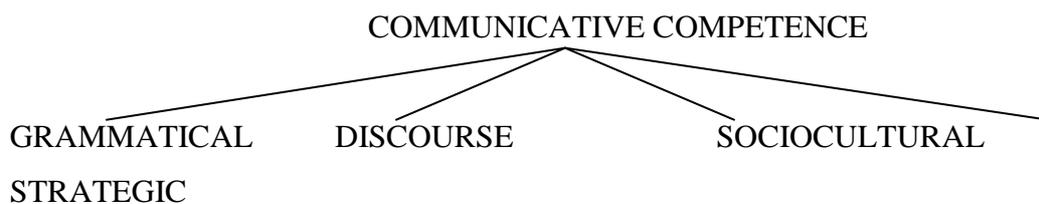
Various linguists introduce different components of communicative competence.

Canale and Swain's extension of Hymesian model of communicative competence [...] was [...] elaborated in some complexity by Bachman (1991). The Bachman model has been, in turn, extended by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1997) (Richards and Rodgers, 2002:160).

The components may vary, but their core, in my opinion, remains similar. I shall mention and briefly describe a few examples to show this similarity. Firstly, Canale and Swain's division which may be considered one of the first productive ones in defining communicative competence. According to their theory, four different components, or subcategories, form the construct of communicative competence:

1. Grammatical, or linguistic, competence
2. Sociocultural competence
3. Discourse competence – the ability to sustain coherent discourse with another speaker
4. Strategic competence – the means by which learners deal with potential breakdowns in communication (cited in Celce-Murcia, 1991:125).

I shall visualize and briefly explain this theory.



According to Richards and Rodgers, Grammatical competence refers to Chomskyan Linguistic competence (2002:160). It includes knowledge of lexical items and of rules of syntax, morphology and phonology. Discourse competence includes the ability to connect sentences in discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of them. The following two are more about the function of language: Sociocultural (Sociolinguistic) competence “refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place“ (Richards and Rodgers, 2002:160), and Strategic competence is the verbal and non-verbal strategies that may be used to compensate breakdowns in communication (internet source C).

Canal and Swain's definition of Communicative competence has been further elaborated over the years. These newer views are well described by Bachman in his book *Fundamental Consideration in Language Testing*. Bachman agrees with Canal and Swain that “the ability to use language communicatively involves both knowledge of or competence in language, and the capacity for implementing, or using this competence.“ (1993:81). However, the division of the components of communicative competence was modified and elaborated in more detail. He distinguishes three components of communicative language ability (CLA): language competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms; each

further divided into detailed subcategories. Although Bachman's division is very detailed, I shall present his basic summary:

Language competence comprises, essentially, a set of specific knowledge components that are utilized in communication via language. *Strategic competence* is the term [used] to characterize the mental capacity for components of language competence in contextualized communicative language use. [It] thus provides the means for relating language competencies to features of the context of situation in which language use takes place and to the language user's knowledge structures (sociocultural knowledge, 'real-world' knowledge). *Psychophysiological mechanisms* refer to the neurological and psychological processes involved in the actual execution of language as a physical phenomenon (sound, light) (1993:84).

Yet in Europe the most current are the components described in detail in *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*⁶ first published in 2001 and briefly described here:

1. linguistic competence – includes lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as system
2. sociolinguistic competence – refers to the sociocultural conditions of language use
3. pragmatic competence – is concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources, mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony, and parody (2004:13, 108).

Nonetheless, it is important to realise that one's communicative competence grows in accordance with the interrelation of the various components. Therefore, the whole of communicative competence is always something other than the simple sum of its parts. It is a complex ability to communicate which one learns by communicating. Learning communicative competence is described in *Common European Framework* in more detail:

The language learner/user's communicative language competence is activated in the performance of the various **language activities**, involving **reception**, **production**, **interaction** or **mediation** (in particular interpreting or translating). Each of these types of activity is possible in relation to texts in oral or written form, or both (2004:14).

⁶ The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively (2004:1).

Both oral and written communication, *reception* and *production* are obviously primary processes since both require interaction. In *interaction* at least two individuals participate in an exchange in which production and reception alternate and in fact overlap in an oral communication (*Common European Framework*, 2004:14). This will be dealt with in the following chapter.

3.2. Communicative competence in spoken English

In the two previous chapters, communicative competence and its development have been defined. A short overview of communicative competence in spoken English will be presented here, but from a more practical frame of reference.

Communication may be defined in terms of four basic communicative skills: *listening*, *reading*, *writing* and *speaking*. For the purpose of this thesis I shall look at communicative competence in spoken language, mainly because of the age of the pupils used as research subjects. However, all the mentioned skills are closely interrelated. According to Celce-Murcia, while an activity such as a speech is a speaking activity for one, it is a listening activity for the rest of the class and speaking can also be easily integrated into other communicative skills, such as reading and writing (1991:134). Although speaking is one of the most natural ways of expressing oneself, it “is perhaps the most demanding skill for the teacher to teach.” (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990:33). This is even more true for young learners since they cannot be provided with strict grammatical rules in the way adults can. In other words, “speech mastery calls for intensive practice rather than study.” (Morris, 1964:19). We should provide children with the most ‘English language environment’ around them and let them enjoy natural talk while being in the classroom since it is often the only time when they can hear and practise speaking English and so the only time when their spoken communicative competence may develop. As Scott and Ytreberg state, we will also find that children often naturally insert their native language when they cannot find the words in English (1990:33). However, this does no harm to the development of communicative competence in English. On the contrary, it may show that children feel English as a natural way of putting a message across, which is really the target we teachers of English want to achieve, as well as the instrument by which they acquire communicative competence in spoken English.

4. Young learners

At no other time in life (*than childhood*) does the human being display such enthusiasm for learning, for living, for finding out. PLUCKROSE

Since the aim of my research is to find out how have two groups of young learners mastered the communicative competence in spoken English, this chapter will be devoted to the theme of young learners; especially to their development in a connection to first and second language acquisition.

4.1. Young learners and their development

The magic age seems to be around seven or eight. At around seven or eight, things seem to fall into place for most children and they begin to make sense of the adult world as we see it. SCOTT and YTREBERG

Under the heading *young learner* people generally tend to imagine a small child of any age, but there are precise boundaries that classify this term. We speak about a "child from the age of five to the age of ten or eleven." (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990:1). At this particular period entering school is a major turning point in the children's lives; they acquire a new social role – the role of a pupil. School puts new demands on the children and these are gradually escalating. Each pupil manages these demands differently and therefore it "is not possible to say that at the age of five all children can do *x*, at the age of seven they can do *y*, or at the age of ten they can all do *z*." (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990:1). Similarly, Jan Čáp suggests that the *thinking* of young learners is much more developed than at any age before, however, on the other hand, is not yet abstract at all (2001:230)⁷. As clearly seen, children are individuals who develop variously, some continually and some in waves. Nonetheless, there are some general characteristics of children and their age, as well as essential abilities that teachers should understand in order to help them learn, such as understanding the needs connected to the children's age or ability "to see how far up the ladder" (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990:1) of development the children already are. Without a knowledge of the various stages of children's cognitive, emotional, physical, social and language development and an ability to monitor any changes in these, it would be extremely difficult to teach well. As Opal Dunn claims, these changes "can take place within a week or even within a lesson, which means that teachers

⁷ Author's translation is used. The original version is to be found in appendix 14, together with all the other translations from Czech.

need to be flexible, adjusting lesson plans where necessary to cope with new developments.“ (Dunn, 1991:8).

For the purposes of this thesis, only children of specific age and only some parts of children’s development will be described; those, moreover, mainly connected to language learning and the question *When and how do young learners learn language?*

Young learners and their development is divided and described variously by many authors, teachers and psychologists. For instance, Fontana labels Piaget’s work on children’s thinking and development as the most ambitious and the most insistent. His view on how children’s minds work and develop has been enormously influential, particularly in educational theory. Piaget’s particular insight was the role of maturation, together with children’s increasing ability to understand their world (2003:65). In other words, they cannot undertake certain tasks until they are psychologically mature enough to do so. He also proposed that children’s thinking does not develop entirely smoothly, and he went on to identify certain points at which it moves into *new areas*. In accordance with these points he identified four stages in cognitive development:

- Sensomotor stage (infancy)
- Pre-operational stage (toddler and early childhood)
- Concrete operational stage (elementary and early adolescence)
- Formal operational stage (adolescence and adulthood)

([internet](#) source D).

Since the children who are to be researched here are mainly nine year olds, only the Concrete operational stage will be considered. As its name suggests, children at this stage are, according to Fontana, influenced by connections to concrete experience and practice, their thinking is still limited and they tend to describe instead of explain. Children at this age are still not able to explain or formulate a hypothesis without previous experience (2003:69, 70).

Teachers should challenge a child’s abilities, but NOT present material or information that is too far beyond the child’s level. It is also recommended that teachers use a wide variety of concrete experiences to help the children learn

([internet](#) source D).

Nonetheless, it is important to take into account that some children may manage the concrete operations earlier and some people may never attain formal operations.

As a more practical example, based on more than one source, I shall mention Scott and Ytreberg’s division of young learners into two groups: the five to seven year olds and the

eight to ten year olds (1990:1). Although major differences between these two groups can be seen, the theoretical part will only deal with the latter group. Children of this age group may be treated as level one learners, also called “beginners, or they may have been learning the foreign language for some time, so there are both level one and level two pupils.” (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990:1). As proved by the questionnaires distributed to the researched children at the beginning of the school year, almost all the pupils are level two learners. Considering the development level according to Scott and Ytreberg, mainly cognitive and language development will be emphasised. They label children of ten as relatively mature with an adult side and a childish side:

- Their basic concepts are formed. They have very decided views of the world.
- They can tell the difference between fact and fiction.
- They ask questions all the time.
- They rely on the spoken word as well as the physical world to convey and understand meaning.
- They are able to make some decisions about their own learning.
- They have definite views about what they like and don't like doing.
- They have a developed sense of fairness about what happens in the classroom and begin to question the teacher's decisions.
- They are able to work with others and learn from others (1990:3, 4).

However, as Opal Dunn suggests:

young children until about the age of eight are still dependent on an adult support for much of what they do. This is especially so in the English classroom and although they may work in groups their relationship still has to be with the teacher (1990:12).

Moreover, not only the teacher's support is important at this age, but also the teacher as a model. According to Petty, what we, as teachers, *do* may be more important than what we *say*, such as our enthusiasm, consistency or patience (1996:16). In other words, to readjust it to language learning, it may be more important *how* and *when* we say things than *what* we say, for example, setting a good example at the right time.

As seen from these examples, children undergo many breaking points and the level of their development and their abilities is likely to vary even within a homogeneous group. Therefore, teachers should consider both the level of competencies achieved by children on

one side, and the stage of their general development on the other. Dunn states that “experienced teachers of young beginners are conscious of these different stages and know how to recognize developmental changes as they take place.” (1990:8). This plays a crucial role in the way how teachers treat a class as a whole in order to adjust the lessons to individuals although they vary.

The length of time a child can concentrate on doing one activity also varies from child to child. Some young children can only manage to concentrate for about five minutes, others for very much longer periods of up to fourteen or fifteen minutes. Once children have lost interest in an activity and their attention has wandered, little or no learning takes place. It is best to change activity before children lose interest so that they are left wanting more and looking forward to the next opportunity to do the same activity (Dunn, 1990:10).

Some authors see the limitations of children’s span of attention as even shorter. For instance, Broughton and collective assert, as does Dunn, that it is necessary to switch frequently from one activity to another, although they see ten minutes as the longest time for which many primary children can sustain an interest in one activity (1978:169). A good teacher should have a prepared list of activities with smooth transitions, as well as possess the ability to adjust it to the momentary situation. In the words of Dunn,

The time spent on different activities often has to be modified on the actual day to fit in with the children’s mood and span of concentration. If an activity is being done all by the class and about one third of the children lose interest, it is time to change to some other [prepared] activity (1990:34, 35).

However, as children develop their concentration span lengthens; their general mental growth affects their language learning greatly. If a teacher is aware of the child’s position on the ‘development ladder’ it is not difficult to recognise when a child is ready to learn and accept the new. Asking children to learn something new before they are ready can lead to disappointment and a general slow-down, which is why correct timing is essential for introducing the unknown.

If new activities are presented before sufficient consolidation of previous activities has taken place, a gradual accumulation of things not properly understood begins to grow. This often leads to a feeling of 'not being good' at English (Dunn, 1991:13).

and people in general, not only children, are naturally not interested in things they are not good at. Being good at something, on the other hand, as well as enjoying it, increases one's motivation. This is true for all of us, but especially young learners who expect to go home from their first lesson with an ability to speak English, and if their expectations are not met, they are disappointed and may lose interest in language learning.

Teachers should be also aware of the children's communicative level in Language 1 in order to evaluate their ability to acquire Language 2. "It appears that concepts that he (a child) has learned in Language 1 can be transferred to Language 2." (Dunn, 1991:10). Many similarities between learning a mother tongue and a foreign language can be found. For example, setting a good example by repeating the correct word form, sentence or utterance instead of direct correction. As O'Grady explains, linguists call these sorts of correct repetitions *recasts*, by which parents, and in our case teachers, provide alternative sentences against which children, pupils, may measure their immature, incorrect, utterances (2005:169). However, many major differences between learning a mother tongue and a foreign language can also be found, such as the age when learning takes place and the length of exposure to the language.

What is clear here is that most eight year to ten year olds will have some sort of language awareness and readiness which they bring with them into the foreign language classroom. [.....] They are competent users of their mother tongue and in this connection they are aware of the main rules of syntax in their own language. By the age of ten children can:

- understand abstracts
- understand symbols (beginning with words) [and]
- generalize and systematize (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990:4).

The achieved Language 1 level seems to be crucial, although its role has not been clearly proved yet.

Many more additional factors which influence children's language learning, that will not be explained here in detail, exist. For instance, the pupils' mother tongue, their social and emotional background, interests, teacher's personality or class atmosphere.

4.2. Young learners and language acquisition

There is a Slavonic proverb, 'If you wish to speak well, you must murder the language first.' But this is often overlooked by teachers of language who demand faultless accuracy from the beginner and often keep their pupils grinding so long at some little part of the subject that their desire to learn the language is gone for ever. OTTO JASPERSEN

In the previous chapter young learners and their development, as well as general considerations of 'language learning', were dealt with. On the following pages young learners and language acquisition, as well as second language acquisition, will be developed in more detail.

4.2.1. Language acquisition

Human beings possess the ability to acquire language.

The human minds are not constructed so as to acquire a particular language but they are born with the ability to acquire the language or languages of the society in which people are brought up (Frysztacka-Szkróbka, 1997:31).

The processes by which people acquire the ability to communicate, either in a first or second language, have already been researched many times.

As a result, two main tenets on first language acquisition have emerged:

- behaviorist theory [and]
- transformational-generative theory (Frysztacka-Szkróbka, 1997:31).

According to Savignon, behaviorists see the process of language acquisition as habit formation, much like "the stimulus-response theory of animal and human behaviour elaborated in particular by B.F. Skinner." (1983:302). This theory may be explained as an automatic imitation of utterances produced by adults. For the purposes of second language acquisition, it can be further transformed as an imitation of teachers. Children build a connection between a particular stimulus and a particular response. Here the input provided by adults/teachers, as well as habit formation, play a crucial role.

Contrariwise, Chomskyan transformational-generative linguistic theory rejects the idea of language acquisition by habit formation completely and claims “that a child is born with innate knowledge of the nature of language which enables him to produce an unlimited number of novel sentences.” (Frysztacka-Szkróbka, 1997:31). This linguistic theory is “concerned with the relation between the grammatical interpretation of sentences and surface structure as a means of discovering universal categories of grammar.” (Savignon, 1983:311).

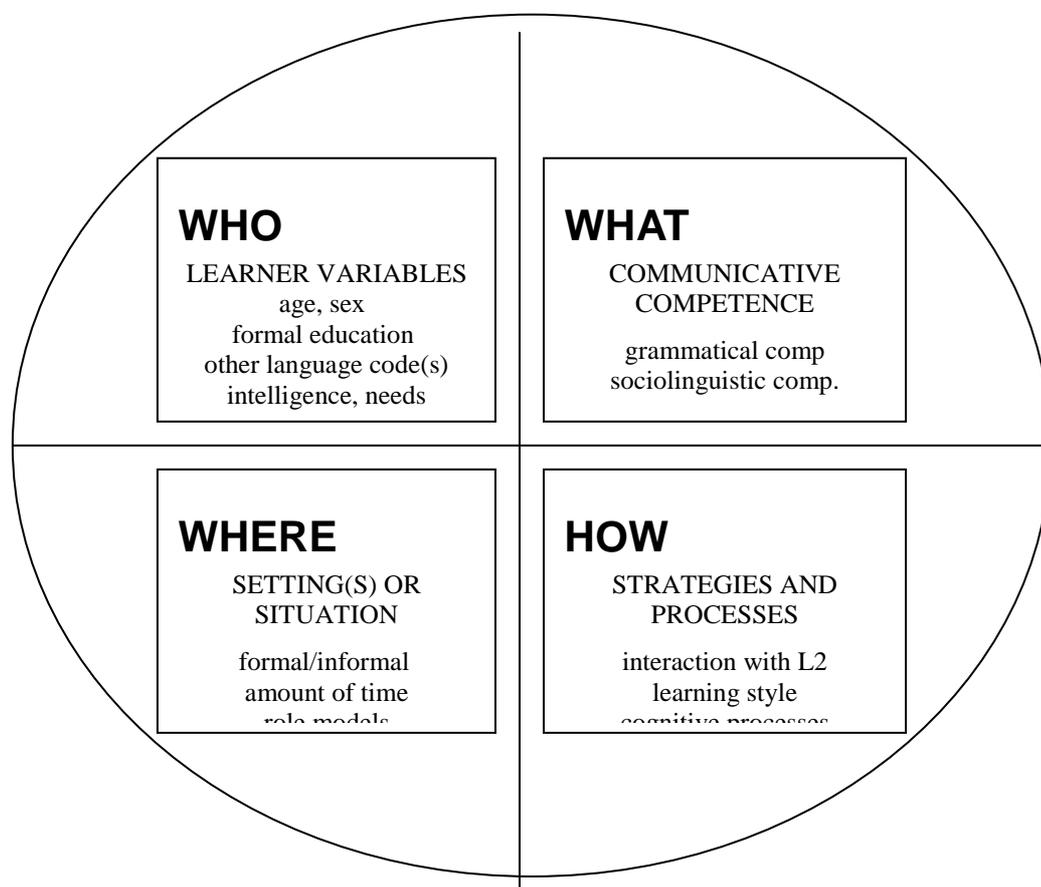
Both these are theoretical extremes from which other thoughts and theories have been developed. They have also been questioned, such as the rejection of the idea of imitation by many theoreticians and teachers. For example, William O’Grady explains his theory about why learning a language is not an imitation in his book *How Children Learn Language*. On the one hand, he sees the fact that a child naturally ends up speaking the language which the adults around speak, while on the other hand he claims that “the imitation explanation won’t take us very far. That’s because there are major parts of language that cannot be imitated. Sentences are the most obvious example.” (2005:165). As O’Grady explains in the chapter called *Why it’s not imitation*, there are two facts about language acquisition which confirm that imitation is not the key for how children learn to produce sentences. The first fact claims that imitation requires repetition and children are not good at repeating unknown structures, they only repeat what they already know, for example, ‘The dogs are hungry’ as ‘*Dogs hungry*.’ Secondly, according to O’Grady, “children often do not even try to repeat, probably because they are not very good at it.” (2005:165).

As can be seen above, various thoughts and questions arise while thinking about language acquisition, but so far there seem to be no complete answers. Obviously many more ideas than already mentioned have to be considered while talking about language acquisition. In the following section only those related to second language acquisition, mainly second language acquisition by using the second language itself, will be dealt with.

4.2.2. Young Learners and second language acquisition

Second language acquisition, together with learner's role, is very well summarised by Savignon in her

VARIABLES IN L2 ACQUISITION: A KALEIDOSCOPIIC VIEW



L2 acquisition variables may be thought of as the brightly colored pieces of glass that reflect in the mirrored surfaces of a kaleidoscope. Our fascination with this optical instrument is rather like our fascination with language learning. Looking through the cylinder we see numerous reflections that appear as brilliant symmetrical configurations; these configurations may be constantly altered by a slight rotation of the instrument (1983:57).

Initially, the term *acquisition* has been minutely described in Krashen's theory (mentioned in chapter 2.2.1.1, page 9) as a subconscious way of gaining language ability. Secondly, Savignon labels *second language* as "a language learned after the basics of a first or primary language have been acquired" and, thirdly, *second language acquisition* as "all nonnative language acquisition." (1983:309). According to Frysztacka-Szkróbka, second language acquisition may be divided into formal and informal (1997:35). Informal L2 acquisition takes place while being exposed to the target language. This way is very natural and has much in common with first language acquisition since learners depend on their intuition and on their general ability to generate rules.

The informal style of L2 acquisition is a dynamic process in which a person learns a language mainly through communication with the target language speakers. He does not receive instructions about the language rules (Frysztacka-Szkróbka, 1997:37).

As opposed to informal L2 acquisition, formal L2 acquisition is not similar to L1 acquisition at all and occurs in an artificial setting, such as a classroom. It requires more effort of the learner and may be stressful.

The learner's success depends not only on the teaching abilities and general competence of the teacher but, first of all, on the learner's motivation and aptitude which is the result of his thinking ability, to acquire the language (Frysztacka-Szkróbka, 1997:37).

Although there are major differences between formal and informal L2 acquisition, some similarities can be found and used well. This is the case especially in the teaching methods where the stress is put on exposure to the target language, such as the Natural approach or Communicative Language teaching. Teaching in the target language may successfully simulate the natural environment in which the informal L2 acquisition takes place and the teacher may play the role of the 'target language speaker'. Young learners, already described in detail, are clearly not the kind of learners to whom complicated grammatical structures are introduced, so that it is quite acceptable to teach in the target language and change the artificial environment of a classroom into the natural informal place in which the children are likely to acquire the most.

Similarly, the term *young learner* should be put into the context of language acquisition. Young children are in their minds very much orientated towards the visible and perceivable and do not usually understand grammatical rules and explanations well. Their language knowledge develops well when they are given plenty of examples and patterns to follow. As mentioned already, they tend to have a much shorter attention span and need activities that capture their immediate interests. They also need a great deal in the way of 'sensory input'. In other words, they need to have most of the senses stimulated at once; these connect to the following ways of learning: visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), kinesthetic (moving) or tactile (touching).

No general truths exist in second language learning, "there are few, if any, absolute rights and wrongs in the classroom." (Halliwell, 1992:9). According to Dunn:

the debate as how young children learn another language continues, and is likely to continue, as the number of young children learning English increases and more research becomes available (1983:2).

What will be looked at here is the language in which the language is taught: English taught through English and English taught with the support of Czech. Some teachers may feel that explaining English in Czech may retard the learning of English, or that giving instructions in Czech may only leave the English language for the artificial use in exercises. On the contrary, as Swain emphasizes, "instructions in the first language can benefit second language." (cited in Dunn, 1990:7). Some teachers and theoreticians advocate teaching English with the support of the mother tongue, because it is not so time-consuming, it is less stressful and easier for learners (and for teachers). However, every teacher has to decide for themselves how much mother tongue will be used during their lessons.

Jane Willis, in her book *Teaching English through English*, advocates and explains how "even with a class of beginners starting their first English lesson, it is possible to teach entirely in English." (1991:1). Teachers should not rely only on spoken language, therefore activities for young children should involve movement, use of body language and intonation. The use of demonstration and facial expressions will "convey meaning parallel to what we are saying." (Halliwell, 1992:4). The balance between spoken and demonstrated meaning "will change as the children get older, but appealing to the senses will always help the pupils to learn." (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990:5). Children are not likely to understand everything and they do not need to either since they have a great ability to grasp meaning from a minimum. As Halliwell claims,

"we know from experience that very young children are able to understand what is being said to them even before they understand the individual words." (1992:3). Children should be exposed to the target language as much as possible, therefore, teachers should, according to Scott and Ytreberg, try to speak English as much of the time as they can, using mime, acting, puppets and any other methods they can think of to get their meaning across. They should let the children hear as much as possible while they have them in class, and keep the language simple but natural, keep it at the children's level (1990:18). Some teachers may, however,

worry that the children will not understand and will behave badly. There are two things worth saying here. First of all, you do not have to find the foreign language equivalent for 'What on earth do you think you are doing puching Thomas like that?' It works just as effectively to say in the target language 'Don't do that!' or even just 'No!' Secondly, children, as we have already seen, respond very well to context and facial expressions. This was shown very clearly by the two small English children whose teacher finally lost patience with their misbehaviour and said very angrily in Spanish that if they misbehaved again she'd murder them. At this point, one child turned to the other and said, 'I don't know what she said, but if we do it again she'll kill us! (Halliwell, 1992:16) .

As shown in the previous paragraph, modified language, *Teacher Talk*⁸, should be used in order to give the children the possibility to understand in the same way as native speakers modify their language, *Foreigner Talk*⁹, to be understood when talking to non-natives. I shall only look at the modifications of Teacher Talk distinguished by Lynch as: Input modifications, Interaction modifications and Modifications of information choice (1996:39). These three types of Teacher Talk modifications assist pupils' comprehension by making the 'language learning' easier for the learners. Of course, the degree of modifications may vary since they depend on the level of the pupils, as well as on their age. According to Lynch, the main features of Input modificatios are modifications of grammar (e.g. less complex utterances), vocabulary (e.g. avoidance of idioms), pronunciation (e.g. less vowel-reduction) and non-verbal communication (e.g. increased use of gestures) (1996:41). However, it is important to notice that "the input modifications in the classroom are [and should be] only 'occasionally' ungrammatical." (Chaudron cited in Lynch, 1996:41).

⁸ Language typically used by teachers in the foreign language classroom (Lynch, 1996:6).

⁹ Term invented by Charles Ferguson, who claimed that people used special variety of simplified speech when talking to outsiders who they thought had little or no knowledge of the language (Ferguson cited in Lynch, 1996:40).

Input modification is often used in combination with Interaction modification. Nevertheless, according to Lynch, it is important to consider interaction as a whole since interaction modifications are more influential in assisting learners' comprehension than are modifications of the spoken input alone (1996:44), although as already said, both are closely interrelated and often occur together. For instance, when giving instructions to a class, Input modification may be expressed by using easier vocabulary while Interaction modification would be present when a learner non-verbally shows he or she has problems with understanding what is being said (1996:44-48). Considering Modifications of information choice according to the studies presented by Lynch, teachers tend to adjust both the amount and the type of information, such as in increasing the quantity of descriptive detail or making logical links in stories (1996:49). Much more has been written about language modifications in order that learning would be easier for learners, as well as making it more effective. An example of this would be Krashen's Comprehensible input, which is an essential component in his Input hypothesis. A hypothesis (already dealt with in detail in the chapter 2.2.1.1., page 11) that learners will acquire language best when they are given appropriate input at level I+1. All the mentioned types of language modifications are crucial for teachers whose target is to speak mainly English during their lessons and to give the pupils conditions in which they learn while being so.

However, children will, as Willis says, accept a teacher who speaks only English only when they are shown it works and therefore, for instance, the instruction 'Would you close your books please?' should be, at the beginning stage, accompanied by a clear demonstration (1991:1). However, later, the degree of language modifications may change. As the children's learning proceeds, particular language patterns are introduced and thanks to their repetition children seem to acquire those unconsciously. It is important to give

young children opportunities to acquire sufficient basic language for activities to take place using only English in the classroom. As the type of activities that take place in young children's classrooms are often very similar whatever the learning circumstances, the core of what the children need to acquire is also more or less similar (Dunn, 1984:80).

Once they know and can use, for example, games language, organising language, language for activities, the lessons can be held in English with no major problems. Children learn these patterns by being exposed to them again and again. First, they get used to particular patterns, later, they remember them and understanding becomes easy. A lesson can be taught "on the

basis of a surprisingly small number of phrases and structures.” (Halliwell, 1992:15). In the initial stages, prefabricated language is used more, as already shown, but as the children’s language develops, they start being creative with language.

Research indicates that for many Language 2 learners, especially children, Gestalt (prefabricated language) serves as a short cut to allow social interaction and interpersonal communication with a minimum of linguistic competence (Dunn, 1983:5).

As seen from this quotation, children possess the ability to produce language with limited sources. When they feel ready they start using English and its various patterns; this is also supported by, for instance, Krashen. “They hear plenty before they speak, so that when they speak it comes out confidently and already fairly accurately.” (Halliwell, 1992:35). The plenty of language they hear is, according to Willis, better learnt through real use than through pattern drills and exercises.” (1991:1).

Children have an amazing ability to absorb language through play and other activities which they find enjoyable. How good they are in a foreign language is not dependent on whether they have learnt the grammar rules or not. [...] The best time to introduce some sort of simple grammar is either when a pupil asks for an explanation, or when you think a pupil will benefit from learning some grammar (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990:6, 7).

Children are creative, use imagination and, last but not least, they love talking. They should, therefore, be provided with “a programme rich in meaningful, real-life activities in which communication takes place naturally.” (Dunn, 1983:3). Teachers should set up various real-life situations in which real language is used, and for this purpose it is suitable to hold lessons in English as that is the easiest way in which to come across common language use when, for example, checking attendance, setting homework, agreeing on plans, and so forth.

We want our learners to want to and dare to use the language for their own purposes. We want them to use it accurately if possible, inaccurately if necessary, but above all we want them to *make it theirs* (Halliwell, 1992:9).

As soon as children start using language, there is a risk of making mistakes. However, “real communication demands risk taking.” (ibid). Without making mistakes pupils would not learn anything. Luckily, as Dunn claims, children are willing to use language and to experiment with sounds, without really worrying about mistakes (1983:3).

Unfortunately, one of the things children soon begin to pick up at school is the idea that mistakes are in some way 'bad'. They begin to be embarrassed and upset when they have difficulty (Halliwell, 1992:13).

The idea that making mistakes is bad has been supported and claimed by many teachers and theoreticians. For instance, as mentioned by Morris, it is by continually making mistakes that learners form the habit of making mistakes, therefore students should not be encouraged to use normal conversation before it has been drilled (1964:84). Palmer then supported this idea by his slogan "We learn to speak correctly only by speaking correctly." (cited in Morris, 1964:84). However, teaching methods and approaches have developed noticeably since then. (as seen in chapter 2. Teaching methods and approaches). It is well known now that it is necessary to allow children the opportunity to make mistakes. "In fact, if children are impatient to communicate they probably will make *more* not *fewer* mistakes." (Halliwell, 1992:5). "Luckily, communication does not demand one hundred percent accuracy" (Halliwell, 1992:13), and it is what the aim of teaching young learners through English is – to give them the most space to acquire the most language possible and to teach them how to communicate.

5. Testing speaking

Normally, in out-of-school conversations, our focal attention as speakers and listeners is on the meaning, the intention, of what someone is trying to say. Language forms are themselves transparent; we hear through them to the meaning intended. But teachers, over the decades if not centuries, have somehow gotten into the habit of hearing with different ears once they go through the classroom doors. Language forms assume an opaque quality. We cannot hear through them; we hear only the errors to be corrected. COURTNEY CAZDEN

To be able to evaluate the achieved level of communicative competence of the two researched groups of young learners relevant testing techniques, types of tests, as well as marking system have to be chosen out of the abundance available. These will be presented in this chapter.

5.1. Testing communicative competence in spoken English

Testing language has traditionally taken the form of testing knowledge about language, usually the testing of knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. However, there is much more to being able to use language than knowledge about its forms and isolated pieces. Dell Hymes proposed a concept of communicative competence, as already talked about in chapter 3.1. Development and definition (page 18), in which he included not only the ability to form correct sentences, but also the ability to use them in an appropriate situation. Since Hymes proposed the idea in the early 1970s, it has been expanded considerably and various types and components of communicative competence have been presented; these are presented in chapter the 3.1.1. Components of communicative competence (page 20). Nonetheless, the basic idea of communicative competence remains the ability to use language appropriately, both receptively and productively, in real situations and that is **what** should be tested when testing communicative competence in spoken English. Furthermore, the tests should integrate all the components of communicative competence. To conclude, Savignon's summation, adjusted to describe only the spoken communicative competence, can be used:

1. Tests of communicative competence [in spoken English] assess the *dynamic negotiation of meaning* between two or more persons [...]
2. They include *measures of [...]* spoken language, as well as paralinguistic and nonverbal features of communication.

3. Although there is a theoretical difference between competence and performance, *only performance is observable* and therefore provides the basis for making inferences about a person's underlying competence (1983:254).

While testing speaking, as well as while testing other language skills, many factors have to be taken into consideration. These, such as the age of those being tested, the purpose of the test or the test evaluation will be dealt with in this chapter, although since testing speaking is not the theme of this thesis, only relevant information will be presented.

The decision to test communicative competence only in spoken English comes from the fact that the testees are third grade pupils, and after studying relevant materials (long term plans of the two researched groups) provided by the school authorities I realised that, during the first five months, mainly the pupils' ability to speak and listen is developed. In other words, only reception, production and very simple interaction in an oral communication are being taught, which may be seen in the long term plans of the two researched groups. Conversely, writing is only briefly presented to show the pupils the difference between written and spoken forms of English, and mainly gap-fill exercises or writing with a model are used to practise the written form of the language.

5.1.1. Types of tests

Since the purpose of my test is to compare the level of communicative competence in spoken English in two groups of pupils, a relevant test type has to be chosen. There are many types of tests described in detail, for instance in the *Common European Framework*, but for the needs of this thesis I decided to use Underhill's division into the following four groups:

- Proficiency: what is the learner's general level of language ability?
- Placement: where does this learner fit in our teaching programme?
- Diagnosis: what are the learner's particular strengths and weaknesses?
- Achievement: how much has the learner learnt from a particular course?

(1991:12, 13).

According to Underhill, "in reality, most test programmes will combine two or more of the above aims." (1991:12). However, I have decided to work with achievement testing which Clark, in his book *Foreign Language Testing: Theory and Practice*, describes as "any skills activities which are based on the instructional content of a particular language course." (1972 cited in Savignon, 1983:245). Achievement tests assess whether or not the pupils have

achieved some specific aspects of the course after a certain period of time, in this case, after five months of study. As stated in the *Common European Framework*, “achievement test is oriented to the course“ (2004:183), therefore, only the language skills that have been covered on the course are tested and the aim of this test is to find out how well the pupils have mastered these skills. Moreover, as Heaton emphasises, a good achievement test should also reflect the particular approach to learning and teaching that has been adopted during the course (1991:172).

5.1.2. Criteria of tests

Savignon labels a test as a “*sample behavior*“ (1983:232), but to be able to find out its level on the basis of limited observation, two important assumptions have to be first taken into consideration; test *reliability* and test *validity*.

According to Heaton, “reliability is a necessary characteristic of any good test.“ (1991:162).

The test score is an accurate and stable measure of individual performance. The same test given to the same person on another day, in another setting, or scored by a different rater is likely to yield the same or similar results. In other words, the test is **reliable** (Savignon, 1983:232).

Reliability is further divided into parts to be considered separately, yet various literature differs in these divisions. For instance, Underhill considers *internal consistency* and *test/re-test reliability*. However, according to Underhill, “these classical measures of test reliability have little relevance for oral tests.“ (1991:107). A slightly wider point of view, which also takes note of testing speaking, is presented by Savignon who also introduces *internal consistency*, *test-retest reliability* and adds – *rater reliability* (1983:233/234). Internal consistency, also called item reliability by Savignon, has to do with the relationship of a pupil’s performance on individual items of the test to their performance on the test as a whole. Some items might be ambiguous or have more than one possible response, therefore pre-testing the test is an important part in test creation and usage. Test-retest reliability has to do with the stability of a measurement procedure in different settings. As Savignon explains, the procedure for estimating test reliability of this kind is, as its name implies, to test and to retest the same pupil and the same test with the comparison of the results (1983:234). To ensure the

reliability of the test used for the purpose of my research, repeated pre-testing of a few pupils will be used. Last to be mentioned is rater reliability which may partly, as in the case of my research, be ensured by using only one rater.

Rater reliability is of particular concern in tests sometimes referred to as ‘subjective’ - essay tests and oral interviews, for example – where evaluation requires the evaluator to exercise individual judgement (Savignon, 1983:233).

To avoid this problem, it is again good to carry out the pre-test to become familiar with it as a tester, as well as to create some evaluation tools to make the scoring easier. These will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 6.5.2. Reliability and validity (page 52). Not only should we respect all the above measures while creating a ‘reliable’ test, but the reliability of a test may be estimated afterwards by a special formula, very well described by Heaton in his book *Writing English Language Tests*.

$$r_{11} = \frac{N}{N-1} \left[1 - \frac{m(N-m)}{N(x,x)} \right]^{10} \quad (1991:164)$$

Nonetheless, this not applicable for my purposes since I am testing an overall level of communicative competence achieved and so it is impossible to, for instance, define the number of items in the test. The reliability coefficient is also being used when “we have two sets of scores for comparison. The most obvious way of obtaining these is to get a group of subjects to take the same test twice“ (Hughes, 1994:32), which is not applicable in the case of my research either. Various ways how reliability coefficient may be arrived at are minutely described in a book *Testing for Language Teachers* written by Arthur Hughes.

Validity, on the other hand, is concerned more with the ‘content’ of testing. Simply said, a test is valid when it measures what it is supposed to measure and nothing else.

The sample test behavior is a true reflection of the underlying competence the test is designed to evaluate. For example, performance on a driving test in fact requires

¹⁰ N – the number of items in the test
 m – the mean score on the test for all the testees
 x – the standard deviation of all testees’ scores
 r₁₁ – reliability (Heaton, 1991:164).

driving ability, performance on a reading test requires reading ability, etc. In other words, the test is **valid** (Savignon, 1983:232).

As reliability is divided into more levels, so too does validity have its subcategories, such as *content*, *construct*, *concurrent*, *face* or *predictive validity*. I shall again look closely only at the ones relevant to this thesis. According to Savignon, achievement tests seem to be concerned primarily with *content validity* (1983:245). "Validation must then rely to a great extent on the test designer's intuitive knowledge of the implicit objectives of the programme" (Underhill, 1991:106), as well as on the content of the syllabus. In practice, there may be little difference between content and *construct validity*. Almost all tests are a part of a larger programme and, as Underhill claims, a test should share the same assumptions and the same philosophy as the programme of which it is part (1991:106). "In construct validation, one validates a test not against a criterion or another test, but against a theory." (Palmer and Groot cited in Savignon, 1983:236). As mentioned in the previous sentence, a test may be also validated against another test, which is called *concurrent validity*. Concurrent validity, together with predictive validity, "are both examples of what is sometimes referred to as criterion validity." (Savignon, 1983:236). Underhill describes concurrent validity using the following question: "How do learners' scores on the test compare with their scores on other language tests?" (1991:106). Since the researched pupils are given the test after five months of their study, it would be possible to compare the results with the marks they get at half term. Nonetheless, not much importance can be given to this comparison since it is the first time they are to be marked for language and therefore their results may be higher in order to motivate (all pupils obtained A). Of the five kinds of validity described above, *face validity* differs from the others since it exists only on the basis of impression. "So-called 'face' validity, the mere appearance of validity, is not an acceptable basis for interpretative inferences from test scores." (American Psychological Association, 1974 cited in Savignon, 1983:237). Nonetheless, it is very important that the test is "perceived as a reasonable, fair, or appropriate test by those who take it as well as by those who interpret the results" (Savignon, 1983:236), because if either the testers or the testees do not see the test as reasonable and are not happy with it, then it is unlikely to yield good valid results.

An ideal test should, of course, be reliable as well as valid, although as Heaton states, "the greater the reliability of a test, the less validity it usually has." (1991:164). It seems easier to 'additionally' increase the reliability of a test which is already valid since knowing *what* we

are testing is a core of any test creation. Consequently, according to Heaton, it is essential to devise a valid test first and then establish ways of making it reliable, such as by the careful creation of a marking system. (1991:164, 165).

5.2. Testing techniques and test creation

When one considers the criteria, such as the age of testees, the aim of the test, the test's validity and reliability, a quality test may be created. A quality test should be reliable for the teacher's purposes and be an appropriate level for the pupils. Many tests already exist, but according to Heaton, to meet the teachers' needs it is best when they create the tests themselves (1990:23). However, before creating a test, one has to decide what to include in it, as well as to choose the appropriate testing techniques. As explained above, it is very important *what* we test, although equal importance should be given to *how* we test it.

As already stated, only items that have been taught should be tested, hence, according to Heaton, all the grammar points, structures or various skills taught and practised over the period should be written down before starting to write the test. These items should then be rated by their importance and given appropriate weighting in the test (1990:26-28). Furthermore, all the items included in a test should be given a certain amount of time, which does not necessarily have to be the same, but should be balanced in some way.

A great importance while creating a good test lies in the choice of testing techniques. Much is to be considered here, such as the age of the learners and interaction patterns, as well as the techniques learners are already familiar with. Various authors, such as Heaton (1990, 1991), Underhill (1991) or Madsen (1983), describe a number of testing techniques in detail, for instance: discussion, role-play, re-telling a story, decision making or explanation. However, I shall only look closely at the techniques that meet my needs; those that are relevant for young learners, and those that were already practised with the pupils I am to research. I elicited these from interviews (appendix 4) I had carried out with the two teachers and the only two techniques they have both been using to practise and to test are: interview and description (of, for instance, picture or person.) These outcomes may be supported by Madsen, who claims that students with limited speaking skills, such as young learners are, can be evaluated by using rather controlled testing methods, of which the most useful are *direct responses* and *questions about pictures*. Both of these appear in everyday communication (1983:148, 149).

"Pictures are very useful for testing the speaking skills." (Heaton, 1990:61). Teachers may ask various questions about the pictures, as well as ask the pupils to describe the pictures themselves. According to Madsen:

when using pictures, it is best to prepare your questions ahead of time. Write them down, and then read them aloud as the student moves through the test. This can improve the quality of your questions, and it can help with the scoring of the test. [Teachers should also] be prepared to provide additional cue where necessary (1983:153).

Although, so far, the two controlled testing techniques, of which the latter is testing through direct responses, have been described, I shall also consider the direct response from the viewpoint of guided techniques. Although a slight difference may be seen between the two, both may be used while testing young learners. The difference is well illustrated by Madsen:

(controlled) "Tell him that it's ten o'clock."

(It's ten o'clock.)

(guided) "Remind him politely of the time."

(Excuse me, Mr. Evans. It's almost ten o'clock.) (1983:158).

It can be seen that guided testing techniques give the testees more freedom of response than the controlled ones. On the other hand, the disadvantage of more open-ended techniques may be a difficulty with scoring which may cause lower reliability. Nonetheless, an even more open-ended technique than guided direct responses is an *oral interview*, also suitable for testing young learners.

Many teachers think of the interview as simply a series of questions and

answers, for instance: 'What's your name?' (My name is Lin Tan.)

'How old are you?' (I'm fifteen years old.)

(Madsen, 1983:162).

However, it can include a meaningful interaction between the interviewer and the learner in which much of the learner's communicative competence may be revealed. As Heaton asserts,

”supporters of the oral interview claim that the examination at least appears to offer a realistic means of assessing the total oral skill in a ‘natural’ speech situation.” (1991:97). Madsen supports this idea by saying that ”instead of simply reciting information, the student is actually talking with someone! The oral interview can provide a genuine sense of communication.” (1983:162). Nevertheless, teachers should be careful in order to prevent the interview from becoming a pure interrogation. Consequently, a friendly atmosphere should be established. Heaton claims that, when a speaking test forms part of an achievement test (as it does for the purpose of my research), it is useful to start by asking for personal details which may put pupils at ease (1990:65, 66), since the ”questions are quite simple [and] cover information that the student is thoroughly familiar with.” (Madsen, 1986:163).

In conclusion, I would again emphasise the importance of pupils being familiar with the testing techniques as well as the interaction pattern the teacher uses when testing. Becoming familiar can be achieved by practising enough communicative activities during proper lessons. ”If any aspect of a test is unfamiliar to candidates, they are likely to perform less well than they would do otherwise.” (Hughes, 1994:39).

5.3. Marking system

Underhill labels the marking system as “a vital part of an oral test. It must be integrated into the whole process of test design from the beginning; it is too important to be left to the end, as an afterthought.” (1991:88). Most authors, as well as agreeing about the importance of marking system while testing speaking, also agree about the demands of marking itself. “On a speaking test, getting the students to say something appropriate is only half the job. Scoring the test is equally challenging.” (Madsen, 1983:166).

5.3.1. Scoring systems

Various scoring systems have been introduced in accessible literature, and the system teachers tend to select depends, according to Madsen, on two things: “how well trained we are to evaluate oral communication and what factors we choose to evaluate.” (1983:167). However, Heaton claims, that whatever system we adopt, the marking system may be very subjective and reminds us, for instance, to avoid allowing the pupils’ personality to influence the grade we award (1990:68). According to the literature, I shall divide and briefly describe scoring under three categories: *subjective* – using subjective judgement of the marker, *objective* – where answers are either right or wrong and are evaluated that way, and *holistic* –

usually based on the five criteria: comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency (Madsen, 1983:167-173, Underhill, 1991:95-97). The latter is, as Madsen asserts, “unquestionably an ideal rating system, when consistency can be maintained.” (1983:170). Therefore, holistic scoring will be used for the purpose of my research. *Common European Framework* describes holistic scoring as a global synthetic judgment where different aspects are weighted intuitively by the assessor (2004:190). The particular aspects, together with the descriptions of their levels, should be described in a rating scale.

Various tools how to make oral testing more consistent and less subjective, such as the use of a rating scale or an evaluation sheet will be described in detail in chapter 6.5.2. Reliability and validity, together with some helpful ideas used for the purpose of my research. However, a few more ways to gain consistency and reliability in oral testing exist, such as the number of assessors or the recording of the oral test. These will not be dealt with here since they are not relevant, nonetheless, they are very well described in the already mentioned Underhill’s book. The reasons for not including recording the testees is because, according to the interview with the teachers (appendix 4), the pupils had never been recorded before and so their nervousness could increase or the friendly atmosphere decrease. Not even mentioning the number of assessors is relevant since I will be the only assessor in spite of Heaton’s affirmation that “the dual role (i.e. of both language partner and assessor) which the examiner is required to assume in the oral interview is always a most difficult one.” (1991:97).

Chapter five is dedicated to testing with the emphasis given to the ways of testing communicative competence in spoken English. Regarding the abundance available only the relevant information was presented. The demandingness of creation, assigning and assessing such test have also been mentioned; supported by Hughes’s claim that “the accurate measurement of oral ability is not easy [and] it takes considerable time and effort to obtain valid reliable results.” (1994:114).

6. Research

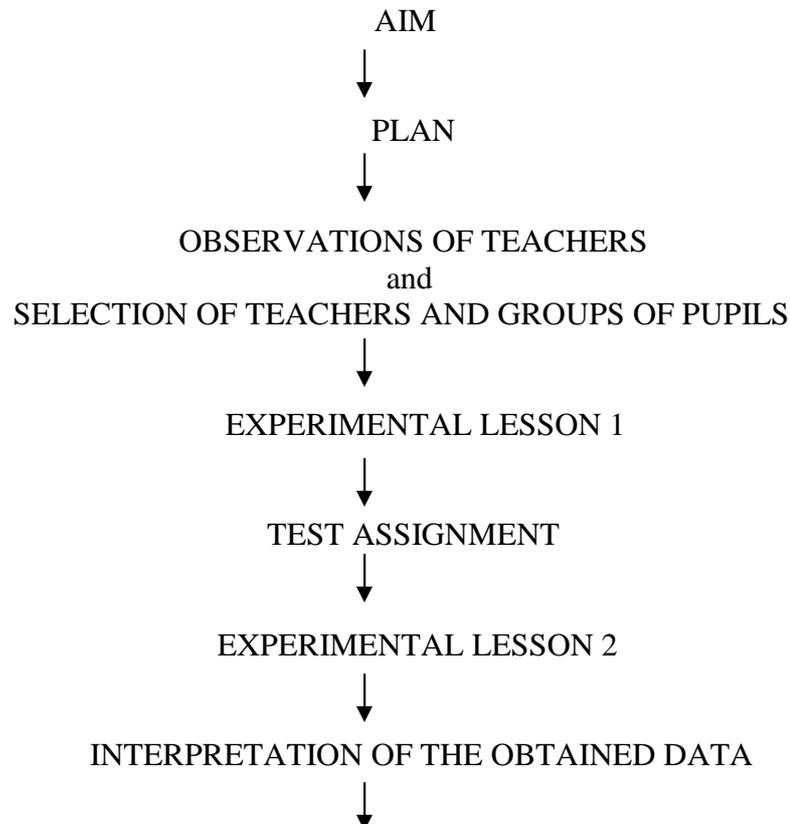
When I started teaching, doing research was the furthest thing from my mind.

DONALD FREEMAN

The aim of this part of the thesis is to provide a description of my small-scale empirical¹¹ research project and its findings. The aim of the research was already stated in the introduction (page 1), here I shall present its structure, introduce it and consecutively look closely at its phases. School, teachers and pupils involved, selection of research methods and data collecting techniques, creation of tools, data analysis and their evaluation will be dealt with on the following pages.

6.1. Introduction and structure of the research

Diagram 1. Structure of the research



¹¹ Classical empirical research is done by “looking outward“, in other words, by closely observing certain aspects of the world around us. It is concerned with examining objective, material things (Wallace, 1998:39). [It] always works with a concrete phenomenon of educational reality, with concrete data, uses exact methods and gains concrete results (Průcha, 2003:182).

EVALUATION



The aim of my research was to investigate how well have two groups of young learners mastered English language while being treated by two different approaches towards language teaching. One group being taught English through English, second being taught English with support of Czech. For this purpose, two comparable groups of young learners had to be chosen, as well as two teachers who would meet my needs. The duration of my research project was six month, from the beginning of September until the end of February. After about the first month I taught an experimental lesson in both groups to learn about their level. At the end of this experimental lesson, I made a small inquiry whether or not had the pupils studied English before, about their attitudes towards English and opinions on the language individual teachers use. During the second half of February I orally examined individual learner's level of communicative competence achieved. Second experimental lesson took place at the beginning of March based on the same principles as the first experimental lesson.

The following part of my thesis will chronologically examine individual phases of the above described research, together with the description of chosen elicitation techniques, tools used and interpretation and evaluation of the obtained data. Identities of the subjects of my research will be protected.

6.2. Research methodology and tools for data collection

The research carried out for the purpose of this thesis is, as already mentioned, an empirical research (page 46). Ellis “suggests that there have emerged three different categories of empirical research, each with its own goal and principal research methods.” (Nunan, 2001:93). A brief description of the second category, *The study of classroom interaction and L2 acquisition*, which is relevant to my research topic will be provided here although I will not closely stick to its research methods.

[The goal of such study is] to test a number of hypotheses relating to how interaction in the classroom contributes to L2 acquisition and to explore which types of interaction best facilitate acquisition. [Its principal research methods] are controlled experimental studies; ethnographic studies of interaction (Nunan, 2001:93).

Nunan himself claims, that a language classroom is a complicated place

to carry out a formal experiment to establish a relationship between the dependent variable of language proficiency and independent variables such as innovative

methods and materials. [However,] this is not to say that the task is impossible (Nunan, 2001:94).

For my research I selected two basic elicitation techniques: observations and an interview, and one subordinate with only subsidiary data obtained in a form of a questionnaire. Observations are used when we deal with data directly accessible to senses, such as in my case, for instance, the use of mother tongue and the target language. Various types of observations exist based on several criteria¹². For example, my observations are *structured* since a clear focus is specified in advance, and *overt* since the participants are aware of being a part of a research. The things to be observed need to be overt, obvious, context independent, relevant, complete, precise and easy to record. I shall not deal with these conditions in detail, however, they are well described in Dencombe's book *The Good Research Guide*. Another elicitation technique chosen for the purpose of my research is an interview. Even though interview is a time consuming technique, its flexibility to, for instance, specify or reformulate questions in progress is a big advantage. I selected a structured interview which is based on a set of prepared questions in a determined order. In order to avoid inaccurate wide answers I offered some possible options the teachers could choose from. Lastly, the questionnaire will be very briefly mentioned. Out of the possible types of *questions* that can be used in a questionnaire, I decided to use a *yes/no answer*, mainly because of the little time available and the age of the pupils.

Furthermore, to be able to assess their achieved level of communicative competence, I decided to carry out an oral test and to teach two experimental lessons. Therefore, a rating scale and an evaluation sheet for me and three worksheets for the pupils were created. All the tools used during my small scale research project, together with their creation, will be further presented when the particular phases of the research are described.

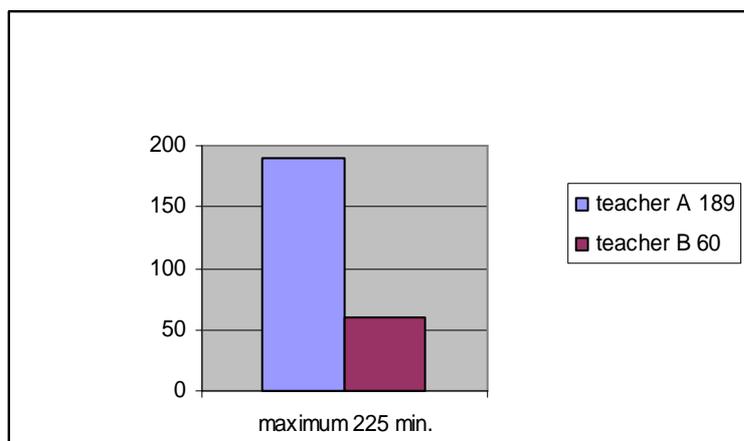
6.3. School, teachers and pupils involved

For my small scale research project I chose a school in the suburb of Prague where I spent my one year teaching practice during the clinical year at University of Pardubice. The advantage of such choice was that I had known the English teachers, their approaches towards teaching and attitude towards the use of mother tongue beforehand. However, to support my choice of teachers, I observed them to record how much English they use during their lessons.

¹² These criteria, as well as some other information related to elicitation techniques, were presented to me at University of Pardubice during a subject called *Úvod do pedagogického výzkumu*, 2003

The observation sheet (appendix 1) I used was created at the University of Pardubice. Since I found it appropriate for my needs, I decided to use it after a permission. It was used in ten lessons during September. Each teacher was observed in five lessons (225 minutes aggregatively), these observed alternately to make sure both groups developed similarly. The amount of time teachers used the target language and mother tongue was measured. For the purpose of my research, I shall label the two teachers as a teacher A and a teacher B, corresponding to a group A and a group B. I decided to present the obtained data in a graph showing the use of English in minutes, maximum being 225 minutes.

Diagram 2. Use of English



As results from the Diagram 2, teacher A uses the target language considerably more than teacher B. It is to be noted that the purpose of my observations was not revealed to the teachers in order to obtain genuine data. Both teacher A and teacher B completed their university studies, however, while teacher B is a qualified English teacher with about 25 years of teaching practice, teacher A is an educated psychologist with 12 years of teaching practice, however, has completed quite a number of language and methodological courses.

Regarding the choice of the two groups being taught by the two chosen teachers, I concentrated on two aspects: the age and the level of English. Therefore, I decided for two third grade language groups, each beginning with English and consisting of fifteen pupils. The two language groups consist of pupils from four classes. It is plausible to state that both teachers teach under very similar conditions, therefore, the results of the chosen groups should be comparable. These pupils and their achieved level of communicative competence is the subject of my research.

6.4. Experimental lesson 1

In order to form an opinion on the pupils' level of English, mainly aimed at understanding the target language, an experimental lesson was carried out in the middle of October. In group A fourteen pupils were present, in group B twelve. I taught both lessons myself to make sure they were identical. Activities, such as 'number bingo' or 'sleeping game', and instructions pupils were not familiar with were chosen not to favor either group. An observation sheet (appendix 2) with a list of the activities and two extra items was created for this purpose. Whether or not the pupils understood in English only, together with the time spent on individual phases of the lesson was taken down for each activity. The time pupils spent by filling my questionnaires was also noted down, however, the distribution and instructions regarding the questionnaires (appendix 3) as well as the statements in the questionnaires pupils were to label true or false were intentionally held in Czech in order to avoid any misunderstanding (results presented in the Table 1, page 51).

6.4.1. Conclusion

According to the obtained data, it can be concluded that both group A and B managed a lesson held solely in English, therefore, it can be stated that they are at the same level of understanding English since the results observed are almost identical. The amount of time spent on separate activities differs, however, not remarkably. The two extra items observed were: administration and discipline maintenance. Administration appeared only in group B, nonetheless, was managed in English. Some discipline problems arose in both groups and were in both cases settled with some support of Czech.

The additional data (presented below in the Table 1., page 51) received from the questionnaires show, apart from other things, whether the pupils previously studied English and the pupils' view on whether their teacher uses more English or Czech during the lessons. The number of pupils who had previously studied English is reconcilable when the number of pupils present is taken into consideration. This supports the fact that the two groups used as the subject of my research are comparable. Likewise the pupils' perception of the language their teacher mainly uses during lessons supports the observations I carried out when the choice of the two teachers was being made (page 49). To add my subjective opinion on the level of pupils' understanding English, I may say that the groups appear very similar, if not equal.

Table 1. Questionnaire for pupils: 3 chosen statements

STATEMENT	ANSWER	GROUP A (14Ps)
GROUP B (12Ps)		

I have already studied English 8	YES	10
Our teacher speaks mainly English 4	YES	14
Our teacher speaks mainly Czech 8	YES	0

6.5. Test assignment

The achieved level of communicative competence in spoken English was tested in order to evaluate the improvement of the two surveyed groups. Each pupil was tested individually. The oral test was piloted and took place during the last week in January.

Types of tests, criteria of tests, testing techniques, test creation and scoring systems connected to testing communicative competence were described in detail in chapter 5. Testing speaking. I shall very briefly summarize them here and consecutively deal with the test carried out for the purpose of my research.

6.5.1. Type of test chosen

The type of test (page 38) used is an *achievement test* which is “directly related to language courses, their purpose being to establish how successful individual students, groups of students [...] have been in achieving the objectives.” (Savignon, 1983:245). In my case: two groups of young learners with the objective of mastering the oral communicative competence.

6.5.2. Reliability and validity

Considering the criteria of tests, already explained in detail (page 39), I shall closely deal with the relevant parts. All the language items pupils were introduced to during the five month were listed (appendix 5) to maintain *content validity* concerned primarily with the objectives of the programme and content of the syllabus; no additional aspects of language were tested. I tried to maintain the *test-retest reliability* to make sure my measurements will be stable by testing and retesting two pupils from a different group, however, of the same age and studying in accordance with the same syllabus. The results (appendix 9) of both pupils slightly improved when being retested, nonetheless, the results can be, in my opinion, labeled reliable. I purposely aimed my attention to the *rater reliability* since I am not an experienced teacher, thus I became familiar with the test by pre-testing (or piloting) it. Furthermore, some

evaluation tools to make scoring easier and less subjective were created, such as a rating scale and an evaluation sheet.

6.5.2.1. Rating scale, Weighting system

According to Underhill:

a rating scale is a series of short descriptions of different levels of language ability. Its purpose is to describe briefly what the typical learner at each level can do, so that it is easier for the assessor to decide what level or score to give each learner in a test. The rating scale therefore offers the assessor a series of prepared descriptions, and she then picks the one which best fits each learner (1991:98).

While creating a rating scale, its developer should work with the syllabus of the learners being tested and adjust it to them. The one I have used was designed for the purpose of testing third grade pupils.

Common components of language ability are comprehension (and interaction), pronunciation, grammar (accuracy), vocabulary and fluency. Each component is awarded certain number of points by which a rating scale is created. Heaton claims that “an even-numbered scale is often preferred because it helps examiners to avoid awarding the middle mark (a tendency in many cases).“ (1991:99). This tendency could come from the similarity to the classical marking scheme (1-5). It is “strongly advised to use a scale for grading students’ performances on speaking tests rather than a marking scheme.“ (Heaton, 1990:68). To avoid the similarity, I have created a four-level scale (appendix 7), in which each level is further divided into two, better and worse, so that in practice, there are eight points to choose from. Each category has the same number of marks which makes the scoring easier, though it implies “that they are all equally important.“ (Underhill, 1991:97). Of course, this does not have to be true in all cases. Celce-Murcia asserts that:

many established tests of oral proficiency [...] continue to evaluate a student’s performance primarily in terms of accuracy [...] or vocabulary. [...] Although certainly these discrete components contribute to what is called ‘oral proficiency’, it is questionable whether the elusive quality called ‘communicative ability’ can be evaluated in this manner (1991:133).

To find some alternative rating schemes, Celce-Murcia suggests Underhill's *Testing of Spoken Language*; where a so-called weighting system can be found.

Weighting is a system by which we can award better performance in certain categories and give them more influence in the final score. Underhill labels it as a system in which:

marks are awarded out of the same total for the different mark categories, and these marks are then multiplied. [...] The assumption behind the use of weighting in this way is that it is mentally easier for the assessor to mark all the categories out of the same total initially, and then multiply up the marks to produce weighted score, than it is to mark one category out of ten, a second out of twenty, and a third out of thirty, at the same time (Underhill, 1991:97).

For the purpose of my research, taking into account the age and level of the researched pupils, the greatest importance has been given to interaction and comprehension (multiplied by three), then to pronunciation and fluency (multiplied by two) and the two last categories, accuracy and vocabulary, have not been preferred at all. The teachers both, as elicited from the interviews carried out (appendix 4), give a special importance to interaction and comprehension while testing pupils' oral ability. In order to make weighting, as well as scoring generally easier and more reliable an evaluation sheet with above mentioned categories was created and used for each pupil.

6.5.2.2. Evaluation sheet; Impression, Additive and Subtractive marking

An evaluation sheet is a helpful tool for testers to keep a record of what has occurred or not occurred during the test. Although, as Heaton advises, "the interviewer should *never* attempt to note down marks or comments while the student is still engaged in the interview" (1991:97), it may be used afterwards to quickly note down certain points about the student's performance. Various ways how to mark down the occurrence of any special features or errors exist. I shall briefly describe and give reasons for Underhill's *impression, additive* and *subtractive marking* (1991:100-103), which is used in my evaluation sheet (appendix 8). He claims that where:

different mark categories are used, they will often be marked by different systems: this is not a sign of inconsistency, but rather reflects the fact that they are measuring very different things (1991:100).

Impression marking is usually used for categories and cases which are quite difficult to define. A whole test may be assessed on the basis of impression marking, but I have only chosen it as a helpful tool covered under 'comments', where various disputable parts and pure impressions can be noted down. Whereas impression marking in my case covers all the categories together, both *additive and subtractive marking* may be noted down for each category separately. Both are also used in a simplified way. An occurrence of any special feature used by a testee is marked down to be positively evaluated later. On the other hand, the tester may subtract some points when a serious error occurs, as well as for the non-occurrence of some basic 'knowledge'.

The chapter 6.5.2. Reliability and validity has dealt with ways and various tool to make oral testing more consistent and less subjective, such as the use of a rating scale. However, a few more ways to gain consistency and reliability in oral testing exist such as the number of assessors or the recording of the oral test. These will not be dealt with here since they are not relevant, although they are very well described in the above mentioned Underhill's book. The reasons for not including recording the testees is because, according to the interviews with the teachers (appendix 4), the pupils had never been recorded before and so their nervousness could increase or the friendly atmosphere decrease. Not even mentioning the number of assessors is relevant since I will be the only assessor in spite of Heaton's affirmation that "the dual role (i.e. of both language partner and assessor) which the examiner is required to assume in the oral interview is always a most difficult one." (1991:97).

6.5.3. Testing and techniques used

As already mentioned in detail in chapter 5.2. Testing techniques and test creation (page 42), a great importance while creating a good test lies in the choice of testing techniques. Much is to be considered, this dealt in detail in the above mentioned chapter. According to the information elicited from the interviews with teacher A and B, two testing techniques were chosen: *interview* and *description of pictures* (page 42) These are the only testing techniques both teachers used to practise as well as to test speaking, therefore, I made the same choice in order to provide pupils with tasks they are already familiar with. The oral test (appendix 6) consist of four parts: introduction, questions/answers, description of a monster and conclusion.

The test was carried out during 30th and 31st January. Each test took about eight minutes and the results were noted down into individual evaluation sheets. I am aware that the test was short, however, everything the pupils were to learn during the five months was included.

It is necessary to mention that I did not test the pupils during their English lessons to avoid favouring either group. The pupils were tested during other lessons and the order was given by the lists of pupils in their 'original classes' in order not to know whether the pupil tested belongs to group A or B.

6.5.4. Conclusion

According to the obtained data, it is to be concluded that group B, being taught with the support of Czech, achieved higher score than group A, being taught through English. Maximum score for each group was 1080 points, divided between pronunciation –

maximum 240, fluency – maximum 240, accuracy – maximum 120, vocabulary – maximum 120 and interaction/comprehension – maximum 360 points. Group B achieved higher scores than group A which can be seen in detail in the Diagram 3 below. Group B achieved higher scores even when individual categories are taken into consideration; this to be seen in the Diagram 4 (page 56). The average score of a pupil from group A is 54,6 poits, from group B 60,8 points out of 72 which is the maximum possible score for each testee.

Diagram 3. Total achieved scores

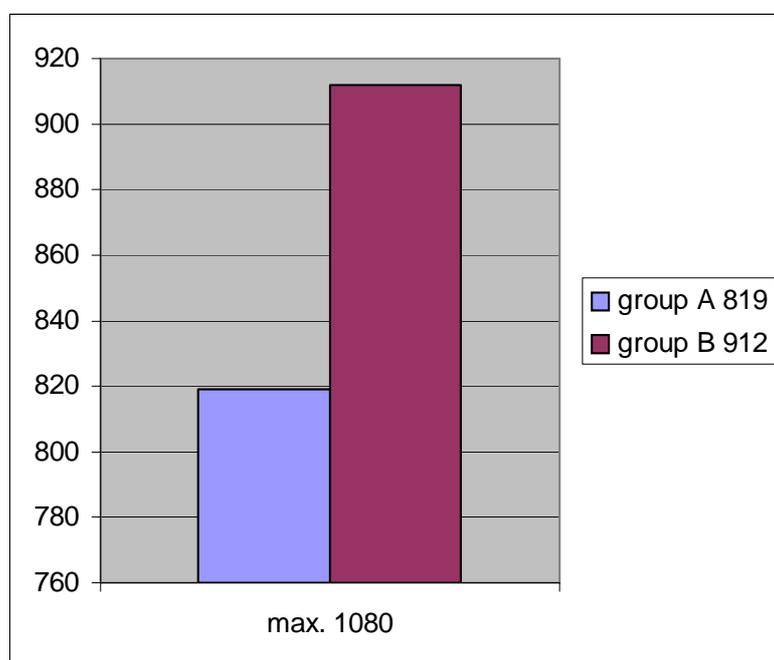
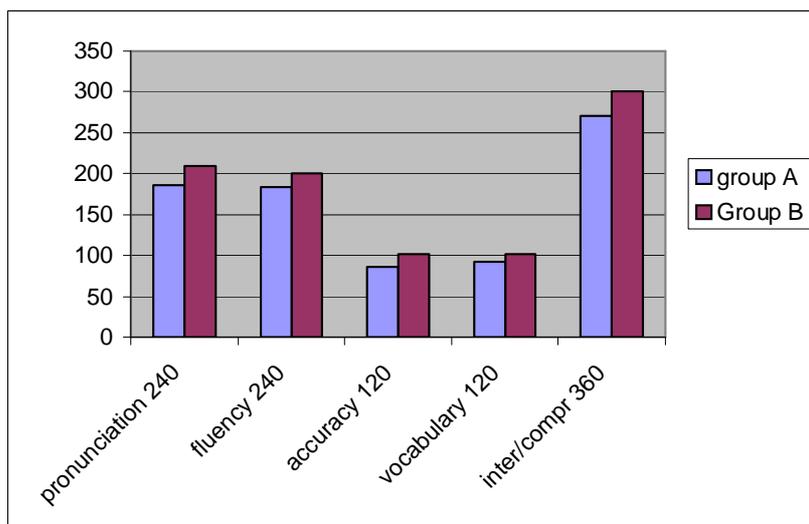


Diagram 4. Achieved scores in each category



6.6. Experimental lesson 2

After evaluating the results obtained from the oral test a second experimental lesson was carried out in order to verify the result. This time all the pupils were present in both groups. The experimental lessons took place at the beginning of March in accord with the principles of the first experimental lessons. For the same purpose, both lessons were again taught by me and new tasks, as well as instructions were used. However, a few differences may be seen between the first and the second experimental lesson in the way it was prepared, as well as in the fact that the observer of the second experimental lesson was a very experienced teacher and managed to observe more phenomena. Moreover, pupils were asked to speak English as well. This fact was quite difficult to observe; it can be said that it showed better and worse pupils in individual groups, but had no value in evaluating the two groups as wholes.

Whereas the first lesson aimed mainly at the fact whether or not the pupils understood English, the second lesson additionally aimed at how well they understood. Therefore, four stages of giving instructions were distinguished: stage 1 – spoken instructions, stage 2 – spoken instructions supported by miming, stage 3 – spoken

instructions supported by miming and giving an example and stage 4 – instructions given in Czech. These, together with the amount of time needed for each activity were entered into an observation sheet (appendix 10) created especially for this lesson. Variance can be seen in the data entered in the observation sheets. Group A understood lower stages of instructions, exactly stages 3, 1, 4 and 3, whereas group B achieved a slightly worse results in stages 3, 2, 3 corrected to 4 and 3. Similarly, a difference may be seen in understanding English. While group A needed some Czech support at one minor instruction stage only, group B needed the support of Czech during the two main activities. Some pupils from group B did not understand the English instructions in stages 3 and consequently were asking for Czech instructions when the activities were already in progress. It is to be noted that few pupils from group A asked for information during the activities as well, however, these were enough to be given in English.

Another difference was the way the activities were dealt with. Pupils worked on an ‘animal project’ throughout the lesson. For this purpose a worksheet (appendix 11) was created for each pupil, these collected at the end of the lesson in order to be able to check whether or not the pupils understood the task and were able to accomplish it. One pupil from group B was not able to accomplish the task since, according to her worksheet, she did not know how to question her classmates. Another examination of whether the pupils understood enough to be able to accomplish the task was a final creation of a graph (appendix 13) into which pupils were to transfer the obtained data. Even though an example was shown to the class, several pupils from group B needed the Czech support during the activity.

An extra task (appendix 12) was prepared for the pupils who completed the given task. All pupils from both groups worked on the extra task in the end, however, since the pupils were told to accomplish only the tasks they understood, group B finished much

earlier since many pupils did not understand the various tasks. Therefore, a ‘miming game’ was played with this group in the end of the lesson. On the other hand, almost all pupils from group A managed to accomplish the extra tasks.

Some discipline problems appeared in both groups and were, similarly like during the first experimental lesson, dealt with with support of Czech.

6.6.1. Conclusion

According to the data obtained from the second experimental lesson, it can be stated that group A managed better than group B. Even though the difference is not major, it appears in all parts of the lesson. The results will be presented in the Table 2 to make them more synoptic.

Table 2. Experimental lesson 2 – results

GROUP	A	B
INSTRUCTION STAGES (1, English – 4, Czech = 16, worst score)	(3, 1, 4, 3) 11	(3, 2, 4, 3) 12
ITEMS ACCOMPLISHED IN ENGLISH (MAX. 9)	7	6
SPOILED WORKSHEETS (MAX. 15)	0	1
PUPILS WHO ACCOMPLISHED EXTRA TASKS	all –10 partly – 5	all - 5 partly – 6

(MAX. 15 pupils)	no – 0	no – 4
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Likewise I added my subjective opinion on the level of pupils' understanding English after the first experimental lesson where I labeled both groups as very similar, if not equal, I shall do the same now. From my subjective point of view, group A's understanding seemed better to me, as well as their English production.

6.7. Interpretation of the research results

I [am] jarred by the phrase, "*The research shows (or tells) us,*" as if there were one unified body of "research," or that "it" had the human ability to "show" or "tell" anything without someone to speak for it. DONALD FREEMAN

This section of the paper was aimed at a question asked at the beginning of my small-scale research project: "*Will the communicative competence of pupils being taught English through English be higher than those being taught English through Czech?*" which I shall try to answer on the basis of the obtained data.

The data obtained from the research and evaluated after each part of the research do not provide a clearly positive nor negative answer to my question. Nonetheless, the test assignment, which was the main evaluation part of my research showed that group B, being taught English through Czech mastered the communicative competence in spoken language more than group A, being taught English through English. On the other hand, the results gathered from the second experimental lesson (even though this being a minor part of my research since aimed at pupils' understanding, not production), claim contrariwise. Therefore, it would be, in my opinion, an exaggeration to conclude that teaching English through Czech is generally more effective than teaching English through English.

When questioning after the reason why do the results of my research project differ from the theoretical background presented throughout the paper, as well as from my personal beliefs, I came across several factors which should be taken into consideration and which might have had some impact on the results. In the following part of this thesis I shall try to find and deal with some of the reasons for my findings.

Teacher's personality, experience and teaching techniques surely play a crucial role. It has already been stated that teacher B is an educated English teacher with about twenty-five years of teaching practice, hence more experienced. Therefore, it is partly possible to ascribe the results to this fact, together with some more elements to be considered here. Although teaching methods and approaches were not directly observed, which would surely be an interesting further inquiry, I can state, that teacher A uses more variety of teaching methods and approaches; during the observations, I saw, for instance, the use of Total Physical Response. Even though all the activities indirectly observed in group A were interesting and the pupils undoubtedly enjoyed them, young learners of this age, should be, in my opinion, familiar with the activities in which they participate in order to aim their concentration only towards the language. Thinking about the activity itself may deviate their concentration. As Dunn claims, "familiar activities give opportunities to revise, consolidate and expand on language items." (1990:34). In other words, pupils can only practise English when they know how to do so. On the contrary, teacher B seemed to be very consistent in the ways of teaching as well as not including many extra activities in addition to the methodology of the textbook used. Teacher B concentrated more on various recommended ways how to practise each item; these being repeatedly used throughout the textbook. Group B might, therefore, be less overwhelmed by the number of activities being involved during the lessons. Constant usage of a certain combination of activities to

practise individual language items may also generally, in my opinion, result in employing more senses, therefore, the needs of different types of learners (page 33) are met.

A teacher who decides to use the target language while teaching has to assuredly be a highly skilled teacher. It is, even from my own teaching experience, extremely difficult to modify the *teacher talk* (page 34) into a comprehensible input (page 11, 12) to give the pupils opportunity to understand. A great emphasis should be given to the fact that *all* pupils, not only the better ones, should have this possibility. Two pupils with very low scores achieved at the oral test can be seen in the results gathered from group A (appendix 9). It is important to notice that these two pupils lowered the results of group A as a whole noticeably. The cause of their low results can be explained by the fact, that there is a possibility that the above mentioned assumption considering the modifications of teacher talk was not fulfilled. In other words, that not all pupils understand the teacher who does not have the weaker pupils on mind and lets them get lost in the 'jungle of language items'. The results of the following gradual accumulation of things not properly understood by the pupils have already been described in chapter 4.1. Young learners and their development.(page 28) To sum up, the accumulation of such items can lead to a general slow-down, as well as to the loss of motivation. However, it would be an oversimplification to claim that it is better to teach English through Czech. On the other hand, it appears better to use Czech while teaching than to use 'incomprehensible English input'. This being supported by the fact that in group B no such weak pupils appeared, although both being language groups into which a successful entrance examination had to be taken. The conclusion of such speculation, for the purpose of my thesis, is that the teacher A is probably not capable enough to teach English through English since the modifications of the teacher talk are not sufficient enough to enrich all the pupils by being exposed to the target language.

Whereas the above mentioned factors (why teaching through Czech came out being more effective) are closely connected to the teacher's personalities, experience and abilities, few more connected more to the language learning theories can be found. I shall mainly deal with Krashen's *Acquisition-Learning hypothesis*; developed in detail in chapter 2.2.1.1. From the two independent systems of second language performance, group A seems to be gaining the acquired system, whereas group B the learned system. Acquiring the language means the pupils are introduced to certain structures which they consecutively get familiar with, start using them and find out their meaning for themselves. On the contrary, when learning the language pupils are given explanations first and then start using it. According to Krashen's theories, pupils who learn the language go, in the early stages, through more rapid process in using the target language, however, it is only a temporary advantage.(page 13) He claims that first language influence can be considered as unnatural and compares learning the second language to learning a mother tongue where a *silent period* (page 12) can be observed. *Silent period* corresponds to the period which appears when children learn their first language. This fact may be considered important in order to explain the results of my oral test since it is possible that the pupils from group B (who *acquire* English) are at the moment in the silent period. In other words, five months might not be enough to pass through the silent period. Krashen himself claims that acquisition is slow, however, in the long term more useful for the purpose of communication (1981:68). Group A pupils should later perceive English language more naturally, this also supported by Scott and Ytreberg, who claim, that children naturally insert their native language when they cannot find English words (1990:33); pupils from group A do so while talking, and did so while being tested for the purpose of this thesis which can be seen in the evaluation sheets I filled for each pupil. Therefore, pupils from group

A are likely to go through a more rapid improvement later; when they are provided with enough English environment enough time.

Contrariwise, the results of the second experimental lesson (page 59) are higher in group A. Even though this being a minor part of my research, it is worth taking into consideration that the understanding to the target language is more developed with the pupils being taught English through English.

Nonetheless, to conclude, although the answer to my question is not positively clear, the research results show that the level of communicative competence in spoken English of the pupils being taught English through Czech is higher than of pupils being taught English through English. However, this may only be a temporary result which is likely to change in accordance with time progress. Therefore, the findings obtained from my research could function as a basis for further study.

I am aware of the fact that the research sample consisted of a small number of pupils, as well as only two teachers, therefore, is not a representative sample with a general value. As can be seen above, teachers' personality may play a crucial role, thus more participants would enable me to make a more general view.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to present a detailed analysis, as well as to prove right the positive role of the second language while teaching it. I have, of course, put it as persuasively as I could, however, it was not meant to be accepted without a question. I aimed at young learners, together with the acquirement of communicative competence in spoken English. Throughout the pages, certain topics connected to the theme were pointed out, based on a theoretical background, as well as from my own perspective. This paper may be divided into two parts which are, however, closely interrelated.

In the first part, based more on the level of theory, it was unavoidable to mention and subsequently deal with topics such as: teaching methods and approaches, communicative competence, young learners and testing speaking. This part, on the basis of the above mentioned theory, further argues for the positive influence of English language on the development of communicative competence of young learners; as well as provides suggestions how to achieve such goal. Current communicative approaches towards language teaching, precisely said: The Natural Approach and Communicative Language Teaching were dealt with in detail and the impact they have on the development of speaking skill was presented. In my view, it is every teacher's considerable task to provide pupils with enough communicative activities, as well as with rich English environment in order to educate confident English users from our pupils. The ability of such users should be focused primarily on the transmission of message rather than on the grammatical accuracy. The role of accuracy is undoubtedly important when acquiring a foreign language, however, the ability to communicate in real life situations, in the way of expressing oneself, is the essential sign that the learning is successful. Therefore, communicative competence in spoken language was dealt with in detail since we cannot concentrate on the development of something unknown. Needless to say, approaches and methods used for developing the communicative competence in spoken English differ in accordance with the participants of such curriculum. Hence, the age and development of children at the primary classroom has to be taken into careful consideration since it greatly influences the way second language is acquired.

In the latter part of my thesis I tried to investigate the impact of first and second language on mastering the communicative competence in spoken English. The small-scale research project I carried out examined the achieved level of two groups of young learners, each being taught by one of the above stated approaches towards the use of mother tongue. As already stated in the introduction part, I identify with the benefits teaching English through

English brings to learners and I myself employ this approach towards teaching. For this reason mainly, I believed and expected the results to fulfill my beliefs, as well as to prove the presented theoretical background true. Nonetheless, as the results of the main part of my research displayed, the opposite came out to be true. Owing to this result, I searched for possible reasons for such finding. Some were found on the level of the two particular teachers, such as their experience, teaching techniques used, treatment of weak pupils or ability to modify teacher talk into a comprehensible input. In my view, the fact that the language in language teaching has to be efficiently modified for learning appeared quite important. Other reasons were found on the level of language teaching theories, for instance, the occurrence of the *silent period* in concord with The Natural Approach.

Generally, I would consider the results of my research beneficial since they may function as a basis for further, long-term survey which could reveal, for instance, whether or not the *silent period* played the role it had been given when the research results were interpreted.

8. Resumé

Ve výuce cizích jazyků probíhá dlouhodobá debata o tom zda, vyučovat v žákově mateřštině, či v cílovém jazyce. Mnohé výzkumy se zabývaly a stále zabývají tímto problémem, ovšem najít jednoznačné řešení není snadný úkol. Prozatím se ani jedna z těchto metod neukázala jednoznačně účinnější a názory učitelů i teoretiků se stále liší. Trendem posledních let je vyučování v jazyce cílovém, což je jeden z důvodů, proč se zejména začínající učitelé, kteří nemají ještě vyhraněné styly vyučování, touto otázkou intenzivně zabývají. Proto jsem se i já, jako začínající učitelka rozhodla věnovat, tomuto tématu svou diplomovou práci a uskutečnit empirické šetření zabývající se rozvojem komunikativní kompetence v anglickém jazyce u žáků mladšího školního věku a položila si otázku, zda bude komunikativní kompetence v mluveném jazyce žáků vyučovaných jazykem cílovým vyšší než žáků vyučovaných s podporou jazyka mateřského.

Zastávám názor, že vyučování jazyka jeho přímým užíváním je efektivnější, a to zejména při vyučování žáků mladšího školního věku obzvláště s přihlédnutím k jejich schopnosti porozumět smyslu jazyka z minima. Věřím, že využíváním dostupných metod, založených na již zmíněných principech, vychováváme v dlouhodobé perspektivě kvalitnější uživatele cílového jazyka. Vzhledem k tomuto faktu je část této diplomové práce zaměřena na způsoby dosažení tohoto cíle a slouží jako základ pro popis samotného výzkumu a jeho výsledků. Obě části této práce jsou spolu úzce spjaty. Podrobněji je celá práce rozdělena do sedmi kapitol.

Synchronní a diachronní pohled na využívání anglického a českého jazyka je představen v druhé kapitole. Zvláštní důraz je kladen na postupný odklon od využívání mateřštiny ve výuce jazyků společně s nástupem metod souvisejících s rozvojem komunikativní kompetence. Podrobněji jsou popsány současné metody rozvíjející zejména komunikativní kompetenci v mluveném jazyce s důrazem na jazyk vyučovací. Vzhledem k tomuto faktu, stejně tak jako s přihlédnutím k věku žáků, kteří jsou předmětem mého zkoumání, byly blíže popsány dva přístupy k vyučování: komunikativní přístup k výuce jazyků a tak zvaný Natural Approach, který je založen na principu podobnosti mezi osvojováním si jazyka cílového a mateřského. I proto se dle tohoto přístupu ve výuce cizímu jazyku, stejně tak jako při osvojování si jazyka mateřského, objevuje období, ve kterém žáci neprodukují jazyk, jsou pouze jazykem obklopeni a podvědomě jej vstřebávají. Tento přístup je zmíněn společně s detailní analýzou Krashenových hypotéz o osvojování si cizích jazyků, na které je založen. Krashenovy hypotézy mají silný vliv na vyučování jazyků již od osmdesátých let dvacátého století, zejména na poli osvojování si jazyka v podmínkách, kdy

jsou žáci jazyku neustále vystaveni. Jednou z jeho stěžejních hypotéz je rozdíl mezi osvojováním si a učením se jazyku. Krashen vidí *osvojování si jazyka* jako podvědomý proces, který přirovnává k osvojování si jazyka mateřského. K již zmíněnému je zapotřebí smysluplné přirozené komunikace v cílovém jazyce, ve které se účastníci soustředí na obsah, ne na formu. Na druhou stranu *učení se jazyku* vnímá Krashen jako produkt vědomého učení, které vede spíše ke znalostem o jazyku, například ke znalosti gramatických struktur. Komunikativní kompetence se, dle Krashena, získává pouze na základě osvojování si jazyka, ne učením.

Komunikativní kompetenci, jejímu vývoji spolu s jednotlivými komponenty, je věnována kapitola třetí. Termín komunikativní kompetence se poprvé objevil v šedesátých letech dvacátého století a od té doby prošel značným vývojem. Tento termín je popsán nejen jako schopnost aplikovat gramatická pravidla jazyka při formování správných vět, ale také jako schopnost vědět, kdy a jaké věty použít v různých situacích. Vzhledem k zaměření práce a věku žáků, kteří jsou předmětem mého šetření, je důraz kladen zejména na komunikativní kompetenci v jazyce mluveném.

Žákům mladšího školního věku je věnována kapitola čtvrtá. Na základě principů Krashenových hypotéz a 'Natural Approach' je ukázána schopnost žáků osvojit si jazyk v určitých fázích jejich vývoje. Žáci mladšího školního věku vnímají jazyk jako celek, ne jako souhrn gramatických pravidel; ta proto není třeba vysvětlovat a pro žáky jsou většinou ještě nesrozumitelná. Jejich jazyková kompetence se rozvíjí na základě předložených příkladů, které mohou napodobovat a jejichž významu jsou velmi dobře schopni porozumět i bez podpory jazyka mateřského. Neméně důležité je také zohlednění jejich schopnosti soustředit se na jednu aktivitu po relativně krátkou dobu, která je definována maximálně deseti minutami. Proto je nutné aktivity často měnit, ovšem není již nutné, souběžně měnit i téma prezentované látky. Výsledkem takto vedené výuky by mělo být jejich vnímání jazyka jako přirozeného komunikačního prostředku.

Vzhledem k tomu, že cílem této diplomové práce je zjistit, zda si žáci vyučovaní na základě těchto principů osvojí komunikativní kompetenci v mluveném jazyce více, než žáci vyučovaní cílovému jazyku jazykem mateřským, je další kapitola věnována testování mluveného projevu. Představeny jsou typy testů, jejich reliabilita a validity, dostupné testovací techniky, tvorba testů a hodnotící systémy. Jako nejvhodnější byl vybrán test, který po daném období hodnotí dosaženou úroveň komunikativní kompetence ve vztahu ke kurzu, kterého se žáci účastní; v tomto případě dosaženou úroveň žáků třetích ročníku po pěti

měsících výuky. Vybrané a detailně popsané jsou techniky založené na popisu obrázků a principu vhodných odpovědí na dané otázky. Konkrétní test byl vytvořen na základě tématických plánů testovaných skupin. Má-li být test dobrým prostředkem měření, musí být značný důraz kladen na dodržení validity a reliability testu. Validita testu se zabývá jeho obsahem. Jinými slovy, validní test by měl testovat pouze látku, se kterou byly žáci seznámeni. Na druhou stranu reliability testu zaručuje stabilní měření výkonu testovaných žáků, což konkrétně znamená, že například výsledky stejného testu daného stejným žákům v různých dnech by měly být téměř shodné. Použitý test byl pro potřeby ověření reliability takto pilotován a sledán vyhovujícím. Oboje zmíněné je v práci detailně rozebráno na základě jejich relevantních komponentů. Na základě druhu testu, s důrazem na jeho reliability, byl vybrán odpovídající hodnotící systém. Proto je část diplomové práce věnována popisu holistického hodnotícího systému, který je označen jako nejvhodnější k získávání objektivních souvislých výsledků hlavně z důvodu, že se opírá o hodnotící škálu. Hodnotící škála je většinou rozdělena do pěti kategorií hodnocených odděleně. Tyto jsou: porozumění a schopnost interakce, výslovnost, gramatická správnost, slovní zásoba a plynulost mluveného projevu. Tvorba konkrétní hodnotící škály, použité pro potřeby empirického šetření, je popsána v kapitole, která je věnována samotnému výzkumu.

Tato kapitola popisuje jednotlivé fáze výzkumu: definování si cíle, pozorování učitelů se záměrem zvolit vhodné účastníky výzkumu, první zkušební hodinu s cílem porovnat úroveň dvou tříd vybraných pro výzkum, proces a výsledky testování, druhou zkušební hodinu se cílem ohodnotit úroveň obou tříd, interpretaci získaných dat a jejich následnou evaluaci.

Cíl práce byl definován již v počátku. Po vyhodnocení pozorování v hodinách, které je zaměřeno na úroveň užívání mateřského a cílového jazyka při výuce byli vybráni dva učitelé, následně označeni jako učitel A a B, čemuž korespondují i dvě zkoumané jazykové skupiny žáků třetích tříd, skupina A a B. Zde je nutno poznamenat, že oba učitelé vyučují ve velmi podobných podmínkách, tudíž výsledky dvou zkoumaných skupin jsou porovnatelné.

První zkušební hodina byla odučena v obou skupinách v půli října za účelem zhodnocení úrovně zkoumaných skupin. Obě hodiny byly stejné. Využila jsem pro žáky neznámých aktivit a instrukcí v cílovém jazyce. Pro její hodnocení byl vytvořen pozorovací arch, do kterého bylo zaznamenáno a následně vyhodnoceno, zda a jak byli žáci schopni porozumět anglickému jazyku a časový harmonogram jednotlivých aktivit. Výsledkem

porovnání obou skupin bylo zjištění, že jejich schopnost porozumět cílovému jazyku byla zhruba na stejné úrovni, čímž byla potvrzena jejich vhodnost pro dané šetření.

Během posledního týdne ledna proběhlo pilotování testu a následné testování obou skupin. K tomuto účelu byla vytvořena již zmíněná hodnotící škála a výsledek každého žáka byl individuálně zaznamenán do evaluačního archu. Vzhelem k předmětu testování byl při hodnocení výsledků použit tak zvaný princip vážení, jímž byla dána vyšší důležitost kategoriím: porozumění a schopnosti interakce, výslovnosti a plynulosti mluveného projevu. Výsledkem testu bylo zjištění, že skupina B, jenž byla vyučována cílovému jazyku s podporou jazyka mateřského, uspěla lépe než skupina A, vyučována téměř výhradně v jazyce cílovém. Maximální dosažená hodnota testu byla 72 bodů. Průměrná hodnota žáků skupiny A byla 54,6 bodu, skupiny B 60,8 bodu. Skupina B obstála lépe i za předpokladu hodnocení jednotlivých kategorií jazyka odděleně.

Následovala druhá zkušební hodina, která byla založena na stejných principech jako první zkušební hodina. Její výsledky nepotvrdily ani nevyvrátily hodnoty získané v testu. Skupina A obstála lépe než skupina B. Tento rozdíl je nepatrný a nemůže mu proto být přikládán značný význam.

Celkový výsledek empirického šetření tedy ukázal, že si žáci vyučovaní jazyku s podporou jazyka mateřského osvojili schopnost komunikace na vyšší úrovni, než žáci vyučovaní výlučně jazykem cílovým. Tento výsledek je v rozporu s teoretickým základem diplomové práce, stejně tak jako v rozporu s mým přesvědčením. Při hledání odůvodnění pro takovýto výsledek byly vzaty v potaz další faktory kromě vyučovacího jazyka, které mohly výsledek částečně či zásadně ovlivnit. Tyto faktory dělím do dvou skupin. Na faktory spojené s osobou učitele a na faktory opírající se o teorie vyučování jazyků. Ve spojitosti s osobou učitele je nutno vzít v potaz nejen jazyk, kterým vyučují, ale také jejich osobnost samotnou, dosažené vzdělání, zkušenost a používané vyučovací techniky. Po zvážení výše zmíněného a dostupných informací je učitel B zhodnocen jako znalejší vyučovacích metodologických postupů nutných k dosažení cíle vyučovacího procesu. Stejně tak rozhodnutí vyučovat v jazyce cílovém je ohodnoceno jako náročný úkol a učitel, který se rozhodne pro takto vedenou výuku musí být vysoce odborně vzdělaný, aby bylo dosaženo požadovaného výsledku. Obtížnost jazykových modifikací je detailně rozebrána a nevýhody neschopnosti modifikovat jazyk na úroveň všech žáků jsou prezentovány. Jako příklad takového selhání by mohli být dva žáci ze skupiny A, kteří dosáhli v testu extrémně nízkých výsledků. Důvodem může být kumulace probírané látky, které daní žáci nerozuměli, tutíž se neosvojená látka

nashromáždila na množství, které se již nedalo zvládnout a žáci zůstali ve výuce pozadu. Výsledky těchto žáků výrazně ovlivnily průměrnou dosaženou hodnotu skupiny A. Zatímco výše zmíněné faktory ovlivňující výsledky testu byly úzce spojeny s osobou učitele, je také možné vyhledat jisté faktory spojené s teoriemi výuky cizích jazyků, zejména s již zmíněnou Krashenovou hypotézou rozdílu mezi osvojováním si a učením se jazyku. Dle Krashenovy hypotézy si skupina A jazyk osvojuje, zatímco skupina B se jazyk učí. Žáci, kteří se jazyku učí, procházejí v prvotních fázích rapidnějším procesem ve schopnosti užívání jazyka, ale tato výhoda je označována jako pouze dočasná. Oproti tomu žáci, kteří si jazyk osvojují, mohou procházet již zmíněným obdobím, kdy nejsou ještě schopni jazyk sami produkovat, ale z dlouhodobější perspektivy budou kvalitnějšími uživateli jazyka.

Přestože výsledky výzkumu neprokázaly přínos vyučování cizímu jazyku jeho užíváním, může být teno výsledek pouze dočasný a naopak opačný v delším časovém horizontu. Získaná data by proto mohla sloužit jako podklad pro dlouhodobější výzkum, který by snad přesněji odpověděl na položenou klíčovou otázku.

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10. Appendix

Appendix 1 – observation sheet – use of English/Czech

Appendix 2 – observation sheet – Experimental lesson 1

Appendix 3 – questionnaire for pupils

Appendix 4 – interview with teachers

Appendix 5 – list of phrases and vocabulary learnt

Appendix 6 – oral test

Appendix 7 – rating scale

Appendix 8 – evaluation sheet

Appendix 9 – oral test results

- maximum score
- results of the pilot test
- results of group A
- results of group B

Appendix 10 – observation sheet – Experimental lesson 2

Appendix 11 – worksheet for pupils

Appendix 12 – extra task for pupils

Appendix 13 – pupils' graph

Appendix 14 – translations from Czech

ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	Výuka anglického jazyka žáků mladšího školního věku cílovým jazykem
Autor práce	Klára Kostková
Obor	Učitelství anglického jazyka
Rok obhajoby	2006
Vedoucí práce	PaedDr. Monika Černá, Ph.D.
Anotace	Práce se zabývá rozvojem a dosaženou úrovní komunikativní kompetence v mluveném jazyce u žáků mladšího školního věku. Důraz je kladen na jazyk, ve kterém je výuka vedena a rozdíl mezi výsledky žáků vyučovaných v anglickém a českém jazyce je následně podroben empirickému šetření.
Klíčová slova	komunikativní kompetence žák mladšího školního věku testování mluveného projevu anglický jazyk český jazyk