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Fakulta filozofická  
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**Home Schooling in the Czech Republic  
with Regard  
to Teaching/Learning English**

Diplomová práce

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Thesis

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# **Domácí vzdělávání v České republice s ohledem na výuku angličtiny**

Diplomová práce

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2006

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis deals with the subject of homeschooling in the Czech Republic. Two main conceptions of this alternative form of education will be shortly described after defining the term “homeschooling”. History of modern homeschooling in the Czech Republic is also included as it gives insight into greater context and contemporary state. The principal theme is the question of the position of English teaching/learning within homeschooling. Several chosen aspects of this teaching/learning are discussed on a theoretical level and subsequently they are the subject matter of research. The research itself was focused on the following: (1) who taught English in homeschooling families, (2) what textbooks the families used and to what extent, (3) whether the families taught pronunciation and how, (4) whether and how the families ensured listening and listening comprehension. All this data was gathered by a method of structured interviews and a method of a questionnaire.

## **ABSTRAKT**

Práce se zabývá problematikou domácího vzdělávání v České republice. Nejprve je definován termín „domácí vzdělávání“ a poté jsou stručně popsány dva hlavní koncepty této alternativní formy vzdělávání. Součástí práce je také historie moderního domácího vzdělávání v České republice, jelikož pomáhá lépe pochopit širší souvislosti a současný stav. Hlavním námětem je otázka postavení výuky anglického jazyka v rámci domácího vzdělávání. Několik vybraných aspektů této výuky je diskutováno nejprve na teoretické rovině a poté jsou předmětem výzkumného šetření. Samotný výzkum byl rozdělen do čtyřech dílčích výzkumných úkolů: zjistit (1) kdo učí angličtinu v rodinách, které vzdělávají děti doma (2) jaké učebnice tyto rodiny používají a v jakém rozsahu, (3) zda tyto rodiny vyučují výslovnost a jakým způsobem a (4) zda a jak tyto rodiny zajišťují poslech a porozumění poslechu. Jako techniky sběru dat bylo využito strukturovaného rozhovoru a dotazníku.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is often claimed that homeschooling originated in the United States of America. Thus, it is very interesting that 876 children<sup>1</sup> at the age of 6 to 14 were educated at home in Bohemia<sup>2</sup> in 1903. The Education Act No. 62/1869 enabled parents either to send their children to school or to educate them at home. The only condition was that the home education had to be comparable to school curriculum. On the other hand, officials were allowed to make an examination to find out whether and how a child was educated. This was true more than one hundred years ago. However, what is the situation of homeschooling in the Czech Republic at the present time? Are parents allowed to choose this alternative form of education for their children? Is it legal? These questions are answered in this thesis.

Homeschooling as well as all other alternative forms of education has its opponents and proponents, its positive and negative features, its advantages and disadvantages. Those who are not well acquainted with the concept of homeschooling believe that a great danger is a lack of socialisation. Several investigations in this sphere proved that homeschooled children interact with other people without problems (Taylor and Petrie 2000). Similar conclusion made Mertin (1999) who examined six homeschooled children in the Czech Republic: "These children are socially and emotionally well, are not ashamed to talk, are not afraid to set requirements, they behave in a way that is appropriate for their age<sup>3</sup>." Although the discussion concerning socialization has not ceased since modern homeschooling came into existence, it is not analysed in this thesis.

The focus is on modern homeschooling in the Czech Republic with special interest in English teaching/learning within this framework. The aim is to introduce conditions under which homeschooling was and is performed and provide an insight to the situation of English teaching/learning on both theoretical and practical level.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sweb.cz/pamet-DV/vse.htm> [viewed 10 February 2006].

<sup>2</sup> The largest part of the Czech Republic, then a part of Austria Hungaria Empire (until 1918).

<sup>3</sup> Own translation. "Tyto děti jsou sociálně i emočně v pořádku, nestydí se mluvit, nebojí se klást požadavky, chovají se přiměřeně věku."

The first chapter tries to define the term “homeschooling”, describes the conception of this alternative form of education and analyses its modern history in the Czech Republic, including contemporary situation. Chapter Two relates to the English language within homeschooling by opening the question of educator’s knowledge of English and the issue of teaching materials. Further, one language system, namely, pronunciation dealing especially with individual phonemes, and one language skill, namely, listening comprehension, are discussed.

Research following the theoretical part that was focused exclusively on the situation of English teaching/learning within homeschooling is analysed in detail in Chapter Three. The research was based on four research tasks that are listed in the beginning of the chapter. Investigations were performed by means of two methods. A method of structured interviews provided an insight to four homeschooling families and to their approach to English teaching/learning. Then, a method of a questionnaire enabled to investigate other homeschooling families. The findings were discussed and analysed in accordance with the research tasks. The last chapter ends with a partial conclusion.

## 1. Homeschooling in the Czech Republic

### 1.1. What is Homeschooling?

Simply stated, “homeschooling” refers to the situation where school-age children do not attend school but they are taught by their parents at home.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to characterise homeschooling precisely as every part of the definition is questionable and should be specified. Firstly, the age of the children varies from country to country in dependence on the education law valid in every country. Secondly, the explanation that the children “do not attend school” does not mean that they do not go to schools at all. Holt, one of the first promoters of homeschooling in the USA, uses the word “‘homeschooling’ to describe the process by which children grow and learn in the world *without going, or going very much, to schools*”<sup>5</sup> (Holt and Farenga 2003, 279). Many of the children participate for example in after-school classes. Further, the statement that the children “are taught” is not necessarily true for there is a certain number of families that follow Holt who was supportive of the idea that parents should ‘facilitate learning rather than impose instruction’ (Holt and Farenga 2003, xix). His way to homeschool is often called “unschooling”. Nevertheless, parents are not the only ones who educate the children for Petrie states that “homeschooling” is “the full time education of children in and around the home *by their parents or guardians, or by tutors appointed by the parents or guardians*”<sup>6</sup> (Petrie 1998, 285). Finally, Petrie’s definition includes the phrase “in and around the home” which points out that it is not precise to argue that homeschooling is conducted exclusively at home. Holt states that the children learn “at home, or in whatever other places and situations (and the more the better) we can make available to them” (Holt and Farenga 2003, 1).

The word “homeschooling” (home schooling/home-schooling) started to be used in the United States of America; however, the term may be criticized for it relates the education at home to the institution of school and, by implication, to teaching/learning methods used traditionally at school. In contrast, for example, Thomas (2002) comments that most families eventually conclude that homeschooling does not mean

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<sup>4</sup> Similarly, *Pedagogical Dictionary* (Průcha, Walterová and Mareš 2003, 48) gives the definition of “homeschooling” as “education being performed at home, in a family, when children do not go to school and are taught by their parents.” (Own translation. “Vzdělávání probíhající doma, v rodině, kdy děti nedocházejí do školy a vyučují je jejich rodiče.”)

<sup>5</sup> Italics added.

<sup>6</sup> Italics added.

that parents will create a mini classroom at home; rather, this form of education is connected with different teaching/learning methods based mainly on the individual approach to children. Therefore, this alternative form of education is also called “home education”, while the two terms are used as synonyms. An interesting development can be found in Czech terminology. The first institution connected with this alternative form of education in the Czech Republic was called Společnost přátel domácí školy (The Society of Home School Friends), founded in 1997, while the Czech term “domácí škola” is free translation of the English term “homeschooling”. This Czech term was also used in most articles published on the subject during the early years of the promotion of homeschooling in the Czech Republic. Another Czech term “domácí vzdělávání” that matches the English term “home education” was used in legal documents permitting the form of education in question and can be found in the title of the second society created to promote homeschooling. The society, which was founded in 2002, is called Asociace pro domácí vzdělávání (The Association for Home Education). Simonová (2004, 1), the president of the society until April 2005, comments that the term “domácí vzdělávání” began to be used instead of the expression “domácí škola” because the latter seems to describe a school that is conducted at home and does not point to a completely different approach to education. However, the recently passed Education Act calls this alternative form of education “individuální vzdělávání”, which is translated as “individual tuition” in the English version of the act (see Appendix 1). It is worth mentioning that the term “individual tuition” is not usually connected with the subject of homeschooling in foreign literature. In this thesis, both terms “homeschooling” and “home education” will be used as synonyms. Although the term “individual tuition” may refer to various situations within teaching/learning process, it will be used as a synonym for the two above-mentioned terms in this thesis.

## **1.2. The conception of homeschooling**

To fully comprehend the conception of homeschooling, it is sensible to start with a short investigation of reasons why parents choose this alternative approach to the education of their children. Holt states three main reasons why people take their children out of school:

They think that raising their children is their business not the government's; they enjoy being with their children and watching and helping them learn, and don't

want to give that up to others; they want to keep them from being hurt, mentally, physically, and spiritually. (Holt and Farenga 2003, 1)

As for the reasons, Petrie (2002, 291, 292) first highlights that families are likely to have more than one single reason for homeschooling, rather, they have a combination of reasons of various importance. Then she provides the following list:

- the parent's dissatisfaction with existing school provision;
- the parent's claim to be a better provider of education than the schools, with freedom to use different educational methods;
- the parent's strong religious convictions;
- a lack of respect for the child as an individual in school;
- the parent's strong ideological (non-religious) grounds;
- geographical mobility of the family.

Czech parents give similar reasons for their decision to homeschool. For example, in school year 2001/2002, Letohradská Elementary<sup>7</sup> School found out that homeschooling parents especially wanted to ensure individual approach to the child, firstly, because of his/her health or mental limitations, secondly, because of his/her above average intellect. Further, they wished to participate in the education of their children and the last mentioned reason was a long-term stay in a foreign country. Next, the investigation of Ostrava-Výškovice Elementary School Reports<sup>8</sup> on homeschooling helped to identify four reasons (out of 16) that had mainly been stated by homeschooling parents belonging to that stem school. One of the priorities was to strengthen the family and spend more time with children. Another priority was the individual approach to a child together with the possibility to use more appropriate forms and methods of education. Then the parents wished to give their children more time for their hobbies and thus avoid stress. Finally, poor health and health limitations of children were mentioned as well.<sup>9</sup>

The reasons for home education have revealed several significant features of homeschooling. Firstly, this form of education concentrates on a child, emphasizes the individual approach and enables to show consideration for a child's needs. Secondly, it strengthens family and thus creates a relaxed atmosphere stimulating learning. Thirdly,

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<sup>7</sup> Adjectives *elementary* and *basic* are used as synonyms in relation to school education in this thesis.

<sup>8</sup> Bakončík 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> The order of the reasons is not authoritative as it changed a little over the years.

homeschooling is flexible. Other features are closely connected with different approaches to home education.

To grasp the conception of this alternative form of education, it is necessary to realize that “homeschooling” is a very broad term. Farenga, president of Holt Associates and father of three homeschooled daughters, likewise said: “The word ‘homeschooling’ doesn’t refer to any one practice; it just refers to families learning outside of school” (Holt and Farenga 2003, 237). However, Farenga (2003, 237-239) distinguishes two main approaches:

1) **School at Home.** Families following this approach use textbooks as pupils at ordinary school and transfer school schedules and curricula to their home. The curriculum regulates which subjects in which class children will learn. Regular testing is a common procedure. The so-called “project” approach may be a part of the school-at-home approach. Families following this philosophy teach and learn by means of projects based on a theme and covering more subjects.

2) **Unschooling.** As the title indicates, this form of home education is not based on a curriculum. It thus enables children to learn entirely at their speed and in accordance with their needs and interest. This philosophy may be best documented by the fact that, on the one hand, some unschoolers study astronomy at the age of eight, and, on the other hand, only at the age of ten do some unschoolers learn to read.

Although there exist pure school-at-home families and pure unschooling families, Farenga claims that most families stand somewhere between the two approaches (Holt and Farenga 2003, 227).

Do the above-mentioned approaches occur in the Czech Republic? A Bulletin of The Association for Home Education<sup>10</sup> describes two different approaches. “School-at-home” refers to the education that is similar to the teaching/learning of subjects at ordinary school. Although individual needs of children are taken into account, parents imitate the traditional procedure of revision, introduction of new subject matter and practice. The other approach is outstanding in the usage of new methods and approaches as, for example, project teaching/learning or subject integration. The teaching/learning

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.domaciskola.cz/archiv/buletiny/buletinADV6\\_2004.pdf](http://www.domaciskola.cz/archiv/buletiny/buletinADV6_2004.pdf) [viewed 8 December 2005].



is not based on a strict schedule, rather, children learn the whole day. It is usual for families following this approach that they use museums, galleries and media. Many families gradually shifted from the former to the latter and most Czech homeschooling families combine both approaches. When compared with Farenga's division, both Czech approaches come within the first philosophy. The other one, unschooling, is probably not possible for, in the Czech Republic, homeschooling is closely<sup>11</sup> related to the traditional school system.

### **1.3. History of Homeschooling in the Czech Republic**

#### **1.3.1. Situation before 1998 and experimental verification**

Before 1998, according to the Education Act<sup>12</sup>, it was not possible to educate children out of school for it was compulsory schooling, in contrast to compulsory education<sup>13</sup>, that was the core of the Czech system of education. In spite of that, two families found a way to teach their children at home. The Tůma family started a private One-teacher school (for two of their three daughters) in 1992<sup>14</sup> and then, in 1993, they helped the Fejfar family to start their school. However, the mother of the latter family taught also about six children from other families, which was quite demanding (Gališová 1999, 23, 57). Later, the Act No. 138/1995 that upgraded the Education Act set the minimal number of pupils attending one school, which made it difficult for other families in their efforts to start schools for their children. As for the third family, Farris (1998) explained that they “have children born in America and they are being left alone on the basis of their dual citizenship.”

The public learnt about homeschooling gradually from various sources. Tůma translated two popular books (*How Children Fail* and *How Children Learn*) by Holt into the Czech language. These translations were published in 1994 and 1995, respectively. In the mid-1990's, first articles about homeschooling were published in Czech periodicals. Semín (2005), one of the first promoters of homeschooling in the

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<sup>11</sup> It is interesting that Farenga warns: “If homeschoolers wish to work with the schools, then they will be judged like the schools, which limits the possibilities for experimentation and exploration at home” (Holt and Farenga 2003, 282).

<sup>12</sup> The Act No. 29/1984 Coll.

<sup>13</sup> Petrie analyses the difference between compulsory schooling and compulsory education that were often misused as synonyms (Petrie 1995, 286-288).

<sup>14</sup> The private school finished in school year 1998/1999, when the youngest daughter finished her fifth year (Gališová 1999, 57).

Czech Republic, mentioned another meaningful event, namely, the First World Congress of Families that was held in Prague, 19-22 March 1997, sponsored, and hosted by the Howard Center in conjunction with the Civic Institute of the Czech Republic. Farris, a homeschooling father, highlighted there advantages of homeschooling in his speech “Reclaiming the Large Family Ideal”. The speaker was the founder of the Home School Legal Defense Association in the United States of America and a father of ten children.

On 7 February 1997<sup>15</sup>, Semín (who was influenced especially by homeschooling families whom he stayed with when attending various conferences in the United States), together with two mothers, Rejlová and Cekotová, founded The Society of Home School Friends to promote homeschooling in the Czech Republic. Tůma (2005) learnt about the society in autumn 1997 and offered his help to the Semín family. Later Tůma found out that the then Deputy Minister of Education Roupec planned to use experimental verification to try new things in education. That was why the promoters of homeschooling focused on the experimental verification. After a short correspondence with the Deputy Minister, Tůma prepared a proposal of experimental verification of homeschooling and sent a letter that proposed to start negotiations about its legalization.

Around this time, in March 1998, there was an official meeting between Tůma and Farris, on the one hand, and the Deputy Minister and Senator Vízek, the chairperson of the education committee, on the other hand. Farris commented:

His [Roupec’s] attitude was extraordinarily refreshing. And he was clearly supportive of the concept of home education. Although Mr. Roupec does not have the legal authority to change the law, he is empowered to authorize educational experiments. On the basis of a five-year experiment, he agreed to make home schooling legally possible for families who want to teach their children through the fifth grade<sup>16</sup>.

However, the preparation phase was not easy as the promoters did not have any idea how to cope with compulsory schooling and, in addition, such experimental verification had to be guaranteed by a school. They therefore decided that the solution would be for the children to be registered in a school that would guarantee the experimental

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<sup>15</sup> [http://ipoint.financninoviny.cz/detail\\_subj.php?ent\\_id=1817260](http://ipoint.financninoviny.cz/detail_subj.php?ent_id=1817260) [viewed 16 December 2005].

<sup>16</sup> In *Home School Heartbeat* radio programme on 2 June 1998.

<http://www.hslda.org/docs/hshb/4/hshb0422.asp> [viewed 16 November 2005].

verification. Husband and wife Semín tried to find a school that would co-operate with them and Tůma would communicate with the Ministry of Education. After a refusal at Elementary Parochial School of Saint Ursuline, they found an obliging head teacher at Brother School<sup>17</sup> in Prague (Tůma 2005). The head teacher Bulř (2005) mentioned several reasons for his decision to participate in the experiment. First, he remembered one boy who had attended his school and for whom this form of education would have probably been an ideal solution as he was wheelchair bound. Secondly, the head teacher had an interesting experience in the school year 1997/1998. One family from Kolín wanted their child to attend Brother School, however, they asked whether an individual plan would have been possible because it would have been too demanding for their first-grade<sup>18</sup> child to travel to Prague and back every day. Next, he believed that Brother School as a representative of Christians should have been willing to help others. Thus, Brother School was stated as a bearer in the proposal.

The official meeting at the Ministry of Education was held in spring 1998. There were Roupec and Brunclřková from the Department of Elementary Education on the one hand, and Tůma, Semín and Bulř for homeschooling in attendance. Although the negotiation was short, Roupec promised to approve of the experimental verification, however, it was limited to the first level<sup>19</sup>. Further details were to be negotiated with the Department of Elementary Education. As a result, Brunclřková drafted a proposal of conditions for the first stage of experimental verification to which Tůma wrote the analysis. The most significant hurdle crossed was the objection that the evaluation of homeschooling outcomes would not be in a form of a commission exam but in a form of feedback (on a child's progress) between school and the family. Another important issue was that schools would get the full normative on homeschooled children. The modified conditions<sup>20</sup> were quickly authorized (Tůma, 2005). Thus, in a letter to Bulř on 26 May 1998, it was announced that the Ministry of Education established an Experimental Verification of Alternative Organizational Form of Basic Education –

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>18</sup> In this thesis, the word *grade* is used in the sense of Act No. 561/2004 (the Education Act) Section 46 (2): “Basic education at basic schools shall consist of nine (9) grades and shall be divided into a first level (primary education) and a second level (lower secondary education). The first level shall consist of the first five grades.”

<sup>19</sup> In this thesis, the word *level* is used in the sense of Act No. 561/2004 (the Education Act) Section 46 (2). See footnote 16.

<sup>20</sup> The official version of the conditions is in Appendix 3.

Home Education at his school for a period of four<sup>21</sup> school years from 1 September 1998.

The head teacher of Parochial Elementary and Nursery School of John Amos Comenius<sup>22</sup>, Liberec, was looking for ways to meet individual needs of children. When visiting the United States of America, she had the possibility to observe a certain way of homeschooling in practice. She then learnt about the experimental verification in the Czech Republic and, in June 1998, she contacted Brunclíková and arranged everything for her school. A letter on 29 June 1998 confirmed that the Ministry of Education established Experimental Verification of Alternative Organizational Form of Basic Education – Home Education at that school for a period of five school years from 1 September 1998. It is important to mention the fact that the idea of homeschooling in Liberec was quite different from the ideas of the first promoters of homeschooling in the Czech Republic, as it was to play a significant role later. Homeschooling in connection with that school was very strict and tied to school. One of the rules that parents were obliged to follow stated that the child must have gone to school one or two days per week and parents must have met the consultant at least once a month. If a child did not attend school at all, the consultation was obligatory once a week, with the exception of families living more than 50 kilometres from the school. They were allowed to meet the consultant once a month if their child progressed well (Gališová 2003, 29, 30). On the contrary, the idea of the other promoters of homeschooling was that parents would take responsibility for their child's education fully and the main role of the institution of school would be to prevent any misapplication (Tůma 2005).

On account of distance from the stem school, Brunclíková always wanted one stem school in Morava. Husband and wife Floryk finally found Elementary School Ostrava – Výškovice<sup>23</sup> that was willing to cooperate and where the experimental verification was approved for a period of five school years from 1 September 1999. That school became also the last one where the Ministry permitted the experimental verification, in spite of the fact that several other schools made efforts to gain the permission (Tůma 2005).

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<sup>21</sup> The Brother School had then only four grades at the first level.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>23</sup> See Appendix 2.

After Brunclíková left the Ministry in 1999, homeschooling was no longer the centre of interest. This situation changed in 2001 when the Ministry made a covenant with the Research Institute of Education for co-operation in assessment of the experimental verification of home education and asked the head teachers involved to co-operate with those who worked for the Research Institute. Sadly, the man who was commissioned to assess how home education worked had shown considerable prejudice against home education even before he visited the schools. He concluded that the experimental verification was not prepared properly and highlighted that the only good model could be found at Parochial Elementary School in Liberec. Another contributing factor of this biased attitude was that the head teacher of the Brother School in Prague refused to co-operate. Finally, the Ministry decided to finish the experimental verification at that school and, in June 2001, this opportunity to participate was offered to Fejfarová<sup>24</sup>, the head teacher of Elementary School Letohradská in Prague. Fejfarová agreed immediately as she had long pursued it. Nevertheless, she informed the head teacher of Brother School, who, in the end, with the help of other important people, managed to make an appointment with the director of Department of Elementary Education and persuade him to continue with the experimental verification at Brother School, Prague. The positive outcome of the above-described difficulties was that the Ministry permitted the experimental verification at Elementary School Letohradská<sup>25</sup> which thus became the fourth school of the experimental verification. To enable the new school to gain homeschooled pupils, the Ministry limited the number of homeschooled pupils at the first three schools to the number they had at that time. It is evident from a comparison of school year 2000/2001 with school year 2001/2002 in the following table.

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<sup>24</sup> The woman that had taught her children before 1998.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 2.

**Table 1: Number of pupils enrolled in the experimental verification of home education – according to school, grade and school year**

School year	Grade	BS Prague	PENS Liberec	ES Ostrava	ES Letohradská	Total
<b>1998/1999</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	10	4	-	-	<b>14</b>
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	9	5	-	-	<b>14</b>
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	8	6	-	-	<b>14</b>
	4 <sup>th</sup>	2	6	-	-	<b>8</b>
	5 <sup>th</sup>	4	8	-	-	<b>12</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>1999/2000</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	24	14	14	-	<b>52</b>
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	23	10	7	-	<b>40</b>
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	19	8	5	-	<b>32</b>
	4 <sup>th</sup>	14	9	5	-	<b>28</b>
	5 <sup>th</sup>	6	7	6	-	<b>19</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>2000/2001</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	30	17	20	-	<b>67</b>
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	32	16	17	-	<b>65</b>
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	29	8	9	-	<b>46</b>
	4 <sup>th</sup>	21	12	8	-	<b>41</b>
	5 <sup>th</sup>	12	8	7	-	<b>27</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>2001/2002</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	22	20	20	14	<b>76</b>
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	30	11	20	6	<b>67</b>
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	34	17	11	3	<b>65</b>
	4 <sup>th</sup>	25	5	5	4	<b>39</b>
	5 <sup>th</sup>	19	8	5	4	<b>36</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>2002/2003</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	20	11	19	34	<b>84</b>
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	21	16	15	16	<b>68</b>
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	29	9	17	8	<b>63</b>
	4 <sup>th</sup>	28	11	8	5	<b>52</b>
	5 <sup>th</sup>	27	3	6	4	<b>40</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>307</b>

Source: Nováková, Brant, Tupý (2002)

BS = Brother School

PENS = Parochial Elementary and Nursery School

ES = Elementary School

Although things seemed to be running smoothly, a critical situation developed during the summer holidays of 2001 when the schools were sent so-called “new conditions” of the experimental verification that were approved by the Ministry on 14 June 2001.

Kostecká (2003, 116, 117) highlighted the most radical changes from the original conditions. Firstly, home education was perceived as an emergency educational alternative that was restricted only to pupils with specific educational needs. Secondly, the authority of a head teacher was restricted as the “new conditions” regulated who could be included into this alternative education and what other conditions a family had to fulfil. Lastly, compulsory four-hour consultations once a month represented another problem, especially for families who lived far away from the stem school. Tůma (2005) referred that those conditions were based on the model of home education performed at Parochial Elementary School, Liberec. As soon as Tůma learnt about the “new conditions”, he and Semín negotiated with the chairperson of the Educational Committee of the House of Parliament. They were informed that it was an executive decision to which the Parliament was not allowed to interfere. Thus, the only possible solution was waging a media campaign<sup>26</sup> against the “new conditions”. This was led mainly by homeschooling parents belonging to Brother School, Prague. As a result, the Deputy Minister of Education Müllner retracted the “new conditions” in autumn 2001. However, the head teacher of Elementary School Letohradská, Prague, accepted them, as she did not start the experimental verification until September 2001 and had not been provided with the original conditions before.

### 1.3.2. Legal promotion

With all the problems going on, a new Education Act was being put into place. According to Kostecká (2003, 116, 117), although the bill contained a section concerning homeschooling, it closely resembled the “new conditions” that were discussed above. After the first reading the bill was recommitted in May 2001. In spring 2002, the Ministry reported a revised bill, however, again with no changes in the section concerning homeschooling. That development was closely linked with the formation of the Association for Home Education<sup>27</sup> as its primary objective<sup>28</sup> was advancing the

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<sup>26</sup> For example, *Mladá fronta dnes* (Young Front Today) 20/8/2001 Bendová, J.: Dirigent je stát (The State is a Conductor); 20/8/2001 Holecová, S.: Domácím školám hrozí zánik (Home Schools Face Extinction); 22/8/2001 Semín, M.: Prázdninové školní podrazy (Holiday School Dirty Tricks); 30/8/2001 Motýl, I.: Domácí škola? Stěží (Homeschooling? Hardly); 6/9/2001 Drápal, D.: Mé děti nepatří státu (My Children do not Belong to the State). The issue was discussed also in *Lidové noviny* (People's Newspaper), *Učitelské noviny* (Teacher's Newspaper) etc.

<sup>27</sup> The Association for Home Education started to exist in May 2002.

<sup>28</sup> See The Memorandum and Articles of the Association for Home Education. [http://www.domaciskola.cz/zaklinf/stanovy\\_html](http://www.domaciskola.cz/zaklinf/stanovy_html) [viewed 16 November 2005].

interests of home education in the legislation of the Czech Republic. The Presidium<sup>29</sup> was assigned to work for such a version of the Education Act that would be in accordance with objectives of the Association. That meant that home education would become one of many ways to fulfil the right of children to be educated in the Czech Republic. The association launched an intensive “Campaign for Pressing Home Education into the Education Act” in November 2002. Simonová (2004) stated two aims of the project: firstly, to prepare the basis for the legalization of home education, and secondly, to increase public information and thus ensure the approval of a desirable form of the bill among members of Parliament. The representatives of the association first tried to affect the bill during the preparation phase in the Ministry. Their proposal was supported by the head teachers of the stem schools and by a representative of the Czech School Inspection. The director of the Department of Elementary Education asked the association to amend the relevant section in the bill and promised to pass it to producers of a paragraph version. The amendments were sent to the Ministry in January 2003. Nevertheless, the co-operation of the Ministry proved to be questionable as the bill passed through to External Commentary Proceeding again with no changes in the section concerning homeschooling.

The association focused on the three most important amendments out of twelve that had been prepared. The primary attention and prominence was given to the requirement that the decision as to whether to include a pupil into home education would not be given to the regional authority but to the head teacher of the stem school. The team of volunteers from the association did a tremendous amount of work by means of lobbying, the media and legal consultation service. The result? Simonová (2004, 5) summarized their success this way:

**The version of the Act was influenced in the External Commentary Proceeding** (the decisive authority belongs to the head teacher, not to an officer of the regional authority), **during the examination in the Legislative Committee of the Government** (the costs of home education are covered by parents, except school expenses – the original bill enabled the interpretation that parents would cover also school expenses), and **during the examination in the Chamber of Deputies** (“medical reasons” as the only explicitly listed reason for

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<sup>29</sup> Jaroslava Simonová, president, Bohumil Bulří, vice-president, Petr Plaňanský, David Floryk, Brigita Ptáčková (See the resolution of general meeting, Prague, 18/5/2002; [http://www.domaciskola.cz/zaklinf/vh/vh\\_2002\\_usn\\_html](http://www.domaciskola.cz/zaklinf/vh/vh_2002_usn_html) [viewed 16 November 2005]).



including a pupil into home education were removed from the Act by means of an amendment), it was **discussed also during the examination in the Senate.**<sup>30</sup>

The so-called Education Act was approved as the Act No. 561 of 24 September 2004 on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education. It includes Section 41 entitled “Individual Tuition” (see Appendix 1) where all the three above-mentioned requirements are incorporated. The Act entered into effect on 1 January 2005<sup>31</sup>. Bulíř (2005) expressed the opinion that the promoters of home education considered including this form of education in the Education Act to be a great step forward although the version of the legal amendment was not satisfying. It is worth mentioning, for example, that individual tuition was legalized only for pupils attending the first level of basic school. By means of such legalization, the Czech Republic became unique as, in all countries where home education is legal, it is permitted for the whole period of compulsory schooling or education (Simonová 2004, 4).

### **Financial conditions**

In an e-mail message to the author on 22 February 2006, the Ministry reported that the schools included in the experimental verification had originally been given the same state financial support on a homeschooling pupil as on a pupil who had attended school. This sum of money that was based on the state financial support for elementary schools with more than 250 pupils was for a test and was given to the schools until the end of 2001. In connection with a partial evaluation, the amount of state financial support was adjusted and the sum of money given to the schools was halved from 2002. At present, the funding is performed according to regional state financial support that is regulated by Order No. 492/2005 Coll., which entered into effect on 1 January 2006.

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<sup>30</sup> Own translation. “**Znění zákona bylo ovlivněno v průběhu vnějšího připomínkového řízení (rozhodující pravomoc má ředitel, nikoliv úředník krajského úřadu), v průběhu projednávání legislativní radou vlády (náklady na domácí vzdělávání hradí rodiče, ovšem kromě výdajů školy – původní návrh umožňoval ten výklad, že rodiče budou hradit i výdaje školy), v průběhu projednávání Poslaneckou sněmovnou (ze zákona byly pozměňovacím návrhem odstraněny „zdravotní důvody“ jako jediný taxativně vyjmenovaný důvod zařazení žáka do domácího vzdělávání), vedla se o něm diskuse i v průběhu projednávání Senátem.**”

<sup>31</sup> On 17 December 2002, the Ministry stretched the experimental verification to school year 2003/2004. Further, on 6 January 2004, the Ministry stretched the experimental verification to the time when the Education Act entered into effect or until the end of school year 2004/2005. (Jaroslav Müllner, letters to Bulíř, 10 January 2003 and 14 January 2004 respectively).

### 1.3.3. Contemporary situation

During the experimental verification, a functional model of cooperation between a family and a stem school was created. The Education Act has enabled this model, which is based on regular<sup>32</sup> evaluation of individual tuition outcomes and on optional consultation services, to broaden itself to other schools.

#### Schools

Since 1 January 2005, home education may be realized in connection to any school if the conditions stated in the Education Act are fulfilled. It is interesting to compare the number of pupils included in home education at the four stem schools in 2002/2003 (the experimental verification) and in 2005/2006 (after the Act entered into effect). Since the focus of this thesis is on English language teaching/learning, figures in brackets show the number of pupils learning English.

**Table 2: Number of pupils enrolled in the experimental verification of home education in 2002/2003 – according to school and grade**

Grade	BS Prague	PENS Liberec	ES Ostrava	ES Letohradská	Total
1 <sup>st</sup>	20	11	19	34	<b>84</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	21	16	15	16	<b>68</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	29	9	17	8	<b>63</b>
4 <sup>th</sup>	28	11	8	5	<b>52</b>
5 <sup>th</sup>	27	3	6	4	<b>40</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>307</b>

Source: Nováková, Brant, Tupý (2002)

BS = Brother School

PENS = Parochial Elementary and Nursery School

ES = Elementary School

**Table 3: Number of pupils enrolled in individual tuition in 2005/2006 – according to school and grade**

Grade	BS Prague	PENS Liberec	ES Ostrava	ES Letohradská*	Total
1 <sup>st</sup>	7	4	2	7	<b>20</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	14	11	4	14	<b>43</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	6	9	6	10	<b>31</b>
4 <sup>th</sup>	5 (5)	4 (4)	4 (4)	13	<b>26</b>
5 <sup>th</sup>	7 (5) <sup>#</sup>	1 (1)	4 (3) <sup>o</sup>	14	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>146</b>

Source: own investigation

<sup>32</sup> The evaluation is performed at the end of each term, which means two times a school year (Act No. 561/2004 Section 41(4)).

BS = Brother School

PENS = Parochial Elementary and Nursery School

ES = Elementary School

\*The school did not mention the number of pupils learning the English language.

#One pupil learnt the German language and one pupil followed the educational programme Special School where a foreign language was not obligatory.

°One pupil learnt the German language.

The following table presents four from other schools where individual tuition is being performed this school year. Again, figures in brackets show the number of pupils learning the English language.

**Table 4: Number of pupils enrolled in individual tuition in 2005/2006 according to school and grade**

School	ES Vrané nad Vltavou	ES Středokluky	NS and ES Slapy	ES Kněžice
Type of school	Fully organized	Fully organized	One-teacher school	One-teacher school
<b>Grade</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	13 (12)	*	*
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 (5)	*	*
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	6 (6)	*	*
	4 <sup>th</sup>	7 (7)	1 (1)	1 (1)
	5 <sup>th</sup>	8 (7)	2 (2)	0
<b>Total (IT)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total number of pupils at school</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>35</b>

Source: own investigation

ES = Elementary School

NS = Nursery School

IT = Individual Tuition

\* not mentioned

The Research Institute of Education reported that they were preparing a summary report about the whole period of the experimental verification. Moreover, in cooperation with the four original stem schools, the Institute will process guidelines for all schools that grant individual tuition<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Jan Tupý, e-mail message to author, 4 January 2006.

## **Educational programme**

Homeschooling parents have a choice and can choose any of educational programmes<sup>34</sup> approved by the Ministry. These can be Elementary School Educational Programme, National School Educational Programme or Common School Educational Programme<sup>35</sup> that are still valid in school year 2005/2006. Bakončík (2000, 5, 6) stated several factors that had influenced the selection of a programme in homeschooling families granted by his school. First, most parents chose the same programme that their child followed before enrolling in home education, secondly, other parents chose the programme that was used in their local school, and thirdly, many parents chose the programme used at the stem school for the main reason that it was possible to gain elaborated thematic plans for that programme. In 2004/2005 for example, Elementary School Ostrava – Výškovice, which followed the educational programme Common School, served as a stem school for 53 homeschooling families (65 children). 30 children were educated according to the same educational programme that was used at the stem school, while 35 children were educated according to the educational programme Elementary School (Bakončík 2005).

Another opportunity which arises in connection with the Framework Education Programme for Elementary Schools is, if a school has created its own school educational programme, parents are allowed to follow it. According to the Association for Home Education, there might exist still another possibility; namely, that children are educated according to the educational programme processed by their parents if a school is willing to accept it<sup>36</sup>.

## **Groups supporting home education**

In 2005, both earlier-mentioned groups supporting home education in the Czech Republic changed their administration and, in addition, divided their operations. The Society of Home School Friends is concentrated primarily on homeschooling families and its role is mainly supportive (Semín 2005). On the other hand, the principal aim of

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<sup>34</sup> Parents can also draw directly from Standard of Elementary Education, which the authors of particular educational programmes used as the basis (Bulř and Tůmová 2000).

<sup>35</sup> *Sdělení MŠMT k učebním plánům vzdělávacích programů pro základní vzdělávání (od 1. 9. 2005)* (Announcement of Ministry of Education concerning teaching plans of educational programmes for elementary education (since 1 September 2005)  
[http://www.msmt.cz/Files/DOC/SPUP\\_komplet\\_4hod.doc](http://www.msmt.cz/Files/DOC/SPUP_komplet_4hod.doc) [viewed 26 December 2005].

<sup>36</sup> Dana Pražáková, e-mail message to author, 4 February 2006.

the Association for Home Education<sup>37</sup> is to enable home education at the second level of basic school and to professionalize its activities as soon as possible (Simonová 2004, 5).

### **Home education at the second level (lower secondary education)**

The association has taken the first steps in making home education possible at the second level. A very detailed proposal of an experimental verification at the second level<sup>38</sup> was sent to the Ministry on 23 June 2005, however, the outcome was not good as the Ministry has refused it at present<sup>39</sup>.

#### **1.4. Summary**

This chapter first tried to define the term “homeschooling”. Then the conception of this form of education was analysed on the basis of reasons why parents choose it and Czech approaches were described in the light of two main philosophies of homeschooling. Afterwards the history of homeschooling in the Czech Republic was in focus. It covered the period before 1998, when homeschooling was not legal, then the period of experimental verification, and finally, the legal promotion. Homeschooling could thus be seen in grater context, and furthermore, the history gave insight into the contemporary state of this alternative form of education. The next chapter will deal with English language teaching/learning within homeschooling.

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<sup>37</sup> Presidium since April 2005: Jiří Tůma, president, Dana Pražáková, vice-president, Judita Kapicová, Jiří Bakončík, Tomáš Flégr (See the resolution of general meeting, Prague, 23/4/2005; [http://www.domaciskola.cz/zaklinf/vh/vh\\_2005\\_usn\\_html](http://www.domaciskola.cz/zaklinf/vh/vh_2005_usn_html) [viewed 16 November 2005]).

<sup>38</sup> Written by Tůma, Mertin and Simonová. 2005.

<sup>39</sup> In a letter on 19 July 2005 addressed to the vice-president of the Association for Home Education ([http://www.domaciskola.cz/archiv/dokumenty/msmt\\_2\\_stupen.jpg/view](http://www.domaciskola.cz/archiv/dokumenty/msmt_2_stupen.jpg/view) [viewed 18 November 2005]).

## **2. Homeschooling and English language teaching**

According to the above-mentioned act, individual education is another way to fulfil compulsory schooling, which suggests that homeschooled children are obliged to study the same subjects as pupils at school, including English language. However, it may raise many questions. When do homeschooled children start learning English? Is a minimal level of parents' knowledge of English set? Are parents obliged to ensure a qualified English teacher for their children? Which textbooks should parents use? Is their choice free? The first part of this chapter will answer these questions and thus will help to clarify the position of English language within homeschooling. The second part will deal with two aspects of the English language teaching, namely, with pronunciation and listening comprehension. It will focus on several basic theoretical and practical principles of these two areas for, subsequently, the principles will form theoretical basis for the interrelated research.

### **2.1. English language within homeschooling**

#### **2.1.1. When do homeschooled children start learning English?**

The first question when children are supposed to start learning a foreign language in the Czech Republic is not easy to answer due to the implementation of school educational programmes into schools. So far, subject distribution has been realized according to the three different educational programmes<sup>40</sup> in Czech schools. The educational programmes Elementary School and Common School introduce a foreign language in the fourth grade although pupils can start learning a foreign language in the third grade if a school promotes extended teaching of foreign languages. The last educational programme National School files a foreign language into the basic part of the curriculum from the fourth grade as well. Generally, the foreign language is English or German, however, it can be also the French, Russian or Spanish language. The range of choice depends on pupils' interest and on conditions of the particular school. The educational curricula allocate standard time of about three forty-five-minute hours per week for foreign language teaching.

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<sup>40</sup> *Sdělení MŠMT k učebním plánům vzdělávacích programů pro základní vzdělávání (od 1. 9. 2005)* (Announcement of Ministry of Education concerning teaching plans of educational programmes for elementary education (since 1 September 2005)).  
[http://www.msmt.cz/Files/DOC/SPUP\\_komplet\\_4hod.doc](http://www.msmt.cz/Files/DOC/SPUP_komplet_4hod.doc) [viewed 26 December 2005].

However, several schools started to follow their own school educational programme created in accordance with The Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Schools<sup>41</sup>, which introduces a foreign language as a compulsory subject in the third grade. Allocated standard time is three forty-five-minute hours per week.

Hence, homeschooled children have the obligation to start learning a foreign language<sup>42</sup> at the latest from the fourth grade at present. On the other hand, a certain number of homeschoolers start learning English earlier as a non-compulsory subject. Some schools evaluate it by means of a portfolio and it is then listed as a non-compulsory subject or a special-interest activity in the school report<sup>43</sup>.

### **2.1.2. Educator's knowledge of English**

A problem may arise due to the fact that the section of the Education Act concerning individual tuition does not set a minimal level of parents' knowledge of a foreign language, neither are parents obliged to ensure a qualified teacher of a foreign language for their child in case their knowledge of the foreign language is not sufficient<sup>44</sup>. In spite of this, Semín warns parents that if they do not have a good command of a foreign language, they will not be able to teach it. When this situation occurs, he suggests that it is wise to pay a language course for children or to arrange a private teacher (Semín 2002, 64).

However, some parents tend to underestimate teaching/learning a foreign language as it is obvious from Reports on the Course of Homeschooling Experimental Verification elaborated for each school year from 1999 to 2005 by the head teacher of Elementary School Ostrava – Výškovice<sup>45</sup>. Although the aim of the reports was not to observe foreign language teaching/learning, it is possible to find out several pieces of significant information there. The reports note that there were two language consultants, one for the

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<sup>41</sup> According to *Manuál pro tvorbu vzdělávacích programů v základním vzdělávání* (Manual for Creation of Educational Programmes in Basic Education) (2005, 94), the School Educational Programme is a compulsory document for each elementary school at least for the first grade and the sixth grade from the school year 2007/2008. On the other hand, schools have been allowed to follow their school educational programme since 2005.

<sup>42</sup> As the thesis deals with the English language, it is necessary to realize that expression "a foreign language", which is often used in this discussion, includes the English language as well.

<sup>43</sup> Hana Tůmová, e-mail message to author, 29 January 2006.

<sup>44</sup> Similar situation was during the experimental verification as the conditions did not set a minimal level of parents' knowledge of a foreign language, neither were parents obliged to ensure a qualified teacher of a foreign language for their child in case their knowledge of the foreign language was not sufficient.

<sup>45</sup> Bakončík 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005.

English language and one for the German language, however, the reports do not state what percentage of pupils learned English or German. All reports comment that teaching a foreign language was mostly performed by parents or with help of relatives who had a good command of the selected language and that some children took foreign language courses. 2001/2002 Report, which reported on the third year of the experimental verification, reads that the level of foreign language knowledge of pupils of the fourth and fifth grade lowered. What was added to the list of problems that the school planned to solve was that several parents underestimated teaching/learning a foreign language. 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 Reports state that difficulties concerning a foreign language persisted and the reports present two possible reasons in addition. Firstly, the curriculum concerning foreign languages was not very specific; secondly, some educators who taught their child the foreign language by themselves did not have a sufficient command of the language. In 2003/2004 Report, there is an interesting note that parents' interest in foreign language consultations arose. This activity probably led to a little more favourable evaluation in following 2004/2005 Report where the head teacher summarizes that the difficulties concerning foreign languages persisted due to the same reasons as during the two previous school years although it was possible to observe a little improvement.

### **2.1.3. Teaching materials**

As regards teaching materials, the Education Act states that a pupil's statutory representative, who is usually a parent, is obliged to present a proposal that includes "the list of textbooks and teaching texts to be used in individual tuition unless these are textbooks listed in Section 27 (1)" (Act No. 561/2004). The clause one mentions textbooks and teaching texts that were granted an approval clause by the Ministry. The approval clause means that such textbooks and teaching texts have been assessed and are in accordance with educational goals and Framework Educational Programmes. The list of these textbooks and teaching texts is published in the Journal of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports every year, usually in April (Act No. 561/2004, Section 27).

In the 2004/2005 list, there are 27 different titles of English textbooks from various publishing houses but only five of them are labelled clearly for the first level of basic school. The other titles may be aimed at either the first or the second level, which is not



clear from the table in the Journal. In addition to this fact, there exist a certain number of textbooks without the approval clause by the Ministry, however, they can be used for education of homeschooled children if the head teacher of a stem school agrees to it. Since it seems impossible to evaluate all available English textbooks, parents could go to an extreme regarding the choice, namely, they could choose simply the textbook recommended by a friend family or a stem school without their own evaluation whether it is convenient for their child's needs.

With respect to the fact that the choice is a responsible and demanding task, it is wise to follow advice of experts. Průcha (1997, 279), who is an expert in the field of textbook evaluation, presents a list of 36 components that can help analyse any textbook. Tomanová states several general criteria for the evaluation, for example, whether a textbook is synchronic and diachronic. A synchronic textbook means that it is published with a set of teaching aids such as a teacher's book, an audiocassette, a video cassette or a set of games for pupils. While a diachronic textbook means that it is a part of an integrated series, which ensures subject-matter relationship and gradually increasing difficulty of the learning text (Tomanová 2002, 243). Harmer's evaluation of textbooks for English teaching/learning brings an insight into the problem as he points out that the first step should be an analysis of pupils' needs. On the basis of the pupils' needs it is then possible to fill in the materials evaluation form presented in *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. His form consists of 24 questions divided into seven parts: practical considerations, layout and design, activities, skills, language type, subject and content and the last one is guidance (Harmer 1992, 278-284). Similar procedure can be found in Halliwell's book *Teaching English in the Primary Classroom*, however, it seems to be much easier. Firstly, Halliwell presents ten questions that help a teacher to identify important issues concerning the teacher and his/her pupils. Secondly, the evaluation form is shorter because it includes only 16 questions divided into two subgroups; the former deals with a book from the viewpoint of the teacher and the latter from the viewpoint of the pupils. The answers are in a form of scale from one, meaning poor, to five, meaning very good (Halliwell 1993, 114-118). Nevertheless, no matter which textbook the educator chooses, it is important to realize that no textbook was written exactly for his or her child and therefore it is desirable to deviate from the given

content according to individual needs of the child. Both Halliwell (1993, 113) and Harmer (1992, 258) point out a similar idea.

Another situation may arise due to the Framework Educational Programme as individual schools are obliged to create own educational programme that will include a specific curriculum for each of the educational areas. These curricula should not be based on a particular textbook<sup>46</sup> but on the subject-matter and expected outcomes presented in the Framework Educational Programme. Teachers, and by implication homeschooling parents, can thus approach the curriculum in another way. They can use several textbooks, learning texts, various encyclopaedias, books and other materials to process a topic or a grammatical structure without having one base textbook.

## **2.2. English language teaching**

As it was concluded above, homeschooled children start learning English at the latest in the fourth grade. Although English teaching/learning is realized on the elementary level in the fourth and fifth grade, it covers teaching/learning both productive and receptive skills, namely, speaking, writing, listening and reading. In addition, Scrivener (1994, 20) mentions important language systems such as lexis, grammar, function and pronunciation that must be given full attention as well. Since it is not possible to analyse all of them in detail in this thesis, the focus will be on the following two aspects; firstly, on pronunciation the importance of which might be overlooked, especially provided that parents are not trained English teachers, secondly, on the listening skill as it is closely connected with pronunciation. Harmer (1992, 22) highlights the important relationship between learning pronunciation and listening as he says that pupils “need to hear the language used so that they can both imitate the pronunciation and also subconsciously acquire some of its sounds and patterns”.

The aim of this part is to point out on the example of only one language system and one language skill how demanding the whole process of English language teaching is. Therefore, what will go along with the following analysis is this unanswered question: Is it in possibilities of homeschooling parents to teach English to their children correctly if the parents do not have a good command of English?

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<sup>46</sup> *Manuál pro tvorbu vzdělávacích programů v základním vzdělávání* (Manual for Creation of Educational Programmes in Basic Education) (2005, 98).

### 2.2.1. Pronunciation

According to Scrivener (1994, 140), the English phonological system consists of five areas: “the individual sounds; word stress; sentence stress; intonation; and features of fluent connected speech”. On the other hand, Kelly in *How to Teach Pronunciation* distinguishes two main features of pronunciation; phonemes and suprasegmental features while the latter include intonation, word stress and sentence stress (Kelly 2004, 1). Although the suprasegmental features are essential, homeschooled pupils as well as the other pupils primarily need to be able to make individual sounds or phonemes used in English. Therefore, the focus will be on common pronunciation difficulties connected basically with individual phonemes.

Kelly presents a list of phonemes that are likely to cause problems to speakers of particular languages. The Czech language is not included in the list of languages, however there is the Russian language that belongs to the group of Slavic languages as well. According to the list, some consonants marked as problematic are, for example, [θ], [ð], [ŋ] followed by [g] or [k], a semi-vowel [w] and lenis consonants at the end of words. It is especially [ə] and [æ] that can be chosen from the list of problematical vowels. The quality of Russian [r] is similar to the English [r], so Kelly does not mention it as a problematical phoneme (Kelly 2000, 144-146). Nevertheless, it must be included into the group of problematical phonemes when the Czech language is in question for Skaličková states in *Fonetika současné angličtiny* (Phonetics of Contemporary English) that there is a big difference between the Czech and English phoneme [r] (Skaličková 1982, 165). Close examination of several problematical phonemes will highlight the complexity and difficulty of English pronunciation. Further, three possible approaches to teaching pronunciation will be shortly investigated and several notes concerning young learners will subsequently conclude this discussion.

### 2.2.1.1. Several problematical phonemes

#### Consonants [θ] and [ð]

[θ] and [ð] are consonants which have no corresponding equivalents in the Czech language. Concerning qualities of *th* sounds, [θ] is unvoiced and [ð] is voiced but the latter one is devoiced at the end of a word. They belong to the group of fricatives which means that during their production two vocal organs, the tongue and the teeth in the very case, come so close together that there is only a small gap where the air can escape, which causes a hissing sound (Roach 1994, 47; Kelly 2004, 50). The mutual position of the tongue and the teeth is very important. Kelly writes, “the tongue tip makes light contact with the back of the top, front teeth. Or, tongue tip may protrude between upper and lower teeth. The soft palate is raised” (Kelly 2004, 50). However, the protrusion of the tongue tip between the teeth is questionable.

Skaličková criticises the fact that many textbooks claim that the right articulation of these consonants is interdental. She supports her opinion by a letter by Daniel Jones where he describes the interdental *th* as “a makeshift” that can help students who are not able to pronounce *th* properly (Skaličková 1982, 144). Roach comments this subject in *English Phonetics and Phonology*, “the dental fricatives have sometimes been described as if the tongue was actually placed between the teeth, and it is common for teachers to make their students do this when they are trying to teach them to make this sound. In fact, however, the tongue is normally placed *inside* the teeth ... with the tip touching the inside of the lower front teeth and the blade touching the inside of the upper teeth” (Roach 1994, 49). The comparison of pictures published in the three above-mentioned publications is interesting, as the tongue does not protrude between the upper and lower teeth in any picture (Kelly 2004, 50; Roach 1994, 49; Skaličková 1982, 144). It may thus be concluded that the position of the tongue between the teeth is an alternative position often used for teaching the production of this sound but the right position of the tongue is inside the teeth.

#### Lenis consonants

The problem connected with lenis consonants may be explained on the example of plosives, which consist of pair-consonants [p], [b]; [t], [d] and [k], [g]. The consonants [p], [t], [k] are voiceless, and according to the force of articulation they are labelled as

fortis, which means strong. On the other hand, the consonants [b], [d], [g] are voiced, and according to the force of articulation they are labelled as lenis, which means weak. The terms fortis and lenis are more accurate when English is in question as the lenis consonants are usually devoiced in initial and final position. The lenis consonants are problematic for Czech speakers when they are produced at the end of words. The problem is caused by a contrary rule of assimilation of voicing in Czech and English. The pair-consonants keep their different characteristic in all positions in English, they do not assimilate in any case neither within one word, nor over a word boundary. Even if a lenis consonant is devoiced at the end of a word, it does not become a fortis consonant (*lead* [led]/*let* [let]). On the other hand, Czech neutralises the contrast of voicing in final positions, which means, for example, that the consonant [d] is replaced in its final position or position of assimilation, that is before the voiceless consonant, by its voiceless pair-consonant [t] (*led* [let]/*let* [let]) (Skaličková, 1982, p. 119, 131). There exists one essential feature of the lenis consonants in English, namely, that in contrast with the fortis consonants, they prolong preceding vowels (Roach 1994, 33). This feature is of great significance because it is very useful when Czech learners are taught the production of final lenis consonants.

### **Consonant nasal [ŋ]**

Nasal [ŋ] is a lenis which functions only as an allophone of [n] in Czech, thus it is not an independent phoneme that would distinguish individual words. On the contrary, it functions as an independent phoneme in English that is in Received Pronunciation submitted to a rather complex rule concerning the question whether [ŋ] is pronounced with or without the following [g] (Roach 1994, 57). The group of letters *ng* is always pronounced as [ŋ] without the following [g] at the end of words. If it is situated in the middle position, it is pronounced either as [ŋg] within one morpheme (*finger, hunger, anger*), in comparatives and superlatives of adjectives (*longer, strongest*) or as [ŋ] without the following [g] in all other cases, that means in words derived from verbs ending in *-ng* (*longing, hanger*) and in words derived from adjectives by *-ish, -ly* and *-ster* endings (*strongish, strongly, youngster*) (Skaličková 1982, 160; 1974, 69). The consonant [ŋ] is problematic for Czech elementary learners as they usually start with present continuous tense in English grammar and present participle has the ending *-ing* that should be pronounced as [ŋ] without the following [g] according to the above

mentioned rule. The main danger is that if the attention is not paid to the right pronunciation of *-ing* ending in the early stages, children may acquire a wrong pattern that could be eliminated only with a great effort in future time.

### **Consonant [w]**

The consonant [w] is characterised as a labio-velar semivowel which is voiced. When it is produced, the lips are rounded, the tongue is in the position similar to the one when the vowel [u] is pronounced, the soft palate is raised and the sound moves quickly to the following vowel (Kelly 2004, 53). This phoneme has no equivalent in Czech, therefore Czech learners mistake [v] for [w] and vice versa. However, [v] and [w] are two completely different phonemes in English. If they are mistaken, they change the meaning of words, for example: *veal/wheel*, *vale/whale*, *vile/while* (Skaličková 1974, 74).

### **Consonant [r]**

This phoneme is questionable because there exist rhotic and non-rhotic accents in English speaking countries, therefore the non-rhotic Received Pronunciation will be focused on for simplification. As for characteristics of the articulation of English [r] it may be stated, that it is a post-alveolar approximant that is produced in this way: The tongue tip approaches the alveolar area but never touches the roof of the mouth. The tongue is slightly curled backwards, the tip is raised and the soft palate is raised as well. The lips are rounded but not as much as with the consonant [w], which would sound childish. The rule for distribution of [r] in Received Pronunciation is easy but for Czech learners difficult to apply: [r] is produced only when it is situated before vowels, not wherever the letter *r* is spelled (Roach 1994, 60). Skaličková (1982, 165, 166) states several features in which the Czech phoneme [r] differs from the English [r]. Four of them are summarised in the following table.

**Table 5: Features of phoneme [r]**

Features	Czech phoneme [r]	English phoneme [r] (Received Pronunciation)
Place of articulation	alveolar	post-alveolar
Tongue-palate contact	2 or 3 times	None
Lips	neutral	rounded
Distribution	in any position	only before a vowel

Source: Skaličková (1982)

### Vowels

English vowels can be described according to three basic features: their tongue height, their frontness/backness and lip-rounding. The tongue height, that can be close, mid-close, mid-open or open, relates to the distance between the tongue and the palate, while the frontness/backness expresses which part of the tongue is raised highest, whether the front, central or back one, when a vowel is pronounced. Concerning the lip-rounding, there are usually three positions taken into account, that is spread, neutral and rounded (Roach 1994, 18, 19). Concerning vowels another important aspect that was mentioned above is that their length is relative (Kelly 2004, 34). It is caused by the fact that the vowels are lengthened before a lenis consonant and shortened before a fortis consonant, nevertheless they are short or long (*sat – sad, hurt – heard*) (Skaličková 1974, 35, 43).

### Vowel [æ]

English short vowel [æ] is open, front and the lips are slightly spread. Skaličková compares English short vowel [æ] in a pair with Czech long vowel [é]. She presents an idea that the vowel in question could be taken for a long partner to a short vowel [e]. In fact, the vowel [æ] has some features of English long vowels, for example, it is not used in diphthongs. However, it is important to realize that English [æ] differs from Czech [é]. It is much more open, and as for its quality, its tone is much deeper. Skaličková emphasises especially the importance of this timbric difference between the pronunciation of short [e] and open [æ] (Skaličková, 1982, 86).

## Vowels [ə] and [ɜ:]

These vowels have no equivalent in Czech language. [ə] is sometimes called neutral vowel because its articulation is neither back nor front and lips are in a neutral position. This vowel occurs only in unstressed syllables. In some Czech textbooks<sup>47</sup>, there is an explanation that so called mixed vowel [ə] is pronounced when Czech consonants are produced individually, that is the pronunciation of *b, s, v, ě* etc. is actually [bə, sə, və, ěə]. There exist several possibilities of the articulation of the mixed vowel that differ according to the position of the vowel in a word. It is essential that the articulation of [ə] and [ɜ:], which is long equivalent of [ə], has not any r-colouring in Received Pronunciation (Skaličková 1974, 41-43).

### 2.2.1.2. Teaching pronunciation

The preceding analysis of several phonemes that may be problematical for a Czech learner indicates that homeschooling parents face a demanding task when they want to teach English pronunciation to their children. Kelly states that, generally, pronunciation teaching is often neglected because of the main reason that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of the theory of pronunciation (Kelly 2004, 13). Griffiths, who is a teacher trainer and materials writer from Spain, shares the similar opinion. She presents two other reasons why teaching pronunciation tends to be neglected:

Firstly, the lack of clear guidelines and rules available in course books, and secondly the fact that isolated exercises once a month do not seem to have much of an effect. (Griffiths, 2005, 1)

Griffiths mentions “isolated exercises” which may have connection with Kelly’s observations that if pronunciation is taught, it is usually done as a response to pupils’ errors. Therefore, he points out the importance of systematic pronunciation teaching that is “strategically planned” (Kelly 2004, 13).

Kelly states that pronunciation teaching concerns both productive and receptive skills. Although he points out the importance of drilling for development of these skills, he presents many other techniques and activities, such as activities based on minimal pairs or recommendation to the integration of pronunciation work into listening and reading activities.

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<sup>47</sup> For example, in *New English for You* by Zdeňka Kociánová.



Further, Kelly describes three different approaches to teaching pronunciation; integrated, remedial and practice lessons. An integrated lesson means that pronunciation work is planned beforehand and it is integrated into teaching. It can be, for example, the pronunciation of *-s* ending in plural or *-ed* ending in past tense. A remedial lesson is a case of an unplanned integration of pronunciation work into teaching. The teacher notices a problem, which results in a short remedial activity that can be either drilling, which reinforces the right pronunciation, or a short exercise based on minimal pairs so that students could notice the difference. The last approach, so called practice lesson, is very important because it enables to devote some time to a particular phoneme or another feature of pronunciation such as stress or intonation. Well-thought-out and carefully planned practice lessons may thus serve as a basis for systematic pronunciation teaching (Kelly 2004, 11-28).

Another issue concerning pronunciation is the phonemic chart. Laics often argue that it is difficult and that is why it is not very important for learning English. However, studying relevant literature shows that the opposite is true. Stanton, a teacher trainer and materials writer, encourages teachers in using the phonemic chart and presents several reasons why it is important for children to be acquainted with and be able to use the phonemic symbols. Stanton points out that if pupils know the phonemic symbols they are then able to use dictionaries in a more effective way. Pupils' learning is then more autonomous because they can find out the pronunciation by themselves without any help. Such knowledge enables pupils to see and understand how the English language works. In addition to these, the phonemic chart is "a totally reliable guide" to pronunciation in comparison with the letters of alphabet (Stanton 2006, 1). It is not possible to say that a pupil does not pronounce the letter "a" correctly because there exist many ways to pronounce it but if the pronunciation of the sound [æ] is wrong, it is clear. Moreover, the phonemic awareness will help pupils begin discovering the sound-spelling relationships in English.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that teachers or parents in the role of a teacher have also the responsibility to take into account that Czech children are influenced by the Czech language in their perception of the English language. This problematic is developed in textbooks written by Kellyová. For example, Czech children cannot understand why they are taught that the letter "a" is read as [ei] in the alphabet while the

key word is “an apple” with the very different pronunciation [æ] of the letter “a”. Therefore, Kellyová uses “an acorn” as a key word for the letter “a” in her textbooks (Milena Kelly 2005, 13).

### **2.2.2. Listening**

The importance of listening for the development of “communicative efficiency in pronunciation” has already been pointed out. Harmer believes that students should listen not only to the teacher, who serves as the language model for the students primarily, but also to other people talking English. If the students do not live in English speaking surroundings and are not exposed to the English language in various forms every day, the teacher should ensure tapes or videos for the students for Harmer claims that “students should be given as much exposure to people speaking the language correctly as possible” (Harmer 1992, 22). That represents another demanding task for homeschooling parents.

How one homeschooling family coped with the problem is obvious from their experience with teaching/learning English described in the 13<sup>th</sup> issue of *Občasník SPDŠ* (The Occasionally Published Magazine of the Society of Home School Friends). Their daughter Pavla was in the second grade and she started to learn English when she was four years old. Parents used to buy her books with audiocassettes written by Carolyn Graham. The stories were full of songs and Pavla liked listening to the cassette and singing the songs. Later they bought other English books with cassettes for children or cassettes with English songs for children. Then they regularly used the British library in their town where it was possible to borrow English books with audiocassettes and English films on videocassettes or DVD.

In this place, it is necessary to realize that the purpose of listening activities may be different. Scrivener (1994, 146) mentions that listening work may be aimed either at language systems<sup>48</sup> or at the improvement of listening skills. Similarly, Ur (1992, 33) distinguishes listening for perception, which is focused on pronunciation teaching, and listening for comprehension. Concerning the latter, Harmer describes six listening skills that a man uses in his mother tongue in real life. They are predictive skills, the skill to extract specific information, to get the general picture, to extract detailed information, to

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<sup>48</sup> The language systems are lexis, grammar, function and phonology (Scrivener 1994, 20).

recognise function and discourse patterns and the skill to deduce meaning from context. If pupils develop these skills, their listening comprehension becomes better.

Moreover, Gabrielatos<sup>49</sup> recommends that children should have the opportunity to develop their listening skills from the elementary level. On the other side, the teachers have responsibility not to set habits that could interfere a proper development of the listening skills. Explaining all unknown words before listening to a passage may be stated as a clear example of teacher's inappropriate behaviour (Gabrielatos 1998, 1, 2).

Scrivener adds another important commentary regarding this problem. His advice is “grade the task – not the tape”, which means that whatever the pupils listen to, it is important to set the right level of the accompanying task (Scrivener 1994, 149). Then he describes basic principles of a procedure of listening work. It starts with a lead-in activity that helps pupils to concentrate on the topic. After a pre-task work, which is optional, the teacher sets a clear task concerning the listening and a tape is played. After finishing the task, pupils are given feedback either from another pupil or from the teacher. If the teacher finds out that pupils were not successful, he or she should let the pupils listen to the tape once more. Otherwise, the whole procedure must be somehow concluded, for example by a follow-on activity or by a review that highlights what the pupils have learnt (Scrivener 1994, 149, 150).

Arnold says that it is important for children that listening skills “have a ‘real-life’ meaning”, which is essential when a teacher chooses material for training listening skills (Arnold 2006, 1). Ur (Ur 1992, 68-123) presents in detail different kinds of exercises for listening for comprehension. Those of them that can be adapted for children are listed below:

- Obeying instructions
- Ticking off items
- True/false exercises
- Detecting mistakes
- Aural cloze
- Guessing definitions
- Noting specific information
- Pictures
- Maps

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<sup>49</sup> The author of *Two Birds with one Stone 2: Listening skills development using testing materials* (1995).

Ground-plans

Grids

Family trees

In addition, Ur emphasises that listening should be also “a source of enjoyment and recreation” (Ur 1992, 63). It is possible to listen to various stories, songs, films and television or video programmes. Such activities may have an important role in motivation of children for they perceive English not only as a subject but also as a real language that is useful for them.

### **2.3. Summary**

This chapter analysed the situation of English teaching/learning within homeschooling. First, the question when homeschooled children start learning English was discussed, and then educators’ knowledge of English and teaching materials were in focus. The second part of the chapter stressed, on the basis of pronunciation language system and listening language skill, that English teaching/learning was a demanding task. Several English phonemes that are problematical for Czech learners were analysed in detail and, subsequently, teaching pronunciation and listening were in the centre of interest. Further, English teaching/learning within homeschooling was the subject matter of research that is discussed in the following chapter.

### **3. Research**

The first part of this thesis dealt with the challenges of homeschooling in the Czech Republic not only on a general level but also with regard to teaching/learning English. The analysis that was based on the study of series of specialist literature, final reports from schools and other documents constituted the basis for the research. The research strove to explore the situation of English teaching/learning in homeschooling families.

The aim of the research was to find out the answer to the question, “What is teaching/learning English within homeschooling like?” The purpose was not identification of a typical homeschooling English lesson because there did not exist anything like that. Rather, the research focused on gaining an insight into possibilities and restrictions that had brought teaching/learning English within homeschooling. As it was shown in the theoretical part, the area of teaching/learning English was so large that it was not in the possibilities of the research to cover all aspects in detail. Therefore, the research focused on the following:

1. Who taught English in homeschooling families
2. What textbooks the families used and into what extent
3. Whether the families taught pronunciation and how
4. Whether and how the families ensured listening and listening comprehension

The first three tasks were the subject matter of the first part of the research performed by means of structured interviews and all of them were the subject matter of the second part of the research performed by means of a questionnaire. Subsequently, findings of the entire research were discussed and thus the main question, “What is teaching/learning English within homeschooling like?” was investigated and answered on the basis of the four above-mentioned tasks.

#### **3.1. Four homeschooling families**

##### **3.1.1. Methods of investigation**

The research was conducted by the method of structured interviews. One member of The Association for Home Education provided addresses and phone numbers of several families that homeschooled their children. The interviews were held with four families from Prague in the Czech language in summer 2005; particularly it was on 21 July (two

interviews), 5 August and 17 August. All interviews were held with mothers who represented the main educator in their families<sup>50</sup>. Three mothers were interviewed at home; two families lived in a house in Prague and the other families lived in a flat in Prague but one of them spent holidays at a summer cottage near Prague where the mother was interviewed. Three families had three children and one family had four children. The common factors were that at least one child that had been educated by means of homeschooling was at the second level, which ensured that the family had at least one year experience of teaching/learning a foreign language. Another factor was that there was at least one child who was homeschooled in school year 2004/2005, so that the examined sample could still be included into the homeschooling families. The next essential factor was that the families had chosen the English language as a foreign language for their children. Other factors were not taken into account in the selection of the examined sample.

The structure of the interview<sup>51</sup> was formed around three main areas, two of which were directly in line with the second and third task<sup>52</sup> mentioned above. The initial questions asked about the family situation and their knowledge of the English language, and then the interview focused on the usage of a textbook. The aim was to find out whether the educator used a particular textbook and how she worked with it. There was also a question about other materials the educator used. The next part of the interview included questions finding out about the attitude to the teaching/learning of language skills and language systems. What followed was the area of pronunciation in connection with teaching/learning vocabulary or with speaking. The last part asked about the final evaluation for the school report.

The method of structured interviews was used to investigate the state of teaching/learning English due to the following reason. Farenga claimed that “there are as many ways to homeschool as there are families who do it” (Holt and Farenga 2003, 227). Therefore, it could be presumed that teaching/learning English within homeschooling would correspond with the same fact. As it was explained in the

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<sup>50</sup> All families were two-parent.

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>52</sup> 1. Who taught English in homeschooling families  
2. What textbooks the families used and into what extent  
3. Whether the families taught pronunciation and how  
4. Whether and how the families ensured listening and listening comprehension

theoretical part, homeschooling was connected with the individual approach to a child, which meant that it would be reflected also in teaching/learning individual subjects, including the English language. It was not possible to interview a large number of people, therefore, the findings could not be quantified; they provide rather a qualitative insight into the situation. Further, with regards to the balance of the data gathered, it would have been better to cover one more investigated area that would focus on a language skill. It was later added when the second research method, the questionnaire, was used.

### **3.1.2. Findings**

#### **3.1.2.1. Family Number 1**

The interview was held with that mother on 21 July 2005; two younger children were present but not interviewed. There were three children in the family at the age of fourteen, eight and five. Tom<sup>53</sup>, the oldest child attended grammar school, Lucy was in the second grade of homeschooling and the youngest child did not go to school in school year 2004/2005. The mother had graduated from the Faculty of International Relations at the University of Economics in Prague. Concerning the English language, she had passed the basic state exam and she continued in education as a self-taught person because she enjoyed English teaching/learning. She studied, for example, *Didaktika výuky cizích jazyků* (Didactics of Foreign Language Teaching) by Hendrich; she attended about seven courses held by various publishing houses and went through relevant web pages regularly. The mother also conducted after-school courses for young children.

This is what was found with respect to the usage of a textbook in that family. The mother called herself an eclectic, because she did not follow a single book systematically as it was usual at school, instead, she pointed out that they used a large number of books and textbooks, out of which she mentioned following titles: *Stepping Stones*, *Cambridge English for Schools*, *Tip Top*, *Come and Play*, *Time for a Rhyme*, *Picture Dictionary* and readers. As for writing, Lucy did, at a speed of approximately two pages per week, *Way Ahead* workbooks that progressed slowly and carried little grammar. Children learned also by means of educational CD-ROMs, for example,

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<sup>53</sup> The names have been changed.

educational courses for American pre-school children and *Zak's Wordgames*. The mother noticed that children remembered many words from playing English games on computer, however, she was persuaded that children must have had a grounding in English, otherwise they would not have been able to learn only by means of computer. The CD-ROM version of *Macmillan English Dictionary* was another aid used especially by Tom.

The mother preferred inactive knowledge to speaking, which meant, on the one hand, that she did not make children speak or repeat English words or sentences unless they wanted by themselves. On the other hand, children were exposed to the language as much as possible. The mother used English in everyday situations (Put your slippers on. Have you finished?), they read a lot in English, listened to English songs and fairytales, played English computer games or did interactive multimedia courses on computer. Reading procedure was like this: when it was the first reading, the mother read and translated each sentence into Czech, when it was the second reading, the mother read in English and then summarized the content of each page in Czech, next reading was only in English and the mother pointed to pictures and sometimes asked questions like, Can you see...? Since children liked reading very much, the mother read books many times and that helped them to remember some words and phrases. Further, the mother explained that her attitude to English teaching/learning was closely connected with her ideology of homeschooling. She did not want to make school at home, which subsequently reflected in approaches she had chosen for the entire teaching/learning process in her family, including the English language teaching/learning.

As it was stated above, the mother emphasized listening, so that children could acquire correct pronunciation by listening to the language. The mother thought that if children started with learning when they were young it was very easy for them to acquire the correct pronunciation. She remembered that Lucy when she was younger had a problem with the word *three* because she used something like sound [f] at the beginning. The mother tried to correct her, but then she decided that the child was able to acquire the correct pronunciation through listening. The mother admitted that she had neglected to teach the phonemic symbols to Tom, so he had had to learn them later when he started grammar school. Lucy was not taught the phonemic symbols that year.



As for the final evaluation, the mother always stated what the child was capable of and nothing else. Lucy's word assessment of the English language on her last school report read, "Lucy tries to read simple words in English and she often listens to English recordings of fairy-tales and songs."<sup>54</sup>

### **3.1.2.2. Family Number 2**

The interview was held with the mother on 21 July 2005. There were three boys in the family at the age of fourteen, twelve and ten. The oldest attended grammar school, the second one was in the fifth grade of homeschooling and the youngest was in the third grade of homeschooling in school year 2004/2005. The English language was the only subject that was taught by the father because he was more competent as one of his jobs was in the translation field. The mother planned to be actively involved in English teaching/learning the following school year because her husband was very busy.

As for the textbooks, the father did not use any and the mother thought that using textbooks was outdated if children could use computers much more effectively. Concerning young learners, she considered textbooks useful only for orientation as a kind of a syllabus of what was expected from her children. Materials used for teaching/learning English included especially interactive multimedia courses or educational CD-ROMs, out of which *Zak's Wordgames* CD-ROM was the most popular.

What the father emphasized most was speaking, therefore, his method of English teaching/learning consisted of speaking with his children. He helped them to use the language, while the main focus was on communication. The father's objective was to help his children to be able to react properly and not be afraid of speaking English. Although the father did not use any textbooks, he went through some grammar, however, it was mostly grammar needed for speaking, not according to a syllabus. The mother thought that the best learning would have been to combine work on a computer and contact with native speakers in a form of regular guests. The best solution would have been to make friends with an English speaking family where the children had peers. The mother emphasized that it was important for the children to perceive the English language as a means of gaining further knowledge. They must have felt that it

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<sup>54</sup> Own translation. „Lucie se snaží číst jednoduchá slova v angličtině a často poslouchá anglické nahrávky pohádek a písní.“

was necessary to have a good command of foreign languages, which corresponded with the family situation. Children could see that their father used foreign languages in his job as they often heard him speak a foreign language on the telephone and the family had foreign guests occasionally.

Correct pronunciation was very important for the parents and for that reason, they preferred children's learning by means of interactive multimedia courses where the children were exposed to voices of native speakers. The boys were able to acquire the right accent as well as correct pronunciation of individual phonemes that way. The parents did not teach phonemic symbols to their children because it was not necessary during homeschooling. Moreover, the mother was persuaded that children of the sixth grade who started to attend school were able to learn the phonemic symbols in two or three days when they needed them.

This is what was found with respect to the assessment for the school report. The mother preferred the final evaluation that was based on a portfolio for that enabled them to choose various ways of teaching/learning. When parents wrote down the assessment of the English language, they stated what the child had dealt with, which topics (family, school, colours, numbers etc.) and basic instructions he had mastered.

### **3.1.2.3. Family Number 3**

The interview was held with the mother on 5 August 2005, two younger children were present. There were four children in the family at the age of twelve, eleven, five and one. Mathew, the oldest child, attended the "prima" grade at grammar school (after five years of homeschooling), Lukas, the second child, was in the fourth grade of homeschooling and the two youngest children did not go to school in school year 2004/2005. The mother had graduated from the university, where she studied biology. She had passed a university examination in the English language, so she taught her children by herself. At the beginning, except teaching English to her children at home, they attended an English group conducted by one homeschooling mother once a week. There were usually about five children in attendance. Later, the time did not permit them to go there, so they continued in teaching/learning English only at home. In addition to that, Lukas attended an English course at the community centre for a time.

The English language was one of the more difficult subjects for Mathew and Lukas because they had talent for other things. The mother thus had to think up interesting activities such as playing various word games, for example, making funny phrases (*a small elephant*), using the same phrase and filling in different words (*I am interested in ...*), forming long and funny sentences (*I have a small pink elephant at home.*) etc. Generally, the children learned more when it was informal (on a way to the doctor's, when the family was out, when they had a foreign visitor at home) than formally when sitting over textbooks.

The mother used a series of textbooks written by Zahálková (which had been primarily chosen for all children attending the English group) despite the fact that she would probably not have selected that particular textbook and that she was not satisfied with it. Although the mother did not use the textbook systematically, she used it for orientation. Lukas was a dyslexic child so their aim was not to go through the whole textbook, but that what he learned he did well; therefore, they progressed more slowly. What proved best were their own teaching aids that contained a set of self-made and bought games for the English language. These aids were used mainly for revision and the mother devised her own system of using them, while the system was different for each child as it corresponded with their individual needs. The mother pointed out the following from other materials used in the family: *Zak's Wordgames* CD-ROM, interactive multimedia courses for American pre-school children (reading, writing, counting), a book *Time for a Rhyme* and English animated film cartoons.

Regarding the English teaching/learning, the mother considered speaking and listening most important for young learners. As for the difference between grammar and vocabulary, their children learnt better individual words, so that the mother had to emphasize grammar but they progressed more slowly in that field and the focus was put mainly on practice.

This is what was found with respect to pronunciation. Children did not write new words, they learnt them only in a verbal way, which meant that they must have been able to read and pronounce them. The mother felt that correct pronunciation was important for children to be understood, however, she knew that this field was a problematic area for them. Her children had had problems with the correct pronunciation of Czech phonemes, so that the English pronunciation was difficult for

them as well. They were trained also in the pronunciation of the special English phonemes as [θ], [ð] and the mother thought that Matthew had already mastered them. The mother did not teach the boys to know the phonemic symbols but Mathew got to know them by himself when he encountered them in a dictionary.

When the mother prepared the word assessment for the school report, she evaluated the progress and wrote down the phrases that her children had mastered.

#### **3.1.2.4. Family Number 4**

The interview was held with the mother on 17 August 2005. There were three children in the family, Amy attended the seventh grade, Peter attended the second grade in school year 2005/2006 and Millie was still a pre-schooler. The mother did not have an official exam in English, however, she had studied it at high school and then at university. She was finishing her pedagogical education in the meantime and if she wanted to teach English, she would have to pass an exam in English. The children learnt English together with another family regularly once a week; moreover, they had an English task at home every weekday.

The mother used particular textbooks when she taught the English language. Peter and Millie followed the title *Here Comes Minibus*, which was offered to the mother in a bookshop. The advantage of that textbook was that it consisted of a teacher's book and only one book for pupils, which meant that the children did not need to use a pupil's book, a workbook and worksheets because everything was included in that book for pupils. In addition, the book was nice, entertaining and the children loved it. Amy had started with the series written by Zahálková but both the mother and Amy did not like that textbook. Amy found it boring even if her mother prepared many additional activities. Then, by chance, the mother discovered *Cambridge English for Schools* by Fraus publishing house that later had become her favourite publishing house. The reason was that the textbooks were processed on the basis of projects, which was, in her opinion, the best thing for homeschooling learners. Amy would start *Cambridge English for Schools 3* the following year. Since the mother was perfectly content with the selected textbooks, she followed them consistently and did not feel a need to add anything. If the children wanted they could do something on computer, for example, follow BBC English courses or work with *Oxford Interactive Word Magic* CD-ROM.

Besides that, the mother used a set of self-made cards for the practice of vocabulary. One of the activities was as follows: cards with the Czech meaning and cards with the English word cut in two parts. The children would match two cards that formed the English word with the corresponding Czech card.

Mother's attitude to teaching/learning vocabulary stemmed from her own experience when she was made to learn new words. Although she had done that, her own vocabulary was limited. Therefore, she was persuaded that it did not make sense to write down new words and memorize them; rather, what the children needed was to use the English language, which meant to listen to and speak it. The above-mentioned textbook *Cambridge English for Schools* corresponded with her opinion. A large amount of text enabled the children to listen to native speakers and to absorb the language. Furthermore, they were often asked to prepare a topic and talk to a friend about it. Quite a short list of new words followed only after several units and in no case did it contain all new words to which children were exposed in the units.

The mother was persuaded that correct pronunciation was important. They practised the special English phonemes, however, when the children spoke the mother corrected mispronunciation only if it would have caused misunderstanding. As a model, she used cassettes accompanying the textbooks and, in addition to that, the children had the opportunity to meet native speakers in their church from time to time. Regarding the phonemic symbols, although they were taught to the children by the mother, they were not the object for testing or revision. The textbook commonly used the phonemic symbols, thus the mother thought that even if she did not emphasize them the children must have noticed them.

As for the final assessment, the mother wrote down what the children had gone through and how they had succeeded. The textbook was processed on the basis of topics, so the assessment included topics and grammar that was mastered within the topics.

#### **3.1.2.5. Summary of findings**

The objective of this summary was to analyse the situation of English teaching/learning in accordance with the research tasks stated at the beginning. This is what was found with respect to the first task, which was to find out who taught English in homeschooling families. It was the mother who taught English in three families

(family number 1, 3 and 4); as main educators they taught also the English language to their children. All of them had studied English at university and one mother had passed the basic state exam in English. On the contrary, it was the father who taught English in the last family because he was more competent for that task as he worked as a translator. Two mothers mentioned a kind of cooperation with another homeschooling family (family number 3 and 4) and one child attended an English course in community centre (family number 3).

As for the second task, the objective of which was to find out what textbooks the families used and to what extent, it was possible to see a great variety of attitudes among the examined samples. The family number one used many textbooks, English books and several interactive multimedia courses without having one item as a basis. In the second family, the parents did not use any textbooks and the mother considered them an out-of-date medium for children at the first level of primary school. Except pure communication with the father, the children used several interactive multimedia courses on computer. The mother in the third family used one textbook for orientation but she did not follow it systematically; rather, she used a set of self-made games that supported practice because her son was dyslexic and those games could be well adapted to his needs. Regarding the fourth family, after a period of looking for an appropriate textbook, the mother had found *Here Comes Minibus* and *Cambridge English for Schools* for her children. She followed them systematically because, in her opinion, the textbooks were perfect, so that she even did not feel a need to prepare any additional activities.

The third task focused on the language system of pronunciation with the objective to find out whether and how the families taught pronunciation. All the mothers stated that it was important for them so that their children could acquire correct pronunciation. Moreover, the mothers realized that it was very difficult to achieve that goal if the children did not have opportunity to speak to a native speaker regularly. Thus, most children (family number 1, 2 and 3) did interactive multimedia courses on computer where they could hear and absorb correct pronunciation. Two mothers (family number 3 and 4) stated that they trained the pronunciation of the special English phonemes as [θ] and [ð] with their children, however, only one mother (family number 4) had taught the phonemic symbols to her children. The other mothers did not consider that important

for the period of homeschooling. Concerning this opinion, one mother explained (family number 2) that it did not pose a problem for a child of the sixth grade to learn the phonemic symbols if he or she needed them. Similarly, another mother (family number 3) noticed that her son had learnt the phonemic symbols when he had worked with a dictionary.

## **3.2. Quantitative analysis of questionnaire research**

### **3.2.1. Methods of investigation**

The first method, the structured interviews, provided further insight into the issue of English teaching/learning in homeschooling families, however, the findings made a statement only about the four families that served as an examined sample. Thus, it was not possible to apply any of the findings to English teaching/learning within homeschooling generally although it was probable that English teaching/learning in other homeschooling families could be marked by similar features. Consequently, it was decided to perform another study<sup>55</sup> that would give a more general picture about the situation of English teaching/learning within homeschooling in the Czech Republic.

It was the method of a questionnaire that was used as a tool for finding out data. The advantage of the method was that it enabled to ask more respondents in shorter time. Nevertheless, it was difficult to find an appropriate way of delivery and return of questionnaires. Firstly, a database of homeschooling families who taught English to their children<sup>56</sup> was not available. Secondly, in accordance with law, institutions were not allowed to provide private information that they have about persons to anyone. Finally, it was, thus, decided to perform the research by means of e-mail electronic questionnaires. As e-mail addresses are included into private information, the following solution was found. The Association for Home Education and one consultant offered that they would send the electronic questionnaire together with a cover letter to electronic addresses in their database. The database of the association was chosen because it included more addresses (over one hundred)<sup>57</sup>. The problem was that, obviously, it was not a pure database of homeschooling families who taught English to

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<sup>55</sup> In this thesis, the words *research* and *study* are used as synonyms.

<sup>56</sup> Some families homeschooled only one child and some families homeschooled two and more children, therefore, the words *children* and *child* are used without a difference in this part of the thesis.

<sup>57</sup> Both could not be used because it was presupposed that most families in the other database were also members of the association.

their children; it included families who taught other languages or who had not taught a language yet; in addition, it included persons who only sympathised with homeschooling. To minimize the problem and to increase the response rate, the respondents were asked to send a message if the subject matter was not their case. The questionnaire was created in two versions, Microsoft Excel application (see Appendix 5)<sup>58</sup> and Rich Text Format (for those who did not have the former application installed), and sent as an enclosure to the cover letter where the respondents were explained how to save the file in their computer and send it back as an enclosure. The cover letter and the questionnaire were prepared in the Czech language to rule out the possibility that the language barrier would present an obstacle to filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent via the association to 122 electronic addresses on 28 November 2005. Until 14 December 2005, 23 respondents filled and sent back the questionnaire<sup>59</sup>, on the other hand, 11 persons sent a message that they did not teach English; the response rate was thus 19 percent. The respondents were families in which children learnt or had learnt English. The cover letter addressed the whole family, however, it was supposed that it would be either of parents who would fill in the questionnaire.

Experience with the structured interviews served as a reliable basis for the preparation of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of several parts that were not separated by graphical means. The first part found out basic data about the family, the person who taught English and about the position of the English language as a subject within homeschooling in the family. The second part focused on the usage of textbooks and other materials; the third part investigated listening and listening comprehension and the last part asked about pronunciation teaching.

The method of the e-mail electronic questionnaire was suitable because respondents could fill it in off-line, further, the questionnaire was relatively short and not demanding since it consisted of closed and half-closed questions with the total number of 29 questions. The respondents were mostly asked to fill in the letter “x” for the answer(s) that they had chosen, and, in several questions, they could choose the answer “other” and describe their different situation. A negative aspect of this method was mainly the low response rate, which could have several reasons; respondents might have deleted

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<sup>58</sup> An English version is in Appendix 6.

<sup>59</sup> Twenty-one respondents used Application Microsoft Excel and two used Rich Text Format.



the e-mail letter by accident, they might not be able to fill it in due to the lack of computer abilities, they might have overlooked the e-mail letter among the others (Pol et al. 2004, 69)<sup>60</sup> or the families who did not teach English failed to send a message. The findings thus needed to be treated with caution as the low response rate did not justify and could not make a basis for a general characterization of English teaching/learning within homeschooling. Despite all of that, the number of 23 filled questionnaires was significant for it brought more information and a broader picture of the issue in the question than the first study. Although the conclusions have particular reference to the 23 families that had filled in the questionnaire, it was possible to reveal at least several tendencies in English teaching/learning within homeschooling. Should some generalizations be drawn from those tendencies, it would be necessary to perform some other research.

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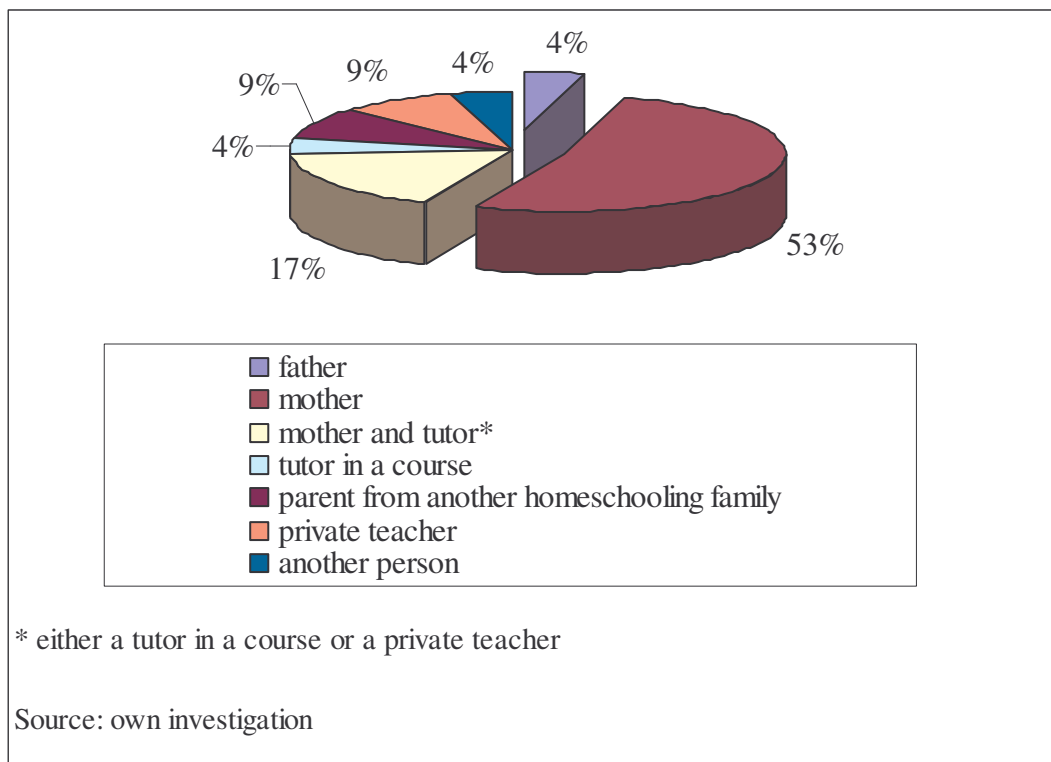
<sup>60</sup> Researchers investigating the effectiveness of electronic questioning reported that it proved practical to send the questionnaires once more after two weeks, while the addresses of respondents who had answered were excluded from the database (Pol et al. 2004, 71). However, this procedure could not be used in the research of homeschooling families, as the database of the electronic addresses was not freely available.

### 3.2.2. Analysis of findings<sup>61</sup>

#### 3.2.2.1. Teachers of English and parent's attitude to the English language

The first study showed that it were exclusively the parents (three mothers and one father) who taught English to their children. The only exception was one child who attended an English course for some time. Who taught English in other families? The questionnaire research showed a more balanced view. In more than half of the families questioned it were again parents (mothers represented 53 per cent, fathers 4 per cent) who taught English to their children, whereas 43 per cent of respondents ensured a tutor of English for their children. A list of persons who were involved into the English teaching is processed in Graph 1.

**Graph 1: Who taught English to homeschooled children?**

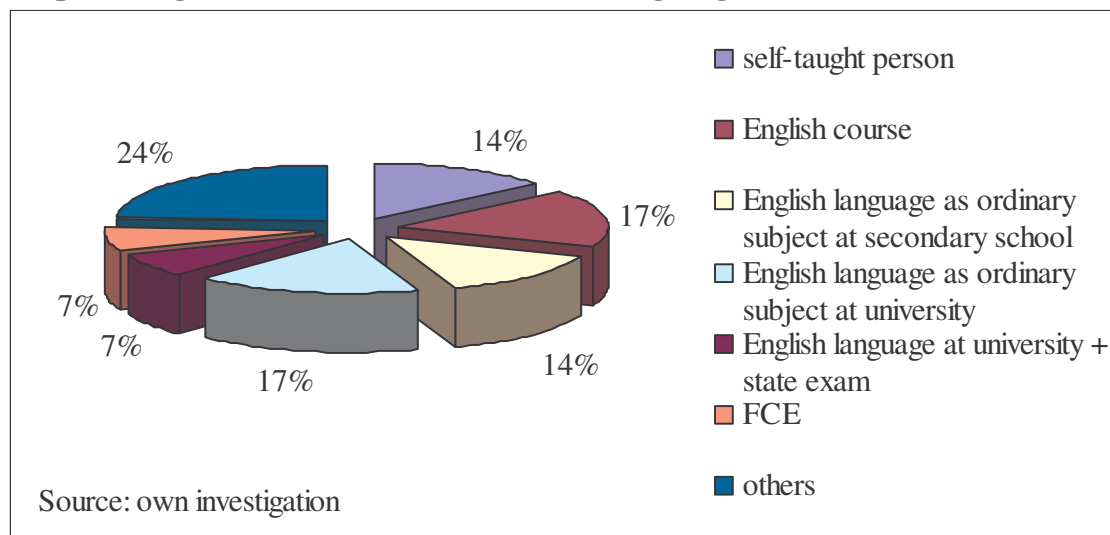


One family (4 per cent) ticked the last possibility “another person”, which meant an older sister who attended the seventh grade at grammar school in 2005/2006. She had passed the basic state exam in English and did an ACAE course at that time.

<sup>61</sup> The summary of the findings is in Appendix 7.

The education of parents who had decided to teach English to their children by themselves was another issue. Their position in the field of the English language is covered in Graph 2.

**Graph 2: English Education of Parents Teaching English to their Children**

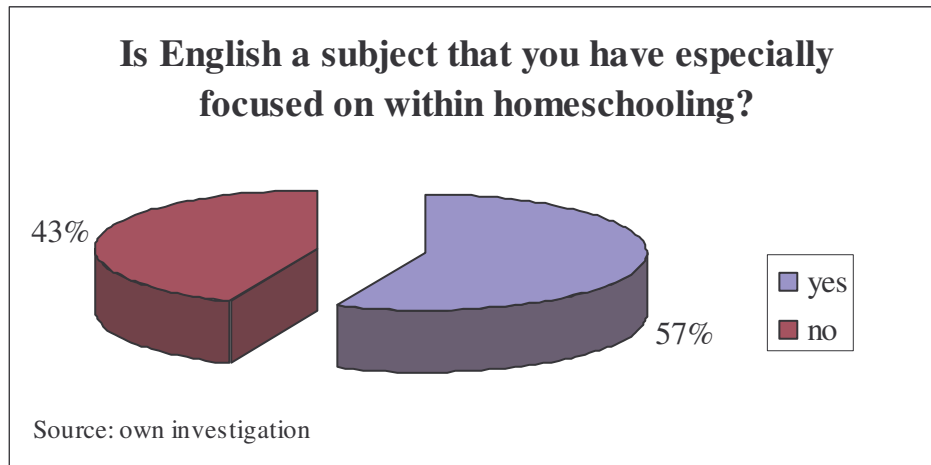


As for “others” in the graph, one mother stated that she had attended language elementary and language secondary school, another mother referred that she had studied English as a special subject at university but she did not finish it, several parents pointed out their stay in Great Britain or the USA and several parents emphasized their frequent contact with native speakers. It may thus be concluded, that no homeschooling parent included in the research had graduated from a pedagogical university as an English teacher<sup>62</sup>. On the other hand, all of the parents questioned made an effort to improve their knowledge of the English language and 14 per cent of them had passed an exam in English (either a state exam or FCE).

The families were asked also about their attitude to the English language. Graph 3 shows their answers to the question, Is English a subject that you have especially focused on within homeschooling?

<sup>62</sup> Those two parents (7 per cent) who ticked the option “English language at university + state exam” were contacted and confirmed the fact that they had not graduated as an English teacher.

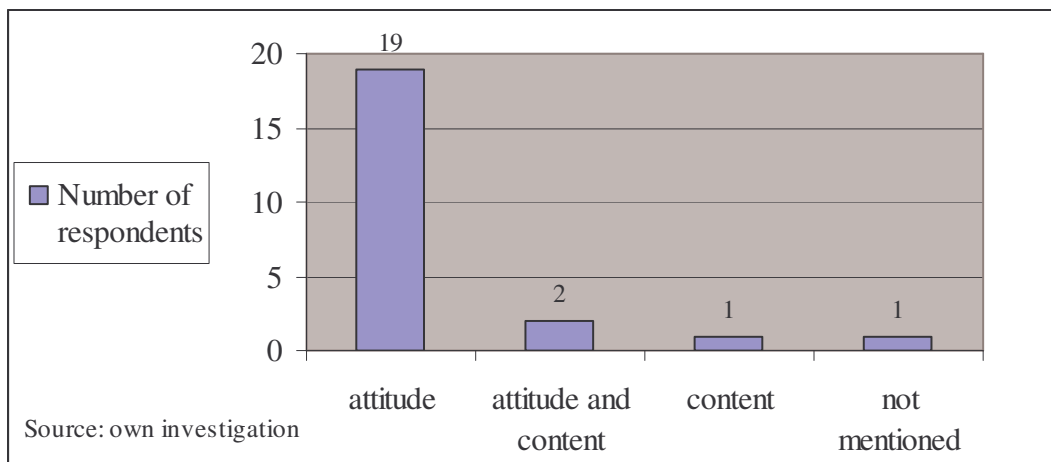
**Graph 3: A special focus on English within homeschooling**



It was interesting that more than half of the respondents replied positively. However, to find out whether it is a tendency in homeschooling families, it would be necessary to perform some other research.

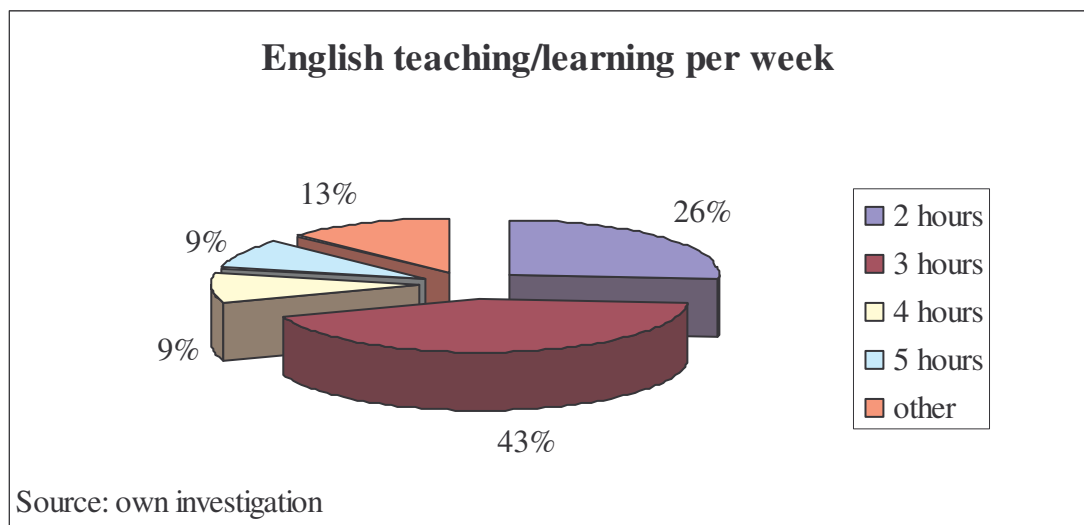
Another question asking about the attitude was, As for the English language, what do you consider more important for children at primary level? There were two options to choose from: (1) to draw up as much information as possible on which children will build later (content) (2) to gain a positive attitude to the foreign language (attitude). Most parents chose the latter (see Graph 4), which was in accordance with the opinion of Halliwell (1993, 11) who said that teachers at primary level “have a *responsibility* to give high priority to the attitude goals.”

**Graph 4: What is more important for children at primary level – content or attitude (parent’s view)?**

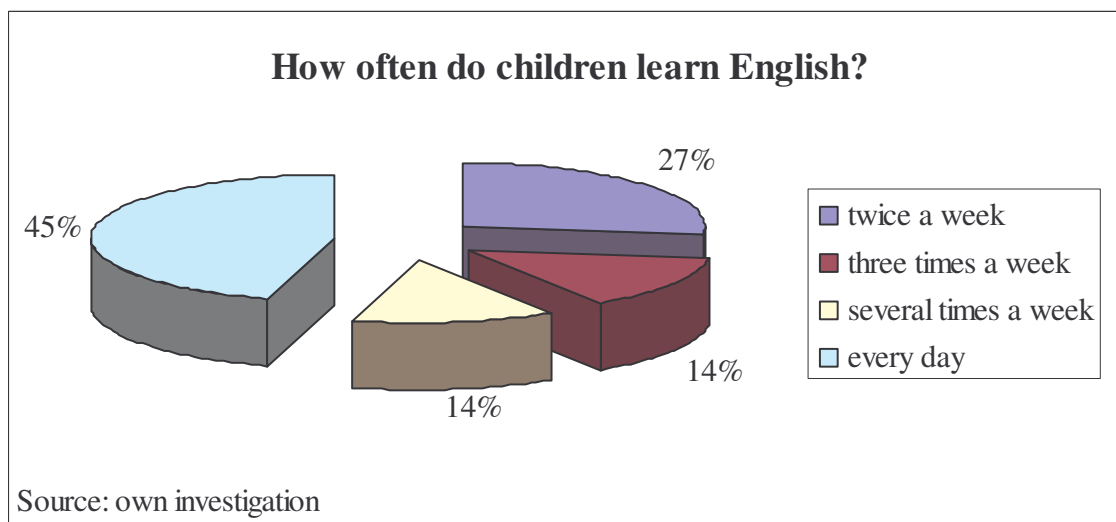


The questionnaire asked also about the time spent with English teaching/learning. Forty-three per cent of the children from the families questioned learnt English three hours per week, 18 per cent of the children learnt English more than 3 hours per week (see Graph 5). As for the frequency, 45 per cent of the children learnt English every day, 14 per cent three times a week and 27 per cent twice a week (see Graph 6).

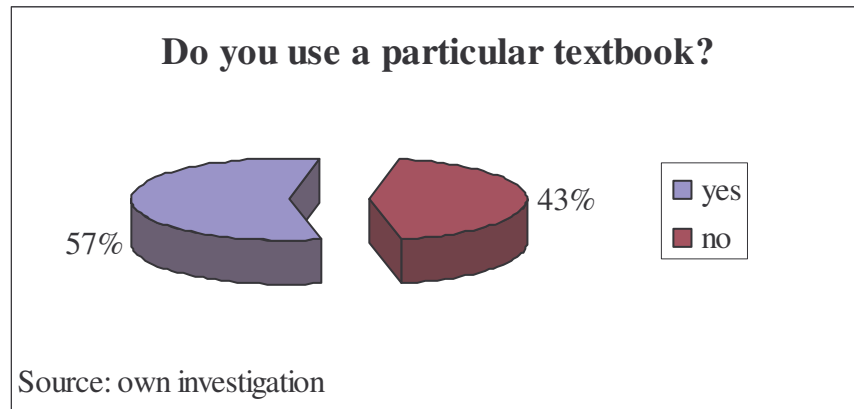
**Graph 5: English teaching/learning per week**



**Graph 6: How often do children learn English?**



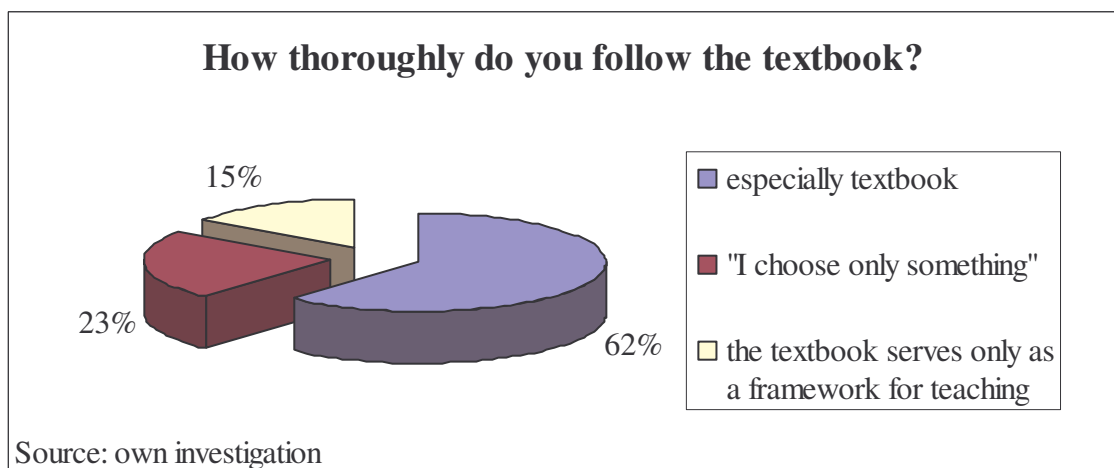
**Graph 7: Usage of a particular textbook**



### 3.2.2.2. Textbooks

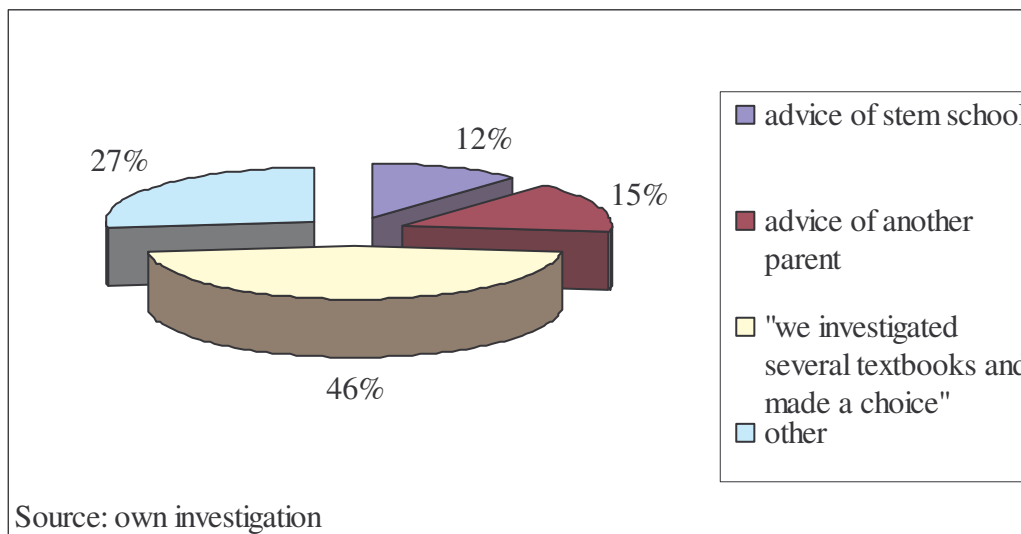
The first study showed that there was a great variety of attitudes to using a textbook in English teaching/learning among the four interviewed families. What revealed the questionnaire research? Was there a dominant attitude among the respondents? Fifty-seven per cent stated that they used a particular textbook for English teaching/learning. However, it is significant that nearly half of the respondents (43 per cent) reported the contrary (see Graph 7). Graph 8 shows to what extent the former group used the particular textbook.

**Graph 8: How thoroughly homeschooling parents follow the chosen textbook**



In chapter 3.1.3., it was explained that choosing a suitable textbook is a demanding task; therefore, the families were asked what had influenced their choice. The answers are in the following graph.

**Graph 9: How did homeschooling parents choose the textbook?**



The item “other” included especially parents who had selected the textbook used in the English course of their child. However, it was remarkable that 46 per cent of the respondents had answered that they had investigated several textbooks and made a choice by themselves. It implied that this group of parents likely had taken into account their child’s needs. However, a consultant at a stem school or another parent could have considered the child’s needs as well. Only some other research could reveal whether the chosen textbook really met the child’s needs.

The textbooks and other books used as textbooks that were used in teaching/learning English in the families questioned are listed in Table 6. It was interesting to compare the list based on the questionnaire research with the list of textbooks and teaching texts published by the Ministry of Education. For that purpose, the titles in the table that were granted the approval clause were labelled by an asterisk.

The interviews revealed that homeschooling families used many other teaching materials. Similarly, the questionnaire research discovered that the same was true with other homeschooling families. Graph 10 covered five categories (other textbooks, English magazines, readers, CD-ROMs, other) out of which multimedia courses proved to be a favourite. Particular titles of all the categories are listed in Table 7.

**Table 6: Textbooks used in homeschooling families<sup>63</sup>**

1 <sup>st</sup> grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Anglicko-český obrázkový slovník	Angličtina pro 4. ročník ZŠ*	Angličtina po hláskách* (Kelly)	Chatterbox*	Angličtina pro samouky
Angličtina po hláskách* (Kelly)	English Junior	Angličtina pro malé školáky + MC (Zahálková)*	Chit Chat 1*	Cambridge English for Schools*
Angličtina pro nejmenší* (Zahálková)	Time for A Rhyme	Angličtina pro nejmenší* (Zahálková)	Grammar Rhymes	English for You
English Junior	Way Ahead 1; Workbook	Chatterbox*	New English for You* (Kociánová)	New English for You 2* (Kociánová)
Ferda umí anglicky		Playway to English	Tip Top 2	Go!
Time for A Rhyme		Time for A Rhyme	Tip Top 3	Grammar Rhymes
		Tip Top 2		
		Way Ahead 1; Workbook		

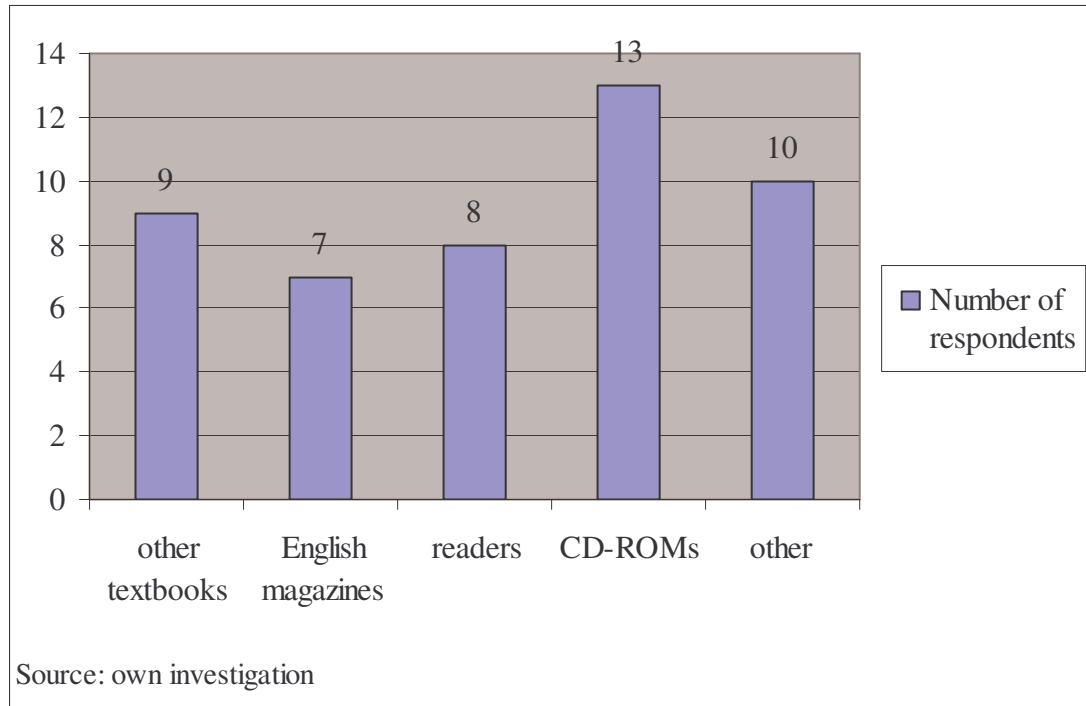
Source: own investigation

\*The titles that were granted the approval clause by the Ministry of Education.

<sup>63</sup> Each title is stated only once although it could be mentioned by several families.



**Graph 10: Teaching materials**



**Table 7: Teaching materials used in homeschooling families**

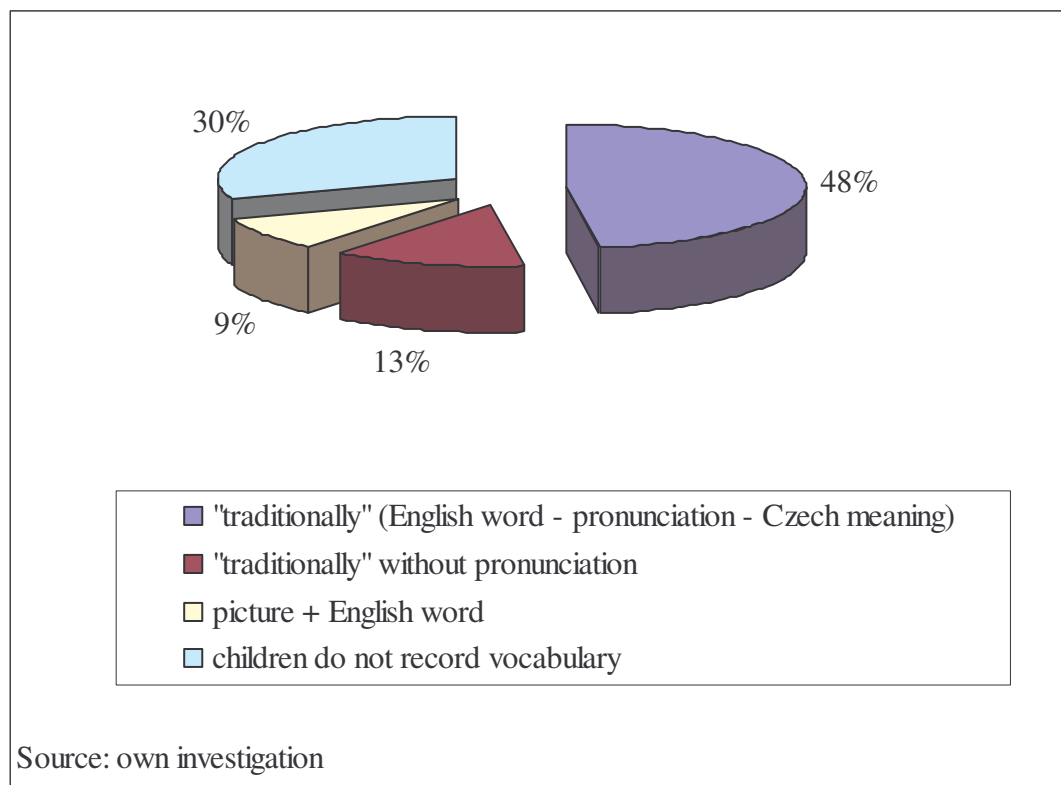
Textbooks	English magazines	Readers	CD-ROMs	Other
Cambridge English for Schools – Starter	American girl	Giving	Angličtina pro děti	audio-cassettes
English for You	Click	My First Bible in Pictures	CD-ROMs by Terasoft	cards
English Grammar for 5th grade	Club house	My Little Miss Library,	computer games (in English)	English songs
Headway	Cricket	Star English with Stories 1–5	DVD-ROM Celá angličtina	figures
Reading for Understanding	Ladybug	The Clever Shoemaker	Elementary Advantage – social studies, spelling, writing, phonics, science, geography...	frequent contact with native speakers
Spelling	Ladybug	The Lazy Farmer	English Plus	illustrated dictionaries
Stepping Stones 1, 2	Spider	Wombat Goes Walkabout	Jump Start	materials available via Internet
textbooks by M. Kelly	Ufin		Mach a Šebestová, ...a svět máš na dlani	matching game
Time for a Rhyme	Your Big Backyard		Reader Rabbit	own worksheets
			Sheila Rae The Brave	self-made aids - games, tables, farm, numbers, colours, verbs, cards
			Zak's Wordgames	The Oxford Dictionary - illustrated
				toys
				TV course Angličtina pro nejmenší + BBC workbook
				TV courses
				visual aids

Source: own investigation

### 3.2.2.3. Teaching pronunciation

One of the objects of the questionnaire research was to find out about the situation of teaching pronunciation in homeschooling families. First, parents were asked whether their children included pronunciation into their vocabulary records. Nearly half of the respondents stated that their children did so, as it is shown in Graph 11.

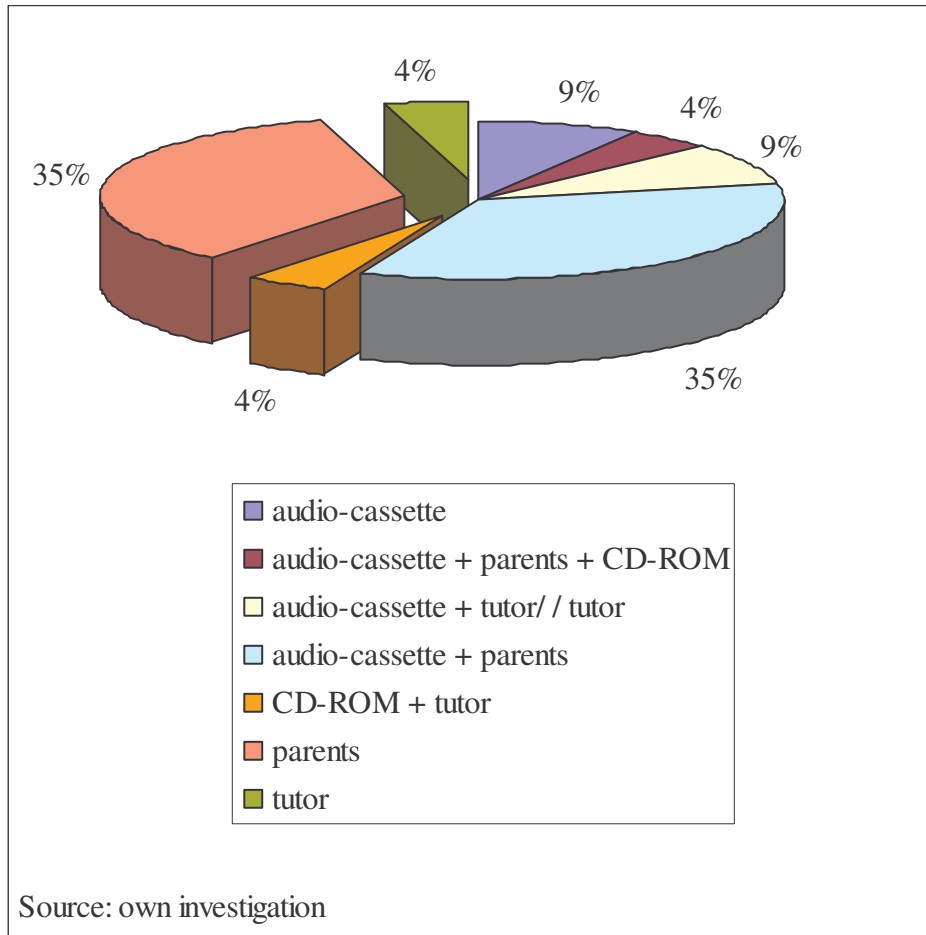
**Graph 11: How do children record new vocabulary?**



One family where the children recorded new vocabulary “traditionally” without pronunciation stated that they did it only because it was required by their stem school. The fact that 30 per cent of families did not encourage children to record new vocabulary was also interesting. Could that imply neglect? Probably not, since two families specified their answer (although they were not asked for) in the sense that the children made certain lists of word families from time to time in one family and underlined new words in a list in the other. Moreover, the fact that a child wrote down the pronunciation of a word certainly did not ensure that he or she would know it.

Secondly, another question was what served as a model for children. Graph 12 summarizes all the answers.

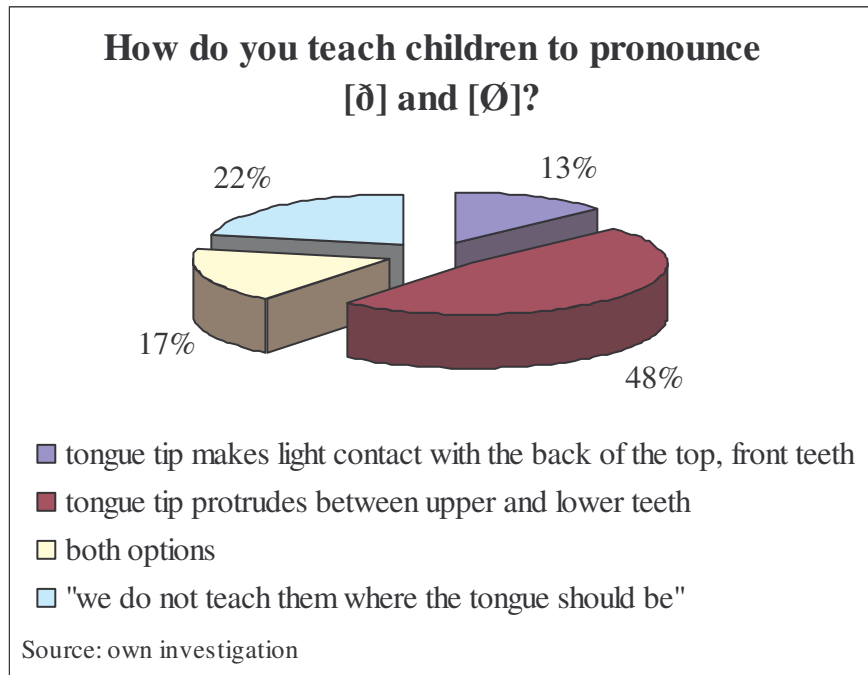
**Graph 12: By means of what/whom were homeschooled children taught the correct pronunciation of English Phonemes?**



Thus, the research revealed that 57 per cent of the families questioned used audiocassettes as a model, which was good news as most audiocassettes were recorded by native speakers. On the other hand, 35 per cent of the respondents stated that they taught the pronunciation to their children by themselves.

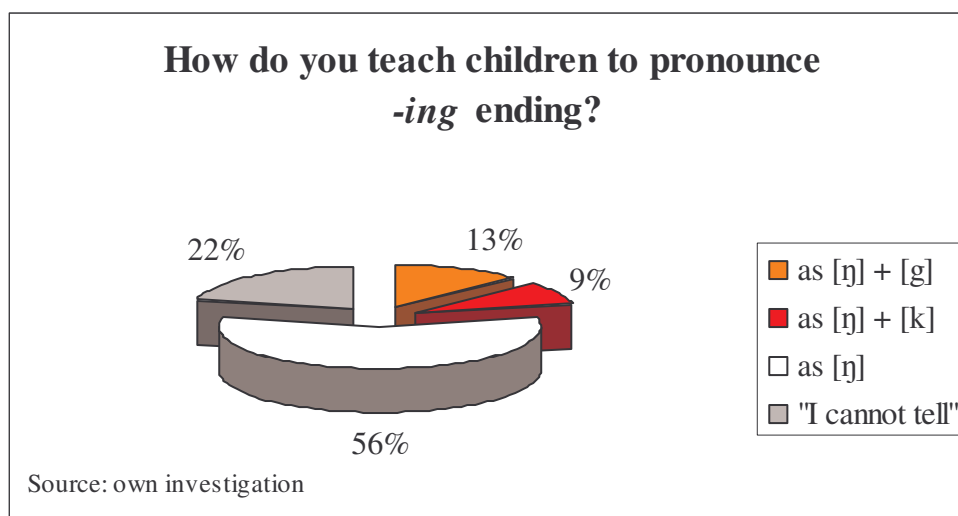
Was the model of the parents adequate? Two questions concerning the pronunciation of individual English phonemes were to examine it partly. The results are expressed by means of Graph 13 and Graph 14.

**Graph 13: Pronunciation of [θ] and [ð]**



Concerning the pronunciation of [θ] and [ð], 66 per cent stated that they used the alternative position of the tongue that had been discussed in chapter 3.2.1.1., namely, that the tongue tip protruded between upper and lower teeth. The second remarkable group of the respondents, who chose the option “we do not teach them where the tongue should be”, presented 22 per cent. It covered various attitudes, for example, that children were taught pronunciation by a tutor or that they learnt it naturally by listening to native speakers.

**Graph 14: Pronunciation of *-ing* ending**

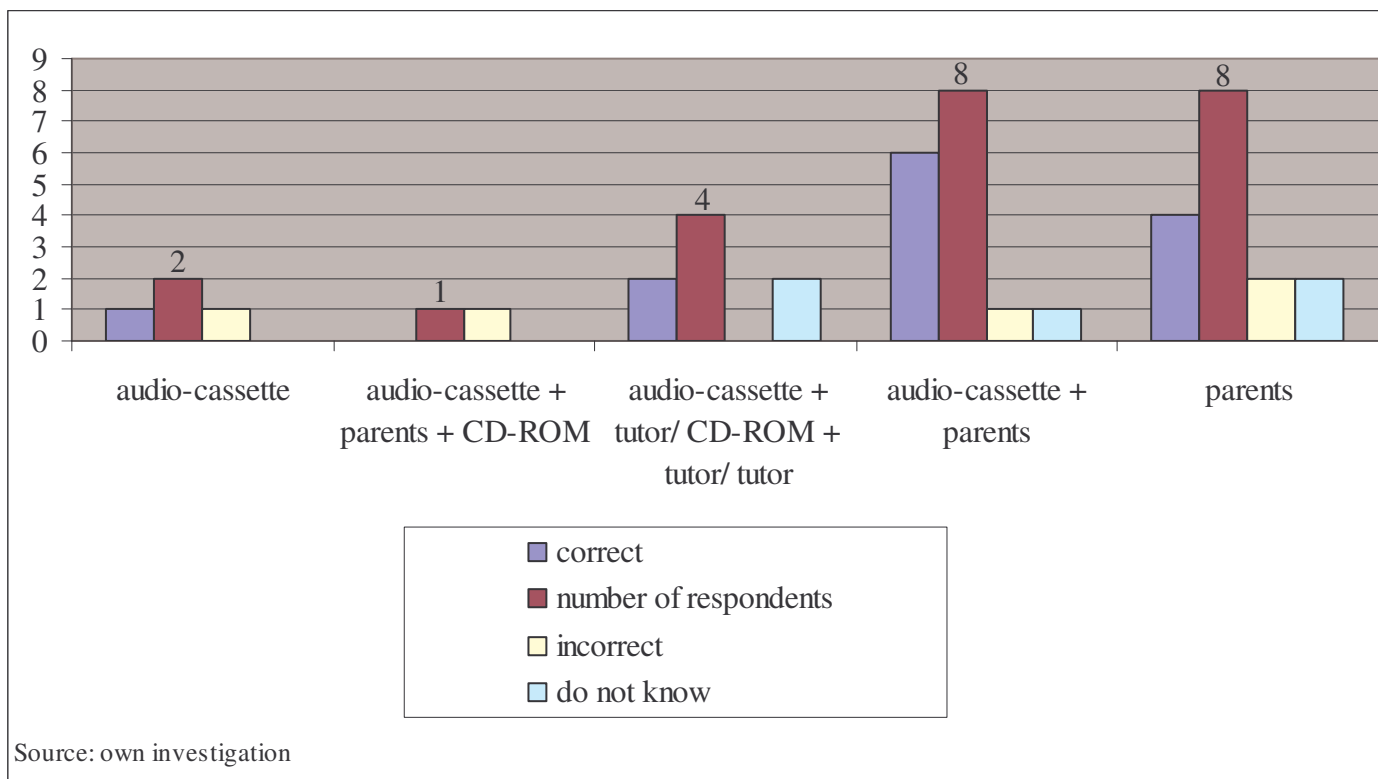


Whereas the case of [θ] and [ð] pronunciation did not challenge the parent's competency to teach pronunciation correctly, it could not be said in the case of *-ing* ending pronunciation. Skaličková stated that the group of letters *ng* was always pronounced as [ŋ] without the following [g] at the end of words (Skaličková 1982, 160), as it had been discussed in the theoretical part<sup>64</sup>. Thus, according to Graph 14, only 56 per cent taught the pronunciation correctly. Was there a connection between the model of pronunciation and the correct pronunciation? Graph 15 that was to find out about it did not prove any significant connection between those two factors except the fact that incorrect pronunciation of *-ing* ending was not identified in the group of respondents who had stated a tutor as one of the models. Based on the questionnaire, no other factors that could be linked to the incorrect pronunciation were revealed, neither English not being the subject that the family was especially focused on nor the usage of one particular textbook as a basis for teaching/learning English<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> Chapter 3.2.1.1.

<sup>65</sup> See questions number 8 and 13 in Appendix 7.

**Graph 15: Relation between the model of pronunciation and the correct pronunciation**



#### **3.2.2.4. Listening and listening comprehension**

Questions connected with the fourth research task were to introduce several aspects of listening and listening comprehension concerning the English language within homeschooling families in the Czech Republic. The first question asked about techniques used for checking listening comprehension. The families chose from a list of options created on the basis of various exercises presented by Ur<sup>66</sup>. Their answers are expressed in Graph 16.

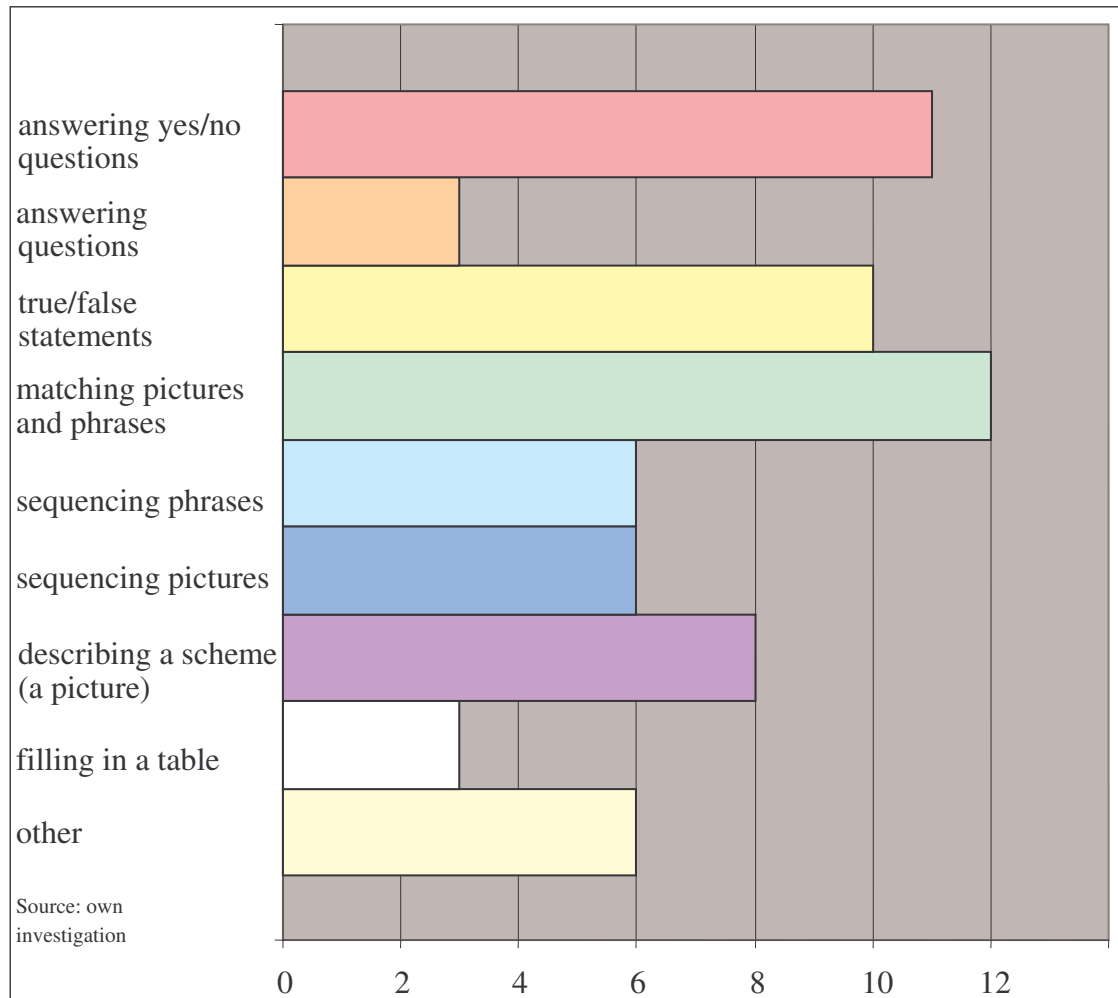
Further, the questionnaire research revealed that, for teaching listening to their children, 83 per cent of respondents used the audiocassette accompanying a textbook. Moreover, four respondents wrote that they adjusted or altered listening exercises in textbooks. They presented following ways: according to a particular situation, according to the age of the child and to his/her needs, and making own exercises for checking comprehension. One respondent from this group plus three other respondents reported that they created own listening exercises.

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<sup>66</sup> Mentioned in Chapter 3.2.2.



**Graph 16: Techniques of checking listening comprehension<sup>67</sup>**



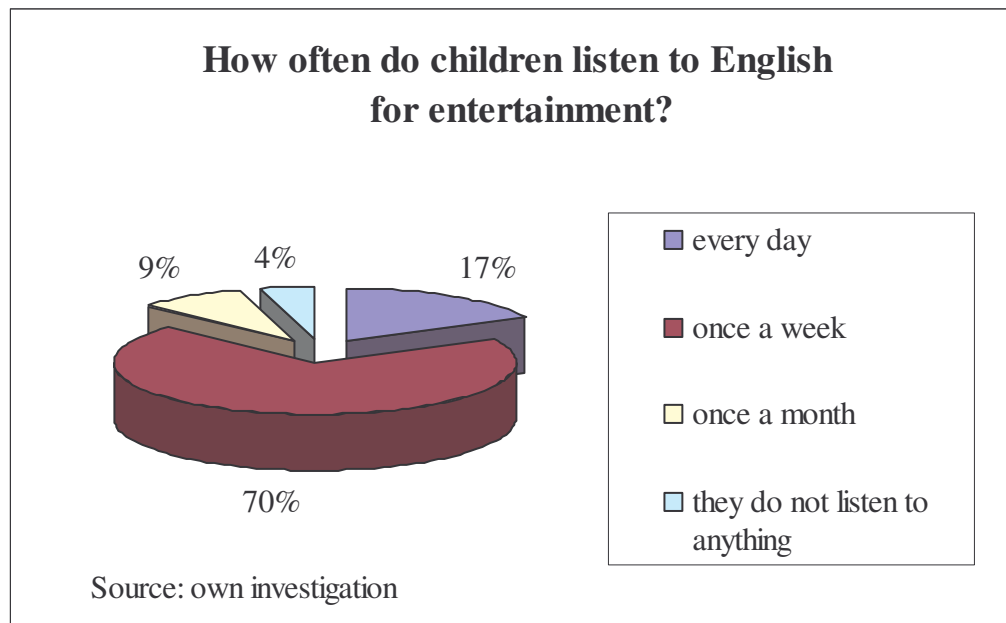
**other**

- according to the textbook
- it is done in the course
- the child reacts and progresses in the programme on PC
- no feedback (children watch TV films that they have already known)
- the child says it in Czech
- children understand everything (a sort of bilingual teaching/learning)

<sup>67</sup> The options were adapted according to the responses (two options were added – answering questions, filling in a table).

The last two questions concerning this area of English asked about listening for entertainment. Graph 17 shows that children did this kind of listening once a week in 70 per cent of the families.

**Graph 17: The frequency of listening to English for entertainment**

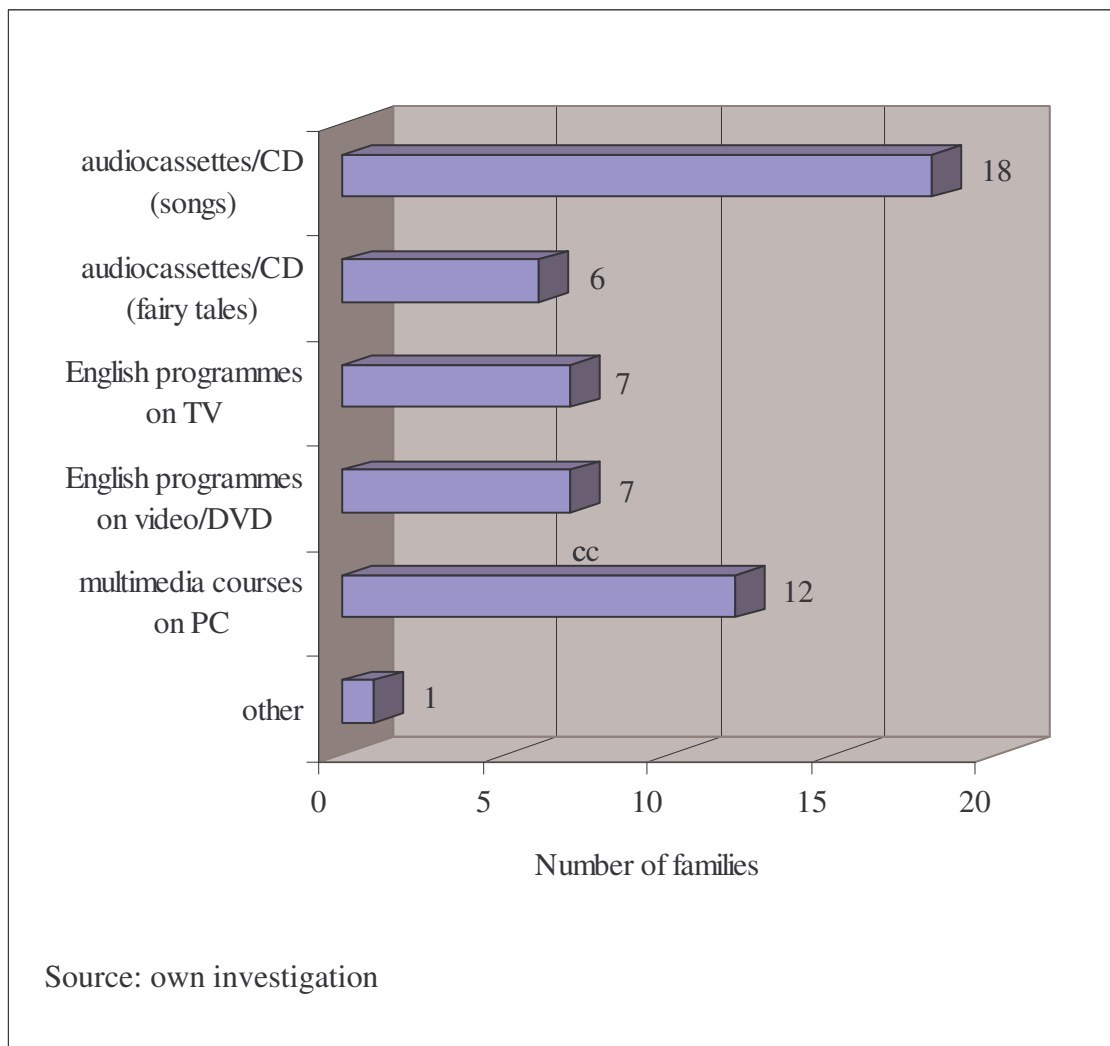


It was encouraging that children in several families (17 per cent) listened for entertainment every day. One response that a child did not listen to anything seemed to be quite startling, especially if the option “once a quarter of a year”<sup>68</sup> was taken into account. However, closer examination revealed that the child started the first grade in school year 2005/2006, which explained the situation.

Graph 18 sets forth what the children in the families questioned listened to for entertainment.

<sup>68</sup> See the questionnaire, question number 25, in Appendix 7.

**Graph 18: What do children listen to for entertainment?**



### **3.3. Partial conclusion**

Since both the method of structured interviews and the method of the questionnaire opened a window to the English teaching/learning within homeschooling, it was possible to introduce several aspects concerning the four research tasks stated at the beginning. However, it must be remembered that any conclusions could be applied only to the homeschooling families included in the research. The interviews revealed the situation of English teaching/learning in four homeschooling families. Although the questionnaire research enabled to monitor other homeschooling families, the low response rate could not justify any generalizations regarding all homeschooling families in the Czech Republic. In view of this, what has the research revealed?

First, the parent's opinion on English teaching proved quite reasonable for nearly half of the respondents provided their children with a tutor of English. Parents who had decided to teach children by themselves had different knowledge of English and three of them (25 per cent) had passed an exam in the English language. Whether they were competent enough for teaching English to their children was not proved as it was not an objective of the research.

Secondly, it was encouraging that families used a wide variety of textbooks and books for teaching English. A list of textbooks and a list of teaching materials<sup>69</sup> used in the homeschooling families presented a useful outcome of the research. There were different approaches to the usage of textbooks in the four interviewed families, ranging from strict following to no usage. Similar variety was among the families that responded to the questionnaire. More than half used a particular textbook, however, almost 40 per cent of them used it selectively or only as a framework for teaching.

Next, all the interviewed mothers considered correct pronunciation very important. According to them, a regular contact with native speakers was the best way to acquire it. However, interactive multimedia courses on PC or audiocassettes could help in case of the lack of such a contact. More than half of the questionnaire respondents used an audiocassette as a model, whereas 35 per cent of the families stated parents as a model. The model of parents was seemingly challenged by 22 per cent of incorrect responses concerning one specific pronunciation item<sup>70</sup>. Further investigation did not prove any clear connection between the pronunciation model of parents and the incorrect pronunciation. Thus, the competency of homeschooling parents to teach pronunciation correctly could be proved only by means of another study.

Finally, the method of questionnaire was used to find out whether and how the homeschooling families ensured listening and listening comprehension. Most respondents (83 per cent) used the audiocassette accompanying a textbook for teaching listening. In addition, it was proved that the homeschooling families used various techniques for checking listening comprehension<sup>71</sup>. Most families (87 per cent) stated that their children listened to English for entertainment at least once a week. According

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<sup>69</sup> See Table 6 and Table 7.

<sup>70</sup> The pronunciation of *-ing* ending that was discussed in Chapter 3.2.2.3.

<sup>71</sup> See Graph 16.

to the research, audiocassettes with songs and interactive multimedia courses were preferred.

Homeschooling was a wide field, out of which English teaching/learning presented only one constituent. The research that focused on several aspects of that constituent was valuable, as it revealed various approaches to English teaching/learning (concerning the selected aspects<sup>72</sup>) in homeschooling families. Further investigations could be aimed at a question that arose repeatedly during the research, namely, whether parents who did not have adequate pedagogical education were competent to teach English to their children. It was not a subject of the research and the data gathered could not provide a satisfying answer.

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<sup>72</sup> See the introduction to chapter three of this thesis.

## CONCLUSION

Homeschooling is an alternative form of education that may include various approaches to teaching/learning process. In the Czech Republic, there exists the “school-at-home” approach that is based on traditional procedures used at school and the freer approach that uses, for example, project teaching/learning.

Homeschooling was first enabled by means of the experimental verification that was performed in connection with the four stem schools. The process started on 1 September 1998 and was permitted for five years. The end term was gradually shifted until the new Education Act entered into effect. Section 41 of the Education Act approved on 24 September 2004 regulates this form of education at the first level of basic school. Modern homeschooling started to exist and was legalized in the Czech Republic due to great effort of the promoters of homeschooling from two Czech homeschooling organizations, The Society of Home School Friends and The Association for Home Education. At present, the association takes steps to make home education possible at the second level of basic school.

Homeschooling families are obliged to include all subjects from school curriculum into their teaching/learning, which means a foreign language as well. This thesis focused on the position of the English language within homeschooling, which was also the subject matter of the interrelated research. The research centred on four research tasks that were to find out (1) who taught English in homeschooling families, (2) what textbooks the families used and into what extent, (3) whether the families taught pronunciation and how, and (4) whether and how the families ensured listening and listening comprehension. The method of structured interviews opened windows to four homeschooling families and their process of English teaching/learning. The second method of investigation, the questionnaire, enabled to examine this field in other homeschooling families in the Czech Republic.

Some homeschooled children start to learn English as a compulsory subject in the first grade, however, most of them in the fourth grade. The law does not set a minimal level of parents’ knowledge of a foreign language, neither are parents obliged to ensure a qualified teacher of the language in case their knowledge is not adequate. Thus, there is a danger that some parents might underestimate English teaching/learning.

Concerning this subject, the research showed that some parents<sup>73</sup> provided their child with a tutor of English whereas others taught their children by themselves. No parent questioned was a trained English teacher. Homeschooling parents are allowed to choose textbooks and teaching materials appropriate for their children. The research revealed great variety not only in the choice but also in the approach to using textbooks.

Since the field of English teaching/learning was enormous and all its aspects could not be covered in detail in research of this breadth, the special focus was on one language system and one language skill, namely, pronunciation and listening respectively. The close examination of several problematical phonemes highlighted the complexity and difficulty of English pronunciation. Further, integrated, remedial and practice lessons were mentioned as three possible approaches to teaching pronunciation. The interviews proved that all the mothers considered correct pronunciation very important. Many families questioned used audiocassettes and interactive multimedia courses on personal computer for teaching/learning it. Interviewed mothers perceived a regular contact with native speakers as the best way to acquire correct pronunciation.

Listening activities may have different purpose. Ur (1992) distinguishes listening for perception and listening for comprehension. In addition, she mentions the importance of listening for enjoyment. The research proved that most respondents used the audiocassettes accompanying a textbook for teaching listening. For listening comprehension, they used a variety of techniques. Homeschooled children listened to English also for entertainment, while audiocassettes with songs proved to be the most favourite item.

Overall, the findings of the research are in accordance with Tůma's (2005, 1) description of Czech homeschooling parents:

It was shown that the group of parents who choose homeschooling is very specific... Most are parents with a highly developed sense of responsibility toward own children.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The conclusions from the research were not applicable to all homeschooling families in the Czech Republic generally because of the low number of respondents. Moreover, not all families teach a foreign language and, in addition, not all families have chosen English as a foreign language.

<sup>74</sup> Own translation. „Ukázalo se, že skupina rodičů, kteří domácí vzdělávání volí, je velmi specifická... Většinou jde o rodiče s vysoce rozvinutým smyslem pro zodpovědnost vůči vlastním dětem.“

## RÉSUMÉ

Často se setkáme s tvrzením, že domácí vzdělávání má svůj původ ve Spojených státech amerických. Velmi zajímavá je tedy informace, že v roce 1903 se v Čechách<sup>75</sup> vzdělávalo doma 876 dětí ve věku od šesti do čtrnácti let<sup>76</sup>. Školský zákon 62/1869 poskytoval rodičům možnost výběru, buď posílat děti do školy nebo je vzdělávat doma. To však platilo před více než sto lety. Jaké postavení má domácí vzdělávání v České republice v současnosti? Mohou si rodiče zvolit tuto alternativní formu vzdělávání? Je to legální? Tyto otázky jsou zodpovězeny v této diplomové práci.

Námětem je tedy problematika domácího vzdělávání v České republice. Cílem je přiblížit podmínky, za kterých domácí vzdělávání probíhalo a také v současnosti probíhá. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována otázce postavení výuky anglického jazyka. Ta je také předmětem souvisejícího výzkumu, který je dále rozdělen na čtyři výzkumné úkoly: zjistit (1) kdo učí angličtinu v rodinách, které vzdělávají děti doma, (2) jaké učebnice rodiny používají a v jakém rozsahu, (3) zda rodiny vyučují výslovnost a jakým způsobem a (4) zda a jak rodiny zajišťují poslech a porozumění poslechu. Jako techniky sběru dat bylo využito strukturovaného rozhovoru a dotazníku<sup>77</sup>.

První kapitola se nejprve věnuje definici termínu „domácí vzdělávání“. Jelikož tato alternativní forma vzdělávání zahrnuje nejrozmanitější přístupy k vyučovacímu procesu, není snadné ji jednoznačně definovat. Navíc, pracovníci Ministerstva školství se rozhodli označovat tuto formu vzdělávání jako „individuální vzdělávání“, což je často zavádějící, zejména v podobě anglické verze „individual tuition“. *Pedagogický slovník* uvádí, že domácí vzdělávání je „vzdělávání probíhající doma, v rodině, kdy děti nedocházejí do školy a vyučují je jejich rodiče“ (Průcha, Walterová, Mareš 2003, 48). V České republice se dají odlišit dva hlavní přístupy. První z nich se často označuje jako „škola doma“ a jak už z názvu vyplývá, využívá postupy tradičně využívané ve škole. Druhý přístup je volnější a zahrnuje například projektové vyučování nebo integraci předmětů.

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<sup>75</sup> Myšleno pouze v Čechách, ne na Moravě a ve Slezsku. Čechy tehdy byly součástí Rakousko-Uherské monarchie (až do roku 1918).

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.sweb.cz/pamet-DV/vse.htm> [18.2.2006]

<sup>77</sup> Viz příloha 4.



Dále je v této kapitole uvedena historie domácího vzdělávání v České republice a jeho současná situace. Domácí vzdělávání bylo nejprve umožněno prostřednictvím pokusného ověřování, které bylo povoleno ve spojení se čtyřmi kmenovými školami. Toto ověřování začalo 1. září 1998 a bylo naplánováno na pět školních roků. Termín ukončení byl postupně posouván až do doby, kdy vstoupil v platnost nový školský zákon. Paragraf 41 školského zákona, který byl schválen 24. září 2004, upravuje tuto formu vzdělávání na prvním stupni základní školy. Přestože znění zákona není ideální, díky velkému úsilí několika aktivistů Asociace pro domácí vzdělávání se podařilo prosadit tři zásadní pozměňovací návrhy: (1) „rozhodující pravomoc má ředitel, nikoliv úředník krajského úřadu“, (2) „náklady na domácí vzdělávání hradí rodiče, ovšem kromě výdajů školy“ a (3) „ze zákona byly ... odstraněny „zdravotní důvody“ jako jediný taxativně vyjmenovaný důvod zařazení žáka do domácího vzdělávání“ (Simonová 2004, 5). Výše uvedená asociace se v současnosti soustředí na povolení domácího vzdělávání na druhém stupni základní školy. Společnost přátel domácí školy, druhá česká organizace, která je úzce spjata s domácím vzděláváním, se zaměřuje především na rodiny zapojené do domácího vzdělávání a plní spíše podpůrnou úlohu.

Kapitola druhá rozebírá postavení angličtiny v rámci domácího vzdělávání z několika hledisek. Nejprve vysvětluje, že některé doma vzdělávané děti se začínají učit angličtinu jako povinný předmět již v první třídě, avšak většina doma vzdělávaných dětí ve čtvrté třídě. Závisí to zejména na tom, podle kterého vzdělávacího programu se řídí kmenová škola, do které je dítě zařazeno. Další zjištění se týká vzdělání rodičů s ohledem na cizí jazyk. Zákon nestanoví, jakou minimální úroveň znalosti cizího jazyka musí mít rodiče, kteří chtějí své dítě vzdělávat doma. Navíc rodičům neukládá ani povinnost zajistit kvalifikovaného učitele, pokud je jejich znalost cizího jazyka nedostatečná. Proto existuje reálné nebezpečí, že by rodiče mohli výuku angličtiny podceňovat (Bakončík 2002, 13).

Další hledisko, které tato kapitola rozebírá, se týká učebních materiálů. Ze zákona vyplývá, že rodiče si mohou sami vybírat učebnice a učební texty pro výuku svých dětí. Pokud těmto nebyla přidělena schvalovací doložka Ministerstva školství, rodičům je uložena povinnost vytvořit seznam všech takových učebnic a učebních textů a přiložit jej k žádosti o individuální vzdělávání. Nicméně, oblast výuky angličtiny je tak

rozsáhlá, že všechny její aspekty nemohou být detailně rozebrány ve výzkumu tohoto rozsahu. To je důvodem, proč se druhá část této kapitoly zaměřuje pouze na jeden jazykový systém, konkrétně na výslovnost, a na jednu jazykovou dovednost, konkrétně na poslech. Cílem bylo na základě těchto dvou aspektů ukázat, jak je proces výuky angličtiny náročný. Na poli výslovnosti je zvláštní pozornost věnována anglickým fonémům, které mohou být pro české žáky problematické. Dále jsou stručně popsány tři možné přístupy k tomu, jak vyučovat výslovnost, které popisuje Kelly. Jedná se o integrovanou, nápravnou a procvičovací hodinu (Kelly 2004, 11-28). Pokud jde o poslech, Ur (1992, 33) rozlišuje poslech pro vnímání, jehož cílem je naučit se správně vnímat rozdílné zvuky, přízvuk ... a poslech pro porozumění. Ur (1992, 63) také zdůrazňuje důležitost poslechu pro zábavu.

Výzkum, který vycházel z teoretické části a který byl zaměřen výlučně na postavení výuky angličtiny v rámci domácího vzdělávání, je podrobně analyzován ve třetí kapitole. Obě metody sběru dat přiblížily několik aspektů této výuky v souvislosti se čtyřmi výše uvedenými výzkumnými úkoly. Metoda strukturovaných rozhovorů umožnila hlouběji nahlédnout do přístupu k výuce angličtiny ve čtyřech doma vzdělávajících rodinách. Metodou dotazníku byly prozkoumány další doma vzdělávající rodiny. Kvůli nízké návratnosti se však výsledky dotazníkového šetření nedají obecně uplatnit na všechny doma vzdělávající rodiny v České republice. Navíc je třeba si uvědomit, že ne všechny rodiny vyučují cizí jazyk a že zvoleným jazykem není vždy angličtina.

Jaké jsou tedy výsledky výzkumu? Za prvé, názor rodičů na výuku angličtiny se prokázal rozumný, neboť téměř polovina respondentů zajistila svým dětem učitele angličtiny. Ti rodiče, kteří se rozhodli učit děti sami, se vyznačovali rozdílnou znalostí angličtiny. Tři z dotázaných (25 procent) složili zkoušku z anglického jazyka. To, zda jsou rodiče dostatečně způsobilí vyučovat své děti angličtinu, se nedalo prokázat a také to nebylo předmětem výzkumu.

Za druhé bylo zjištěno, že rodiny využívaly pro výuku angličtiny rozmanité učebnice a knihy. Užitečným přínosem výzkumu je seznam učebních materiálů, které tyto doma

vzdělávající rodiny používaly<sup>78</sup>. Ve čtyřech rodinách, se kterými byl veden rozhovor, bylo možné pozorovat rozdílné přístupy k používání učebnic, od velmi důsledného používání učebnic až po jejich zamítnutí. Podobná rozmanitost byla i mezi rodinami, které odpověděly na dotazník. Více než polovina z nich používala jednu konkrétní učebnici, avšak téměř čtyřicet procent ji používalo selektivně nebo pouze jako rámec výuky.

Dále, všechny matky, se kterými byl veden rozhovor, považovaly správnou výslovnost za velmi důležitou. Nejlepším způsobem, jak ji získat, je podle nich pravidelný kontakt s rodilými mluvčími. Pokud takový kontakt není možné zajistit, dají se využít interaktivní multimediální počítačové programy nebo audiokazety. Více než polovina dotázaných používala jako model správné výslovnosti audiokazetu, zatímco třicet pět procent rodin uvedlo, že využívají jako model rodiče. Model rodičů byl zdánlivě zpochybněn, neboť dvacet dva procent dotázaných nesprávně odpovědělo na otázku týkající se správné výslovnosti koncovky *-ing*<sup>79</sup>. Další šetření však neprokázalo žádnou jasnou souvislost mezi výslovnostním modelem rodičů a touto nesprávnou výslovností. Způsobnost rodičů vyučovat správné výslovnost by mohla být prokázána jedině na základě dalšího výzkumu.

Nakonec bylo dotazníkové šetření využito ke zjištění toho, zda a jak doma vzdělávané rodiny zajišťují poslech a porozumění poslechu. Většina respondentů (83 procent) používala k výuce poslechu audiokazety doprovázející učebnici. Navíc bylo prokázáno, že zkoumané doma vzdělávající rodiny využívaly různé techniky pro zjišťování porozumění poslechu. Většina rodin (87 procent) uvedla, že jejich děti poslouchají angličtinu pro zábavu nejméně jednou týdně. Podle tohoto výzkumu patřily mezi nejoblíbenější audiokazety s písněmi a interaktivní multimediální programy.

Přestože se výzkum zaměřil jen na několik aspektů, byl velmi přínosný, neboť v rámci těchto aspektů odhalil rozmanité přístupy doma vzdělávajících rodin k výuce angličtiny. Přinesl také širší obraz toho, jaké postavení výuka angličtiny zaujímá v rámci domácího vzdělávání v České republice. Další výzkum by mohl být zaměřen na otázku, která se několikrát objevila během tohoto šetření, totiž, zda jsou rodiče, kteří

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<sup>78</sup> Viz tabulka 6 a 7.

<sup>79</sup> Rozebíráno v kapitole 3.2.2.3.

nemají odpovídající pedagogické vzdělání, způsobí učít své děti angličtině. Tato otázka nebyla předmětem tohoto výzkumu a na základě shromážděných dat nebylo možné poskytnout uspokojující odpověď.

Závěrem se dá říci, že výsledky šetření jsou v souladu s charakteristikou českých doma vzdělávajících rodičů, kterou uvedl Tůma (2005, 1):

Ukázalo se, že skupina rodičů, kteří domácí vzdělávání volí, je velmi specifická... Většinou jde o rodiče s vysoce rozvinutým smyslem pro zodpovědnost vůči vlastním dětem.

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**Appendix 1: Act No. 561/2004 Coll. (Education Act), Section 41 – Individual Tuition**

## **Alternative Ways of Satisfying Compulsory School Attendance**

### Section 40

#### **Other Alternatives of Satisfying Compulsory School Attendance**

Other manners of satisfying compulsory school attendance shall be understood to be

- a) individual tuition carried out without regular participation in school lessons (hereinafter referred to as “individual tuition”);
- b) education of pupils suffering from serious mental disability.

### Section 41

#### **Individual Tuition**

(1) The head teacher of a school where a pupil has been admitted for compulsory school attendance shall decide on permitting individual tuition of the pupil concerned upon an application in writing filed by the pupil’s statutory representative. Individual tuition may be permitted only for the pupil attending the first level (primary level) of basic school.

(2) An application filed by the pupil’s statutory representative must contain the following data:

- a) the name and surname, birth identification number and permanent place of residence of the pupil;
- b) the period, grade or term when the pupil should be educated individually;
- c) reasons justifying individual education of the pupil;
- d) the description of space, material and technical equipment for education and conditions for the protection of health of the pupil;
- e) documents certifying education achieved by the person who shall individually teach the pupil;
- f) the list of textbooks and teaching texts to be used in individual tuition unless these are textbooks listed in Section 27 (1);
- g) other details affecting the course of education of the pupil;
- h) the opinion of the school advisory facility.

(3) The head teacher shall permit individual tuition if

- a) individual tuition is justified by serious reasons;
- b) sufficient conditions for individual tuition, in particular material conditions and conditions of protection of the pupil’s health, are ensured;
- c) the person who will teach the pupil has acquired at least secondary education completed by a school-leaving examination;
- d) adequate textbooks and teaching texts under which the pupil is to be taught are available.

(5) Should it not be possible to evaluate the pupil being educated individually at the end of the relevant term the head teacher shall specify an additional term for his/her evaluation in order that evaluation shall be completed not later than within two (2) months of the end of the relevant term.

(6) If the statutory representative has some doubts about the correctness of the pupil's evaluation he/she may, not later than within eight (8) days of the date of examinations, request the head teacher in writing to re-examine the pupil. If an examiner of the pupil was the head teacher him/herself the statutory representative shall contact the Regional Authority. If the head teacher or Regional Authority agrees to the request a re-examination of the pupil by the Examination Board shall be ordered.

(7) The head teacher shall refuse permission for individual tuition

- a) if sufficient conditions for education, in particular material and personnel conditions and conditions for the protection of the pupil's health are not ensured;
- b) if the statutory representative does not meet conditions of individual tuition stipulated herein;
- c) if the pupil failed examinations at the end of the relevant term;
- d) if the pupil may not be evaluated in the manner laid down in sub-sections 4 or 5;  
or
- e) upon the request of the statutory representative.

(8) The head teacher shall decide on refusing individual tuition for the pupil not later than thirty (30) days from the commencement of proceedings and at the same time he/she shall include the pupil into the relevant grade of the basic school. An appeal against a decision made by the head teacher on refusing individual tuition for the pupil shall not have the effect of suspending the enforcement of the decision.

(9) Expenses incurred in individual tuition shall be covered by the statutory representative of the pupil with the exception of textbooks and basic school equipment and stationary under Section 27 (3) and (6), special textbooks and special didactical and compensatory teaching aids under Section 16 (7), and expenses on activities of the school to which the pupil was admitted to satisfy compulsory school attendance.

Source: [http://www.msmt.cz/\\_DOMEK/default.asp?CAI=3255](http://www.msmt.cz/_DOMEK/default.asp?CAI=3255) [viewed 20 January 2006]

**Appendix 2: Schools Involved in the Experimental Verification of Home Education  
(2002)**

**Bratrská škola**

Pan ředitel Bohumil Bulíř  
Rajská 3, 170 00 Praha 7  
Tel.: 283 870 423

**Základní škola Letohradská**

Paní ředitelka Renata Fejfarová  
Letohradská 1  
170 00 Praha 7  
Tel: 233 370 782

**Církevní a mateřská základní škola Jana Ámose Komenského**

Paní ředitelka Daniela Coufalová  
Srbská 441/12, 460 11 Liberec  
Tel. 485 106 111

**Základní škola Ostrava-Výškovice**

pan ředitel Jiří Bakončík  
Šeříková 43, 700 30 Ostrava  
Tel. 696 750 070

**Appendix 3: Experimental Verification of Home Education Established at Brother School** (a letter including conditions of the experimental verification)

## **Appendix 4: Structured Interview**

### **Initial questions**

How old are your children and which grade do they attend?

Do you teach English to your children?

What is your education in the field of the English language?

### **Usage of a textbook**

Do you use a particular textbook?

If so, what is its title and how did you choose it?

How thoroughly do you follow the textbook?

What other materials and aids do you use?

### **The attitude to the teaching/learning of language skills and language systems**

Which of the following skills do you consider the most important for a child of this age (the first level) – reading, writing, speaking or listening?

What do you place greater emphases on? Grammar or vocabulary?

### **Pronunciation teaching**

Do you teach vocabulary to your children?

If so, how?

Is correct pronunciation important for you?

Do you practise sounds of speech that do not exist in the Czech language - [θ]?

Do you teach phonemic symbols for transcription of pronunciation to your children?

How do you practise speaking?

### **Evaluation**

According to what and how do you evaluate English of your children (for example, on the school report)?

## **Appendix 5: Questionnaire (original version)**



## **Appendix 6: Questionnaire (English version)**

## **ENGLISH TEACHING/LEARNING WITHIN HOMESCHOOLING**

- 1. How many children do you have?**
- 2. How many of them do you educate at home?**
- 3. How many of them did you educate at home?**
- 4. Does a child that you educate at home learn English this school year?**
- 5. If so, specify, please: age/ grade**
- 6. Who does usually teach English to your children?**
  - father
  - mother
  - tutor
  - parent from another homeschooling family
  - private teacher
  - another person (specify, please)
- 7. What education does the person have in the field of English?**
  - self-taught person
  - English course
  - English language as ordinary subject at secondary school
  - English language as ordinary subject at university
  - English language at university + state exam
  - others (specify, please)
- 8. Is English a subject that you have especially focused on within homeschooling?**
- 9. If not, what other subject have you especially focused on?**
- 10. How much time per week do children spend with learning English?**
- 11. How frequent is teaching/learning English?**
- 12. Concerning English, what do you consider more important for children at primary level?**
  - content/ attitude
- 13. Do you use a particular textbook for teaching/learning English?**
- 14. Specify, please. grade/ textbook/ publisher**

**15. How did you choose the textbook?**

advice of stem school

advice of another parent

we investigated several textbooks and made a choice

other (specify, please)

**16. How thoroughly do you follow the textbook?**

especially textbook

I choose only something

the textbook serves only as a framework for teaching

**17. What other materials/ aids do you regularly use when teaching/learning English? textbooks (specify, please)**

English magazines (specify, please)

readers (specify, please)

CD-ROMs (specify, please)

others (specify, please)

**18. What techniques of checking listening comprehension do you use most often?**

the child answers yes/ no questions

the child states whether statements are true

the child matches pictures and phrases

the child sequences phrases

the child sequences pictures

the child describes a scheme (a picture)

other (specify, please)

**19. Do you use the audiocassette accompanying a textbook for teaching listening?**

**20. Do you adjust listening activities from the textbook?**

**21. If so, how?**

**22. Do you sometimes create listening activities?**

**23. If so, what materials do you use?**

**24. What do children listen to in English for fun (outside of learning)?**

audiocassettes/CD (songs)

audiocassettes/CD (fairy tales)

English programmes on TV

English programmes on video/DVD

multimedia courses on PC

nothing

others (specify, please)

**25. How often do children listen to English for fun (songs, fairy tales...)?**

every day  
once a week  
once a month  
once a quarter of a year  
they do not listen to anything

**26. How do children record new vocabulary?**

“traditionally” (English word – pronunciation – Czech meaning)  
“traditionally” without pronunciation  
picture + English word  
children do not record vocabulary  
other (specify, please)

**27. How do you teach correct pronunciation of English phonemes to your children?**

according to the audiocassette accompanying a textbook  
according to CD-ROM  
we teach them by ourselves  
another way (specify, please)

**28. How do you teach children to pronounce [ð] and [θ], for example in words *the, this* and *think, thanks*?**

tongue tip makes light contact with the back of the top, front teeth  
tongue tip protrudes between upper and lower teeth  
we do not teach them where the tongue should be  
another way (specify, please)

**29. How do you teach children to pronounce –*ing* ending, for example in words *going, cooking, making*?**

as [ŋ] + [g]  
as [ŋ] + [k]  
as [ŋ]  
I cannot tell

## **Appendix 7: The Findings of the Questionnaire Research**

## ENGLISH TEACHING/LEARNING WITHIN HOMESCHOOLING

- 23 respondents
- respondents were allowed to tick more options
- figures without a title mean number of respondents who ticked or wrote down the option

### 1. How many children do you have?

One	4
Two	4
Three	10
Four	3
Five	2

### 2. How many of them do you educate at home?

None	4
One	15
Two	3
Three	1

### 3. How many of them did you educate at home?

None	5
One	6
Two	9
Three	3

### 4. Does a child that you educate at home learn English this school year?

Yes	18
No	5

### 5. If so, specify, please: age/ grade

Age	
Six	2
Seven	4
Eight	6
Nine	2
Ten	3
Eleven	5

Grade	
1 <sup>st</sup>	3
2 <sup>nd</sup>	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	4
4 <sup>th</sup>	4
5 <sup>th</sup>	6

**6. Who does usually teach English to your children?**

father	1	
mother	16	
tutor	5	
parent from another homeschooling family	2	
private teacher	2	
another person (specify, please)	1	A sister of the child

**7. What education does the person have in the field of English?**

self-taught person	4
English course	5
English language as ordinary subject at secondary school	4
English language as ordinary subject at university	5
English language at university + state exam	2
FCE	2
others	7

**8. Is English a subject that you have especially focused on within homeschooling?**

Yes	13
No	10

**10. How much time per week do children spend with learning English?**

2 hours	6
3 hours	10
4 hours	2
5 hours	2
other	3

**11. How frequent is teaching/learning English?**

Twice a week	6
Three times a week	3
Several times	3
Every day	10

**12. Concerning English, what do you consider more important for children at primary level?**

Attitude	19
Attitude and content	2
Content	1
Not mentioned	1

**13. Do you use a particular textbook for teaching/learning English?**

Yes	13
No	10

**14. Specify, please. grade/ textbook/ publisher**  
see Table 6

**15. How did you choose the textbook?**

advice of stem school	3
advice of another parent	4
we investigated several textbooks and made a choice	12
other	7

**16. How thoroughly do you follow the textbook?**

especially textbook	8
I choose only something	3
the textbook serves only as a framework for teaching	2

**17. What other materials/ aids do you regularly use when teaching/learning English?**

see Table 7

**18. What techniques of checking listening comprehension do you use most often?**

the child answers yes/ no questions	11
the child states whether statements are true	10
the child matches pictures and phrases	12
the child sequences phrases	6
the child sequences pictures	6
the child describes a scheme (a picture)	3
other	12



**19. Do you use the audiocassette accompanying a textbook for teaching listening?**

Yes	19
No	4

**20. Do you adjust listening activities from the textbook?**

Yes	4
No	19

**21. If so, how?**

- according to a particular situation
- according to the age of the child and to his/her needs
- own exercises for checking comprehension

**22. Do you sometimes create listening activities?**

Yes	4
No	19

**23. If so, what materials do you use?**

- recordings of a bilingual friend
- various audiocassettes
- materials from internet
- own recording on an audiocassette
- texts from a textbook

**24. What do children listen to in English for fun (outside of learning)?**

audiocassettes/CD (songs)	18	
audiocassettes/CD (fairy tales)	6	
English programmes on TV	7	
English programmes on video/DVD	7	
multimedia courses on PC	12	
others (specify, please)	1	Materials from internet with sound

**25. How often do children listen to English for fun (songs, fairy tales...)?**

every day	4
once a week	16
once a month	2
once a quarter of a year	0
they do not listen to anything	1

**26. How do children record new vocabulary?**

“traditionally” (English word – pronunciation – Czech meaning)	11
“traditionally” without pronunciation	3
picture + English word	2
children do not record vocabulary	7

**27. How do you teach correct pronunciation of English phonemes to your children?**

according to the audiocassette accompanying a textbook	13	
according to CD-ROM	2	
we teach them by ourselves	17	
another way (specify, please)	4	tutor

**28. How do you teach children to pronounce [ð] and [Ø], for example in words *the, this* and *think, thanks*?**

tongue tip makes light contact with the back of the top, front teeth	3
tongue tip protrudes between upper and lower teeth	11
both options	4
we do not teach them where the tongue should be	5

**29. How do you teach children to pronounce –*ing* ending, for example in words *going, cooking, making*?**

as [ŋ] + [g]	3
as [ŋ] + [k]	2
as [ŋ]	13
I cannot tell	5

## ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

<b>1.1.1. Název práce</b>	Home Schooling in the Czech Republic with Regard to Teaching/Learning English
<b>1.1.2. Autor práce</b>	Hana Hrušková
Obor	<b>1.1.3. Učitelství anglického jazyka</b>
Rok obhajoby	2006
Vedoucí práce	PaedDr. Monika Černá, Ph.D.
Anotace	Diplomová práce se zabývá problematikou domácího vzdělávání v České republice. Součástí je také jeho historie, avšak hlavním námětem je otázka postavení výuky anglického jazyka v rámci domácího vzdělávání. Několik vybraných aspektů této výuky je diskutováno nejprve na teoretické rovině a pak jsou předmětem výzkumného šetření. Jako techniky sběru dat bylo využito strukturovaného rozhovoru a dotazníku.
Klíčová slova	angličtina, Česká republika, domácí škola, domácí vzdělávání, dotazník, historie, individuální vzdělávání, poslech, strukturovaný rozhovor, učebnice, výslovnost, výuka, výzkum