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**Bakalářská práce**

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Storytelling as a teaching method in bilingual preschool  
education

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## **Declaration:**

I declare that I have worked independently on this thesis and used only the sources listed in bibliography.

## **Prohlášení:**

Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně. Veškerou literaturu a další zdroje, z nichž jsem při zpracování čerpala, uvádím v seznamu použité literatury a zdrojů.

V Olomouci dne 29. 5. 2022

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## **Abstract**

Teaching English in preschool education seems to be a very popular topic among public, but many kindergartens still struggle to find the way of teaching language to children of such young age.

Based on theoretical knowledge and insights from practice, the aim of this bachelor thesis is to illustrate storytelling as an effective method of teaching English in bilingual preschool education. On the basis of a research conducted with preschool teachers, their experiences with the storytelling method were described, which largely confirmed the theses set in the theoretical part of the thesis. The respondents stated that storytelling motivates children towards new languages because it is not learning by drilling, but by acquiring languages through stories and related activities. The respondents saw the main advantage of storytelling as the fact that it is fun and natural way of learning. Another observation that the teachers made was that in storytelling, vocabulary is acquired in context and with the correct storytelling technique there is no need for translation. Related to this, the use of props, correct storytelling technique and the use of gestures and facial expressions were mentioned as important elements of storytelling. Based on their experiences, the respondents agreed that the storytelling method is an effective tool for preschool children to learn English naturally. Finally, a concrete project for working with preschool children is presented and evaluated, which can serve as a lesson plan for preschool and primary school classes.

## **Key words**

Storytelling, bilingualism, preschool education, Very Young Learners, kindergarten, language acquisition.

## **Abstrakt**

Výuka angličtiny v předškolním vzdělávání se zdá být velmi populárním tématem, avšak mnoho mateřských škol stále neví, jak výuku takto malých dětí uchopit.

Cílem této bakalářské práce je na základě teoretických poznatků a postřehů z praxe vykreslit storytelling jako efektivní metodu při výuce jazyků v bilingvním předškolním vzdělávání. Na základě výzkumného šetření, provedeného s učiteli v předškolním vzdělávání, byly popsány jejich zkušenosti s metodou storytellingu, jež se ve velké míře shodovaly a potvrdily teze stanovené v teoretické části práce. Respondenti uvedli, že storytelling motivuje žáky k učení se dalšího jazyka tím, že se jej neučí, ale přijímají ho skrze vyprávění a aktivity

s ním spojené tak. Jako hlavní výhodu storytellingu spatřovali v tom, že je pro děti zábavná a přirozená. Další poznatek, který učitelé uvedli, že při storytellingu slovíčka přijímány v kontextu a při správné technice není třeba překladu. S tím souvisí, že důležitými elementy storytellingu jsou i využití rekvizit, gest a mimky a také správná technika vyprávění. Respondenti se na základě svých zkušeností shodli, že metoda storytellingu je efektivním nástrojem k přirozenému učení angličtiny u předškolních dětí. Na závěr je předložen a zhodnocen konkrétní projekt práce s dětmi předškolního věku, který může sloužit jako plán týdenní výuky v předškolní i školní výuce.

## **Klíčová slova**

Storytelling, bilingvismus, předškolní vzdělávání, předškolní děti, mateřská škola, osvojování jazyka.



## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's modern globalized world there is a great emphasis placed on education and language learning. More and more parents nowadays realize that it is very important the knowledge of foreign languages to be successful in the professional field and also that languages bring opportunities. Many of them have therefore started to look into the possibility of placing their children in kindergartens that offer some English courses or even bilingual education. With this in mind, these childcare facilities began to look for the best ways to teach such young children. One of these ways is storytelling.

It may seem that a lot has been written about storytelling, but I am so interested in this method that I decided to choose it as the topic of my thesis. Two important events of my life gave me the encouragement to do so. The first was the birth of my children, and my decision to surround them as much as possible with an English environment from which they would acquire English naturally and without learning. In this case, storytelling proved to me to be the best tool because as a Czech-speaking parent, I found it too odd to speak English to them at home, as some parents practice and some experts recommend. It was the stories that played the biggest role in my children's language acquisition. They found the stories entertaining and got used to the fact that when we read a book, it is in English and this way I avoided confusing and uncoordinated switching from English to Czech. The second and even bigger impulse for me was taking a job as a teacher in a bilingual kindergarten. As an enthusiastic but only novice teacher, I was greatly supported and mentored by a colleague of mine who had worked for a long time in a kindergarten in England and had taken a course in storytelling directly in Oxford. As she says, in her twenty years of practice she found this method very convincing indeed and now she mostly uses stories to educate children in her class. I was very impressed by her work and her enthusiasm for storytelling and teaching in general, and she inspired me in what kind of teacher I want to be. Although I do not avoid other methods, storytelling has become my main approach to teaching and so it felt natural and appealing to study it in more detail through my thesis.

The thesis aims to illustrate storytelling as an effective method of teaching English in bilingual preschool education based on theoretical knowledge and practice insights. One of the objectives, among others, is to enhance the author's professional development. The thesis is divided into two main parts. The first one is theoretical and describes the system of preschool education with a focus on bilingual preschool education and its teaching methods. The

theoretical part also deals with the concept of storytelling as a method of children's teaching and its key features.

Overall, the theoretical part should help us to understand the uniqueness of the storytelling method in bilingual preschool education.

In the practical part, I decided to conduct qualitative research based on interviews with teachers - my colleagues from a bilingual kindergarten and their opinion and attitude toward the use of storytelling activities in their teaching. I also decide to make and evaluate a project that offers concrete storytelling methods to encourage natural language acquisition without the need for translation. The main contribution of this should be that all the methods have been conceived into a coherent project and put into practice. The project, therefore, offers inspiration for the work of other novice teachers.

# 1 THEORETICAL PART

## 1.1 The language educational system in preschool facilities

### 1.1.1 Preschool children and second language

Although the demand for educating young children in a foreign language is increasing, the topic of introducing a language at such a young age still seems controversial. Many experts do not seem to find an agreement and their opinions differ. There is therefore no uniform opinion on the question of when to start a foreign language.

According to Colin Baker (2007), young children pick up language easily and are acquired subconsciously and without the pressure of school language classes. He adds that the young children are not worried about making mistakes and they are just interested in getting their message across and receiving information that is essential for them. The important thing here is to say that “*Language among young children is caught rather than taught. The process is not learning but acquisition when children are young. Language acquisition is a by-product of playing and interacting with people*” (Colin Baker, p.31, 2007). Baker (2007) also mentions that very young children pick up the proper pronunciation quickly unlike adults learning a second language who often struggle with pronunciation even when they have already become fluent in that language.

Mgr. Sylvie Doláková (2019) also considers early introduction to a foreign language to be beneficial. Children at an early age perceive language completely differently from adults. They can understand the content of a text without having to know every word. If a foreign language text is supplemented with comprehensible accompanying activities (gestures, facial expressions, voice intonation), they will be able to understand the content of the message without knowing the individual words. They perceive the content as a whole, not as individual parts.

On top of that, her colleague Jitka Netušilová (2008) says that when a child begins a foreign language only in the third grade or later, he or she already has to translate every word and laboriously learns to form sentences.

Another advantage of starting a second language at preschool age is the absence of strict syllabuses. It provides the teacher with the freedom to make the teaching process according to his or her best knowledge and the children’s needs. (Reilly, 1997).

In the preschool years, children experience an exceptionally favourable interplay of several factors that allow them to learn the basics of a foreign language much more easily and naturally than at a later age. But one of the factors outweighs them all. Enthusiasm. As Lynne Cameron (2001, p.246) states in the last chapter of her book “Children bring to language learning their curiosity and eagerness to make sense of the world. They will tackle the most demanding tasks with enthusiasm and willingness. With this agrees many authors such as Phillips (1993) who says that young children enjoy all the great and fun activities prepared for them by the teacher.

However, Alena Coubalová (2013) has a slightly different opinion, stating that an early start does not automatically guarantee a significant success rate. Mastery of a foreign language does not depend on when the child starts learning it, but on the quality of the pedagogical guidance and the regularity.

A similar point of view is presented by Hanušová and Najvar (2007), according to whom dozens of research projects in the field of foreign language acquisition or learning have been done over the past decades. The results show that there are no significant differences between those who started learning English in kindergarten and those who started in primary school or later. The impact of early foreign language learning is influenced by a complex of other variables, such as pupil attitude, teacher competence, the age of the pupil, the motivation of the pupil, personal characteristics and value orientation of the pupil etc.

Mertin and Gillern (2010) state that there is no reason why young children should not start learning English in kindergarten. However, they stress that if a child does not master the mother tongue because of a small vocabulary or speech defects, parents should be advised to wait until later in the child's life to learn the language.

Also, Průcha and Kotátková (2013) are rather skeptical about foreign language teaching in kindergarten. They argue that children only learn, for example, the English names of colours, animals, etc., or learn a simple rhyme or poem, however, systematic knowledge of the basics of a foreign language is missing. They point out that teaching English in usual kindergartens cannot harm children, but neither can it significantly help them to learn the language better. However, they add that a completely different situation arises in the placement of a child in a bilingual pre-school institution where language teaching is intensive and conducted by fully qualified English teachers or even native speakers.

Hanušová a Najvar (2007) also rightly draws attention to the fact that a very important condition for the successful introduction of a foreign language into kindergartens is to ensure the future continuity, the lack of which is very often cited as an obstacle to the success of early learning.

This implies that a very important factor in obtaining a solid foundation in a foreign language through preschool education is the competence, professionalism and enthusiasm of the teacher, the intensity of the children's exposure to the foreign language environment, the child's attitude and the teaching methods were appropriately chosen for the age group. And while the authors may disagree on the most appropriate age for teaching a foreign language, they uniformly point out that the right approach to teaching young learners should be taken. And Storytelling might be the right approach. It is well known that preschool children can concentrate for only a very short time. The attention span of a 4-year-old is roughly around 8 – 12 minutes. They get very easily distracted and can lose interest quite quickly if they find prepared activities too difficult for them. (Cameron, 2001). But because most children associate storytelling with fairy tales, which are relaxing and enjoyable free time activities for them, it is an ideal tool in the early learners' learning process (Bryndová, 2018).

### **1.1.2 Characteristics of preschool children**

Preschool age lasts from the age of three to the child's entry into school. It is often referred to as "the age of questions". The preschool period lasts from approximately three to six years. The end of this phase cannot be precisely said because it is not only determined by physical age but mainly by the social milestone, the start of school. Although this is related to the age of the child, may oscillate within a range of one or more years" (Vágnerová, 1997).

Authors Lisá and Kňourková (1986) describe the preschool period as the most remarkable stage in the development of the human individual, combining all that has been innate in the child with that which, through education and learning, will become the basis of the future adult personality.

During the preschool years, a great deal of development takes place in the cognitive, emotional and social areas. Motor skills development is also important. The improvement of motor coordination is reflected in the child's overall activity and is also manifested in the area of self-care skills. Fine motor skills are also developed and, about this, drawing. The central activity for this developmental period is play, which significantly affects all other areas of development (Šulová, 2004).

### **1.1.2.1 Speech and thinking**

Speech development is a process related to the development of sensory perception, motor skills, thinking and socialization. In the process of acquiring speech, various activities that form a complex of speech skills - comprehension, imitation, etc. - are mastered in parallel over a short period. Parents play a key role in the area of speech until approximately four years of age (Bartanusz, Šulová, 2003).

At the age of 2.5 to 3 years, every normal child learns the language that surrounds him/her. By the age of 6-7 years, he or she is so linguistically advanced that is ready to start school.

Current science has concluded that a child acquires language by learning (that he/she first perceives speech and then imitates it, helped by contact with other people such as the mother), but on a genetic basis (i.e. everyone comes into the world with an innate ability to learn the language). The most remarkable development of a child's speech is seen in the growth of vocabulary. The first isolated words are pronounced by children usually around 1.5-year-old, at the age of two the active vocabulary is about 200-300 words, and at a later age, the size of the vocabulary increases sharply. At the age of about 5 years, children have completed the basic acquisition of their mother tongue. Normally, children at this age know about 2500-3000 words. Children can understand and express increasingly complex thoughts, feelings, wishes, and questions (Průcha, Kot'átková, 2013).

Speech develops in close connection with thinking. But it is not a simple and mechanical relationship. In turn, the two processes complement each other. Thinking arises in the child earlier than speech. Speech, in turn, speeds up the process of cognition, since it enables one to take over ready-made knowledge from other people. In cognition, however, speech is of importance only when it is combined with a sufficient store of sense experience which helps to classify and generalize. Speech helps to form concepts and other logical forms of thought. Without it, it would be impossible to reach the highest level of thinking, understanding and forming abstract and system concepts. Conversely, developing thinking is reflected in a higher level of speech. The development of speech also allows for the growth of knowledge about oneself and the world around. A three-year-old child usually knows his name and can tell his/her gender. He/she correctly recognizes colours and around the age of 5 gives a simple definition of familiar things. Maturity of thinking and speech is reflected in emotional expressions and social behaviour (Weldlichová, 2010).

### **1.1.2.2 Socioemotional development**

Social development refers to the relationships that an individual maintains with other individuals and groups. Emotional development relates to the development of emotions or feelings. A child's emotional development is an important condition for the child's successful growth into interpersonal and social relationships. The child's interaction with others is important for optimal emotional development. At the beginning of the period, the child is naturally selfish and egocentric, considers himself/herself the "centre of the world" and expects the whole world to serve only his/her needs and interests. At the preschool age, the child can talk about his or her emotions and by the end of the preschool, period is able to control and manage his or her emotions. Thus, the will emerges as an important element in the social life of a person (Gillernová, 2003).

Closely related to emotional development is the first understanding of basic moral qualities - what is good and what is bad. By the end of the period the child begins to evaluate his/her behaviour, he/she already has elements of criticality, which indicates the development of moral consciousness. In preschool age, the child's personality also begins to emerge. Its characteristic features are manifested especially in the child's emotional processes and social relationships. The so-called intellectual feelings are also intensively formed, manifested in the effort to know things and to acquire new knowledge. Social feelings emerge, these are attached not only to people but also to things, events, and situations (Vágnerová, 1997).

The child also becomes more sensitive to the experience of successes and failures, which are reflected in his developing self-concept. For this reason, emotional support, appreciation and praise are very important (Gillernová, 2003).

In addition to the family, a new space for social learning emerges in the preschool period - kindergarten. This institution expands the child's social contacts. With it comes the new authority of the teacher. A new type of social relations is represented by the peer group, which, unlike the sibling group, is larger, more diverse and more open. Children experience interplay, cooperation and friendship, but also competition or neglect (Matějček, 2005).

In summary, in the preschool period, the child passes through several important developmental milestones in the socio-emotional area: an increased sense of self-awareness, a growing ability to understand others, an increase in sensitivity to moral norms and social rules, and the onset of self-evaluative emotions (Stuchlíková, 2002).

### **1.1.2.3 Perception**

Perception is one of the most important cognitive processes of a preschooler. The capacity for unconscious remembering and learning grows. Emotions determine how deeply and permanently an event is imprinted in memory. A child at this age can already perceive more purposefully and focused. He or she begins to observe life around him or her deliberately and applies the observations more and more in his/her games. Perception is closely related to the overall development of the child. The more mature the child becomes motorically, the more experience he gains and the more opportunity he/she has to perceive new stimuli. Perception is also linked to thinking. The more he/she knows about things, the better he/she perceives and differentiates them. Children still have difficulty estimating distance and determining three-dimensionality. The concept of time develops slowly but by the end of the preschool period, however, perception of time and orientation in space should be completed before school (Kuric, Vašina, 1987).

Preschool age is a period of growth, and improvement, learning to be independent and learning about the world around. At the beginning of the age, the child knows a few words, and at the end of it, he/she is almost an independent being ready for school. But we must not forget that every child is different and must be treated with warmth and respect. If a child needs to be supported in a less developed area, the preschool and especially its teachers should provide this support. It is clear that preschool institutions have a sophisticated system of how to achieve quality education, however, it is up to the teachers to take ownership of this mission.

### **1.1.3 Preschool education**

The website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports said that the main aim of pre-school education is to lead the child to acquire, based on the optimal development of his/her abilities, the key competencies thus creating the essential basics for lifelong learning and facilitate the child's further life education journey. Institutions of pre-school education should complement and support family education and provide the child with an environment with sufficient multifaceted and appropriate stimuli for his/her active development and learning. (Ministry of education, youth and sports, 2022). Preschool institutions offer education to children aged from two to six years (usually). In 2017, the last year of pre-school education has been made compulsory and is free of charge.

In 2005, the Framework Education Programme for Preschool Education (FEP PE) was published, building on the Programme from the year 2001. The FEP PE is a binding document



that describes the main requirements, conditions and rules for institutional preschool education (Ministry of education, youth and sports, 2022). The FEP PE lays down the elementary educational foundation on which primary education builds and establishes a common framework to be maintained (FEP PE, 2021).

The FEP PE (2021) sets the elementary educational basis for pre-school education. It works with four target categories:

1. Framework objectives - expressing universal preschool education goals
  - Child development, learning and cognition;
  - Acquisition of the foundations of values on which our society is based;
  - Acquiring personal independence and the ability to express oneself as an independent personality influencing one's environment.
2. Key competencies - general competencies achievable in preschool education
  - Competencies to learn;
  - Competencies to solve problems;
  - Competencies to communicate;
  - Social and personal competencies;
  - Activity and civic competencies.
3. Partial objectives - reflect specific goals about individual education areas
  - Biological;
  - Psychological;
  - Interpersonal;
  - Socio-cultural;
  - Environmental.
4. Partial outputs - partial knowledge, skills, attitudes and values corresponding to partial objectives

The educational content of FEP PE consists of 5 education areas that lead to an understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of early childhood education. The areas are called:

1. A child and their body
2. A child and their mind
3. A child and the other person
4. A child and the others
5. A child and the world

As stated earlier, according to FEP PE (2021) the main aim of preschool education is to master the basics of key competencies. Competencies are sets of activity-oriented and practically usable outcomes that are interconnected. Their acquisition is a long-term and complex process that starts in pre-school education and gets gradually developed later in life. The foundations of key competencies are important not only in terms of preparing the child for the start of systematic education but also for lifelong learning. Therefore, the aim is that key competencies should form an indispensable basis for education at all levels and that all educational content and activities in schools should be directed towards their development.

Czech author ŠIKULOVÁ sums the aim of preschool education up in one sentence saying that a child at the end of the preschool period should acquire age-appropriate physical, mental and social independence and the foundations for further active development and education (2005). That is an opinion that I identify myself with as well and try to achieve this in my work as a preschool teacher.

#### **1.1.4 Bilingualism in preschool education**

Bilingualism is to a large extent an interdisciplinary phenomenon, which is addressed not only by linguists (psycholinguists and sociolinguists) but also by psycho-neurologists and educators (Morgensterová, Šulová, Scholl, 2011).

The notion of bilingualism is not entirely precisely formulated; definitions vary in terms of the authors' bias towards a particular phenomenon and terms of cultural conditions. The definitions of foreign and Czech literature also differ. Průcha (1998) defines bilingualism as the ability to speak two languages, and the ability to communicate using both the first and second languages. On the other hand, bilingual education is a form of education that happens in two languages, aimed at enabling individuals to develop communicative competence in a language other than their mother tongue.

The interest in world languages grew in our country after 1990 and the desire to acquire them as soon as possible was reflected in a specific way in the practice of kindergartens. Today,

various forms of introducing children to foreign languages are used in practice. Some forms are more suitable, others less so, and their effectiveness varies. Ideally, children should encounter English in kindergarten during ordinary games and activities. In this respect, in particular, state kindergartens and private ones differ greatly. Private preschool facilities try to create a natural foreign language environment. Native speakers are often involved in the teaching and the natural approach is the main method used in teaching. In state-run kindergartens, the most common form of English language teaching is in the form of short courses of varying intensity. These are usually one-week sessions of about one hour however, this does not create a bilingual environment and is thus rather ineffective (Smolíková, 2006).

Based on the FEP PE, each kindergarten in the Czech Republic creates its School Education Programme (hereinafter referred to as the SEP), which may include bilingual education. We can speak of a bilingual environment in the context of kindergartens that provide preschool education in the mother tongue and also in a foreign language, usually English. Here, the foreign language input is not limited in time and takes place throughout the day, alongside the mother tongue. In this case, the child has the opportunity to acquire a foreign language naturally.

There is no binding norm in the Czech Republic that specifies the exact conditions for bilingual preschool education. Moreover, the Czech curriculum system of preschool education does not include the teaching of foreign languages, although on 14 July 2021 a new section on providing language support to children with insufficient knowledge of the Czech language was included in the FEP PE. The situation for teaching foreign languages in kindergartens is unfavourable. There is a lack of appropriate methodology, quality and qualified teachers and, last but not least, comprehensive didactic materials (Smolíková, 2006).

Part of the National Plan of Foreign Language Teaching for the period 2005-2008 was the intention to provide language teaching from preschool age in the form of language introductory courses and the first year of primary school. A methodological guide for schools on language introduction was created several years ago, which could be included in the SEP as a suitable alternative to early learning of a foreign language. After all, enabling children to become aware of the languages that surround them, arouses their interest in them, offers them the opportunity to choose which foreign languages they would like to learn in their lives, and thus prepares them for life in a multilingual and multicultural European society, should be an absolutely obvious goal of education. It is a pity that the concept has not yet found a response

or anchorage in the FEP, nor has it received sufficient publicity among the teaching public (Coubalová, 2013).

It would be good, therefore, if suitable conditions were created in all kindergartens and all children were given the opportunity to be introduced to foreign language already in the preschool institutions. The ideal would be to surround them with a bilingual environment, however the realization of this idea in state kindergartens seems rather unrealistic at the moment.

### **1.1.5 Forms and methods of bilingual education**

As Šulová (2007) mentions we should realize that preschool children need to be taught through play and should not feel that the activities they do are obligatory or that they are forced into them. Teachers should build on their needs and their feelings. It is also good to involve parents in some activities.

Baker (2007) offers us an even more detailed insight into bilingual education in preschool education: Effective bilingual preschool education emphasizes communication, language and literacy, incorporating other important aspects of learning: personal development, social and emotional development, mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creativity. Everything is planned to develop spoken language so that the child becomes an active speaker rather than a passive listener. This support is implemented through forms and methods of work such as:

1. Conversations between children and adults, in small groups or individually,
2. The use of books and videos,
3. Storytelling,
4. Singing,
5. Games,
6. And also during daily activities like eating or playing.

The workers of the non-profit organization META which focuses on the integration of children with a different mother tongue into Czech schools published a manual for kindergarten teachers that brings many useful tips. The material can certainly be used for working with children in bilingual kindergartens too. The authors have written rules for effective language teaching for young children and I have picked a few that are worth mentioning:

### **1.1.5.1 Understanding**

The teacher should ensure that children truly understand what they are doing during prepared activities so they do not just copy other children. Control questions can be used to help them do this, plus all instructions should be clear (META, 2020).

### **1.1.5.2 Demonstration**

The teacher should accompany the explanation with good examples. He/she can use various photographs, dolls or gestures. This way, it is much easier for the children to understand (META, 2020).

### **1.1.5.3 Simple language**

The language should be simplified and is it also good to repeat important phrases. The children should always have a good view of the teacher so they can observe the gestures that accompany the speech (META, 2020).

### **1.1.5.4 Repetition**

Repetition is the key to learning. Both the teacher and the children should repeat. For example, when explaining different activities, the educator repeats the words he wants the child to learn (META, 2020).

### **1.1.5.5 Engaging another child**

A child who has a good knowledge of the second language and expresses an interest in helping others can be a big help. The child usually likes to do that naturally and it does not have to be a given function by the teacher (META, 2020).

### **1.1.5.6 Working in groups**

Working in groups is very suitable and effective for some activities. Children can learn from each other and observe how the other works. Also, there is more opportunity for children to participate or express themselves than if the whole class worked together (META, 2020).

### **1.1.5.7 Preparing children for the activity in advance**

If the teacher is planning an activity that he/she knows might be more challenging for some individuals in terms of language, he/she takes the individual aside and shows him/her pictures, aids on the topic and possibly introduces some vocabulary that will be new in the activity (META, 2020).

### **1.1.5.8 Differentiating the demands on individual children**

The educator involves all children in the activities but should design the activities according to the child's language level. This way, each child has the opportunity to complete the task and experience a sense of achievement (META, 2020).

### **1.1.5.9 Commenting**

During all activities, it is useful to name what the teacher is working with and comment on what he/she is doing. The teacher thoughtfully uses verbal commentary even where he/she would not normally do it (META, 2020).

In addition to methods and forms, the effectiveness of bilingual education also depends on the language-rich environment, the teacher's communication skills, planned activities and material resources. All of these factors of bilingual education not only form the basis for learning but benefit the whole life (Baker, 2007).

There is certainly no doubt that bilingual or even multilingual individuals have a great advantage over monolingual ones in many ways. Whether it is access to information from foreign-language sources, learning about other cultures through reading literature in the original language or travelling without fear of a language barrier, and many other advantages and possibilities that bilingualism brings. However, it is for sure that such bilingual education for early young learners must be provided with professionalism, and continuity and supported by appropriate methods, a few of which are written in the text above. In our kindergarten, we try to use all the methods and forms mentioned, which we like to combine, but the one closest to my heart is storytelling. This is why I have chosen it to explore further.

## **1.2 Storytelling**

Storytelling is a discipline that involves the interactive delivery of a story to an audience. Storytelling has found its application in many fields such as marketing but mostly in education, where it has its irreplaceable place. Today, however, this traditional method is often displaced by modern technology. For children, storytelling is natural and familiar (Suchá, 2021). Stories are important to the learning of the mother tongue, they are also crucial to children learning a second language (Watts, 2018). Storytelling is now an accepted method, especially in the context of teaching very young learners.

### **1.2.1 Importance of storytelling**

The role of storytelling in foreign language teaching has been addressed by many authors such as Gail Ellis and Jean Brewster, Eleanor Watts, Andrew Wright and many others who have described in their books the immeasurable value of fairy tales and stories for the development of foreign language skills. Many methodologies have been published for teachers on how to work with stories. Various articles and journals have also dealt with the subject. Teachers now have a wide range of resources from which to draw information on how to use stories in the classroom (Suchá, 2021).

Storytelling is not only an ancient art form but also one of the oldest learning tools that develop emotional intelligence and help children gain an understanding of human behaviour.

It is a motivating and effortless way to learn other languages that enrich pupils' vocabulary and acquire new language structures (Dujmović, 2006).

The authors Ellis and Brewster (2014) even provide a long list of reasons why it is important to include storytelling in language teaching:

1. Children love stories and enjoy listening to them that is why stories are such a good motivation for foreign language learning. They are an element that can add variety to traditional teaching. They allow the foreign language to be taught in a playful way, which is particularly important for younger pupils. They help to build a positive relationship toward education.
2. Children like listening to stories over and over again, they can hear them several times and still not get bored. By repeating them, pupils become familiar with different language items and reinforce the ones they already know because stories usually use a natural repetition of key vocabulary and grammatical structures. This makes it easier for children to remember these language items.
3. Stories can also serve as a tool for teachers to introduce a new topic or they offer an opportunity to review what children already know.
4. Storytelling also gives us benefits in the area of pronunciation. By listening to stories that are repeated several times, children become familiar with the correct intonation, accent and pronunciation of a foreign language.

5. The rich content of storybooks and the wide range of activities allow teachers to cater to all types of learners - visual, auditory and kinesthetic so the children can learn a foreign language in a way that is natural to them.
6. Thanks to stories children get to learn a language in a meaningful context. If they encounter new language items in real situations, they find them much more comprehensible and memorable. It also helps when teachers use pictures and gestures to help the audience understand the story.
7. Stories promote fluency in a foreign language. Communication is usually difficult for beginners - they don't want to speak because they are afraid of making mistakes. However, if they hear a story for the first time, they are usually able to retell it using simple sentences that appear in the story.
8. A well-chosen story offers a wide range of cross-curricular connections. Thus, science, mathematics, history, music, physical education, art, drama and more can be integrated into the classes using the storytelling method.
9. Stories, especially fairy tales, exercise the imagination. Children can identify with the main characters and get personally involved in the story. Stories evoke different emotions in us. They can often make us laugh, excited, or even make us sad. Children can share their feelings, which helps their social and emotional development.
10. Stories are an excellent tool to teach children to be understanding of different people and religions. They portray real moral lessons thru characters and virtue shown in the stories.

In her book *Storytelling*, Eleanor Watts (2006), a well-known British author of teaching materials, agrees with all the points mentioned above and adds two more interesting points:

Stories can be told to large groups and cost nothing. While many modern teaching techniques involve expensive devices and are often only for use with a small group, a good story can be told to up to a hundred children and just enhanced by a few simple illustrations on a chalkboard. Her second point is that stories encourage children to use critical judgments and express opinions. Since there is no right answer to whether they liked the story or not, children can learn to express and defend their opinions freely.

There is no doubt that stories because they are reaching back to prehistoric times, are a great way to engage most children of all ages. They offer numerous ways how to work with



them to ensure that a teacher's goals across the whole curriculum are achieved. I think it is important to incorporate storytelling into the teaching of early young learners because, when used correctly, its methods can help in all areas of children's development.

## **1.2.2 Key elements of storytelling method**

Authors dealing with the storytelling method describe many tips to help teachers and parents to make the most out of the storytelling process:

### **1.2.2.1 Getting the audience involved**

Harmer and Puchta (2018) mention that children will always learn more if they are actively involved than if they are just passive recipients. They also described the ways to achieve this:

1. Using story attention markers, for example, during storytelling we can encourage children by saying something like “Raise your hand if you think the prince should kiss the princess”.
2. Asking questions, for example, if we ask them “What do you think happens next”, we encourage the audience to think about it and get them to involve more with the story.
3. Using sound and movement, especially with younger children we can use this technique. For example, if we tell a story about a stormy night and trees bending in the wind, some children could be standing and waving hands as if they were the trees and others could make the noise of the rain.

### **1.2.2.2 Using story props**

As Ellis and Brewster (2014) in their Handbook say that a very important part of storytelling, especially for beginners and young children, is engaging as many senses as possible. Therefore, it is very beneficial to use as many different visual and audio aids as possible, as well as technology.

1. Visual support
  - Real objects (e.g. real food), puppets, flashcards, magnet boards, masks, speech bubbles.
2. Audio support
  - A “knock knock” or “tap tap” can come alive by simply knocking or tapping on a table and makes the experience more memorable. BBC School Radio has a

*stimulus sounds library, which is a valuable resource: [www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/earlylearning/stimulussoundslibrary](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/earlylearning/stimulussoundslibrary)” (Ellis & Brewster, p.49, 2014).*

### 3. Technology

- Technology can add a vital dimension to language teaching, however, it is very important to avoid passive watching, for example when watching an animated story “Brown bear, brown bear”, it is vital to give the children while-viewing tasks: “Point to something red”. Teachers can also do predicting, pre-watching and post-watching activities with children, more about it in the next chapter.
- There are numerous materials on the internet that can be used in lessons:
  - a. Animated stories (e.g. The very hungry caterpillar, can be found on YouTube);
  - b. Documentaries;
  - c. Rhymes and songs (there are many rhymes and songs on YouTube which can fit the topic of the story);
  - d. Making video recordings of your own (children will love watching a recording of themselves singing songs or doing role play) (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

#### **1.2.2.3 Using vocal variation**

When we talk to children, we often exaggerate so that the little listeners catch what we are trying to tell them. This is how we should use vocal attention when telling a story, whether our listeners are children or any age group really, to keep their attention and interest. *“And one of the ways we can do this is by the voice we use. We can also use variations in pitch, speed, stress and pausing”* (Harmer, Puchta, p.58, 2018).

#### **1.2.2.4 Total physical response**

*“Pre-school children learn through direct experience via the five senses and do not yet understand abstract concepts. Total Physical Response means getting children to do or mime what we are talking about. If a teacher says: “Alexander, open the door please” and Alexander opens the door that is an example of total physical response. The younger the children are the more important TPR is. It can be used many ways: for example, by getting the children to follow*

*instructions in a game or craft activity, in miming a song, or rhyme, or action, or acting out a role-play.*” (Reilly, Ward, p.9, 1997).

### **1.2.2.5 Using movement, facial expression and gesture**

When telling a story to young children teachers should bear in mind that movement and action will help the audience's comprehension of, and engagement in, the story. All that should be performed deliberately and exaggeratedly to get the maximum effect. Particularly, teachers should make extensive use of body language and facial expressions.

#### 1. Body language:

- “For example, if a story says: She looked into the distance, we might want to put our hand above our eyebrows in the time-honoured gesture of someone looking at something far away.”

#### 2. Facial expression:

- “Our story will be improved if, when we quote the words of someone who is shocked, for example, we look shocked, too (Harmer and Puchta, 2018).

### **1.2.2.6 Setting the mood**

The children should be in a story mood before the teacher starts. It is good to sit the children near the teacher. It is so the children can see better but also because the relationship between the teacher and the children changes, they know they are going to share something special. It is also good to change something in the classroom arrangement, it changes the atmosphere and the children know that something is going to happen. The teacher can, for example, bring pillows or duvets to sit on. Some teachers use a puppet to start the storytime, some wear a special “story hat”, and some play a particular music before so the children can get themselves ready (Wright, 2008).

### **1.2.2.7 Memorizing key elements of a story**

It is perfectly fine to read a story instead of memorizing it, which is a really difficult process even for professional actors. Moreover, for a teacher, such a preparation for a lesson would take too much time than he/she probably imagined. However, it is worth mentioning that memorizing at least the key passages, which are often strongly rhythmical, is easy for children to memorize on their own and get a lot of fun out of it. For example, Little Pig, Little Pig, let me come in! Not by the hair of my chinny chin, chin (Harmer and Puchta, 2018).

### **1.2.2.8 Rehearsal**

The more practice the teacher do, the better they get at telling stories. It is important to rehearse a story, try out how it sounds and get the confidence that the teller needs to deliver a good story. The better the teachers know the story the more confident they feel to make changes as they go along (Harmer and Puchta, 2018).

### **1.2.2.9 Choice of a story**

The choice of story is also an important factor, but equally important is whether we read the story aloud or tell the story without a book. Both are correct, but it is important to remember that each has its pros and cons.

#### Reading from a book

The big advantage of reading from a book is that we don't have to remember the story. Pupils will always hear the same text and it is easier for them to predict what will happen next in the story. At the same time, we don't have to worry about making mistakes in a foreign language when we read. When we read, we can concentrate better on the intonation of our voice. On the other hand, sometimes we can get too involved in a book and lose contact with the audience (Wright, 2008).

#### Telling stories

Some people may be more comfortable with telling stories. While we are narrating, we can maintain eye contact with the students at all times and respond if necessary if we can tell from facial expressions or body language that they do not understand. If we are not reading from a book, we can adapt the story when needed. Sometimes it is appropriate to adopt the language to our audience - if the students are beginners, it is appropriate to simplify the language or the plot of the story. However, telling a story without the support of a book places greater demands on memory; it is also possible that we may make mistakes in a foreign language (Morgan, Rinvoluceri, 1984).

#### Suitable story

The first step in planning a lesson is to choose a suitable story. A good story should engage the audience right from the beginning. To keep their attention, it should have an interesting plot with a good storyline. It is also important that the narrator himself likes the story so that he can deliver it to the audience with enthusiasm and passion (Cameron, 2019).

### Level of language

Another important thing to be considered is the level of language. We should choose a text that will be of reasonable difficulty. Even though children may not know all the words that occur in the story, they should be able to understand the main storyline (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

### Illustrations

When storytelling, we must not forget the illustrations, which are crucial for very young learners. Pictures should support and clarify the meaning of the text (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

### Adaptation to different learning styles

A well-chosen story should also develop students' learning strategies and follow-up activities should be adapted to different learning styles. We should also think about whether the story allows us to reach out to other disciplines. Stories provide the basis for cross-curricular relationships, enabling the child to explore the world comprehensively (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

In addition to the criteria mentioned above, we should also think about who our audience is. As Eleanor Wsatts (2006) states, different ages of learners have specific needs. Younger learners need stories with a simple plot and a clear point. It is appropriate when phrases are repeated frequently in stories. Children should be actively involved in the story, using dramatization, creative activities, etc. In particular, we should include oral activities where there is no need to write.

### Moral values

Last but not least, a good story should have a moral or express values and beliefs that are acceptable to the teacher and the class (Ellis, Brewster, 2014).

Storytelling is certainly a great tool in the teaching process. However, it is important to learn the correct technique. Not everyone was born a storyteller, but with a little practice and mastering the tips mentioned above, it is possible to become great.

## **1.2.3 A store of activities**

Once we have chosen a story, it is important to think about which activities to choose in the lesson, because through these activities we get the most out of storytelling. In the book *Storytelling with children*, the author Andrew Wright (2008) describes the most useful activities which can be applied to almost every story. Wright divided them into 3 categories:

### **1.2.3.1 Activities before the story**

#### Introducing keywords

It is also important for children to know key vocabulary before the storytelling. They don't need to understand all the words in the story, however, they should be able to understand the main storyline. Vocabulary can be presented using flashcards, real objects, book illustrations, pantomime or by using it in context. Translation into the mother tongue is appropriate only when other methods fail.

#### Predicting

It is better to include this activity if the children know the story in their native language (e.g. Little Red Riding Hood). The teacher can show them the cover or title of the book and ask what the story might be about. He/she can also use the pictures in the book or pictures that they prepared themselves. The children should try to predict the plot. Younger children can talk about it in their mother tongue.

#### Guess the object (Secret bag)

In the box, put several objects that relate to the story. The children use their sense of touch to guess what the objects are. They can also ask questions about the objects. This activity is suitable either for introducing keywords occurring in the story or also for predicting what the story might be about.

#### Muddled pictures

The teacher prepares a series of pictures showing key moments in the story. Then he/she can display them on the board so the class can work with them all together. Children should try to put the pictures in the right sequence. After listening to the story they check if they were correct.

#### Children retelling

If the children are familiar with the story in their language, the teacher can ask them to retell it in their mother tongue. After working with the story in English, they can compare whether the English version is different from the one the children are familiar with.

### Discuss

Before reading or telling a story, the teacher asks the children about anything they might know about the topic. For example, if the story is about The Little Duckling, he/ she can ask the children what kinds of birds they know, which ones they like the best and why.

### Memory Game

Also known as Kim's game. The teacher places pictures or objects in front of the children, then covers them up and gets them to name the objects. Alternatively, the teacher can remove one or two of them and the children have to guess what has been removed.

### Picture matching

This is the same game as the Czech "Pexeso". To practice pronunciation, the children should say the word out loud while turning the pictures.

### Bingo

It is a good idea to practise the words used for this game before playing. The teacher puts up pictures of around 10 words related to the story on the blackboard. Then each child gets 5 pictures chosen from the ones on the blackboard, no child should have the same set of pictures. Then the teacher says a word after another showing the picture of it. Any child who has the picture crosses it off. The first child that crosses off all the five words shouts Bingo!

Variation: the teacher can mime the word or explain the definition of it.

### Repeat if it is true

The teacher shows a picture or an object to the children. Then he makes a statement about it. If it is true, the children repeat the name of the object and if it is not true the children should stay quiet.

### Drawing

The children divide into 2 teams and make lines in front of a whiteboard. The first two children of each team get markers. Then the teacher shows them a picture. The first two children have to run to the whiteboard and try to illustrate what was shown to them. The team that first identifies the picture gets a point. The children take turns in the drawing.

### **1.2.3.2 Activities during the story**

Various activities can be included during the reading or telling of the story to check children's understanding or encourage prediction and imagination. Some of the activities are

suitable for the second or third retelling of the story when children already know the plot. However, sometimes it is good to just let them listen and enjoy the story.

### Miming

Children can act out the plot or characters with the teacher when they first listen to the story and then perform the story in pantomime on their own.

### Figurines

Children create characters from the story out of paper, manipulating the figurines as the teacher narrates. Later, they can retell the story with the figurines themselves.

### A retelling of the story

When retelling the story, the teacher tells the children that he/she is very tired and might make a mistake. The children then correct the teacher. Another possibility for variation is when the teacher whistles or claps instead of saying some word. The children should say which word he has left out.

### Jump up a word card

The teacher hands out cards with pictures to the children before listening. If the children hear the word they have been assigned during storytelling they should jump up. A variation could be to divide pupils into groups and secretly assign words to each group. The groups then respond to the word by jumping up again. Children then guess which word has been assigned to their classmates.

### Stopping and asking

We can stop during the narrative and ask pupils questions about what happens next. Beginners can answer in their mother tongue, and more advanced pupils can answer in short sentences.

### What can you add?

Women develop their creativity and add their inventiveness to the course. Focus on detail and think about how a dress can be worn by, for example, a princess or how individual characters look.



### True or false

The teacher tells a story to the children or he/she can use a story they already know. He tells the story again but makes some changes. The children have to pay attention and point out what the teacher said wrong.

### Drawing and colouring

The teacher can give the children a picture related to the story. When they hear a name of a person, an animal or an object during telling they colour it.

### **1.2.3.3 Activities after the story**

After the story has been told or read, we can include a wide range of activities. Instead of the traditional boring ones like true or false questions, Andrew Wright (2008) has put together several more interesting variations that can be used after the telling.

### Muddled sentences

This activity can be used for pre-readers by using pictures instead of sentences. The teacher prepares pictures from the story. The children then should arrange the pictures according to the right sequence. Once they are done, the teacher can tell the story again to check if they are correct.

### A retelling of the story

Children retell the story independently, supported by questions or pictures.

### Dramatization

This activity works particularly well with stories the children are familiar with such as The Little Red Riding Hood. The teacher assigns roles to the children, and the children then with the teacher's help act out the story. Variations of this could be miming the characters.

### Creative activities

After the story, the teacher can support the learning by various creative activities, like drawing or painting the story, making paper puppets, creating a poster for the story, making a book or even throwing a theme party. It is good to include free painting from time to time. The teacher can ask the children about their paintings, for example, "What is this", "Why did you use this colour...?".

### Crossing a river

For a game called Crossing, a river the teacher prepares pictures illustrating the story, then places them on the floor to form a path from one end of the classroom to the other. The pictures represent rocks in a river. The children then task have to walk on the stones to get to the other side not stepping into the water. However, to step on the next stone, they have to tell a short piece of the story shown in the picture.

### Discussion of the story

The teacher talks to the children in their mother tongue about how the story has affected them, and if they have any experiences related to the story. The children can rate the story from 1-to 5 using their fingers.

## **1.2.4 Summary of the theoretical part**

According to Cameron „*Storytelling is widely accepted as one of the most natural and effective ways of introducing children to continuous and coherent spoken discourse*“ (Cameron, p. 159, 2001). From my own experience of working with children and teachers, I have seen how the technique of storytelling creates rich and naturally contextualized learning conditions that enable teaching and language learning to be developed spontaneously and creatively in a whole curriculum approach. This is of course true if we ensure the selection of a quality story and its quality interpretation, appropriately chosen follow-up activities and also the continuity of language teaching in a sufficient amount. And most importantly, very young children learn the most if they learn by playing, that is why I listed the activities in chapter 2.3 because they are all related to play and fun.

The storytelling method has been a big topic in recent years due to its undeniable advantages. It has been dealt with by experts among whom the most famous is undoubtedly Andrew Wright. This “guru” of storytelling comes from Britain and apart from his publications which are easily available in bookstores, he writes a blog where those interested can find a lot of tips, advice and inspiration for using storytelling in language teaching. In the Czech Republic, Mgr. Sylvie Doláková is the one, who also reveals many tips on how to work with storytelling method on her website. Both of these authors are a great inspiration and source of ideas for me. During the writing of my bachelor's thesis, I also read some of the bachelor's theses of my fellow students who had a similar topic. I would like to mention here one thesis that I consider very interesting and an excellent source of inspiration. It is the bachelor thesis written by Monika Procházková, which is entitled Storytelling in Preschool EFL Classes. Her

research confirmed that *"there are many benefits and reasons for using storytelling as part of language teaching in kindergarten. The use of storytelling in teaching can help develop better language production, broaden knowledge of vocabulary, and strengthen children' attitude towards language learning. Moreover, besides teaching English in a playful non-invasive manner, stories present real life situations where children may identify with characters used in the story and therefore assist in creating values"* (Procházková, p.70, 2016).

## **2 PRACTICAL PART**

### **2.1 The method of my research**

The first practical part of the thesis is based on the interpretation of interviews with teachers of a bilingual preschool facility. Their views describe the contribution of storytelling in the language teaching of preschool children. The interviews largely confirmed the thesis set out in the theoretical part of the bachelor's project.

The second part, the project, offers a specific educational weekly plan focusing on storytelling and its follow-up activities that teach children language in a natural, contextual and playful way. My planning was based on the fact that all 5 areas should be covered to meet the sub-objectives given by the FEP PE. The main contribution of this chapter is that these methods have been conceived into a coherent project and put into practice. The methods, therefore, offer experience and inspiration for the work of other teachers.

The practical part of the bachelor's project concerns the implementation of Storytelling in bilingual preschool education.

#### **2.1.1 Research aim:**

- To illustrate storytelling as an effective method of teaching English.

#### Objectives:

- 1) To identify how using a storytelling method motivates children to learn English;
- 2) To describe how the storytelling method contributes to the acquisition and consolidation of new vocabulary;
- 3) To identify the main techniques (features) of the storytelling method that help in successful language acquisition;
- 4) Conclude the main advantages of using the storytelling method for learning English in bilingual education;
- 5) To evaluate a detailed lesson plan using the storytelling method in bilingual preschool education.

## 2.2 Interpreting interviews about storytelling

The **interview** is classified as qualitative research. It is a method of collecting data about pedagogical reality, which consists of direct verbal communication between the researcher and the respondent. The English term interview originated from the parts "inter" between and "view" opinion, view. The advantage of the interview is the establishment of personal contact, which allows a deeper understanding of the motives and attitudes of the respondents and adaptation to the situation. The disadvantage is the increased time commitment. This method largely depends on creating a friendly relationship between the researcher and the respondent and a comfortable atmosphere.

Types of interviews include structured interviews, where the question and answer are fixed, unstructured interviews, which allow full freedom to answers and semi-structured, which are prepared in advance, the researcher has a framework of questions but adapts to the evolving content in the interview.

Because of its flexibility, open-ended questions are used in the interview. If necessary, the researcher can ask additional questions or ask the respondent to explain his/her answer (Chráska, 2016).

An appropriate situation must be chosen for the interview and people not involved should not be present. The interview should start with motivating the respondent and establishing a personal rapport, and the purpose of the interview should also be explained. During the interview, the interviewer should behave in a friendly but non-intrusive manner. The researcher's role is to ensure that the interview runs smoothly. The product of the interview is the answers, which may be captured in writing or recorded with the respondent's consent. Evaluation of the responses is done by categorizing the data (Chráska, 2016).

The reason why I chose this method of research was because all the selected respondents are my colleagues and some of them even friends and I could talk to them openly while creating a friendly atmosphere. All of them are also great professionals with many years of language learning experience and I was sincerely interested in their opinion about storytelling.

The objectives of this part of the bachelor's thesis were set as follows, "To identify how using a Storytelling method motivates children to learn English", "To describe how storytelling method contributes to the acquisition and consolidation of new vocabulary", "To identify the main aspects (features) of storytelling method that stimulate learners to take an active

participation during learning”, “To include the main advantages of using the Storytelling method for learning English in bilingual education”.

For this part of the thesis, I chose a semi-structured interview, which is partially prepared, I had prepared questions with me, but I still I was able to adapt according to how the interview evolved.

### **2.2.1 Data collection**

I first approached all respondents in person and each of them was told the topic of the interview. The interviews were conducted in the kindergarten premises, where I work. I prepared six framework questions to elicit the experiences and attitudes of the respondents. With their consent, I recorded the interviews on a recording device, so they are authentic as possible. The interviews were subsequently converted into written form and added as an appendix to this thesis.

### **2.2.2 The research questions**

- 1. What do you think are the main advantages of using storytelling?*
- 2. How can Storytelling help in motivating children to learn English?*
- 3. How do you think that storytelling helps in new vocabulary acquisition?*
- 4. What do you think the main elements/features of storytelling are?*
- 5. Do you think that children, when taught using storytelling method, accept language more naturally?*
- 6. Do you also find any disadvantages of this method?*

### **2.2.3 The sample of the research**

I interviewed five teachers teaching in a private bilingual kindergarten in Frýdek-Místek. It is a bilingual Czech-English kindergarten from which children naturally transit to primary school of the same name and under the same owner. These two institutions work closely together. The interviews were made in person in the building of the kindergarten and I recorded them on my phone. All of these teachers are my colleagues and I greatly admire them for their passion and experience in teaching. I decided to keep their names anonymous but would like to share some factual information about them:

*The first teacher* is a female, at the age of 41. The teacher 1 (T1) has a university degree from preschool education and had more than 10 years of experience with teaching. She also worked with children for more than 4 years in the USA.

*The second teacher* is a female, at the age of 37. The teacher 2 (T2) has a university degree from primary school teaching with focus on English. She also has qualification for teaching in preschool institutions.

*The third teacher* is a female, at the age of 40. The teacher 3 (T3) has a Czech and British university degree from preschool education teaching, she worked in kindergarten in Britain for 3 years and now she has been teaching in bilingual kindergarten In Czech Republic for more than 10 years.

*The fourth teacher* is a male, at the age of 31. The teacher 4 (T4) is a fully qualified teacher of English and History for secondary schools, he also has a university degree from preschool education obtained in Scotland. He worked at a kindergarten in Scotland for more than 2 years. He has been working in the bilingual kindergarten for around 8 months now.

*The fifth teacher* is a female, at the age of 35. The teacher 5 (T5) is a fully qualified teacher of preschool education. She has around 6 years of experience of teaching preschool children. She lived in USA for 5 years where she worked with children.

#### **2.2.4 Interpreting interviews with teachers**

1. “*What do you think are the main advantages of using storytelling?*”
  - Respondents agreed that it is a very fun way to teaching and learning. Most of them said that children learn quickly and, most importantly, naturally. In addition, T1 stated that children learn moral values, enrich their vocabulary, develop their imagination and acquire a positive attitude towards literature.
2. “*How can storytelling help in motivating children to learn English?*”
  - All respondents said that stories are fun and interesting, basically children are learning without realising it. T2 and T5 further agreed that children lose their fear of speaking a foreign language during storytelling. T3 mentioned that children are excited about what happens next in the story, they concentrate and their brain is focused on understanding the foreign language.
3. “*How do you think that storytelling helps in new vocabulary acquisition?*”
  - Three of the teachers replied that thanks to storytelling, children learn vocabulary naturally without having to translate as most adults do. Two of the

teachers mentioned that children are like sponges and pick up a lot more words through storytelling, and in context, than if they learn them in isolation. T4 also mentioned that the main words in stories are usually repeated often in the story. In addition, T1 also mentioned that children learn grammar and sentence structure through repetition of dialogue and phrases from stories.

4. “What do you think are the most important features/techniques of storytelling?”
  - Respondents agreed that, in general, the most important thing in storytelling is to arouse children's interest, i.e. to make the story fun and entertaining. T3, who has the most experience with storytelling, was able to list the following aspects without long thinking: teacher's preparedness, selection of an appropriate story, use of gestures, use of props, use of rhymes and songs, TPR. The use of props such as puppets, pictures and masks, the use of gestures, the use of songs and rhymes were also mentioned by T1 and T2 teachers.
5. “Do you think that children, when taught using this method, accept language more naturally?”
  - All respondents answered yes to this question. T1 added that through storytelling. Children learn new vocabulary in context and not by drilling. T3 further added that it is the most natural way because fairy tales and stories are inherent to children and they take it as a very natural thing, just as their mother reads them a story in the evening, the teacher tells them a story in kindergarten, they perceive it the same way.
6. “Do you also find any disadvantages of this method?”
  - Two teachers answered that they did not know any disadvantage, only one of them T5 added that he did not see any disadvantage if the method is conducted correctly. T1 said that he did not see any disadvantages, perhaps he could see pitfalls in the different levels of foreign language of the children. T2 mentioned that he sees a disadvantage in the longer preparation of the activities. T4 said that if this method is used too often and not combined with other methods, then the learning may not be as effective.

### **2.2.5 The result of the research**

Four objectives were set for the qualitative research using the method of interview interpretation: “*To include the main advantages of using the storytelling method for learning English in bilingual education*”, “*To identify how using a storytelling method motivates*



*children to learn English”, “To describe how storytelling method contributes to the acquisition and consolidation of new vocabulary”, “To identify the most important techniques (features) of storytelling method for effective second language teaching”.*

The respondents agreed that the biggest advantage in preschool children's second language learning through storytelling is the fun in learning. Children learn by playing and doing what they enjoy. The second most common advantage mentioned was learning naturally. This is confirmed by Eleanor Watts (2006, p.6) in her book *Storytelling*, in which she says: *"Children learn when they are having fun. Stories are not only fun in themselves, but they also give scope for role play, pantomime, craft work and games - all of which are natural ways for a child"*.

The fact that children learn without realising they are actually learning was cited by respondents as the biggest motivator in learning a second language by a storytelling method. They put this in the context that children love stories because they are fun and even more so if the teacher includes appropriate activities. This finding is confirmed by Ellis and Brewster in chapter 1.2.1.

Respondents said that storytelling helps in the acquisition of new vocabulary mainly because children learn new words without the need for translation, they learn them in context and also because words are often repeated in stories which was also mentioned by Ellis and Brewster in chapter 1.2.1.

The following were seen by teachers as important techniques and elements of good storytelling: use of props, use of gestures, choice of story, use of songs and rhymes and TPR. Teacher preparedness was also mentioned by one of them. All that they mentioned is also summarised in section 1.2.2.

All respondents agreed that storytelling makes children learn language naturally.

Although I don't think there are any disadvantages to storytelling, I was interested in the opinion of other teachers. The only major disadvantage was seen by teacher T2, who quite rightly identified the fact that it can be quite challenging to prepare for teaching using the storytelling method. This may or may not be true. My recommendation, which I adopted from my colleague, is to keep a box with labeled folders in which the teacher can file all the material used and just pull it out next time he/she needs it.

## 2.2.6 Recommendation

While interviewing teachers, I realised one thing. Although they all agreed that storytelling is an excellent method to help with language acquisition, they use it quite rarely. This led me to think that if I were to pursue this topic further, I would do a research on why teachers do not incorporate storytelling more often into their teaching. Is it really too time consuming, as mentioned during the interview by one respondent? Or do they think that children might not understand the stories? In the books I have read, the reason often given was that there is no time to do stories with children because of the strict syllabuses to follow. However, in a kindergarten, the demands of the curriculum are not as big. Maybe some of the teachers just do not feel confident enough to tell stories? My other idea for further research was to look at the topic from a different point of view. I would ask children for their opinion on storytelling. But I'm aware that for this purpose I would have to choose a group of a little bit older children.

## 2.3 Project

The project-based learning offers a variety of methods. These integrated learning processes are focused on how the chosen topic is handled and the output of the project. The preparation is preceded by the teacher reflecting on the core of the project and what will be its output, then specifying the objectives and selecting the content, which is based on activities and collaborative activities. For each activity or set of activities, methods are chosen that are based on the children's experience, while creating a unifying space (Průcha, Kořátková, 2013).

### 2.3.1 Project Implementation

The intention for this project was to acquire new vocabulary and knowledge about animals in a foreign language – English.

The project was designed to meet the requirements of the FEP PE, which states that children should be offered educational content in its natural context, links and relations. It should be based on the child's life, so that it makes sense, is interesting and useful for them and the project should provide the children with a wide variety of activities and offers them a deeper experience (FEP PE, 2021). The storytelling method applied in this project made all this possible.

- **Name of the project:** Animals around us

- **Project's time plan:** a weekly project in the half-day kindergarten
- **Duration of work methods:** individually adapted to the age and abilities of the children
- **Location of the project's implementation:** Class KINDERGARTEN of GALILEO SCHOOL – bilingual kindergarten, s.r.o.
- **Aim of the project:** With specific activities to present the Storytelling method as an ideal tool for teaching English to preschool children.
- **Methods:** audio support, visual support, story props, memory game, children retelling, reading stories, creative activities, dramatization
- **Project output:** photos of children's activities and works (source: author of this bachelor thesis)

### Monday

*Introduction to the story „Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see“*([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbSSm\\_p782c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbSSm_p782c))

- **Morning circle:** “Walking in the forest” song by Super Simple Songs
- **Aims:** animals, action verbs, Total Physical Response, what's that, awareness of animals and their characteristics
- **Materials:** pictures of animals
- **Description:** *The children learn the names of the animals and sing a song.*
- The teacher introduces the song by playing it on TV. Then he/she shows the children the pictures of animals and tells them their names. He/she asks the children to stick the pictures on the board in order of the song while listening to it. Then again class listens and sings the song together and the teacher encourages them to act according to the instructions in the song.
- **Main activity:** Reading the story „Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see“ by Eric Carle.
- **Aims:** listening, vocabulary, introduction to books, learning to follow a story
- **Materials:** „Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see“ book, flashcards of animals
- **Description:** *The children listen to a story and then play Kim's game to strengthen new vocabulary.*

- The teacher first introduces the pictures of animals from the story to acquire new vocabulary. This will support understanding of the story. Then he/she asks each child to identify the animal on a random picture. Then he/she begins to tell (read) the story, supported by the use of facial expressions and gestures. During storytelling, he/she can skip words and replaces them with pictures encouraging the children to finish the sentences.
- **Follow – up:** Kim’s game
- The teacher places the pictures of animals in front of the children and lets them look at them for a few seconds. Then asks them to close their eyes and take one picture away then ask the children to spot what is missing.

## Tuesday

### *Organized game/Music and rhyme*

- **Morning circle:** “The colour song” by Dave and Ava (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFm3gFwpIwo>)
- **Aims:** to follow instructions, practise vocabulary, spatial orientation
- **Materials:** TV
- **Description:** *The children look for a specific colour in the classroom that was mentioned in the song.*
- The teacher plays the song on TV, when a colour is mentioned in the song, he/she pauses it and asks the children to find something red (green, blue, any...) in the classroom. Then the teacher repeats the procedure with all the colours in the song making sure the children always find the correct colour.
- **Main activity:** „Gone fishing“
- **Aims:** general vocabulary, “I’ve got a ...”, eye-hand co-ordination
- **Materials:** wooden fish and fishing rods, small pictures of animals from the “Brown bear, brown bear” book, adhesive tape
- **Description:** The children take turns catching a “fish”.
- The teacher sticks the pictures on the wooden fish. The children then try to catch a “fish” with a picture on it. When they catch one, they look at the picture and say “I’ve got a (white dog). The teacher should go first once or twice until the children get the idea.

## Wednesday

### *Art and craft*

- **Morning circle:** social game “Pass the ball”
- **Aims:** the practice of saying the phrases “What do you see” and “I see a..... looking at me”, linking music and movement to language
- **Materials:** plastic animals
- **Description:** The children are passing a small plastic animal around while singing a song. When the singing stops, they practise the target language.
- The children are sitting on a carpet in a circle. The teacher gives them a small plastic animal to pass around while singing together “Pass the “bear” round and round” over and over. Then the teacher says stop and asks the child holding the animal a question: “Šimone, Šimone, what do you see? The child should answer: “I see a brown bear looking at me”. The teacher can change the animal and repeat.
- **Main activity:** “Making masks” creative activity
- **Aims:** names of animals, colours, hand co-ordination, colouring in
- **Materials:** animal masks print out copies, crayons, elastic
- **Description:** *The children colour in the print-out copies of the animal mask.*
- The teacher first shows the children the paper masks of animals from the book “Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see”. He/she talks about the, for example, What colour is it, etc. Then he/she lets the children colour them and cut around them. The helps the children put elastic on them.

## Thursday

### *Physical Education and Science*

- **Morning circle:** Physical Education: „How do animals move?“ obstacle course
- **Aims:** to listen for instructions, words for animals and the way they move, Total Physical Response, learning about animals
- **Materials:** pup up tunnel, a rope, plastic footprints, a ball, a balance beam, a hoop
- **Description:** *The children learn the way animals move, then they imitate the animals.*

- The teacher makes an obstacle course: crawling in a pop-up tunnel (an underground fox hole), jumping over a rope (a rabbit jumping over a stream), the crab walking from point A to B, bear walking on plastic footprints (a bear tracking animals), rolling a ball with a hand/foot (a squirrel rolling its winter supplies), walking on a balance beam (chickens on a perch), jumping through a hoop (a horse jumping over a fence).
- **Main activity:** “Animal body coverings“ sorting activity
- **Aims:** learning about animals and their differences, observations using the sense of touch, vocabulary
- **Materials:** animal material, worksheets
- **Description:** *A worksheet for children to sort animals based on their body covering.*
- The teacher can use real animal material to introduce the topic. For fur, he/she can bring the fur of a dog after it had a haircut. Feathers can be easily bought in a craft shop or found on the ground in the school garden. Imitation of snakeskin from a fabric shop is a perfect way to introduce scales. The teacher should let the children touch the materials and encourage them to talk about them: How do they feel? Are they rough or smooth, soft or hard? How do you think the body covering helps the animals? The teacher hands out the children a worksheet to sort the animals into the correct category based on their physical characteristics.

## Friday

### *Social Studies - dramatization*

- **Morning circle:** Reading the story „Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see“ by Eric Carle.
- **Aims:** listening, vocabulary, introduction to books, learning to follow a story
- **Materials:** „Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see“ book, flashcards of animals
- **Description:** *The children first play a game and then listen to a story.*
- The teacher can first revise the names of the animals, for example, by playing a game. He/she spread out pictures of animals around the classroom and divides the children into two teams. Then he says a name of an animal and a member of each team runs to find the correct picture. The team with more points wins. Then the teacher begins to tell

(read) the story. During storytelling, he/she can skip words or phrases encouraging the children to finish the sentences.

- **Main activity:** Dramatization with masks
- **Aims:** Language: practising new vocabulary and phrases “What do you see” and “I see a ... looking at me”, social and emotional skills, vocabulary
- **Materials:** paper masks
- **Description:** *The children take on the roles of animals and dramatize the story.*
- The children put on the masks that they made the previous day. The teacher coordinates the situation by setting an example. He/she starts asking the child with the bear mask: “Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?” and encourages (by pointing to a different child wearing a red bird mask) the child to answer: “I see a red bird looking at me.
- **Follow-up:** The children can change the characters or they can add new animals.

### 2.3.2 My reflection

This project called "Animals around us", which I created on the basis of the book "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see" have fulfilled my expectations and proved to be an effective method in terms of natural teaching of second language of preschool children. I chose this story deliberately because I had the opportunity to try it out on my own children. They liked it very much because it has beautiful illustrations, it is very engaging and simple at the same time. The children in the KINDERGARTEN class are among the youngest in our school, aged 2.5-4 years, which is why I purposely chose such a simple book. Still, I think I managed to get the most out of it.

Every morning we start the day with a Morning Circle. First, we greet each other and then we build on the theme of the week. The song “Walking in the forest is very beautiful and also very effective in introducing the animals. It can also be used as a morning warm-up. Before each activity, I try to introduce the children to new vocabulary first, I usually use flashcards for this, this has worked well for me and I have noticed that the children then become more involved during the activities. I practised reading the story at home first. When reading the story to the children, I incorporated animal sounds as well. The children really liked the story. They already knew some of the names of animals and colours, which made them even more excited to complete the sentences with me. The Kim's game I use quite often with children, it is a great game because the children enjoy it and it does not need much preparation, the children can

revise not only new vocabulary but also phrases like "Close your eyes", "What picture is missing?" and so on.

On Tuesday, the children not only repeated the colours with the Colour song, but also practised spatial orientation by looking for colours in the classroom. This game worked well for me because it is sometimes difficult to find a suitable game for such young children, but this one is simple and even the little ones understand what they are suppose to do. The game "Gone fishing" is excellent for practicing eye-hand coordination and it can be also played outdoors. When playing it, we sang the song "One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive", which the children already knew, so they could revise counting.

On Wednesday, we played the social game "Pass the ball" in a circle with the variation that instead of a balloon we had soft animal toys. I also use this game a lot, it is a good way to practice phrases like "How old are you?", "I am three" and so on. This time I wanted to repeat with them the phrases from the story: "What do you see" and "I see... looking at me". I made a mistake here because I did not re - tell the story with the children first so that they could refresh themselves on these phrases. Admittedly, my colleague and I set the example first, but if they had heard it more times in the story, it probably would have stuck in their minds better. For the dramatization, because of the young age of the children in my class, I used mask templates from Twinkl.com, but with older children around the age of 6, I would definitely let them design and finish the masks themselves.

The Obstacle Course is always a great fun and I knew this would be no different this time. For the worksheets, again because of the young age of the children, I worked with the children individually. First, I introduced, showed and let the children touch the body coverings which I brought from home. Then it was quite easy for them to match them correctly on the paper.

Before the Friday dramatization, which I always include as an activity at the end of the week, I wanted to revise what they have learned. Because I have very competitive children in my class, mostly boys, I wanted to include a competitive game. We then put on masks (in our case headbands - due to the age) and tried to dramatize the story. I sat them on chairs, because my colleague and I have the experience that they are more focused on the activity then and less distracted when they have a fixed spot. I acted as a facilitator if any child needed help. Most of the children were able to retell their passages on their own due to the every day repetition. The weaker ones I helped if they didn't know. I could see in them how happy and very confident they became because they knew full sentences in English. Then they switched roles by



swapping headbands. They enjoyed it so much that they did not want to stop and go play outside as we usually do after a morning activity. Eventually, I took the headbands with us and did the activity with the interested children outside, and even some children from other classes joined in as well.

I was very happy with the project. It confirmed that the children not only gain vocabulary without drilling, but that they learnt with enthusiasm. I further verified that it is possible to teach without need for translation into the mother tongue. I wanted to use English only when really necessary, and I stuck to that strictly. I also realized how convenient it is to have a detailed weekly plan prepared together with all the things I would need. My work was very efficient and I felt very confident going into class with a precise plan and all the supplies. It had a flow and helped me with keeping the children's attention. Based on this experience, I am now convinced that storytelling is the right path I would like to follow in my practice.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was, on the basis of theoretical knowledge and observations from practice, to illustrate the method of storytelling as an ideal tool for teaching English in preschool education.

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of art, as stories have been passed down through generations since ancient times. Children love stories, so I think that the storytelling method deserves to be used more often in language teaching especially but not only in preschool education. There are many experts who publish professional publications and methodological manuals around the world, and it is no longer an exception that professional storytelling courses are organised, for example Sylvia Doláková's courses in the Czech Republic.

This bachelor thesis looks at storytelling as a natural and effective way to teach English to children with the help of the literature mentioned in the Bibliography. Furthermore, the thesis describes benefits of introducing storytelling into the teaching practise. It also outlines which activities a teacher can include in the before, during and after storytelling. The thesis discusses in detail what factors and techniques are important when using this method. It also briefly touched on the characteristics of preschool children, preschool education in the Czech Republic and bilingual education in kindergartens.

The practical part of the thesis was based on the interpretation of interviews with teachers of bilingual preschool education who have a great experience in teaching English to very young learners. Their opinions describe the benefits of storytelling as a teaching method and largely confirm the theses set out in the theoretical part. The respondents agreed that storytelling is an effective method of language teaching which makes children acquire English in a fun, natural way without the need for translation. Furthermore, a project was designed to provide a specific weekly plan based on the use of storytelling that teaches children English in a playful and natural way. The main contribution of the project is that all methods have been conceived into a coherent project and implemented and tested in practice. The methods therefore offer experience and inspiration for the work of other teachers.

The motivation for writing this thesis was my work experience as a bilingual kindergarten teacher and as a parent trying to share my love for English language with my own children.

As an English teacher, I wondered how to pass on this love for language to children in my class and storytelling seemed like the ideal way. I believe that my experiences and the theses

I present will offer the necessary information and become a motivation for further work of educators.

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## **APPENDICES LIST**

- Appendix 1 – Interviews with respondents
- Appendix 2 – Project activities
- Appendix 3 – Parental approval



## **Appendix 1**

Interviews with respondents

### **Teacher 1**

**Q: Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself? Especially a few words about your teaching practice?**

A: I am a kindergarten teacher, currently on maternity leave. I have a bachelor degree in Preschool education from University of Ostrava. I also attended ESL programme for kindergarten and elementary school teachers in the UK. I worked with children in the USA for more than 4 years. I have been teaching in bilingual kindergarten for more than 10 years now.

**Q: What methods and forms of teaching do you use when working with children?**

A: In kindergarten, I usually use methods such as storytelling, dramatization with puppets, role-play, cooperative activities, experiments, hands on activities and a lot of songs and rhymes.

**Q: So you have some experience with Storytelling?**

A: Yes.

**Q: What do you think are the main advantages of using storytelling when teaching a second language?**

A: I think the best benefits of using storytelling in teaching are the development of imagination, new vocabulary acquisition, confidence build up, learning about moral values and creating of positive attitude towards literature.

***Q: How can Storytelling help in motivating children to learn English?***

A: Children enjoy stories because they are fun and interesting for them. Children get easily engage in a story and are eager to know what happens next. They are learning through something very natural for them.

**Q: How do you think that storytelling helps in new vocabulary acquisition?**

A: The stories are full of interesting words that are often repeated; by involving the children in the story and repeating the conversations, they learn words, phrases and whole sentences. Follow-up activities such as predicting, describing pictures, dramatizing, making puppets and so on will help to strengthen the vocabulary.

**Q: What do you think are the most important features/techniques of storytelling?**

A: I think the most important thing when storytelling is to make it fun so the teacher can keep the children's attention. The teachers should also use some pictures, flashcards, rhymes and song to make it more interesting. It is also good to use gestures so the children understand better. Also, choosing good follow up activities is quite essential.

**Q: Do you think that children, when taught using this method, accept language more naturally?**

A: I think it certainly does. Children learn the language in context, they don't learn just isolated words. Also, because they are learning through something so natural to them, it is much more enjoyable than the drill kind of approach.

**Q: Do you also find any disadvantages of this method?**

A: I don't think there are any. Maybe the only I can think of right now is if the children in the class have a different level of English it could be challenging for the teacher.

## **Teacher 2**

**Q: Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself? Especially a few words about your teaching practice?**

A: I work in a bilingual kindergarten as a teacher of preschool education. Working with children is interesting, because every day is different, something new surprises me with children and events. I graduated from MUNI in Brno, I am a qualified primary school teacher, with specialization in English language. I have been in England and Malta as part of Erasmus project.

**Q: How long have you been teaching?**

A: I have been teaching around 15 years.

**Q: What is your experience with bilingual teaching?**

A: Last 8 years.

**Q: What methods and forms of teaching do you use?**

A: I use individual contact with a student, storytelling, Hejného method, frontal method, group activities, circle time, Sfumato.

**Q: Do you have experience with storytelling?**

A: Yes, for two years. I used Czech stories, pantomime, puzzles.

**Q: How often do you use storytelling method in your teaching?**

A: About once or twice a month.

**Q: What do you think are the main advantages of using storytelling?**

A: Children respond very quickly and learn new words fast and love the way of learning.

**Q: In your opinion, how can storytelling help in motivating children to learn English?**

A: For the children, it is super fun to listen stories with some fun pictures. And when the teacher asks questions, all the children love to respond loudly and as fast as they can. They are not afraid of making mistakes and they are so engaged in the story that they lose their shyness. For the teacher, it is very good to have feedback very fast.

**Q: How do you think that storytelling helps in new vocabulary acquisition?**

A: I think children understand all new words very fast, they also remember them much easier than adults, they are like sponges.

**Q: What do you think are the most important features/techniques of storytelling?**

A: I think it is important to accompany the story with a lot of pictures, puppets, flashcards, basically anything that makes the story more understandable and interesting. I like to incorporate rhymes and songs where possible.

**Q: Do you think that children, when taught using this method, accept language more naturally?**

A: Yes, they do.

**Q: Do you also find any disadvantages of this method?**

A: Maybe it takes time for preparing pictures, songs, materials.

### **Teacher 3**

**Q: Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself? Especially a few words about your teaching practice?**

A: I work in a bilingual kindergarten as an English teacher. I have been working in this school for 10 years. Before that, I taught English for a year at the second level of primary school and

3 years in a kindergarten in England. I studied Preschool pedagogy in England and Special education at university in the Czech Republic.

**Q: What methods and forms of teaching do you use when working with children?**

A: Storytelling, Jolly Phonics, Hejného metoda, “Metoda dobrého startu“

**Q: How much experience do you have with storytelling?**

A: I attended storytelling teaching course with Mrs. Doláková and then in Oxford, England.

**Q: What do you think are the main advantages of using storytelling?**

A: Children learn another language naturally.

**Q: In your opinion, how can storytelling help in motivating children to learn English?**

A: Children are not really learning; they do fun and playful activities in another language. Children are excited about what happens next in the story, they concentrate and their brain is focused on understanding the foreign language.

**Q: How do you think that storytelling helps in new vocabulary acquisition?**

A: Children learn new vocabulary naturally and in context; they do not translate into their mother language.

**Q: What do you think are the most important features/techniques of storytelling?**

A: Being prepared, use a lot of gestures, choosing a good story, using a lot of props such as puppets, pictures and also songs and rhymes.

**Q: Do you think that children, when taught using this method, accept language more naturally?**

A: Absolutely. Children are surrounded by books and stories from the day they were born, some of them even before they were born. They are used to their parents reading them before going to sleep. So using storytelling in kindergarten as a way of teaching is the best thing because its almost the same to what they are used to at home, just in a different language but at this age they are not really realising it as long as its supported by gestures and props.

**Q: Do you also find any disadvantages of this method?**

A: No, I do not find any.

#### **Teacher 4**

**Q: Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself? Especially a few words about your teaching practice?**

A: I started my career as a fully qualified teacher of English language and history for secondary schools and high schools. I was teaching English and history at school for two years. Later, I moved to Scotland, started working at a nursery and obtained a full qualification SVQ level 3 for childcare, learning and development, which allows me to teach in Scotland in nurseries, after school clubs, etc. I stayed in the nursery for 2 years. Right now, I am teaching in an English preschool in Frýdek-Místek. I can say that I have at least 5 years experience with teaching children of various age groups. I was teaching children from age 2 to age 15, so I know the differences between young preschool and nursery children, young school children and older school children - teenagers.

**Q: What is your experience with bilingual teaching?**

A: I have been teaching in English-Czech bilingual nursery for 8 months.

**Q: What methods and forms of language teaching do you use?**

A: Storytelling, Sfumato, Hejného method of maths, Jolly phonics, audio-visual method, learning by songs, nursery rhymes, activities, games, direct method.

**Q: Do you have much experience with storytelling?**

A: I am using storytelling during my lessons and activities to teach children new stories and vocabulary.

**Q: What do you think the advantages of storytelling are?**

A: Children are more interested in learning through stories as they are entertaining. They can learn not just by listening but also by retelling and acting them. It is a perfect way of learning a language because learn by playing.

**Q: How do children respond to it?**

A: Children are always very happy to listen to a story and make an activity concerning this.

**Q: How often do you use storytelling in your teaching?**

A: Once or twice per month.

**Q: In your opinion, how can storytelling help in motivating children to learn English**

A: Storytelling can motivate children to actually learn something without knowing they are learning. It is learning by activity.

**Q: How do you think that storytelling helps in new vocabulary acquisition?**

A: Storytelling is good for language acquisition because by listening to stories with using lot of pictures or puppets, children acquire new vocabulary in context and without the need for translation into their mother tongue. And because they enjoy the story, they actually remember the words also because they are usually repeated many times.

**Q: What do you think are the most important features/techniques of storytelling?**

A: Important is to get the children involved so to pick an, interesting topic/story.

**Q: Do you think that children, when taught using this method, accept language more naturally?**

A: Yes, it is a good method.

**Q: Do you also find any disadvantages of this method?**

A: If you use this method too often and do not combine it with other methods, so you are not effective.

**Q: Any other comments?**

A: Storytelling is definitely an excellent way of teaching children.

### **Teacher 5**

**Q: Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself? Especially a few words about your teaching practice?**

A: I am a teacher in a bilingual kindergarten. I like my job as a kindergarten teacher very much and I wouldn't change it for anything in the world. I know that because I feel happier every year when I do this work with children. I studied Preschool pedagogy in Vsetín, where they prepared me very well for this job. I continue to educate myself when I have the opportunity and I am enrolled in many American websites, where they are dedicated to preschoolers and the activities that are best for them.

**Q: How long have you been teaching?**

A: I have been teaching around 6 years.

**Q: What methods and forms of teaching a second language do you use when working with children?**

A: I use individual contact with a student, storytelling, Hejného method, frontal method, group activities, Jolly phonics.

**Q: So you have experience with storytelling. Do you use it often?**

A: Sometimes. Maybe every 2 weeks.

**Q: What do you think are the main advantages of using storytelling with preschool children?**

A: Children learn new words fast and naturally as they are during something that interests them.

**Q: In your opinion, how can storytelling help in motivating children to learn English?**

A: Children love books with nice illustrations. And when the teacher tells the story and asks questions about it, the children are not afraid to love to respond.

**Q: How do you think that storytelling helps in new vocabulary acquisition?**

A: I think children understand very fast they are like sponges. They love stories and when the teacher starts to say English stories, they love teacher's voice and they can read from the faces and the voices of the teacher pretty much, they don't translate in their minds. They can imagine so much more than adults.

**Q: What do you think are the most important features/techniques of storytelling?**

A: Probably to make the storytelling interesting and fun to keep the children's attention.

**Q: Do you think that children, when taught using this method, accept language more naturally?**

A: Of course, they do.

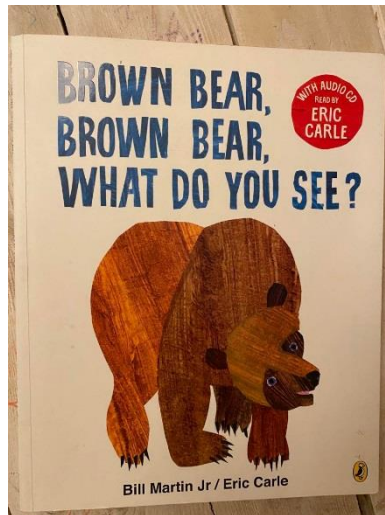
**Q: Do you also find any disadvantages of this method?**

A: No, I don't, if it is used how it should.

## Appendix 2

### Project activities

*(the source of all photos: the author of the thesis)*



*Pic. 1 Original book "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?"*



*Pic. 2 First telling of the story "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?"*





Pic.3 Pictures of the animals used for instruction of the vocabulary, taken from:  
[https://www.twinkl.cz/resource/t-t-1451-brown-bear-brown-bear-stick-puppets.](https://www.twinkl.cz/resource/t-t-1451-brown-bear-brown-bear-stick-puppets)



Pic. 4 Game “Gone fishing”



Pic. 5 Children playing game “Gone fishing” (the property of Galileo School).



Pic. 6 Animal headbands, taken from <https://www.twinkl.cz/resource/t-t-11905-brown-bear-brown-bear-role-play-headbands>.



Pic. 7 Making animal masks, taken from <https://www.twinkl.cz/resource/t-t-1255-brown-bear-brown-bear-role-play-masks>.



Pic. 8 Playing “Pass the ball (animal)” during Morning Circle time.



Pic. 9 Doing Obstacle Course during Morning Circle time.



Pic. 10 Individual work on the Animal body covering activity, worksheet taken from [https://www.liveworksheets.com/worksheets/en/Science/Animals/Animal\\_Coverings\\_fu1406](https://www.liveworksheets.com/worksheets/en/Science/Animals/Animal_Coverings_fu1406)



Pic. 11 Dramatization of the story “Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?”



Pic. 12 Playing games with flashcards, taken from <https://www.twinkl.cz/resource/t-t-1437a-brown-bear-brown-bear-story-sequencing>.

## **Appendix 3**

**Parental approval (all signed copies available upon request)**

### **Písenná forma souhlasu s fotografováním**

Tiskopis souhlasu rodičů s fotografováním dětí zapojených do projektu

### **Sdělení rodičům**

Vážený rodiče,

Váš(e) syn/dcera je zapojen(a) do projektu v rámci mé bakalářské práce s názvem „Storytelling as a teaching method in bilingual preschool education“.

Tímto Vás žádám o svolení k fotografování Vašeho dítěte a využití fotografií pro účely bakalářské práce.

Jméno, Příjmení dítěte:

Souhlasím / Nesouhlasím  
(*nehodící se, škrtněte*)

Ve Frýdku-Místku dne:

Jméno, Příjmení zákonného zástupce dítěte:

Podpis výše uvedeného zákonného zástupce dítěte:

Děkuji,

Bc. Tereza Blažejová

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- FEP PE.....Framework Education Programme for Preschool Education
- SEP .....School Education Programme
- TPR.....Total Physical Response

## RÉSUMÉ

Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na využití storytellingu jako efektivní metody k výuce angličtiny v předškolním vzdělávání. Na základě výzkumného šetření, provedeného s učiteli v bilingvním předškolním vzdělávání, byly popsány jejich zkušenosti s metodou storytellingu, jež se ve velké míře shodovaly a potvrdily teze stanovené v teoretické části práce. Respondenti uvedli, že storytelling motivuje žáky k učení se dalšího jazyka tím, že se jej neučí, ale přijímají ho skrze vyprávění a aktivity s ním spojené tak, že si ani neuvědomují, že se něco učí. Jako hlavní výhodu storytellingu spatřovali v tom, že je pro děti zábavná a přirozená. Další poznatek, který učitelé uvedli, že při storytellingu slovíčka přijímány v kontextu a při správné technice není třeba překladu. S tím souvisí, že důležitými elementy storytellingu jsou i využití rekvizit, správná technika vyprávění a využití gest, mimiky. Respondenti se na základě svých zkušeností shodli, že metoda storytellingu je efektivním nástrojem k přirozenému učení angličtiny u předškolních dětí. Na závěr je předložen konkrétní projekt práce s dětmi předškolního věku, který může sloužit jako konkrétní plán týdenní výuky v předškolní i školní instituci.



## **ANNOTATION**

This bachelor thesis deals with the use of storytelling method in preschool education. The aim of this bachelor's thesis is based on theoretical knowledge and insights from practice illustrate storytelling as an effective method of teaching English in bilingual preschool education. The thesis is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part is devoted to the characteristics of preschool children, bilingual education and its inclusion in the preschool education system. It also looks at the importance of using stories in language teaching, how they can be used, and includes a set of activities that can be used in conjunction with stories during teaching. The practical part of the bachelor thesis concerns the implementation of storytelling in a bilingual preschool education. The content of this part is a research using the interview method with preschool teachers. It also presents a concrete project of working with children with the possibility of cross-curricular connections.