UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

Katedra anglického jazyka

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II. ročník - kombinované navazující studium

Obor: Učitelství anglického jazyka pro 2. stupeň základních škol – Učitelství přírodopisu pro 2. stupeň základních škol

EARLY FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Diplomová práce

OLOMOUC 2017   Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Blanka Babická, Ph.D.

Declaration:

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

V Prostějově 18. 06. 2017

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ABSTRACT

This project deals with the question when to start with a foreign language education and under what conditions can early foreign language education be successful. The main aim was to compare the attitude to learning English between the pupils who start to learn a foreign language in the kinder-garden or in the first grade of a primary school and the pupils who start in the third grade. The theoretical part describes the characteristics of the learners, teachers and motivation. It focuses especially on the young learners and their needs. The conditions for an early foreign language education are stated in the last chapter.

The practical part analyses the results from a questionnaire for pupils and another one for the teachers of English and observation carried out in the third grade of a primary school. The aim was to confirm the findings from the theoretical part. The outcomes of the research supported the hypothesis that pupils who start to learn a foreign language at an early age have got more positive attitude to it than the pupils who start later.

Introduction

This thesis deals with the topic of early foreign language learning. There is a trend to integrate a foreign language, usually English, into lower grades of primary school. Without doubt, there is a strong need for young people to speak a foreign language. The boundaries of Europe are open, people can travel, work or live almost anywhere they wish. However, they need to be able to communicate. According to Davies and Patsko (2013), English is used as a lingua franca which means a language spoken among people with different first language. The question is at what age it is good to start learning a foreign language, what the advantages of an early start are and under what conditions it can be successful.

I have chosen this topic because when I started to teach in the first grade at primary school, I realised that I need to teach the young learners differently from the pupils at lower secondary school. I have also wondered if this early start has got any advantages which would show in the upper grades and under what conditions it is effective.

The thesis consists of two parts - theoretical and practical. The theoretical part is divided into five chapters. The first chapter presents the learner of a foreign language, division to age groups and characteristics of each group. Focus of this chapter is on young learners and their specific needs. The second chapter describes the teacher's roles, characteristics of a good teacher and focuses more on the teacher of young learners and their qualification. The third chapter deals with motivation, it describes different types of motivation, sources of motivation with focus on the teacher as one of the most important sources for young learners. It also presents teaching methods based on motivation with tips for teachers of young learners. The fourth chapter follows the previous one in the topic of motivation and focuses on games and activities as motivation tools. It stresses the importance of enjoyable activities with language focus. It presents different games, listening and oral activities for young learners and songs. The last chapter contains information about the Czech educational system, describes the advantages and disadvantages of early start of a foreign language learning and states conditions for success of this early start.

The practical part consists of two questionnaire surveys and observation of young learners in the third grade of a primary school. One survey was carried out among the pupils of the third, the fourth and the fifth grade of primary schools in district Prostějov and analyses the attitude of the pupils to English in general, to the teacher and to games in English lessons. The second survey was held among the teachers of a foreign language and tries to find out their opinion to early start of a foreign language learning and their motivational strategies. The

purpose of the observation is to find out similarities or differences between pupils who started to learn English in the first grade and those who started in the third grade.

The main aim of this thesis is to confirm the hypothesis that pupils who start to learn English at an early age have got more positive attitude to it than those who start later in the third grade of primary school. Additionally, it should prove that this positive attitude is gained mainly through the teacher and games as motivational tools.

I. THEORETICAL PART

1. Learners

The following chapter deals with learners in general, presents qualities of a successful learner, division of the learners to age groups and characteristics of each of these groups. It concentrates more closely on a group of young learners and their specific needs since it is the most important group of learners for this project.

1.1 Successful learner

Some students tend to learn more easily than others. In some cases the reason may be the student's intelligence while in others it is the learner's characteristics which play an important part in his/her learning process. Harmer (1998) lists these following characteristics of a successful learner:

- *a willingness to listen* (not only to the instruction or teacher's explanations but to English itself as a language)
- *a willingness to experiment* (a successful learner wants to speak and try out what he/she has learnt)
- *a willingness to ask questions* (the questions should be appropriate, to the point and not too often but learners should be encouraged to ask them)
- *a willingness to think about how to learn* (each student is different and has got different ways how to learn best, a successful learner explores his/her own way of learning)
- *a willingness to accept correction* (even successful learners make mistakes but they learn from them and are able to correct them with the help of teacher's feedback) (Harmer, 1998, p. 10)

Moon (2005) has likewise tried to make a list of qualities that a successful learner should have. Here are some of them: *"creative and active, pays attention, keen to communicate and takes every opportunity to use English, does not give up and corrects own mistakes."* Obviously one pupil will not have all these characteristics however he usually has some of them. Moon (2005) also mentions that successful pupils are often *"sociable and talkative"* nevertheless it is not a necessary quality to provide the success. Even quiet pupils can be successful (Moon, 2005, p. 164).

1.2 Different age groups of learners

The basic division of learners to age groups is to children, adolescents and adults. However, the group of children is too wide and therefore is usually divided further to smaller subgroups. This division varies from author to author. For example, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) divide children according to their age to a group of pupils aged five to seven years and a group of pupils aged eight to ten years (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 1). Another division made by Slattery and Willis (2002) is to very young learners which are children up to seven years old and young learner which are children aged seven to twelve years (Slattery and Willis, 2003, p. 4). Similarly, Phillips (1993) refers to young learners as children from five or six years old to eleven or twelve years old (Phillips, 1993, p. 5).

However, Pinter (2006) suggests that the age brackets are not a good measure figure because each child is different and there are often differences between children of the same age. She distinguishes younger and older learners and characterises each group according to their approach to language, awareness about themselves, reading and writing skills, knowledge about the world, fantasy and imagination or real life attitude (Pinter, 2006, p. 2). Even thought that Phillips (1993) mentions the age division, she also points out that there are other aspects that should be considered such as the pupils' gender, cultural background or location they come from (Phillips, 1993, p. 5).

1.2.1 Young learners

The main focus nowadays is on a group of young learners of a foreign language. This group is very different from other groups of learners and is very sensible to teacher's approach. It can be motivated and engaged in activities without much effort and difficulty. In addition, it can be easily influenced in either positive or negative way and this influence may last for a long time. This subchapter focuses on young learners which are as described above children from six/seven years old to ten/twelve years old thus pupils of the first to the fifth grade of primary school.

1.2.1.1 The role of play and imagination

Moon (2005) points out that children are *"naturally curious and active"*. They learn by exploring everything that is around them to understand how it works. They need to experience things by themselves through physical activity. Teacher can use this curiosity in teaching a

foreign language. Moon (2005) gives some examples of good physical activities for young learners such as *"action songs, games, rhymes and drama."* She also suggests that these activities are suitable especially for beginners because their listening skills are usually much better than their speaking abilities (Moon, 2005, p. 7-8). Alike, Pinter (2006) agrees that young learners learn the foreign language best during games while having fun and from the *"meaningful contexts"* (Pinter, 2006, p. 18).

Slattery and Willis (2001, p. 4) and Halliwell (1992) emphasises children's ability to play, make fun and use their imagination and fantasy. Halliwell describes how pupils can enrich activities prepared by the teacher with these skills. In this way learning through play and fun is more memorable for them. Even though, that foreign language teaching is recommended to connect with real life objects and situations, children's imagination is a part of their real life (Halliwell, 1992, p. 6-7).

1.2.1.2 The role of talking

Another advantage of teaching a group of young learners is according Moon (2005) their willingness to talk. Even as very beginners, they are keen on using the language especially during interesting activities (Moon, 2005, p. 9). Equally, Halliwell (1992) thinks that *"the instinct for interaction and talk"* is the most important aspect of young learners. Even though that many teachers see talking as a disadvantage, they should on the contrary use it as a motivation for speaking activities. As Halliwell points out, the best way how to learn the language is to use it (Halliwell, 1992, p. 8). Furthermore, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) advise to let the pupils play and experiment with the language, make up their own rhymes and talk *"nonsense".* They point out that this is the way children learn the first language too (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 5).

1.2.1.3 Attention span

As said, young learners become enthusiastic very quickly, on the other hand as Ur (1991) suggests they also become bored quite easily if the activity is not interesting or meaningful for them. As *"sources of interest"* she advises *"pictures, stories and games"* (Ur, 1991, p. 288). The problem in keeping young learners' attention may be also caused by their attention span which is usually quite short. As Holden (1980) explains, children have problem to concentrate on one thing for a long time. She recommends that teachers should change the activities frequently and practise the target vocabulary or phrases using various methods (Holden, 1980, p. 7-8). On top of

this, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) advise to vary a place, organisation or even a voice (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 5-6).

1.2.1.4 The role of feelings and attitude

Moon (2005) and Scott and Ytreberg (1990, p. 10) are also convinced that pupils' feelings are very important during language learning. If they feel *"happy and secure"*, they can learn better. Moon adds that teacher's support and understanding is significant in forming their attitude towards learning a foreign language (Moon, 2005, p. 9-10).

However, even the young learners have some kind of attitude already formed or influenced by other people most often their parents. Moon (2005) states that two most important factors for young learners are *"the teacher and teaching methods"*. Parental influence is significant for young learners while peer influence is more vital for teenagers. On the other hand, the attitude can change due to different reasons. Moon (2005) divides these influences to in-school and out-of-school influences. Among the in-school influences are the teacher and his/her learning methods, the learning process itself and its outcomes. The issue of success or failure effects the attitude significantly. The out-of-school influences are peer groups, parents or media (Moon, 2005, p. 17-18).

1.2.1.5 Other features

Slattery and Willis (2001, p. 4) and Scott and Ytreberg (1990) point out that young learners grasp the language through enjoyable activities and not through grammar rules and explanations about the language because they are not able to understand them. The best time to start explaining grammar is when the pupils start asking questions about it and even then the teacher should do it in a simple way. These authors also agree on the children's enjoyment of repetition, routine and familiar activities (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 6-7).

Phillips (1993) adds the young learners are usually good *"mimics"* and are often *"unselfconscious"*. She stresses their willingness to participate on almost any activity prepared by the teacher (Phillips, 1993, p. 7).

1.2.2 Adolescents

Teaching adolescents is very challenging. This group of learners has specific needs and can be very critical to teaching style, suggested activities and might be hard to motivate. Nevertheless, there are also some positives.

Moon (2006) mentions that talking in front of a class may be embarrassing for many teenagers because their classmates' opinion is very important to them and they may be afraid of making mistakes and looking silly (Moon, 2005, p. 9). Additionally, Harmer (1998) points out to another problem which may adolescents' teacher face and that is losing control of the class. The reason of this may be that students do not want to study or dislike the subject or the teacher (Harmer, 1998, p. 11).

Ur (1991) sees the biggest problems in motivating, managing and getting adolescents' trust however she suggests that their *"learning potential"* is bigger than in other groups and teacher should find the way they like to be taught. According to a survey adolescents like teachers who can control the class, have a good relationship with students and can teach in an interesting way (Ur, 1991, p. 290-294).

1.2.3 Adults

Adults are a specific group of learners since their formal education is usually completed and if they start learning a foreign language, it is voluntary and purposeful. Teaching adults is often individual or in a small group which may be easier for teacher to handle.

As Harmer (1998) points out the most significant difference between adults and young learners is the fact that adults have got some previous learning experience which may affect their further learning in either positive or negative way. However, there are some advantage compare to other groups. One of them is the concentration span which is much greater than in young learners or adolescents and less disciplinary problems which usually occur in primary school classes. Adult students also tend to be more cooperative than younger learners and since they have more life experience they may add interesting opinions and arguments to classroom communication (Harmer, 1998, p. 10-11).

Pinter (2006) adds to the list of advantages of adult learners their ability to *"analyse language in an abstract way"* and awareness of different learning techniques and strategies (Pinter, 2006, p. 18). In addition, Ur (1991) points out that adults are more *"committed and*

motivated" because they are learning out of their own will usually for a purpose (Ur, 1991, p. 287-288).

There are as well some difficulties with this age group, one of the problematic area according to Pinter (2006) is the pronunciation. Adults rarely perfect their English to sound like native speakers. However, as Pinter suggest this may not be their wish in order to keep their own identity (Pinter, 2006, p. 29).

This chapter has attempted to describe the characteristics of different age groups. To sum it up, young learners are curious, active, enthusiastic, willing to talk and participate in interesting fun activities which are meaningful. On the other hand, they get bored easily, have got short attention span, need to feel happy and secure. Adolescents have big learning potential however they are difficult to motivate and manage, may be shy in front of classmates. Adults have greater concentration spam and are more committed, motivated, disciplined and cooperative, they may be affected by previous learning experiences. It is obvious that each age group is different and it is necessary that the teacher is aware of these differences and of the specific needs of each group to choose an approach, teaching methods and activities that will suit it the best.

2. Teacher

One of the basic components of an educational process is the teacher. The teacher is a qualified person who is responsible for preparation, management, organisation and results of this process (Podlahová, 2007, p. 1). This chapter focuses on the teacher's roles, characteristics of a good teacher, teachers of young learners and their qualification.

2.1 Teacher's roles

The teacher's traditional role is to transfer knowledge to the students. Nowadays, the teacher also adopts other roles such as a communicator, organiser, coordinator, analyser and evaluator (Podlahová, 2007, p. 1).

According to Wright (1987) the teacher has got two major roles in the classroom: a manager and an instructor. As a manager, the teacher is responsible for creating the conditions of learning while as an instructor the teacher passes knowledge to the learners. These roles are not separated from each other, on the contrary, they are complementary and inseparable. There are some smaller roles such as a resourcer, a guide, an evaluator and an organiser among these two major roles (Wright, 1987, p. 51-52).

Littlewood (1981) enriches the above list with another teacher's roles. In his interpretation teacher who is a *"facilitator of learning"* adopts roles as an overseer, a classroom manager, a language instructor, a consultant or an advisor and a co-communicator. The teacher stops being the *"dominator of the classroom interaction"* which helps to establish a good relationship between the teacher and the learners (Littlewood, 1981, p. 92-93). On top of it, Medgyes (1994, p. 63) adds that among other roles the teacher is also a *"provider and comforter."*

Wright (1987) points out that as a part of the management role the teacher is also a motivator (Wright, 1987, p. 53). Dörnyei (2001) believes that the teacher does not have to apply all possible motivational techniques, on the contrary, he advises to use only a few of the ones that will suit the teacher and his pupils the best. Dörnyei calls such teacher a *"good enough motivator"* in the analogy of psychological concept *"good enough parent"* (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 135-136).

2.2 A good teacher

It is natural and common that we want to be good at what we are doing. However, good can be define in many different ways. One definition in the Cambridge Dictionary determinates good as *"successful, or able to do something well"* (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

2.2.1 Characteristics of a good teacher

Harmer (1998) asked the question: "*What makes a good teacher?*" several people and these were some of the answers:

- *interesting lessons*
- *to love and enjoy his/her job*
- *has his/her own personality*
- *has lots of knowledge not only of his/her subject*
- *be an entertainer*

The relationship the teacher has got with his students, knowing the students' names and caring for their problems were also among other answers (Harmer, 1998, p. 1-3). Likewise, Moon (2005) agrees with this opinion and points out that a good relationship with pupils is very important (Moon, 2005, p. 44).

Similarly, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) dealt with the question of ideal teacher and add another characteristics that are important for the teacher of young learners: *"have a sense of humour, be open-minded, adaptable and patient"*. They suggest that especially the teacher of young learners should appear to like all pupils the same because young learners have *"a very keen sense of fairness"* (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 9).

On top of this, Moon (2005) suggests that a good teacher should make the classroom *"a positive learning environment"* by wall displays, book corners, creating a friendly atmosphere and motivating pupils (Moon, 2005, p. 3). Scoot and Ytreberg (1990) add to put the pupils' drawings and writing on the wall and to have plants and even animals to create a pleasant surrounding (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 11).

2.2.2 Talking time

There are other important points that need to be taken into consideration. One of them is talking time in class, more precisely the balance between Teacher Talking Time (TTT) and

Student Talking Time (STT). According to Harmer (1998) a good teacher maximises STT because the students are the ones who need to practice the language. However, good TTT is important too because the students can hear a good level of language which they can understand and therefore benefit from it (Harmer, 1998, p. 4).

Similarly, Moon (2005) and Scott and Ytreberg (1990, p. 18) point out that for majority of pupils teacher's talk is the only possibility to hear a foreign language. Therefore, Moon advises to use English not only for commands or instructions but also to give feedback, a praise or even to joke (Moon, 2005, p. 62).

On the other hand, Medgyes (1994) states that there has to be a distinction made between native-speaking teacher of English, highly proficient non-native-speaking teacher and non-native-speaking teacher with a poor level of English. Medgyes also warns that if the teacher speaks too little, the pupils might not understand and know what to do. This author recommends that the teacher speaks in some lessons for 10-15 minutes in one go, for example telling a story and by this start a discussion between the pupils (Medgyes, 1994, p. 89).

2.2.3 Planning the lesson

Scott and Ytreberg (1990) state that a good teacher plans the lesson carefully in advance because especially during the lessons with young learners there is not much time to think about what activity to do next (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 97). Equally, Phillips (1993) advises about lesson planning in terms of choosing the language point, topic of the lesson and series of activities to practise and develop the language skills (Phillips, 1993, p. 143-144).

However, Harmer (1998) suggests that the teacher should be flexible about keeping the prepared lesson plan because there are many things that can affect the course of the lesson, the technology might not be working, students might not enjoy the activity or they have already done it. Good teacher must be able to handle these situations and respond to them adequately (Harmer, 1998, p. 5-6). Equally, Medgyes (1994) warns about the possibility that the lesson might be boring if the teacher just follows his plans. Medgyes points out that teaching/learning process involves both the teacher and the pupils and due to the interaction between them and the feedback the teacher gets from his pupils, the teacher has to sometimes change his plans and improvise (Medgyes, 1994, p. 88).

2.2.4 Other characteristics

One more matter is teacher's movement in the classroom. Harmer (1998) points out that good teachers tend to move around to keep students' interest. A teacher who stands in front of the board the whole lesson may bore the students (Harmer, 1998, p. 16).

Additionally, Scott and Ytreberg (1990, p. 9) advise to respect the pupils and have realistic expectations about what pupils can accomplish at certain level. Furthermore, Medgyes (1994, p. 63) suggests that a good teacher should be empathic.

2.3 Teacher of Young Learners

It was discussed in previous chapter that each group of learners is different and needs different approach and methods. The teacher of young learners should therefore meet some specific requirements since his effect on the young learners may be significant and may influence their attitude towards a foreign language for a long time.

Medgyes (1994) thinks that even the teacher of young learners should have a good command of English especially because of the pronunciation. Medgyes advises that the teacher of a foreign language should teach both low-level and high-level groups because if a proficient teacher teaches only beginners, his own level of English may decrease (Medgyes, 1994, p. 53). Equally, Vojtková (2006) disagrees with the commonly held opinion that the teacher of young learners does not have to have a high level of language proficiency. On the contrary, Vojtková points out three abilities that the teacher should have:

1. *"the teacher's own command of the language"* - teacher uses the language for communication during the lesson, he should talk in a foreign language most of the time so his pronunciation should be on a very good level because children are very good imitators. According to the Common European Framework of Reference levels teacher should be B2 to C1 level
2. *"the teacher's teaching competence"* - teacher as a *"specialist in educating young learners"* should adjust the activities to suit their needs and a foreign language teacher should do this in the foreign language and should do it with ease. He cannot just repeat songs and rhymes from textbooks
3. *"the teacher's attitude to the language"* - once more, if teacher is not self-assured about using a foreign language, he passes this tension onto his pupils and effects their attitude to the language (Vojtková, 2006, p. 84-95).

Besides the proficiency skills, the teacher should according to Holden (1991) be prepared to listen to pupils' talking about their interests like family, pets or daily events. Holden points out that the *"personal relationship"* is very important for the young learners (Holden, 1991, p. 6).

2.4 Qualified teacher

There is a trend in recent years to integrate English into lower grades of primary school. Pinter (2006) suggests that to be successful in this step there need to be qualified teachers. At primary school there is one class teacher who usually stays with the children during whole timetable, knows the children and their special needs the best and if he has got a good level of a foreign language, he is able to integrate the language into other subjects during the day very easily and in a natural way (Pinter, 2006, p. 41).

Similarly, Lojová (2006) warns that especially for the language education at an early age the right person to introduce the language to young children is very important. There are two possibilities, it can be either qualified primary school teacher who has got a good level of a foreign language or a qualified foreign language teacher who has a knowledge of elementary methodology (Lojová, 2006, p. 46-47).

2.4.1 Requirements for qualifications

As mentioned above, the teacher should be qualified. There are some requirements which a person must fulfil in order to become a qualified teacher. The law 563/2004 about the pedagogical employees states these requirements in §3. Among other requirements a person must have a special qualification for direct pedagogical work which he performs. This special qualification is described in §7 for the teacher of primary school and in §8 for the teacher of lower secondary school. Both paragraphs state that qualification is obtained at university in accredited master's degree study program in the field of pedagogical science. The study is either focused on preparation of teachers for primary school or on general-educational subjects of lower secondary school for lower secondary school teachers. The teacher of a foreign language can obtain the qualification also in another pedagogical science study programme providing that he passes the language exam equal to minimum of C1 level according to Common European Framework of References for Languages and complementary didactic study for the specific language. These conditions are stated in §12. The teacher of class of students with specific educational needs must have a qualification in the field of pedagogical science focused on special pedagogy for teachers (MŠMT, 2004). The standard length of master's degree study is

five to six years. It is also possible to study bachelor study for three to four years and then continue with the master's degree study for two to three years (Černá, 2010). There are nine universities offering pedagogical study programs for primary school teachers on the web pages vysokeskoly.cz. All of them include English or other foreign language in the program of the study (vysokeskoly.cz).

2.4.2 Statistics about qualified teachers

It is obvious that a proficient teacher is a necessary component in a quality education. However, not all teachers at the primary school have got the required qualification. Nikolov and Curtain (1999) claim that based on statistic data *"only a quarter of primary-school teachers in the Czech Republic is qualified"* (Nikolov and Curtain, 1999, p. 9). Nevertheless, the situation is improving and according to annual report of the Czech school inspection from 2015 there was 13% of unqualified teachers at the primary schools in the school year 2014/2015 (Výroční zpráva České školní inspekce, 2015).

The situation is slightly different for each school subject and it does not seem very positive for the foreign languages. Vančurová (2010) states that in the school year 2009/2010 there was 28.5% of unqualified teachers of foreign languages. Yet, even here is an improvement since it is 5.2% less than in the school year 2007/2008 (Vančurová, 2010).

Both Lojová (2006, p. 46) and Dvořáková (2006) agree that the problem of qualified teachers is "*crucial*". Dvořáková as a teaching practice supervisor at primary school points out that many teachers still use very old-fashion methods of teaching a foreign language which are not effective and especially for young learners inadequate (Dvořáková, 2006, p. 62).

To summarise this chapter focused on the teacher, it is significant that teacher's role has moved and widened from traditional transferrer of knowledge to manager and instructor of learning who is an adviser, co-communicator, motivator and many more. Teacher is as well a source of a foreign language for many pupils. The characteristics of a good teacher were mentioned in this chapter, among the most important ones are a good relationship with students, interesting lessons and creating a positive and motivating learning environment. More focus was paid to the teacher of young learners who should ideally be a qualified primary school teacher with a good level of a foreign language. This seems to be a problem however as stated at the end of this chapter the number of qualified teachers rises every year even though the situation is still not very good.

3. Motivation

The best what the teacher can do for his students is to make them like the subject they are learning and therefore to make them want to study it for themselves and not because they have to. The key to this is motivation. This chapter describes different types of motivation, sources of motivation and teaching based on motivation.

Harmer (2007) defines motivation as "*some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something*" (Harmer, 2007, p. 98). In other words, if we want something, we make an effort to obtain it, we overcome difficulties and work continuously until we reach our goal. Motivation is necessary especially for young learners since it is often hard for them to see the need to learn certain information. The terms like future studies, career or other possibilities in life are too distant and abstract for them. Pintrich and Schunk (1996, p. 3) suggest that motivation helps the pupils to succeed at school and if they are motivated, they work and feel better.

3.1 Types of motivation

Harmer (2007) mentions two kinds of motivation: "*extrinsic and intrinsic.*" Extrinsic motivation comes from the outside factors while intrinsic motivation is the result of our own desires and wishes (Harmer, 2007, p. 98). Another distinction made by H. D. Brown (cited in Ur, 1991) is between *"global, situational and task motivation."* Global motivation is learner's general orientation in learning a foreign language. Situational motivation is connected to the "*context of learning*" and task motivation to the learner's attitude to a particular assignment. The teacher has most influence on the task motivation by choosing an appropriate task which would be enjoyable and useful for the students (Ur, 1991, p. 276).

Motivation can be also divided to short-term and long-term motivation. Sitná (2013) points out that the short-term motivation which is more intense and stronger but lasts only for a short time can be usually found at young learners. While the long-term motivation is typical for older students or students of lifelong learning (Sitná, 2013, p. 18).

3.2 Sources of motivation

There are many different sources from which can pupils be motivated. Some sources are common for all age groups while some are more suitable for a specific age. On the other hand,

because of the individual needs of each pupil, even within the same age group what motivates one pupil does not have to motivate the other.

3.2.1 Success and failure

Ur (1991) mentions these sources of extrinsic motivation: "*success and its rewards (as one of the most important elements), failure and its penalties, authoritative demands, tests and competition.*" Learners need to experience success in order to stay motivated. However, if the success is too easy to get and there is no thread of failure, the success loses its value. Learners also need authority, they work more effectively if they have a "*clear demand*" of what should be done and when it should be done (Ur, 1991, p. 277-279). Similarly, Pintrich and Schunk (1996, p. 100) suggest that the teacher should give the pupils tasks that are stimulating and that make them think but difficult enough just for their level.

Equally, Sitná (2013) points out that success in learning increases self-esteem which makes pupils feel good and motivates them to learn more. Sitná talks about the circle of success: success - increase of interest in learning - increase of self-esteem - more motivation - another success. Similarly works the circle of failure which leads to lack of interest, low self-esteem, loss of motivation and therefore another failure (Sitná, 2013, p. 20-21).

3.2.2 Outside factors

As Harmer (2007) remarks young learners usually do not have strong intrinsic motivation and therefore need to be motivated by the outside factors. Harmer lists these external sources of motivation: "*the goal, the society we live in, the people around us and curiosity.*" The goal is the most powerful one from this list. It is very important to specify what are we making our effort for, what is going to be the outcome of our work. The final result is the long-term goal. However, we should set a number of short-term goals along the way in order not to lose our motivation. These short-term goals help to concentrate on the final goal and by succeeding them, we are motivated to continue with our work. Young learners may find it hard to set the goals for themselves so it is one of the important tasks for the teacher. The teacher should be able to help the children to find their reason why they should be learning a foreign language and help them to set the short-term goals (Harmer, 2007, p.98-99).

Dörnyei (2001) suggests that a good relationship with the parents of the pupils is also important for the motivation because they have got a strong influence on the children. Dörnyei advises to update them about the pupil's achievements and to request their help with homework

tasks (Dörnyei (2001, p. 39-40). Equally, Harmer (2007, p. 99) and Moon (2005, p. 16) agree that parents and teachers have usually got a strong effect on young learners while for older pupils the most outside influence comes from their classmates.

3.2.3 Motivating young learners

Frölich-Ward (1991) points to the fact that young children need to be motivated differently from the older learners. She stresses the importance of games and fun during the learning process so the children are actually not conscious of learning the foreign language (Frölich-Ward, 1991, p. 98). Likewise, Paul (1996) states that children's lives are centred around games and the teacher should make the learning similar to playing a game. Paul advises to find out what kind of activity the pupils enjoy and then choose it accordingly. This author as well points out that repetition is necessary for pupils to remember new vocabulary or language structures. However, mechanical drill lessens pupils' motivation and therefore, songs and games are more effective (Paul, 1996, p. 6-7).

Besides that, Phillips (1993) believes that one of the advantages of teaching young learners is their willingness to participate in almost any activity prepared by the teacher. Phillips is convinced that it is easy to keep a high level of motivation and retain the learning enjoyable (Phillips, 1993, p. 7).

3.2.4 Teacher as a motivator

According to Frölich-Ward (1991, p. 98) one of the most important sources of motivation, especially for the young learners, is the teacher and his communicative abilities. Dörnyei (2001, p. 27) states that it is the teacher's responsibility to motivate the pupils. Similarly, Pintrich and Schunk (1996,) suggest that except of the common and deliberate things the teacher does to motivate the pupils, he can possibly motivate them by almost anything he does. For example, his classroom management, the way he handles disciplinary issues or his teaching methods (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996, p. 328). Wright (1987) likewise points that as a manager the teacher has to motivate the learners. Wright mentions eight ways the teacher can stimulate a good approach towards learning:

1. adopting a positive attitude towards the learners
2. giving pupils meaningful, relevant and interesting tasks to do
3. maintaining discipline to establish reasonable working atmosphere
4. being motivated and interesting themselves

5. involving the learners more actively in activities

6. introducing learners to the concept of self-appraisal and self-evaluation

7. giving positive feedback

8. encouraging pride in achievement (Wright, 1987, p. 53).

3.3 Teaching based on motivation

Dörnyei (2001) refers to these main stages in teaching based on motivation:

- to make good motivational conditions and nice atmosphere within the learning process
- to be focussed on the motivational techniques like affirmative attitudes, creativity, establish realistic expectations so the learners can experience success
- teachers should use motivational activities, supporting learner's self-confidence, self-esteem and co-operation among young learners
- to give feedback to the learners about their progress in a positive way (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 38-39).

Similarly, Sitná (2013) gives some recommendations about how the teacher can increase motivations. One of them is the teacher's interest in the taught subject and his ability to make connection between the things he teaches and real-life. Another recommendation is to use a group work and encourage the pupils to be creative and active. Sitná also points out that the teacher should change the activities and include new ones (Sitná, 2013, p. 24). Besides that, Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 64) suggest that the teacher contributes to pupils' motivation by making the learning interesting and appropriate for their age and ability, setting goals that are neither too easy or too difficult and creating a supportive atmosphere.

3.3.1 Feedback

Phillips (1993) points out that feedback should be a regular part of the learning process and should be in the first language because it is not considered as a language practice. Phillips gives a number of advices about feedback, for example to draw a happy or sad face at the end of the activity or to write sentences about what the pupil is good or not good at. Phillips also advises the teacher to talk about it with the pupils and remember which activities they liked to use them next time (Phillips, 1993, p. 11-12). Similarly, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) talk about assessment of the pupils' work. They think it is important not only for the pupils themselves but also for their parents if they want to talk to the teacher about their child's progress. Scott and Ytreberg as

well stress out being positive about achievements and not to mention too much the failures. "*Nothing succeeds like success*" (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 7).

Besides that, Pintrich and Schunk (1996) state that teachers often use feedback to motivate the pupils. They distinguish between *"social comparative information"* during which the teacher compares the pupil's achievements to other pupils' work and *"persuasive feedback"* when the teacher convinces the pupil about his abilities. On top of that, these authors mention other forms of feedback like a praise or a criticism (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996, p. 337).

3.3.2 Speaking to young learners

Another tip for teaching young learners is from Moon (2005) who notes a few things connected to speaking that may help the pupils to understand better: "*using language at children's level, adjusting language by repeating and rephrasing, adjusting speed and volume, pausing, using gestures, actions, making sounds*" (Moon, 2005, p. 79). Likewise, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) point out that a tone of voice or body language can express the meaning without the need to change to mother tongue (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 18). Another useful thing might be according to Phillips (1993, p. 9) to make "speech bubbles" and put them on the wall so the pupils can look at them.

To summarize this chapter, motivation is probably the most significant aspect in any learning not only in learning a foreign language. There are many different types and sources of motivation however one of the most important ones, especially for the young learners, is the teacher. Therefore, he should be very careful about his approach to teaching, know the different needs of each age group and prepare his lessons conscientiously. The importance of positive feedback was also pointed out.

4. Games and activities as motivation tools

It has been mentioned several times that especially young pupils need to be presented with enjoyable activities. One of the most enjoyable and natural activity for children is a game. There are different types of games which can help develop different learning skills. Games can be divided according to different aspects, one of them is the age group the game is intended for. This chapter focuses on games for young learners.

Definition of the word game in the Cambridge dictionary is *"an entertaining activity or sport, especially one played by children, or the equipment needed for such an activity"* (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

Moon (2005) points out that pupils get more involved in an activity if they enjoy it. They also want to continue with it and therefore practise the language further. What is most important, if they enjoy the activity, they gain more positive attitude to English because they connect learning English with fun and enjoyment (Moon, 2005, p. 7). Similarly, Phillips (1993) believes that through enjoyment and *"sense of achievement"* pupils remember more and their attitude to learning English is more positive. Phillips is convinced that this is actually the best the teacher can do for his pupils (Phillips, 1993, p. 8).

4.1 Characteristics of suitable activities

Phillips (1993, p. 7) lists these activities as suitable for young learners: *"games, songs with action, total physical response activities, tasks that involve colouring, cutting and sticking, simple, repetitive stories and repetitive speaking activities."* Phillips also gives these advises about the activities:

- *"the activities should be simple"* so pupils know what to do

- the task has to suit their abilities so it cannot be too easy or too difficult

- the activities should be based on listening and speaking skills, written activities are not suitable for young learners since they have not mastered writing in their own language yet.

Khan (1991) suggests that the game needs to have a language benefit for the teacher to use it. The game should meet the language focus that the teacher wants to pass to the pupils. It has to match the vocabulary or grammar that is being taught. Khan also points out that the teacher chooses a suitable game according to the availability and material needed as well as the

demand on organisation of the class (Khan, 1991, p. 146-147). On the other hand, Paul (1996) and Rixon (1991) warn about possible negativities of using games, one of them is that the game has got only little language impact. The teacher uses the game only for the sake of it but with little effect (Rixon, 1991, p. 33). On top of this, Paul (1996, p. 8) as well advises not to use too many games but rather choose the ones the pupils enjoy.

4.2 Games

Halliwell (1992) is convinced that games are *"more than a fun extra"* or something that is done at the end of the lesson. They are a very good tool for indirect learning because pupils concentrate on playing and not on the learning itself (Halliwell, 1992, p. 6). Similarly, Sitná (2013) states that learning and fun are not in contradiction. It is quite opposite, interesting and enjoyable activities increase interest and motivation of the pupils and lead to a positive attitude to the subject, teacher and learning process itself (Sitná, 2013, p. 121). Besides that, Phillips (1993, p. 85) suggests that because most games are played in teams, they help to improve the ability to co-operate.

On the contrary, Ur (1991) thinks that games should not be a part of a learning process because they are something enjoyable while learning is *"serious goal-oriented work."* Ur is also convinced that some teachers call learning activities games just to rise the pupils' willingness to participate in it. However, Ur agrees with the fact that children learn better when involved in a fun activity so under certain conditions she is willing to accept that game-like or game-based learning activities can be useful (Ur, 1991, p. 289-290).

4.2.1 Examples of suitable games

One of the well-known and popular word games is the hangman. One pupil thinks of a word and writes dashes representing each letter of the word on the board. The other pupils then try to guess the letters. If they are wrong, the pupil at the board draws a line of gallows and a person hanging from it (Phillips, 1993, p. 89). This game is useful to practice spelling and vocabulary. The teacher can appoint a target group of vocabulary to practice.

Another useful type of games are repetitive games. The pupils have to remember and repeat what has been said by other pupils and add their own word. Brewster (1991, p. 180-181) gives an example of such game – *"I went to market and I bought…"* One pupil starts with the opening sentence and adds one thing that he bought, another pupil repeats it and adds his

purchase and so on. Phillips (1993, p. 78) suggests to prepare the base sentence according to the topic taught, for example: *For my birthday I got…, I went for a walk and I saw…* The base sentence for young learners can be as simple as I have got… or I like… Rixon (1991) points out the benefits of this game: *"concentration, close listening and memory strategies."* She also suggests another game in this category – *"What's the time, Mr. Wolf?"* which helps to learn the phrase of asking and telling the time. Pupils ask the question and one appointed pupil who is the wolf answers and tells the time. Once in a while he tells that it is a dinner time and chases the pupils. The pupil who is caught becomes the wolf (Rixon, 1991, p. 35).

One of Ur's (1991) favourite game-like activity is an association domino. The teacher prepares enough small pictures to give each pupil two pieces plus couple of extra ones to put aside. One of the extra pictures is stuck on the board and pupils try to put on either side of it their picture which would make an association with the one on the board and they have to explain it. If they run out of their own pictures, they can take more from the extra ones. The goal is to make as long chain of pictures as possible (Ur, 1991, p. 297).

Rixon (1991) suggests one game which is played by native speakers, in Czech known as "pexeso". In the real game, children have to remember position of two identical cards and pair them together. For language purposes pupils can pair word and image or present and past tense of verbs (Rixon, 1991, p. 42). There are other possibilities for making pairs, for example synonyms or opposites.

4.3 Listening activities

Phillips (1993) states that listening is very important because it is a main source of the language for the young learners. Phillips advises to support the understanding with pictures or body language. Phillips also points out that young learners have a "silent period" during which they just listen and absorb the language. Pupils should not be forced to speak before they are ready to, they can show their understanding non-verbally (Phillips, 1993, p. 17). Moreover, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) warn that listening can be hard for young learners because they have to concentrate intensively in order not to miss anything that is said. This might be a problem due to their short attention span. That is why Scott and Ytreberg advise to repeat and re-tell most of the things that are said because pupils cannot go back through what has been said and listen to it again (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 21).

4.3.1 Examples of suitable listening activities

Scott and Ytreberg (1990) point out that listening is the first skill young learners acquire especially if they do not read and write in English at the beginning of their learning (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 21). On top of that, Phillips (1993) suggests that they are often able to understand much more than they are able to produce. Therefore, the activities should focus on listening abilities. One of these activities is Total Physical Response (TPR) which is very popular with the young learners and can be very variable. TPR is based on the physical reaction of the pupils to the teacher's commands. Teacher can practise the target vocabulary and simple commands at first and then proceed to more demanding tasks. Phillips advises to prepare the list of commands in advance (Phillips, 1993, p. 19-20).

Another favourite activity is "listen and draw". The teacher describes a picture and pupils draw it according to the description. As Scott and Ytreberg (1990) warns, this activity takes some time so the teacher should keep the picture simple. It is not good to draw pictures of action because that can be quite difficult. Similar to this activity, is "listen and colour" activity. The teacher tells pupils what objects colour by what colour. It can be combined with numbers, either the different parts of the picture are numbered and there is a colour code (1=red etc.) or if there are more than one object in the picture, each can be coloured differently (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 23-25). Besides that, Phillips (1993) suggest another listening activity which develops listening for detail. Pupils listen to description of some objects and have to choose between similar pictures the one that was described (Phillips, 1993, p. 23-24). Halliwell (1992, p. 47) turned this activity into more of a physical response activity when pupils have to pick up real objects in the classroom.

4.4 Oral activities

Phillips (1993) advises to first teach short, set phrases because it might be easier for the pupils to learn them. Phillips points out to the problem of pupils skipping into their first language and suggests to choose adequate activity which will suit the pupils' ability and make rules about speaking in the target language. Phillips also stresses the importance of the meaning of the activity for the pupils which is a very important motivating factor (Phillips, 1993, p. 38).

4.4.1 Suitable oral activities

Lee (1986) points out that young learners enjoy any kind of play-acting. During role play the pupils pretend that they are someone else and practise real-life dialogues. The role play can help them to experience the language for real as a mean of communication. Lee gives these areas in which can be role play practised: *"explaining, making a request, interrupting someone, apologising"* (Lee, 1986, p. 147). Scott and Ytreberg (1990) recommend the role play activity for young learners of age eight to ten who are not total beginners. They suggest that the teacher should first play the dialog with a brighter pupil. It is also possible to write the dialog on the board. Later, they can change the vocabulary and alter the dialogue. As Scott and Ytreberg point out, dialogues are good practice because pupils learn to respond and use other features of language like tone of voice or facial expression (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 40-41).

Another oral activity is *"an information gap"*. This activity in written form is used for older pupils, however, Scott and Ytreberg (1990) suggest an easier version for young learners by using a picture. Pupils are divided into two groups and each child gets the same picture and is asked to colour a certain part of it. Pupils in one group colour one part of the picture and children in the other group colour the other part. Then one pupil from the first group makes a pair with a pupil from the other group and ask questions about how the other pupil coloured his picture. At the end, they should have the same picture (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 44). Phillips (1993) alters this activity by giving the pupils the same pictures but with missing different parts. Pupils need to describe their picture to each other and draw the missing parts (Phillips, 1993, p. 40).

One more popular oral activity is "a questionnaire". This activity is usually a whole class work so it can be a little bit noisy. Pupils have to find out their classmate's favourite things. Scott and Ytreberg advise the teacher to make the questionnaires for the very young learners age five to seven, however, the pupils from eight to ten years old should be able to make their own even though they might still need some help from the teacher (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 47). Phillips (1993, p. 42) recommends to demonstrate the dialogue with one or two pupils first and write the question on the board.

4.5 Songs

Brewster (1991, p. 174), Scott and Ytreberg (1990, p. 27) and Phillips (1993) point out that all children love rhymes which are repetitive and usually fun. Brewster (1991, p. 178) suggests that songs and rhymes can help to practise pronunciation, stress and intonation. Phillips

(1993) stresses the fact that the language in music is usually easier to remember and that the teacher can use a song in almost any part of the lesson even as a background during work on another task. She also advises to check the song in advance to make sure that the words are audible and the language is not too difficult (Phillips, 1993, p. 100).

4.5.1 Examples of suitable songs

Very popular among the young learners are action songs. Pupils make the action movement during listening to these songs. Phillips (1993) suggests to just listen to the song at first, then sing or clap hands and only then let the pupils join in the action. She gives these examples of good action songs: *"Head, shoulders, knees and toes; The hockey cokey; Here we go round the mulberry bush"* (Phillips, 1993, p. 100-103). Brewster (1991) recommends action songs when the pupils start being restless. Brewster points out that most of these activities require space because pupils need to move around. His examples of action songs are: *"If you're happy and you know it or Teddy bear, teddy bear"* (Brewster, 1991, p. 175-176).

There are many songs that can help the young learners to learn the numbers. Phillips (1993, p. 104) recommends *"Ten little fingers"* when pupils can sing along and also show the right amount of fingers on their hands. Murphey (1992, p. 128) advises the song *"Ten Little Indians"* and after the pupils know it well, change the words and count other things in the classroom. Similarly, some songs support learning of the English alphabet which the pupils need to spell the words. Phillips (1993) suggests the song *"Bingo"* when pupils first spell the whole word bingo, then clap instead of the first letter B and spell the rest of the word and they continue clapping and spelling till they are only clapping. Later they can replace the name Bingo with their names (Phillips, 1993, p. 105-106). Rixon (1991, p. 36) mentions the song *"The ABC"* to practise the names of the letters in English alphabet. Some songs are sang only for special occasions like birthday or Christmas (Phillips, 1993, p. 106-107).

This chapter focused on different games and activities for young learners to keep them motivated. The importance of gaining a positive attitude to English through enjoyable activities was stressed out. The characteristics of suitable activities were mentioned, among the most important points were appropriateness to pupils' abilities, based mainly on listening and speaking skills and language focus. The warning of using games just for the sake of playing a game without much learning effect was also pointed out. Four different types of simple games were presented as well as listening and oral activities. Last part focused on songs as they are very popular with young learners and are good to practise pronunciation and intonation.

5. An early start

The previous chapters described characteristics of the learners and the teachers of a foreign language and the importance of motivation. Based upon these information rises a question when it is appropriate to start with learning a foreign language to obtain the best results. As Lojová (2006, p. 43) states there is not an easy answer to this question due to many different issues which need to be consider.

It is widely spread idea that young children learn foreign language more easily than adults. However, there seem to be no scientific proof for this statement. Pinter (2006) suggests that it may be based on many observations of children who moved to a foreign country and learnt the new language far more easily and quicker than their parents (Pinter, 2006, p. 28). Similarly, Ur (1991) is convinced that young children learn a foreign language with ease when they are placed in the foreign environment, are exposed to the language and have a real need to learn it. However, the situation is different in the classroom conditions with only one teacher and limited exposure to the language (Ur, 1991, p. 286-287).

Lojová (2006) summarises the three main opinions that experts have about an early start of foreign language learning:

- *"the sooner the better"* experts believe in *"the Critical Period Hypothesis"* which claims that a brain at an early age is capable of huge development and therefore its potential during this period should be used as fully as possible (and learning a foreign language is one possibility)
- *"later is enough"* experts disagree with the above hypothesis and on the contrary, they oppose straining young children who should, according to them, learn naturally and during game. On top of it, they state that *"children can learn a foreign language faster, better and more effectively"* when they get used to classroom learning
- *"it depends"* experts believe that there are many different factors which effect the learning and which have to be consider (Lojová, 2006, p. 44).

Equally, Pinter (2006) mentions the term *"critical period"* which marks a period until which should children start learning foreign language and if they pass this period, learning might be more difficult for them. However, according to some researchers this period might not even exist and older children may be better learners. Pinter suggests that the age to start learning a foreign language is ten (Pinter, 2006, p. 287).

Benedetti and Freppon (2006) express the opinion that learning a foreign language in the Czech Republic is much more difficult. They state that it is because children start learning a foreign language before they "*developed sufficient cognitive skills"* or mastered reading and writing in their own language. Therefore, the age at which children start learning a foreign language in Czech schools is very important (Benedetti and Freppon, 2006, p. 20).

5.1 The National Plan for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages

The Czech Language policy is based on the policy of the European Union and its main goal in the last decade is that every European citizen would be able to communicate in two different foreign languages apart from their mother language. European Union Committee has made an action plan *"The Support of Language education and Language Variety"* to support this aim. *"The National Plan for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages"* for a period 2005-2008 is based on this plan (Coubalová, 2012).

The plan is divided into sections according to educational periods starting with preschool education. It presents three sections of activities connected to this plan in order to their importance. There are several important points in the section for preschool education, one of them is the necessity of specially trained teachers for teaching a foreign language to very young learners. Furthermore, it is mentioned that children need to have these "lessons" on daily basis in short intervals. This early education is however not understood in the classic sense as at the primary school but more as a preparation for its acquisition. Besides, it is not compulsory and depends on the specialized qualification of the preschool teachers. Another important point is that there should be continuity of the education of foreign language at the primary school in the first and the second grade. The section for primary education starts with the continuousness of teaching foreign language in the first and the second grade as optional. One of the most important points in this section is including short intervals of foreign language into regular education of other subjects – "cross-curricular approach" (Národní plán výuky cizích jazyků, 2005, p. 4-5).

5.2 The Framework Educational Programme

The Czech educational system follows new educational strategies and is updated regularly. It is based on the curricular documents comprised of the National Education Programme and the Framework Educational Programmes (henceforth FEPs). The FEPs are each

for different levels of education starting with pre-school education, basic education etc. (Jeřábek, Tupý, 2007, p. 6).

The FPE for basic education is divided into nine educational areas. Each area consists of its characteristic, content and objectives. One of the educational areas is area called Languages and Language Communication with a focus on Czech language and Literature and foreign languages. It is written that this area has got a very important position in the educational sphere because *"a good level of language culture is one of the major indicators of the general achievement of the basic school graduate."* One of the objectives of basic education is to enable *"pupils to engage in efficient, effective, open communication on all aspects of their life."* Naturally, the main focus is on the native language – Czech. Nevertheless, knowledge of foreign languages helps pupils to find out about different lifestyles and cultural traditions of another countries and it heightens their possibilities for future education or career abroad. *"The requirements for foreign language education are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages."* The outcomes of the Foreign Language should be at the A2 level and at the A1 level for Another Foreign Language at the end of compulsory basic education (Jeřábek, Tupý, 2007, p. 11-19).

The minimum time for which pupils study the subjects at each educational area is set in the Framework Curriculum Timetable. It is nine hours for the first to the fifth grades and twelve hours for the sixth to ninth grades for a foreign language. The educational content is then set to three hours weekly obligatory for the third to the ninth grade. It is possible to offer pupils foreign language in lower grade with a parental agreement. *"Pupils must be offered English before other languages"* (Jeřábek, Tupý, 2007, p. 109-112). Therefore, the obligatory age when the pupils start to learn a foreign language is when they are eight or nine years old. However, they are often offered English education earlier.

5.3 Advantages of an early start

Pinter (2006) states that researches about the advantages of an early start of foreign language learning are not very positive and show that most advantages fade out by the age of 16. However, there is one aspect which seems to remain and that is the accent. Mainly because young children like to copy new sounds and intonation. Pinter also claims that children younger than 11-12 years may be able to achieve a native level without an accent providing that they have *"plenty of input and interaction in an English environment"* (Pinter, 2006, p. 29). Similarly, Lightbrown and Spada (2006, p. 73) and Benedetti and Freppon (2006, p. 14) agree with this

statement. Nevertheless, they add that even though pronunciation is important in language acquisition, it is not necessary for communication.

However, Pinter (2006) points out that we have to distinguish between learners who moved to a foreign country and are surrounded with the language and therefore are motivated to learn it and are able to pick it up "naturally" and learners who learn a foreign language at school as a school subject and have less opportunities to try it outside the school. These children need to be motivated by parents and teachers who should understand the importance of learning a foreign language (Pinter, 2006, p. 32). Similarly, Lojová (2006) points out that these are actually two different processes. The first one is an acquisition of a second language while the other is learning a second language. Obviously, the second process is much more difficult and to make the learning easier and more natural the teacher needs to show the pupils real objects, practice natural dialogues, listen to authentic language and watch TV programmes and films in original version (Lojová, 2006, p. 46).

5.4 Conditions for success

Coubalová (2012) states that an early start of learning a foreign language does not automatically ensure the success in mastering it. There are other conditions upon which is this success dependent. She points out that the most important aspects are proficient teachers, regularity and exposure to a foreign language. Equally, Lightbown and Spada (2006) suggest that if the learners have got only a few hours per week, the learners who started later often catch up with the ones that started earlier. They suggest these important points: *"opportunities for learning – inside and outside the classroom and motivation to learn."* They also point to individual differences in language learning (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 74).

Similarly, Benedetti and Freppon (2006) mention a list of *"characteristics of effective elementary school foreign language programs"* issued by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). This list is based upon a summarization of studies and researches of a FLES programmes (Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools) held in Europe and North America by Lipton (1991), Girard (1996), Kaiser (1996) and Gilzow (2002). All four researchers agree on these very important points:

- elaborated connection between primary school, secondary school, teachers and parents

- qualified teachers who have got a proficiency level at "advanced" and as well a good knowledge of the curriculum and the children´s specific needs
- evaluation of the student's achievement and of the programme itself

Among other points agreed by two or three of the researchers are also *"effective teaching methods and a focus on content, materials rich in authentic culture and language and professional development of teachers"* (Benedetti and Freppon, 2006, p. 16 - 18).

5.4.1 Continuity

One of the crucial conditions for success according to Nikolov and Curtain (1999) is *"continuity of early programmes."* They worry that if the continuity is not established and *"the expectations are not fulfilled"*, the interest in starting to learn a foreign language at an early age will disappear (Nikolov and Curtain, 1999, p. 7).

The point of continuity is also stressed out in the above cited list where one of the researchers (Girard, 1996) mentions the need of *"Extended Sequence"* (Benedetti and Freppon, 2006, p. 17). However, as Coubalová (2012) points out even though the issue of continuality should be ensured by The Framework Educational Programme, the reality is different. The main problem is during the transfer from primary school to lower secondary school when pupils usually get new textbooks which tend to start to explain the grammar and build the vocabulary from the beginning. This leads to stagnation or even regression of the pupils' knowledge and mainly to loss of motivation to learn (Coubalová, 2012).

Dvořáková (2006) adds that beside the possibility of failure of the early programmes and The National Plan for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages due to the lack of qualified language teachers and discontinuity there is also a danger of harming the children´s *"attitude to foreign languages and learning in general"* (Dvořáková, 2006, p. 62).

5.4.2 Exposure to a foreign language

Another important requirement for success is exposure to a foreign language. Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 32) warn that pupils learning a foreign language in the classrooms have got less time to experience the language and especially the informal language used in common real-life situations. According to Pinter (2006) the amount of time during which are learners exposed to a foreign language is significant and the most important factor is the teacher and his *"confidence and willingness to use the language."* Pinter mentions a couple of project during

which young learners had regular daily lessons of a foreign language and the results were very good level of pronunciation, intonation and proficiency (Pinter, 2006, p. 38-39).

Similarly, Holden (1991, p. 7) advises to teach sort lesson of about 30 minutes every day. This may be sometimes a problem due to strict hour allowance for teaching a foreign language in the school timetables. Pinter (2006) suggest that one of the ways how to acquire more time for learning a foreign language is to integrate it into the curriculum. This way children may have the chance to practice English also in other subjects like Maths, Geography or Music. Just a small amount of foreign language should be integrated for the basic levels however for advance learners it is possible to have a whole lesson in English. Many schools already adopt this system and the term CLIL – *"Content and Language Integrated Learning"* is used for it. One of the advantages of this method is that learners realise that they can use English in many different situations and it is not just another school subject (Pinter, 2006, p. 40). Including short intervals of foreign language into regular education of other subjects – *"cross-curricular approach"* is mentioned in *"The National Plan for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages"* as one of its most important points in the section for primary education (Národní plan výuky cizích jazyků, 2005, p. 5). To help the teachers with this new method, The National Institute for further education organised several educational programmes and projects, for example *"Brána jazyků otevřená"* and *"CLIL"* and distributed methodical guide "CLIL" to all primary schools and gymnasiums (Coubalová, 2012).

5.4.3 The teacher of a foreign language

It has been mentioned several times in the previous chapters and in this one too that one of the most important factors affecting the success of learning a foreign language is the teacher and his qualification, proficiency and other abilities. Benedetti and Freppon (2006) state that the teacher should have a *"constructivist and communicative approach"* which enables the student to adopt an "*active role in learning a foreign language."* At first the teacher gives a strong support to the pupils then slowly moves the responsibility for the learning to them (Benedetti and Freppon, 2006, p. 20).

Nikolov and Curtain (1999) point to the dilemma who should teach the foreign language. One possibility is the class teacher who could be able not only teach the foreign language as a separate subject but also integrate it onto the rest of the curriculum as it was already mentioned. Other possibility is that a specialist should teach it. Both possibilities have got plusses and

minuses and the teacher´s proficiency is the most important factor to consider (Nikolov and Curtain, 1999, p. 7).

5.4.4 Evaluation

Ur (1991, p. 242) defines evaluation as an information that the teacher gives to the pupils about their performance. The main aim of it is to improve the pupils' work. Kolář and Šikulová (2005, p. 15) point out that evaluation is an integral part of teaching and learning process at school. Furthermore, Pintrich and Schunk (1996, p. 269) suggest that the teacher should evaluate the pupils' achievements and development regularly and if it is necessary, choose different teaching method. On top of that, Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992, p. 4-5) warn that evaluation in educational setting can have a strong effect and therefore it should be systematic and the teacher should be careful about what he is evaluating and sett criteria of evaluation clearly. Equally, Pasch (cited in Kolář and Šikulová, 2005, p. 17) states that one of the specifics of educational evaluation is that it is systematic and the teacher prepares for it and makes it regularly according to some norms.

Besides the feedback which comes from the teacher, pupils should as well learn how to evaluate themselves. Kolář a Šikulová (2005, p. 125-126) point out that the teacher gives an example how to make the evaluation when he evaluates the pupils. The pupils notice how he evaluates and what is important for him. The second step is the pupils' cooperation with the teacher in the evaluation process during which the teacher encourages the pupils to express their own opinions. This cooperation can be achieved only in supportive atmosphere. The pupils learn to communicate with their classmates and by evaluating each other's work they develop their own skills for self-evaluation. Dörnyei (2001, p. 133) advises that the teacher should help the pupils by providing *"self-evaluation tools."* As an example of such tool he gives "*a portfolio assessment."* Similarly, Kolář a Šikulová (2005, p. 127) list these tools for evaluation: *"portfolio, questionnaire, evaluation sheet, discussion between the teacher and the pupil or a book of inquiries."*

Portfolio is according to Dörnyei (2001, p. 133) and Slavík (cited in Kolář and Šikulová, 2005, p. 127) an organised collection of the pupil's work which shows his achievements and development. This portfolio should also help to motivate the pupil. *"The European language portfolio"* (henceforth ELP) was created in 2001 as an effort of the Europe Council to produce an official document which would inform about the language abilities. This portfolio consists of three basic parts: language biography (to note all experiences with foreign languages and

cultures), language passport (overall material of foreign language abilities which can be used when transfer to different school or at work interview) and collection of work and documents (Metodický portal RVP). The need for making the ELP is as well mentioned in "*The National Plan for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages*" (Národní plán výuky cizích jazyků, 2005, p. 7). There are several on-line ELPs for pupils of any age and level of a foreign language which not only offer to create the ELP and print it but also contain tips and inspirations for the teachers.

This chapter aimed to answer the question of an early start of learning a foreign language which is the topic of this thesis. This question is difficult to answer even for the experts. There are three main opinions: the sooner the better, later is enough and it depends opinion. Even though that there are some advantages of an early start, like a good level of pronunciation, there are many conditions that need to be fulfil. The most important ones are continuity, exposure to the language and a proficient teacher of the foreign language. The need of evaluation and self-evaluation was also mentioned at the end of this chapter.

II. PRACTICAL PART

6. Questionnaire for pupils

Based on the theoretical part of this diploma thesis, the main purpose of the research was to confirm the hypothesis that children who start learning a foreign language at an early age have got more positive attitude to it than children who start later. Secondary aim was to find out the pupils' attitude to the foreign language teacher and to games in lessons of English at primary schools. The research method used was a questionnaire survey. This method was chosen because of the anonymity of participants and large amount of information collected in a short time.

6.1 Characteristics of the respondents

The questionnaire for pupils was distributed at four primary schools in district Prostějov from which two are at the city centre, one at the suburb of Prostějov and one in a small town near Prostějov. The questionnaire was designed for pupils of the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade of primary school. Totally 12 classes participated in the survey and there were 296 respondents in total. However, 59 questionnaires were not filled correctly so they were excluded from the analysis. The main problem was with open question number seven about the characteristic of the teacher of English. Pupils either put the teacher's name there or they did not fill it at all. Retrospectively, I would change it to a multiple-choice question because especially the pupils of the third grade probably did not know what to write in this question. Therefore, the total number of useable questionnaires was 237.

6.2 Characteristics of the questionnaire

The language used in the questionnaire was Czech because of the low age of the pupils who would not be able to understand the questions in English. The questionnaire consists of 13 questions from which eight are closed questions and five are open questions. The last open question was voluntary, pupils could express their own opinion about English lessons there. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

6.3 Analysis of the results

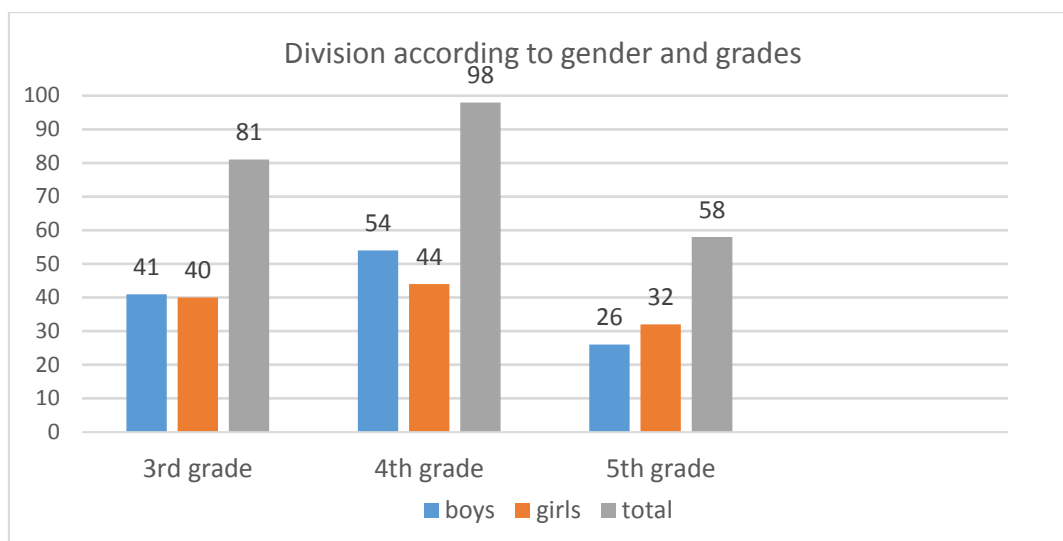### 6.3.1 Division according to gender and grades

figure no. 1: Division according to gender and grades

The first question asked the respondents about their gender while question number two focused on the grade the pupils attend. The above figure shows the division of boys and girls according to the grades and therefore their age. The third grade pupils are usually eight to nine years old, the fourth grade pupils are nine to ten years old and the fifth grade pupils are ten to eleven years old.

There were 116 girls which is 49% from the total number of respondents and 121 boys participating in the research which is 51%. Therefore, the proportion of girls and boys is almost equal. Likewise, the ratio of boys to girls in each grade is relatively similar. The largest group is 54 boys in the fourth grade and the smallest group is 26 boys in the fifth grade. Totally there were 81 pupils in the 3rd grade, 98 pupils in the 4th grade and 58 pupils in the 5th grade. This division is important because it will be used later to see if the attitude to English changes with the age and in some other evaluations.

6.3.2 When children start learning English

One of the basic and most important questions in the questionnaire was question number three: "When did you start learning English?" The starting age of learning a foreign language is the focus of this thesis. Upon these answers are based some of the other comparisons and evaluations.

When children start learning English

51%

25%

5%

19%

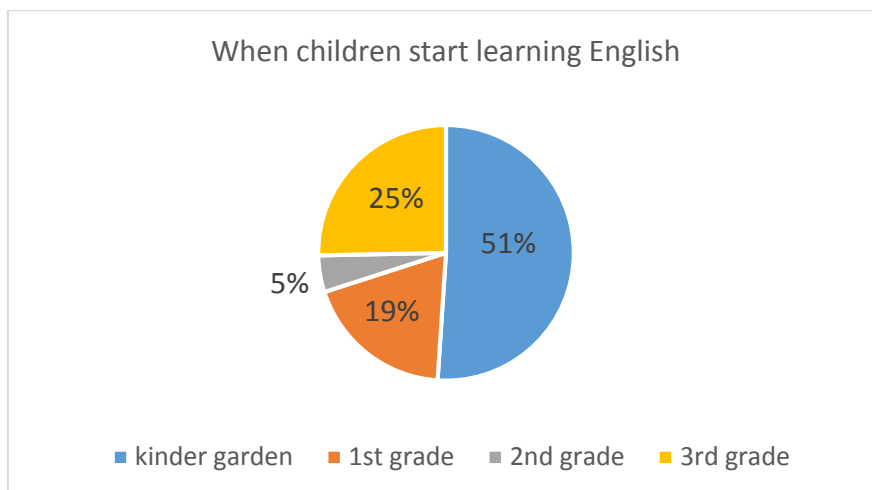■ kinder garden   ■ 1st grade   ■ 2nd grade   ■ 3rd grade

figure no. 2: When children start learning English

The figure number two shows that 121 children (51%) started to learn English already in the kinder garden. This indicates that starting to learn a foreign language at an early age is very popular. Most probably the decision to learn a foreign language was not entirely on the children, parents usually participate in the process of decision-making and there must also be an available offer for such learning at the kinder gardens.

The beginning of English education in the first grade of primary school is likewise conditioned by the offer from the schools. According to the answers, 45 pupils (19%) started to learn English in the first grade. However, only 11 pupils (5%) started in the second grade. This might be probably caused by the pupils changing a school at the end of the first grade since the primary schools usually integrate English into their curriculum in either the first or the third grade. Sixty pupils (25%) started in the third grade when learning a foreign language is compulsory.

6.3.3 Number of English lessons at school per week

The question number four "How many English lessons per week do you have at school?" may seem a little irrelevant since the number of lessons per week is specified in the Framework Education Programme. However, the number is stated as minimum therefore each school can add more hours. This is the case of one of the schools where the questionnaire survey was carried out, their pupils have got four lessons of English per week in the fourth and the fifth grade. It was mentioned in the theoretical part that it is beneficial for pupils to have more short lessons more often. Therefore, increasing the number of lessons to four, which is one lesson almost every day, seems to be an appropriate step in teaching a foreign language.
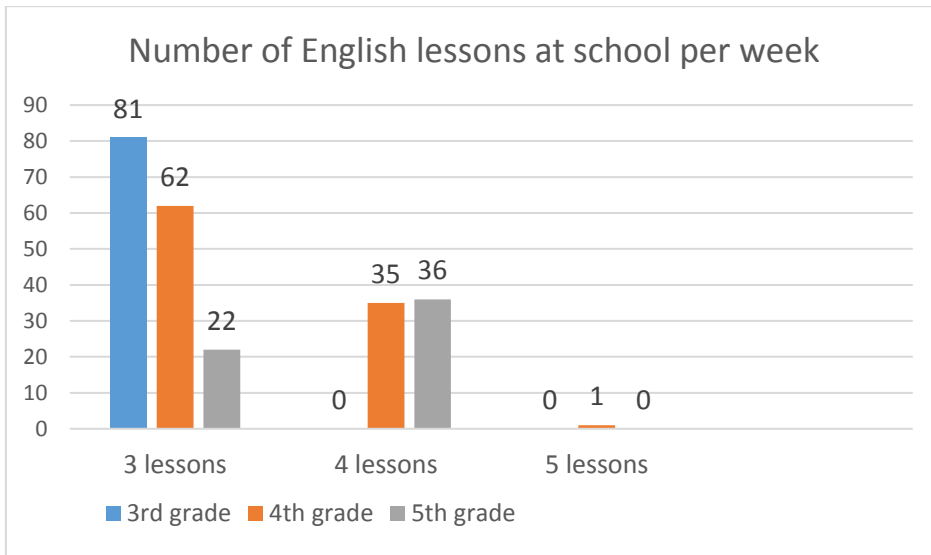
42

figure no. 3: Number of English lessons at school per week

It is obvious from the above figure that the number of lessons of English is mainly as required - three lessons per week except for the fifth grade where more pupils have got four lessons a week than three. On the contrary, there are no pupils who have got four lessons per week in the third grade. There was one answer stating that the pupil has got five lessons in the fourth grade. However, there are not five lessons per week in any of the classes involved in the survey. The possible explanation to this may be that the pupil has got another extra lesson outside the school. Nevertheless, this pupil could just make a mistake about the number of the lessons.

6.3.4 Attitude to learning English

Very important question in the survey among the pupils was question number five: "Do you like learning English?" These answers are used for some other comparisons and evaluations. According to the below figure majority of the respondents - 60% like learning English, 31% like it a little bit and only 9% do not like to learn English.
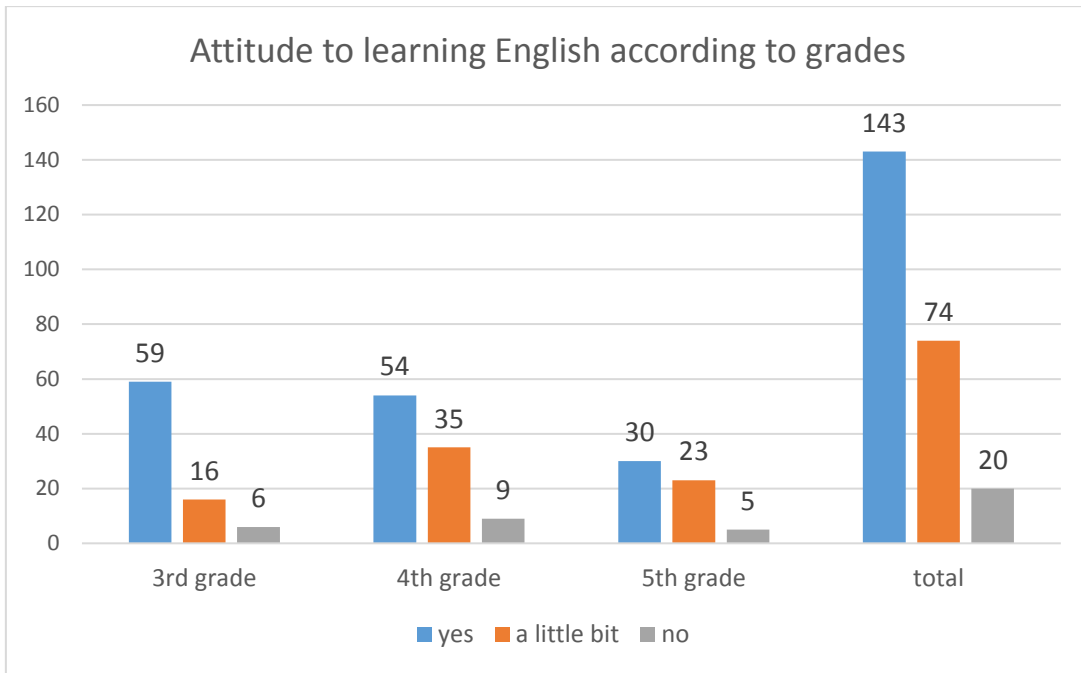
figure no. 4: Attitude to learning English according to grades

Figure number four shows the distribution according to grades. English is most popular among the pupils of the third grade and less in the fifth grade. The decreasing trend of liking to learn English from grade to grade is apparent. However, the dislike of learning English is almost the same in all three grades involved in the survey. It would be interesting to see if this trend continues among the pupils of the upper primary school.
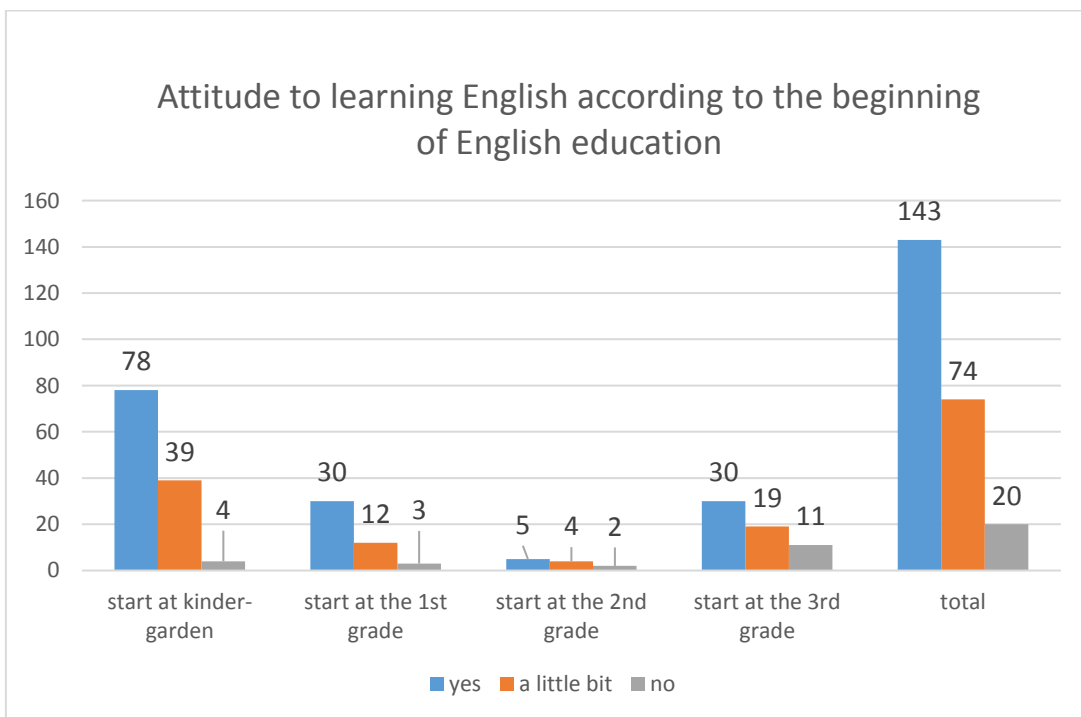

figure no. 5: Attitude to learning English according to the beginning of English education

Figure number five indicates the distribution based upon the beginning of English education. It is obvious that the largest group of pupils who like to learn English is the one that started to learn it already at the kinder-garden. It is 55% of all the pupils who like learning English (78 out of 143) and 33% of all the respondents in this survey. In the group of children who started to learn English at the kinder-garden it is 65%. While among the pupils who started to learn English in the third grade, the group of pupils who like learning English forms "only" 50%.

This result confirms the hypothesis that children who start learning a foreign language at an early age have got more positive attitude to it than those who start later. The outcomes of dislike to learn English also confirm the hypothesis. The largest group of "dislikers" - 55% is in the group of pupils who started English education in the third grade.

Question number six "Why yes? / Why no?" was connected to the previous question if the pupils like to learn English. It was an open question and the pupils could express their own ideas why they like or dislike learning English there. Some pupils wrote that they do not know why they like or dislike English and some left this question unfilled. On the other hand, some pupils gave two or more reasons.

Reasons why the pupils like learning English:

The most often stated reason for liking learning English was that the pupils simply enjoy it. This answer was given by 57 pupils. Similarly, 14 pupils stated that they like playing games in the lessons and another 14 wrote that the lessons of English are fun. Other often expressed reasons were that they want to be able to communicate abroad - ten pupils and that they want to travel or live abroad - five pupils. Among other reasons were statements that English is a nice language - eight answers, they are good at it - six pupils, it is easy - five replies and that they will need it in life - five times. Nine pupils also stated that they like learning English because they like their teacher.

Reasons why the pupils like learning English a little bit:

This was slightly ambiguous choice because it did not state clearly if the pupils like to learn English a little bit or dislike it a little bit. Therefore, some pupils wrote positive comments while some expressed more negative opinion. Among the positive ones were comments such as *"I enjoy the lessons"* - 12 pupils or *"I like playing games in English"* - eight answers.

There were more negative statements such as *"I am not good at it"* (seven pupils), *"it is boring"* (also seven answers), five pupils wrote that it is difficult, three that they do not understand it and another three that they have got difficulty with pronunciation. Five pupils stated that they do not like writing tests and four pupils simply do not enjoy the English lessons.

Reasons why the pupils dislike learning English:

Since the number of pupils who do not like learning English was not high - only 20 out of the total 237 respondents, they presented just a few various reasons for their dislike. The most often reason was that they do not enjoy it - ten answers. Four pupils stated that they are not good at it and another four pupils wrote that it is boring. One pupil finds learning English difficult and one pupil wrote that the reason he does not like English is because he is Czech.

On the basis of these answers, it is apparent that enjoyment in the lessons of English is significant source of positive attitude to it. The importance of the foreign language for travelling and communication abroad is clear even to the young learners. A good relationship with the teacher of English is also very important in forming the attitude to English. On the other side, boredom and not enjoying the lessons of English is the most obvious reason for dislike to learn it. Second cause is the difficulty or failure the pupils experience during the lessons.

6.3.5 The personality of the teacher

Another open question was question number seven "What is the teacher of English like?" As it was stated at the beginning of this chapter, this question was not comprehended by many pupils especially by the pupils of the third grade. However, the pupils who answered this question wrote very nice comments. Only very few statements were negative.

The most frequently stated characteristic was that the teacher is nice. This opinion was shared by 161 pupils which is 68 % of all respondents. On top of that, other five pupils wrote that their teacher is the best. Pupils also frequently noted that the teacher is good - 21 answers and kind - 20 replies. Similar characteristics like *"sympathetic", "fine", "cool", "amazing"* or *"great"* were made by 15 pupils. Among other characteristics were *"patient", "funny", "smart"* or *"fair"*. While four pupils wrote that the teacher is *"not too strict"*, another 13 stated the opposite characteristics from which seven pupils ticked at the previous question that they like English. It seems that for some pupils is strictness positive characteristic while for others it is negative. Pupils also positively evaluated that the teacher can explain everything so they understand it and can teach well - eleven answers and that he is *"good at English"* (eight

replies). The teacher's appearance was also noted by five pupils who stated that their teacher is *"pretty"* and another three that the teacher is *"young"*.

There were some neutral answers such as the teacher is *"OK", "not bad"* or *"sometimes fine"*. Among the few negative statements were replies such as *"boring", "not nice", "strict"* and three pupils wrote that their teacher shouts a lot. One pupil stated that he does not like doing anything with the teacher. In overall, the comments were very positive and showed that most pupils like their teacher of English.
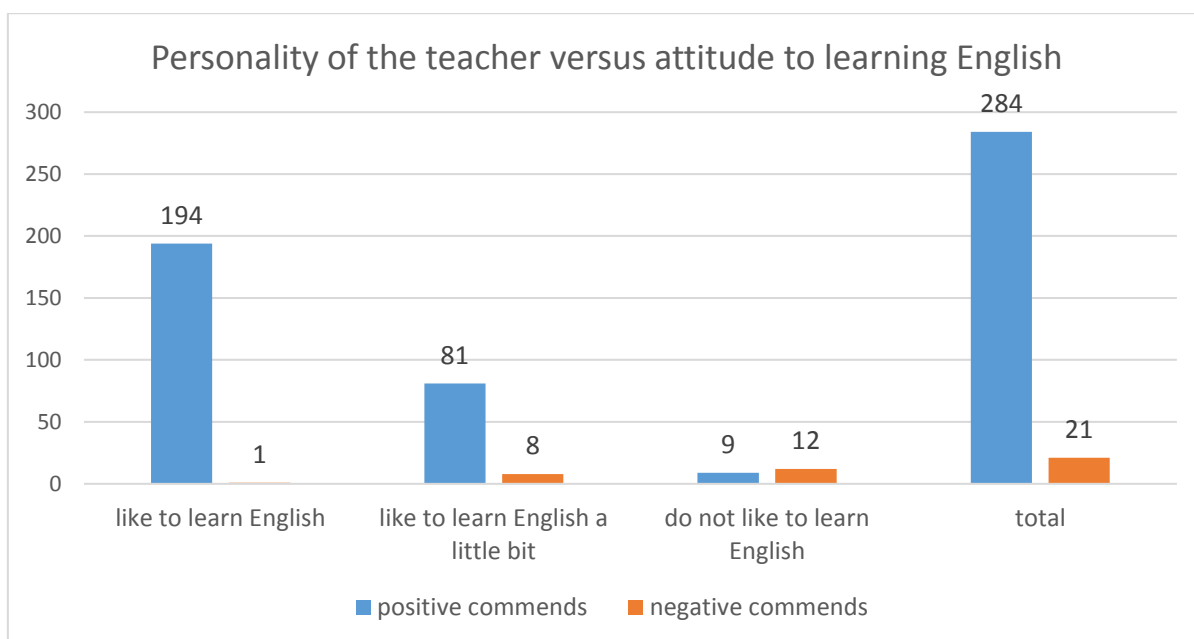

figure no. 6: Personality of the teacher versus attitude to learning English

The above figure evaluates the personality of the teacher in connection to pupils' attitude to learning English. The positive comments about the teacher of English formed one group while the negative statements made the second group. As seen in the above figure, positive comments highly over-exceeded negative ones, 93% of positive comments versus 7% of negative comments. Pupils who like to learn English made the most positive statements about their teacher. On the contrary, pupils who do not like to learn English made more negative remarks than positive ones.

As mentioned several times in the theoretical part in chapters two and three, the teacher plays a very important role in forming the pupils' attitude to a foreign language and to learning in general and this was confirmed by this part of the research.

6.3.6 Games in lessons of English

Question number eight asked the pupils how often they play games in lessons of English. This was again very important part of the questionnaire because as it was mentioned in the theoretical part in chapter four, the role of fun and enjoyment during the lessons is very significant especially for the young learners. The results from this question are evaluated in three different ways. The first figure shows just the frequency of playing games in the lessons of English. The second figure compares the frequency in each grade and the third figure connects the frequency to attitude to learning English.
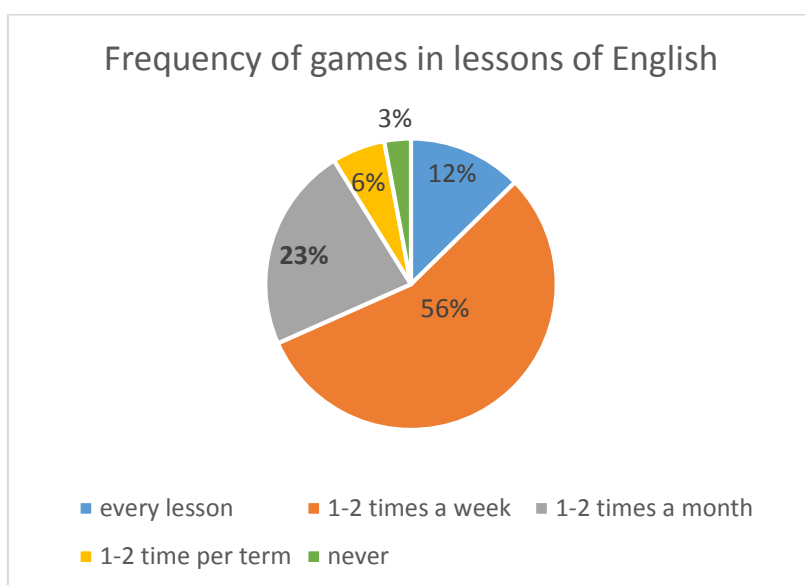

figure no. 7: Frequency of games played in lessons of English

Figure number seven shows that only 30 pupils, which is 12% of all respondents, plays a game in every lesson. However, 132 pupils, which is more than a half (56%) from the total number of pupils, play game once or twice a week. Besides that, only seven pupils (3%) stated that they never play a game in lessons of English. These results are quite positive, 68% of pupils play a game at least once a week.
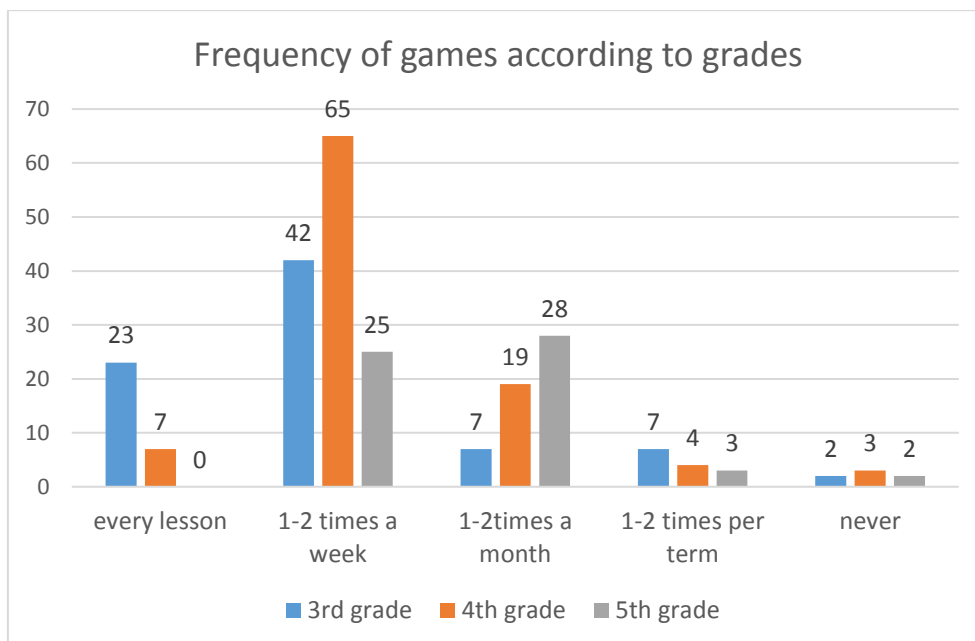
figure no. 8: Frequency of games according to grades

The above figure shows that the grade where the games are played most often is the third grade. The answer of every lesson and once or twice a week makes together 80% of all the answers from pupils of the third grade. Since they are the youngest respondents in this survey, the result is not very surprising and confirms the theory that the young learners need to have enjoyable activities included in their lessons and most importantly that they have.

On the other hand, the answers from the pupils in the fifth grade show that the frequency of playing games is decreasing there. In fact, no pupils answered that they play game every lesson. The most answers were once or twice a month - 48%. A question arises from these results, if the decreasing trend of liking to learn English, which was shown in figure four, is not caused partially by the decreasing frequency of enjoyable activities in the higher grades. However, the pupils might have not been objective about the frequency of playing games. It is possible that the teacher includes other game-like activities in the lessons which the pupils do not consider as games. Besides that, there can be several other reasons for not liking to learn English, for example, the grammar taught in higher grades is more difficult and therefore more demanding on the pupils or the amount of new vocabulary might be too high and the pupils may find learning them too hard.
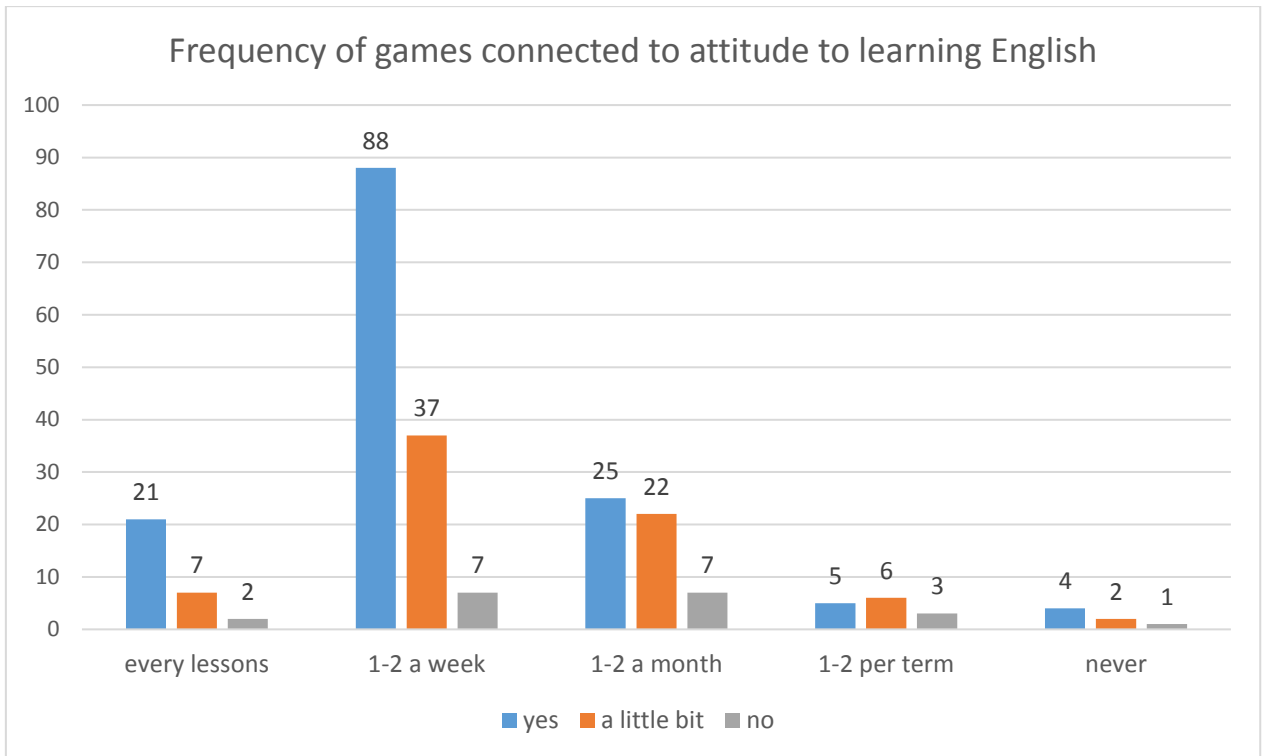
figure no. 9: Frequency of games connected to attitude to learning English

Similarly to the previous figure, it is evident in the figure number nine that the pupils who like to learn English are also the one who play games most often. A game every lesson or once or twice a week was given by 109 pupils which is 76% of all pupils who like learning English and 46% of all respondents. Opposite situation is with the pupils who do not like learning English, only two pupils wrote that they play a game every lesson. The main frequency of playing games in this group of pupils is twice a week or once or twice a month. However, only one pupil stated that they never play a game in lessons of English.

These answers clearly show that attitude to learning English is connected to the frequency of games played in lessons of English. The more often are games played, the more pupils like learning English.

Question number nine was connected to the previous question and it asked the pupils if they enjoy the games played in lessons of English. Surprisingly, all pupils answered this question, even those who wrote that they do not play any games.
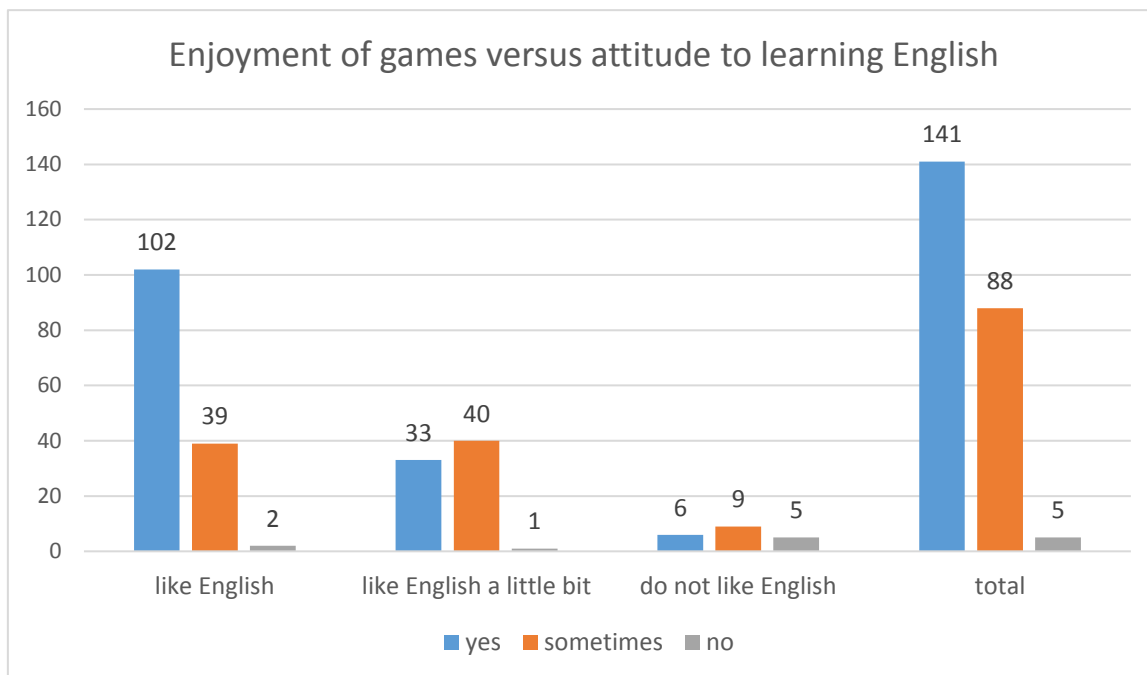
figure no. 10: Enjoyment of games versus attitude to learning English

The above figure shows connection between liking the games that are played in lessons of English and attitude to learning English. Almost 60% of all pupils like the games, while only five pupils from all the 237 respondents stated that they do not like the games that they play in lessons of English. It is evident that the pupils who enjoy the games also like to learn English. This group of 102 pupils forms 43% of all respondents. Besides that, two pupils do not like the games played in lessons of English even though they like to learn English.

The highest number of pupils who do not like the games is not surprisingly in the group of pupils who do not like learning English and, even though it is only five pupils, it makes 25% from this group. The rest of these pupils, even though they do not like to learn English, at least enjoy the games played in the lesson or enjoy them sometimes.

These results show that the connection between positive attitude to English and enjoyable activities in the lessons, which was stated in the theoretical part in chapter number four, can be confirmed.

6.3.7 Help with learning English

Question number ten dealt with the issue of help the pupils get when learning English. Since the pupils involved in this survey are at lower primary school they usually need some assistance with preparation to school, doing homework or learning.
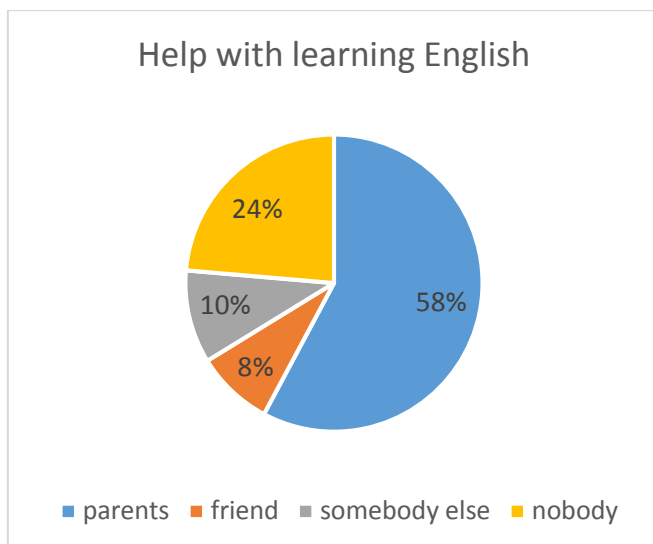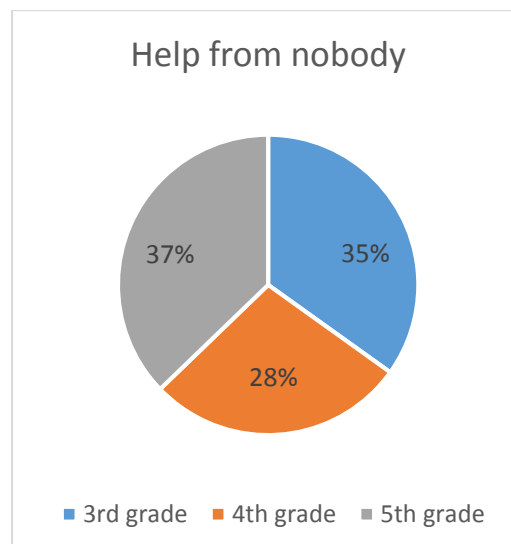
| figure no. 11: Help with learning English | figure no. 12: Help from nobody according to grades |

Most commonly, pupils are helped with learning English by parents, 137 pupils (58%) made this statement. Ten percent of pupils are helped by somebody else. Most often it is a member of the family, in 20 cases a sister, other replies were brother, aunt, uncle, cousin or grandparents. Among the non-family members were players on the computer and in three cases a teacher. It is alarming that 56 pupils (24%) have to learn alone and there is nobody to help them. The support of family and friends is very important for young learners. Figure number twelve shows the proportion of grades in which the pupils stated that nobody helps them to learn English. The situation is almost identical in all three grades with slightly fewer pupils in the fourth grade.

6.3.8 Using English outside school

Question number eleven focused on the possibility of using English outside school and aimed for the pupils to realise that English is not just a compulsory subject at school but can be used in real-life. As a part of the question there was a hint composed of some suggested activities like playing games, listening to music or watching films.

There were two choices of answer - *"no"* (I do not use English outside school) and *"yes"* (I use English outside school) at which were the pupils asked to state during what activity they use English. The option *"no"* was chosen by 69 pupils which is 29% of all respondents. The rest of the pupils stated that they use English outside school. Many of them wrote more than one activity during which they use English. There were two most favourite activities and that was playing games on computer - 64 pupils, followed closely by listening to music/songs with 63

replies. Watching films was stated by 23 pupils and 13 pupils gave as a reason to use English holiday/communication abroad. Four pupils use English also to communicate with English friends and another two with relatives abroad. Two pupils use it for teaching, one teaches sister and another grandmother. One pupil gave as a reason reading books in English. There was also one funny reply, one pupil wrote that he uses English when he is bored.

It is positive that so many pupils, even though they are young, realise that English can be used for common everyday activities and that it is useful to learn it. It can increase their motivation to learn it.

6.3.9 Pupils' self-evaluation

The last question in the questionnaire was question number twelve and it asked the pupils if they think they can speak English well. It is hard to make a self-evaluation especially at this young age. However, pupils should gradually learn how to do it. There is a help with this evaluation in most modern workbooks. It is usually in a form of a smiling face or a simple symbol for young learners.
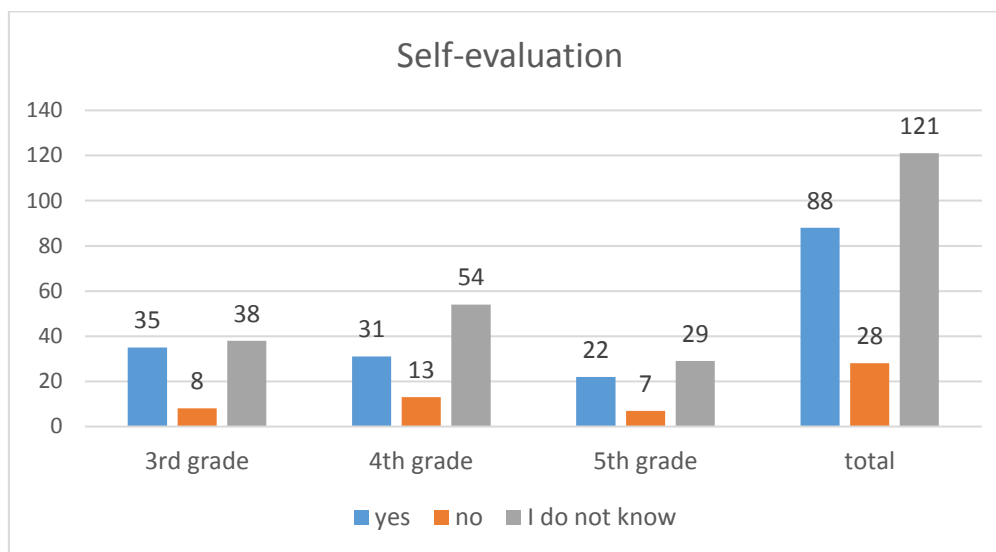

figure no. 13: Self-evaluation

The above figure shows that for a half of all respondents - 51% it is difficult to evaluate themselves and they wrote that they do not know if they can speak English well. On the other side, 37% of pupils stated that they can speak English well and only 12% of pupils think that they cannot. Surprisingly, the largest group of pupils who tried to evaluate themselves were the pupils in the third grade where 53% of all pupils of the third grade made either positive or negative evaluation.
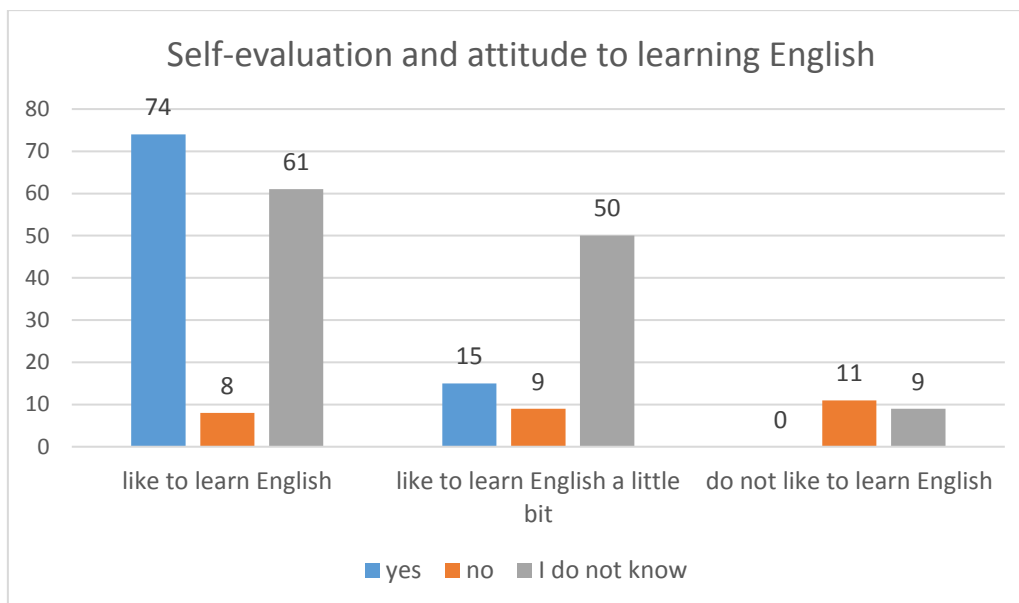
figure no. 14: Self-evaluation and attitude to learning English

The aim of this figure was to show if there is a connection between how the pupils self-evaluate themselves and their attitude to learning English. As mentioned in the theoretical part in chapter 3.2.1, success leads to increased motivation and interest in the studied subject which then leads to more success – the circle of success. The pupils who stated in question number five that they like to learn English are also the ones who wrote that they can speak English well most often - 31% of all respondents. However, 26% of them also replied they do not know what their English is like. On the other side, the pupils who do not like learning English form the biggest group of pupils who evaluate themselves as bad in English. These results indicate that the teacher's evaluation and motivation have a strong impact on the pupils and effects their attitude to English. Teacher should try to find something praiseworthy at even not very successful pupils and evaluate them positively in at least some area.

6.3.10 Optional comments

The last part of the questionnaire was left for optional comments of lessons of English. Some pupils left this space empty and did not write anything, some wrote that they do not want to add any comments. However, many pupils used this opportunity and stated their opinions. Most of the statements were positive, stating that the pupils like learning English and want it to be more often. There were also few negative comments from the pupils who do not enjoy lessons of English. The comments can be found in Appendix 2.

6.3.11 Summary

This chapter evaluated the results of the questionnaire survey among the pupils of the third, the fourth and the fifth grade of primary school. Those are pupils from eight to eleven years old – the young learners. The total number of usable questionnaires was 237 from twelve classes at four primary schools.

The results seem to support the hypothesis that children who start learning a foreign language at an early age have got more positive attitude to it than those who start later. Other outcomes also reinforced the statements from the theoretical part, that the teacher's role in forming the pupils' attitude is very important and that there is a connection between positive attitude to English and enjoyable activities in the lessons.

7. Questionnaire for teachers

The second part of the research was a survey among teachers. It questioned the foreign language teachers' qualification, their opinion on an early start of learning a foreign language and their motivational strategies in the foreign language lessons. The research method used was again a questionnaire survey. The anonymity of participants was the main reason to choose this method.

7.1 Characteristics of the respondents and the questionnaire

The questionnaire for teachers of English was handed out mainly at the same four schools as the questionnaire for the pupils. Additionally, a few questionnaires were filled by teachers at other primary schools in district Prostějov. The total number of the respondents was 23.

Even though the questionnaire was designed for the teachers of English, the language used in it is Czech to avoid any possible misunderstanding. It contains 13 closed questions and one open question. There is a space left for optional comments at the end of the questionnaire. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3.

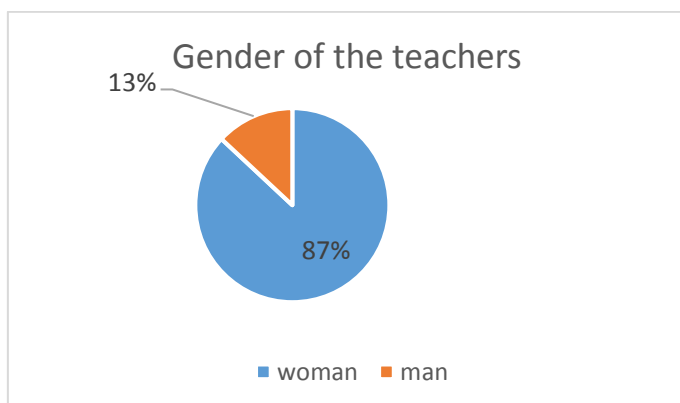## 7.2 Analysis of the results

7.2.1 Gender division

figure no. 15: Gender of the teachers

As expected, the ration of woman to man is not equal. There are 20 woman teachers (87%) participating in the research and only three man teachers (13%). Even though that this problematic was not mentioned in the theoretical part, it is generally known that there are more

women than men at the primary schools. The term "feminisation of education" is often used to comment this situation.

7.2.2 Qualification of the teachers

It was noted in the theoretical part in chapter 2.4.1 that to be a qualified teacher, a person must have a master's degree at university in the field of pedagogical science.
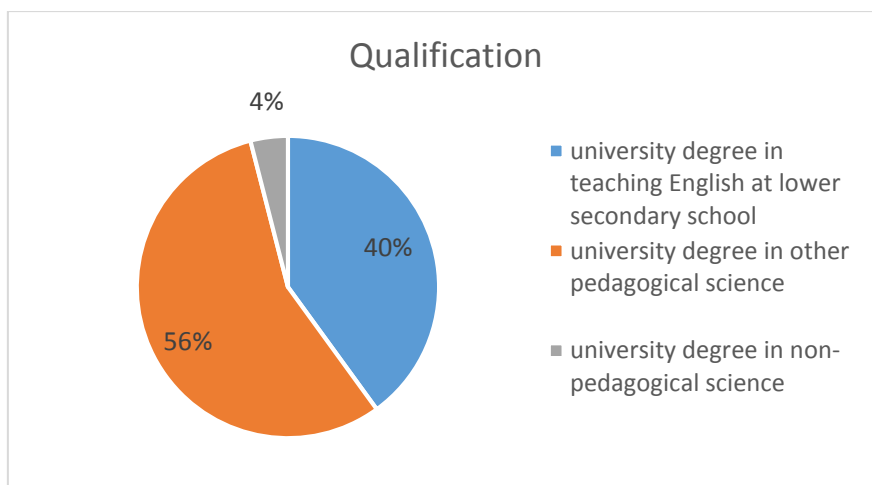

Figure no. 16: Qualification of the teachers

The above figure shows that 40% of the questioned teachers have got qualification for teaching English. Another 56% have got university degree in other pedagogical science. However, the questionnaire did not further ask the teachers if they have got additional exams in English and therefore are qualified to teach it as it is mentioned in chapter 2.4.1. Therefore, some of these teachers could be qualified to teach English, too. Besides that, there was one teacher who chose the option of university degree in non-pedagogical science, however, he also stated that he has got a degree in other pedagogical science.
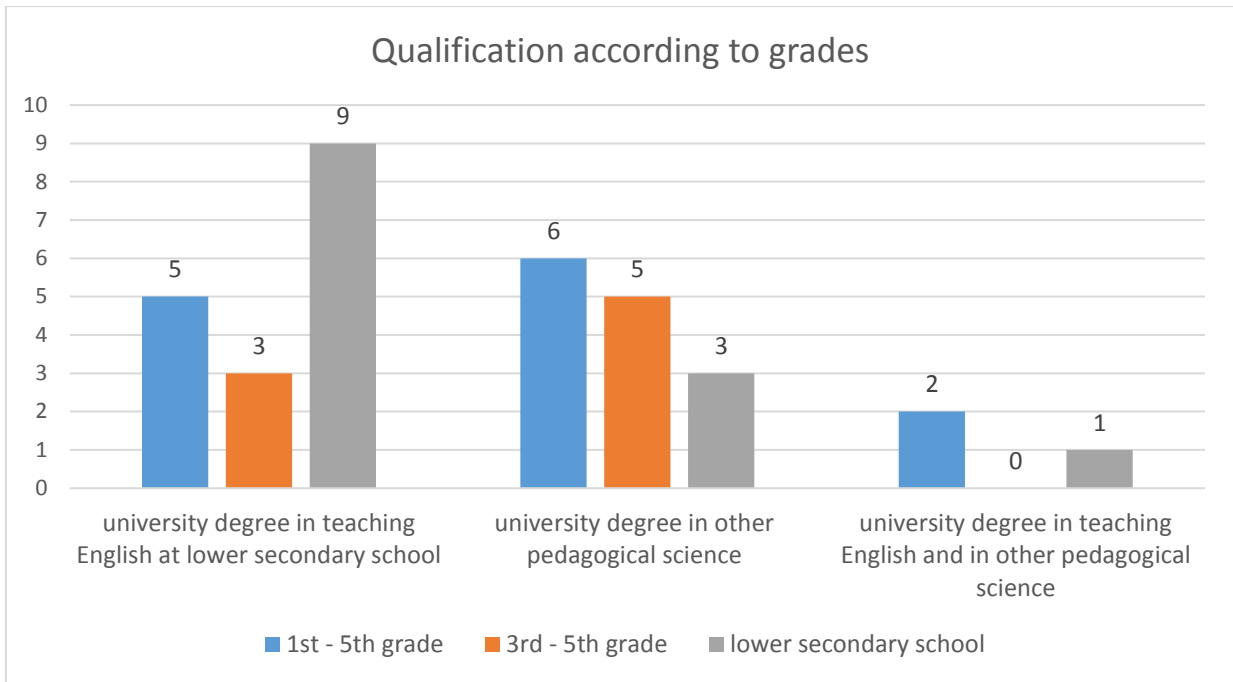
figure no. 17: Qualification according to grades

Question number three focused on the grades the teacher teaches in. The teachers could choose more than one option. A comparison with the obtained qualification was made according to these answers and can be seen in the figure above. The teachers who have got qualification to teach English at the lower secondary school and teach there are therefore fully qualified. As well as the teachers of other pedagogical science, presumably for the primary school, who have also got a degree in teaching English and teach it at primary school are qualified, too. These two groups form 32% of qualified teachers. However, as mentioned under figure 16, some of the teachers with university degree in other pedagogical science might be qualified to teach English, too. Therefore, the number of qualified teachers might be higher.
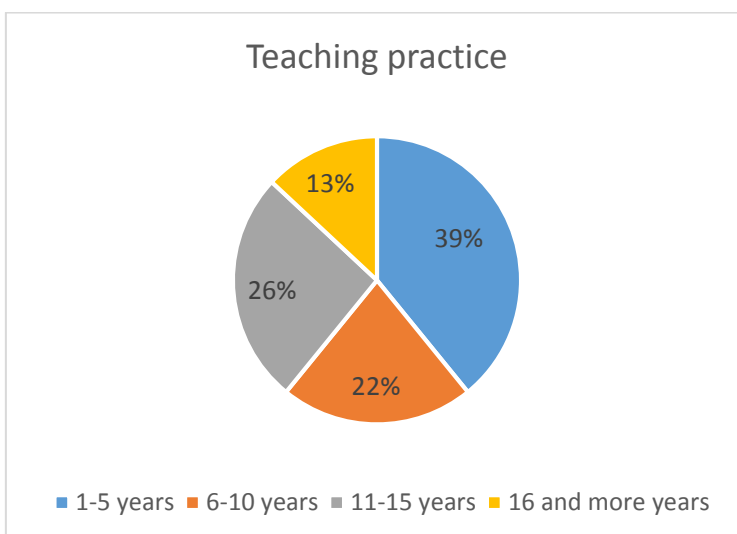

figure no. 18: Teaching practice

The next question dealt with the length of the teachers' practice. There were four possible categories as can be seen in the figure number 18. The largest group are the teachers who have been teaching for one to five years. On the other hand, the smallest group make teachers with 16 and more years of practice.
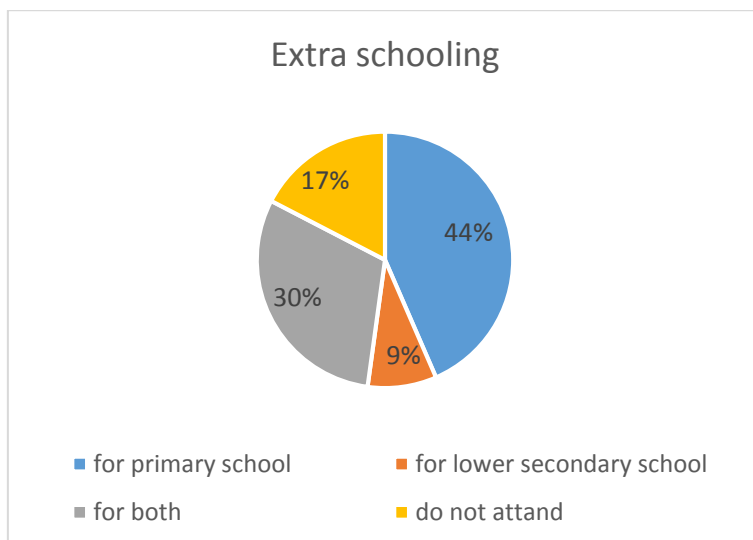

figure no. 19: Extra schooling

The last question concerning the teachers' qualification was about their attendance of extra schooling focused on teaching English. Positively, 83% of all the teachers in the survey attend some sort of extra schooling, most often according to their work position at either primary school or lower secondary school. Surprisingly, all four teachers who do not attend any extra schooling are the teachers with the least teaching practice. Therefore, the ones who would probably need it the most.

To summarise the area of qualification from the results collected from the limited number of questionnaires, it can be noted that the percentage of qualified teachers is not very high - only 32% of teachers teach according their qualification. Similarly, the teachers with long teaching practice were the smallest group of respondents. The positive finding was that 83% of questioned teachers attend extra schooling concerning teaching English.

7.2.3 When children start learning English at school

Question number six investigated if the schools where the questioned teachers work offer lessons of English earlier than in the third grade as it is set in The Framework Educational Programme. The results are in the figure below.
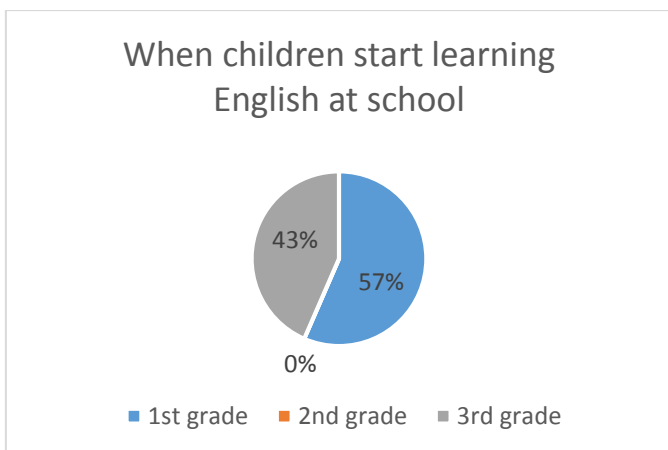
figure no. 20: When children start learning English at school

Slightly more teachers work at primary schools which offer English already from the first grade. This confirms the trend to integrate English into lower grades of primary school than it is compulsory. This trend is apparent also from the pupils' questionnaire where 51% of all questioned pupils answered that they started to learn English in the kinder-garden. However, the questionnaire did not further investigate if these pupils continued with learning at primary school or if they just had private English lessons and continued at primary school in the third grade. This is probably true for some of the pupils because the start of English education in the first grade chose only 19% pupils and another 25% stated that they started in the third grade. However, the results from the teachers' questionnaire indicate that about a half of primary schools offer English from the first grade.

Question number seven inquired the number of lessons taught at the first year of English education. The answers were identical, if pupils start learning English in the first grade, they have got one lessons of English a week. While, if they start in the third grade, they have got three lessons which is compulsory according to the timetable in The Framework Educational Programme. It was mentioned in the theoretical part in chapter 5.1 that especially for the young learners it is more appropriate to include more short sections of the foreign language more often. Therefore, only one lesson a week does not seem to be a very suitable arrangement.

7.2.4 Early education of English

According to the results from the questionnaire for pupils, 51% of the respondents started to learn English in the kinder-garden. As pointed in the theoretical part in chapter five, one of the important factors for success in starting to learn a foreign language at an early age is among others the continuity of the learning. Therefore, question number eight asked the teachers if they

follow up the pupils' possible previous knowledge of English. The answers form the below figure.

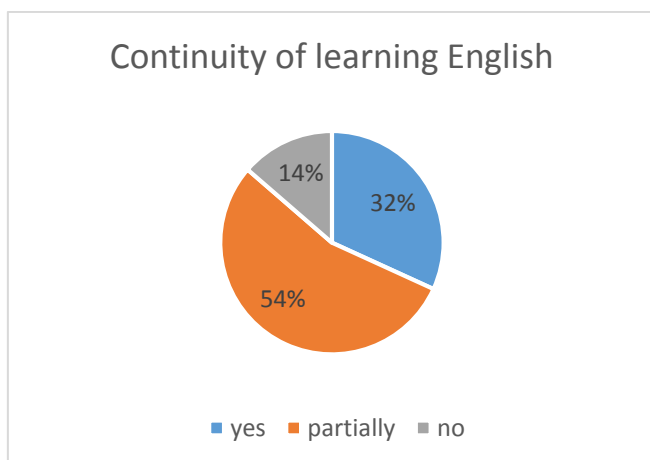Continuity of learning English

yes · partially · no

figure no. 21: Continuity

The results show that majority (86%) of the teachers are aware of the knowledge of English their pupils have got before the start of primary education and that they work with it. There was only one answer where the teacher stated that he has not taught in the first grade yet and therefore cannot give a competent answer.

Question number nine inquired the teachers about noticing any differences in knowledge between the pupils who started to learn English earlier and the pupils who started later. Fourteen of the questioned teachers answered *"yes"* without any further comments. Another three wrote *"yes"* and included a comment that the difference can be seen only at primary school and not at the lower secondary school or that it depends on the pupils' intellect. Only two teachers answered *"no"*. Other four teachers wrote their own comment to this question. Three of them wrote that only some pupils have got different knowledge and that the differences soon fade away. One teacher replied that she can see the differences only occasionally.

Similarly, question number ten asked the teachers if they notice difference in attitude between the above mentioned pupils. As well as in the previous question, the teachers could choose between answers *"yes"* or *"no"* or put their own comment. Twelve teachers chose the answer *"yes"* and another three included a comment that these pupils are more confident in using English and are more interesting in learning it. One of these three teachers noted that the different attitude can be either positive or negative. Another teacher stated that it depends if the pupils have got real interest in English and enjoy it or if they started to learn it early only on their

parents' wish. There were more negative answers than at previous question - seven teachers do not notice any difference in the attitude.
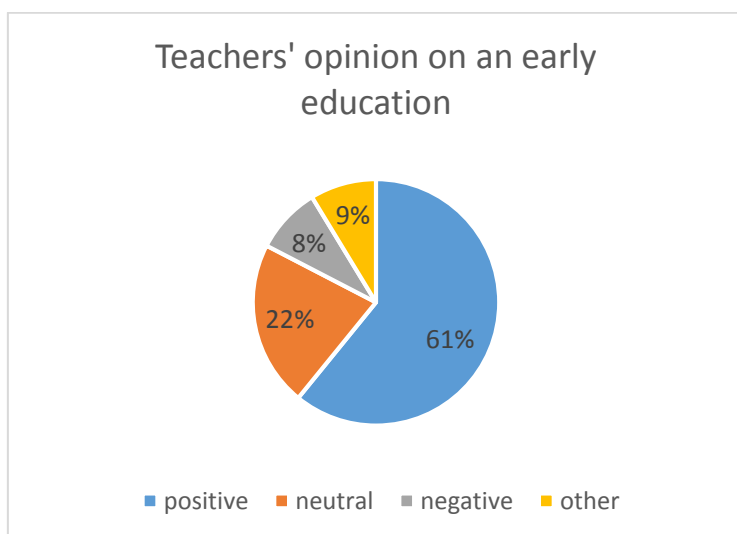
figure no. 22: Teachers' opinion on an early education

The answers to question number eleven *"What is your opinion on English education at an early age (up to eight years of age)?"* are shown at the above figure. More than a half of participating teachers have got positive opinion on an early English education. There were two other opinions: one teacher wrote that if the pupil mastered Czech pronunciation and English is taught by native speaker, she has got no objectives to it, while the other teacher noted that according to her opinion education before the age of six is only for pleasure but it is useless for knowledge. Two teachers have got negative opinion on this matter.

Besides the teachers' own opinion on an early education, question number twelve asked them if they think that an early education of English creates a positive attitude to it. The results can be seen in the below figure.

figure no 23: An early education and positive attitude to English

It is positive that 20 out of 23 teachers agree that an early education of English creates a positive attitude to it. It confirms the findings from the pupils' questionnaire where in figure number six: "Attitude to learning English according to the beginning of En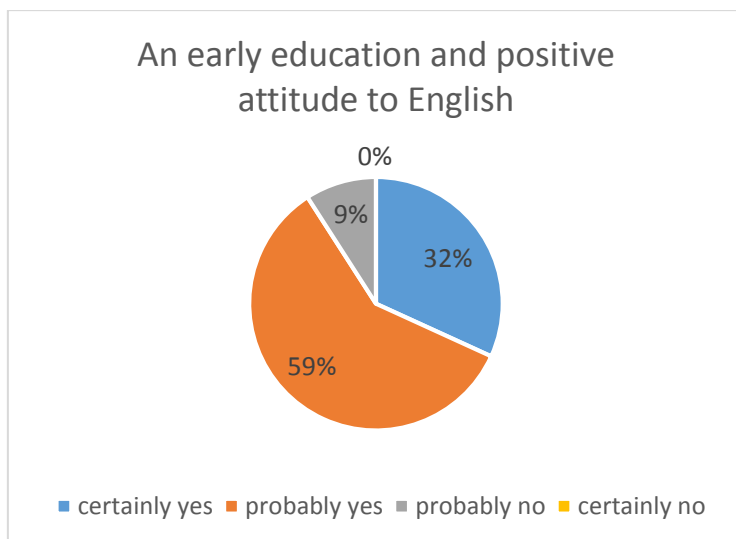glish education" 55% of the pupils who like learning English started to learn it in the kinder-garden and another 21% in the first grade. There were only two answers which disagreed with this opinion. Both of them have also got negative opinion on an early education and do not notice any differences in knowledge or attitude to English between this two groups of pupils.

To summarize this subchapter about an early start of English education which is the main topic of the thesis, it can be stated that most of the questioned teachers are aware of previous knowledge of English of many pupils before the start of education at primary school in the compulsory third grade and that they try to continue and build on this knowledge. Most teachers have also noticed differences in knowledge and attitude to English between pupils who started to learn English earlier and pupils who started later. More than a half of the teachers have got positive opinion on an early education of English and 87% think that it also forms a positive attitude to it.

7.2.5 Motivation in lessons of English

It was mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis and confirmed in the previous chapter by results from the questionnaires for pupils that enjoyable activities increase the pupils' motivation to learn it and as well their general attitude to English. Therefore, the teachers were asked the same question about how often they include games in lessons of English. However, the

63

question did not specify in which grade so the results are only general. The frequency is shown in the below figure.

Frequency of games played in lessons of English

- every lesson
- 1-2 times a week
- 1-2 times a month
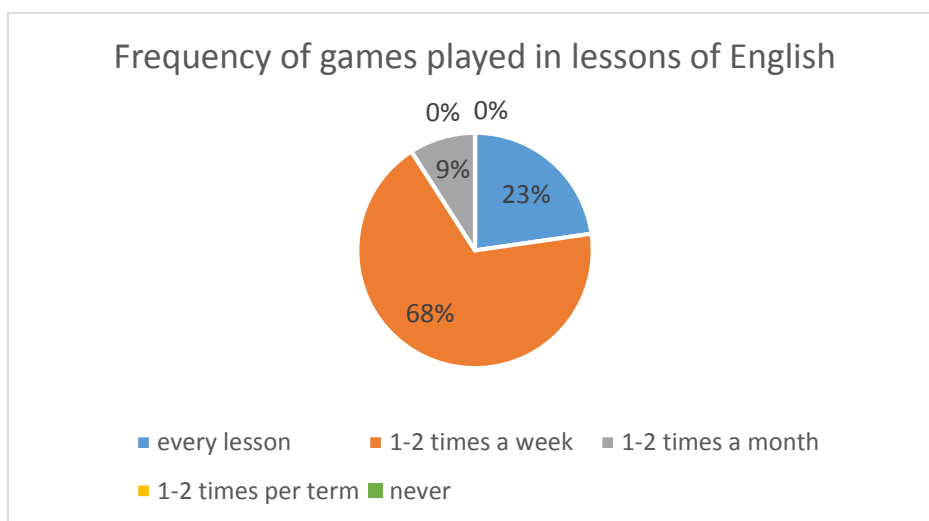- 1-2 times per term
- never

0% 0%
9%
23%
68%

figure no. 24: Frequency of games played in lessons of English

Most teachers declare that they include games in either every lesson or at least once or twice a week. No teacher ticked the options once or twice per term or never. This is in a contrary with the results from the pupils' questionnaires where only 12% of pupils stated that they play a game every lesson and 56% that they play it once or twice a week. There were also 6% of pupils who claim that they play a game only once or twice per term and even 3% that they never play any game. There may be several possible reasons for this. The pupils might have a feeling that they do not play the games often enough while the teachers being aware of the importance of enjoyable activities might have exaggerate the frequency a bit. Nevertheless, the difference might be also in the naming of the activities as it was mentioned in the theoretical part in chapter six. The teachers like to call some activities games to arouse the pupils' willingness to participate in them while the pupils do not view them as games but just as another activity in a lesson of English even though it might be enjoyable.

Question number 14 was an open question and it asked the teachers how they motivate pupils during lessons of English. Most of the teachers gave several examples. The most frequent one were games - 15 replies and songs - 11 answers. Among the other motivational tools were praise, competitions, films, projects and presentation on the interactive board. An interesting answer was a trip abroad. There was only one teacher who did not write anything in this

question. Not surprisingly, it was the one who has got negative opinion on an early education of English and includes games in lessons only once or twice a month.

The last part of the questionnaire was left for optional comments on the topic of early education of a foreign language. Some teachers did not write anything. Others stated their opinion there. The comments were mainly positive. There were only two negative statements. The comments can be found in Appendix 4.

7.2.6 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to find out if the teachers of English are qualified, their opinion on an early start of learning a foreign language and what motivational tool they use in their lessons of English. The results about the qualification indicate that only 32% of the questioned teachers are qualified to teach English at their current work position. Besides that, 39% of the respondents have got only between one to five years of teaching practice. On the other hand, 83% of them attend extra schooling to improve their teaching skills.

Most of the questioned teachers have got a positive opinion on an early start of English education and they believe that it creates a positive attitude to it. On top of that, 91% of them helps to motivate the pupils by including games in the lessons of English at least once a week. They also use other motivational tools like songs, praises or projects to increase the pupils' interest in English.

8. Observation

Another research method used in the practical part of this thesis was observation. The main aim was to compare the attitude to learning English and to games and other game-like activities between the pupils who started to learn English in the kinder-garden or in the first grade of primary school and the pupils who started in the third grade.

8.1 Characteristics of the observed group

The observation was done in the third grade at a primary school in Prostějov. English lessons are integrated in the curriculum from the first grade at this school. There is one lesson a week in the first and the second grade. The pupils have got three lessons of English from the third grade. The teachers use textbook Chit Chat 1 in the third grade. The class where the observation was done was usually divided into two groups and each group learnt in a separate classroom. There were six boys and seven girls in the observed group, total number of the pupils was therefore 13.

For the purposes of the research, the pupils were given numbers to identify them and to keep them anonymous. Pupils numbered one to six are pupils who started to learn English in the kinder-garden. Another four pupils - numbered seven to ten started in the first grade. One pupil - number eleven is a boy who came to this class at the end of the second grade. He did not have any previous education in English. Number twelve and thirteen are two girls who joined the class at the beginning of the third grade and they did not learn English before either. To sum it up, there were ten pupils who started to learn English in kinder-garden or in the first grade and three pupils who started in the third grade.

8.2 Characteristics of the observation method

The observation was done of the whole group of the above mentioned pupils. There were four observations done during the school year 2016/2017. The first observation was in September 2016 and the last in June 2017. An assessment scale was used to record the pupils' attitude and involvement in the activities, attention during the lesson and attitude to the teacher. Number one indicates a very active/good approach, number two an active/good attitude, number three is neutral, number four shows passive/bad approach and number five a very low/very bad attitude. The results of the observation were noted in a record sheet for observation which can be found in Appendix 5.

8.3 Analysis of the observation

8.3.1 Lesson number one

The first observed lesson was at the beginning of the school year in September 2016. Most of the pupils (ten) had a previous experience with lessons of English. However, they did not read or write in English in the first and the second grade. The main activities in the lessons were games, songs and other game-like activities focused on listening and speaking skills. The pupils start to practice reading and writing skills in the third grade. Therefore, the lessons at the third grade are quite different from the previous lessons the pupils were used to.

Record sheet for observation

Date of observation: 12 th September
Number of pupils: 10
Theme of the lesson: Hello, Superstars! (Starter)

pupil's number	involvement in activities	attention during lesson	attitude to the teacher	attitude to learning	other comments
1	A	A	A	A	
2	2	4	3	2	
3	1	1	1	1	always first in any activity
4	A	A	A	A	
5	2	2	2	2	
6	1	1	1	1	
7	1	2	1	1	
8	1	1	1	1	
9	A	A	A	A	
10	1	3	1	4	
11	2	2	1	1	did not sing the song at all
12	3	1	1	2	
13	4	2	1	4	did not know how to introduce herself

A = absent
1=very active/very good, 2=active/good, 3=neutral, 4=passive/bad, 5=very passive/very bad

This lesson was the first time when the pupils used their textbooks and workbooks. The main characters who guide the pupils in the books are two boys and two girls who are superstars. Therefore, they introduced themselves in the starter unit using phrases: *"Hello! What's your name? I'm….My name's….Goodbye"* The pupils first listened to the introductory song twice and then read it in the textbook. Most of the pupils tried to join in the singing since some parts repeated. Only one boy (number 11) did not participate and when he was asked why, he answered that he does not like singing.

After this activity, the teacher asked the pupils the question: *"What's your name?"* and encouraged them to introduce themselves. Afterwards, the pupils made pairs and practised the dialogue between themselves. All pupils worked well except one girl (number 13) who did not know how to ask and how to answer. Therefore, she was helped by the teacher.

The next activity was a written task in the pupils' workbook. It was individual work. The pupils had to write the superstars' names next to their picture, then finish the question: *"What's your name?"* by using the phrases *"I'm …"* and *"My name's …."* In the last exercise they drew themselves and wrote their names next to the picture. The pupils worked quietly and were concentrated on the work. Only the pupils number ten and thirteen needed some help from the teacher. At the end of the lesson, the pupils asked to play the song one more time and sang along.

Most of the pupils seemed to enjoy the activities, especially the singing. They were active during the asking and answering part of the lesson. They paid attention during all the activities and worked enthusiastically. There were not seen any significant differences between the pupils. However, the three pupils who just started to learn English, did not participate in the activities as willingly as the rest of the pupils. Boy number eleven did not want to sing and girl number thirteen needed more assistance from the teacher than other pupils and was shy to speak.

8.3.2 Lesson number two

Record sheet for observation

Date of observation: 10th November
Number of pupils: 12
Theme of the lesson: Pets (Unit 3)

pupil's number	involvement in activities	attention during lesson	attitude to the teacher	attitude to learning	other comments
1	1	2	2	1	
2	2	3	2	1	very slow in writing
3	1	1	1	1	
4	1	2	1	2	
5	1	1	1	1	
6	1	1	1	1	
7	A	A	A	A	
8	1	1	1	1	
9	1	1	1	1	
10	3	3	1	3	does not know the vocabulary
11	4	2	2	2	
12	1	1	1	1	
13	4	2	1	4	was absent previous two lessons

A = absent
1=very active/very good, 2=active/good, 3=neutral, 4=passive/bad, 5=very passive/very bad

The second observation was done in November 2016. The pupils had been learning to read and write in English for more than two month at that time. They tested their knowledge of vocabulary in written form and some of them experienced failure in English for the first time. Most of them realised that English is going to be more than just songs and games and that they will need to practice it at home as well.

This was the third lesson of Unit 3 in which pupils learn the vocabulary of animals and phases *"Is it a…? ", "Yes, it is."* and *"No, it is not."* The lesson started with *"human pelmanism"* which the pupils like very much and in which they practice the vocabulary. All pupils were active and participated in the activity willingly except of girl number thirteen who was absent previous two lessons and did not know the vocabulary. She was therefore paired with another girl who helped her.

The next activity was individual work in the pupils' workbook. Every exercise was first explained by the teacher and then checked together after a set time. The last exercise was to draw a pet and write a sentence *"My favourite pet is a …"* Some pupils wanted to write animals which were not in the vocabulary of this lesson. Therefore, these were written on the board in English and in Czech and the pupils copied them into their sentence. Pupils worked attentively and actively participated in the checking part. However, boy number ten and girl number thirteen needed repeatedly help from the teacher because they did not know the vocabulary and the phrases. Boy number eleven did not need any assistance, on the other hand, he was not active during the checking part. He did not raise his hand to read the answers at any time.

The last activity was talking about the pupils' favourite pets using also the vocabulary from previous units about size and colour. Most pupils wanted to speak and describe their pet. Once again, the exception was boy number eleven and girl number thirteen who did not talk.

8.3.3 Lesson number three

The third lesson in which the observation was done was in February 2017. It was shortly after the half term evaluation. The pupils had learnt a lot during the first term, especially about the written form of words in English. They also got used to the new organisation of the lesson and the need to practice vocabulary at home.

Record sheet for observation

Date of observation: 7th February
Number of pupils: 13
Theme of the lesson: Project: This is me

pupil's number	involvement in activities	attention during lesson	attitude to the teacher	attitude to learning	other comments
1	1	1	1	1	
2	2	2	1	1	
3	1	1	1	1	
4	1	2	1	1	
5	1	1	1	1	did not like his project
6	1	1	1	1	
7	1	2	1	1	
8	1	1	1	1	
9	1	1	1	1	
10	2	2	1	1	did not like his project
11	2	2	1	1	
12	1	1	1	1	
13	2	1	1	2	did not like her project

A = absent
1=very active/very good, 2=active/good, 3=neutral, 4=passive/bad, 5=very passive/very bad

Pupils started to work on individual project called *"This is me"* in which they draw their face and described themselves in the previous lesson. The model sentences such as *"My name is …", "I am …. years old"* and *"I have got…"* were written on the board. The pupils were finishing their projects in the first half of the lesson and then they presented them in the second part. Everybody worked enthusiastically and most of the pupils were very creative, using coloured pencils and two girls even used glittery pencils for their drawing. Then the pupils presented their projects one by one. The rest of the pupils was listening and afterwards evaluated what they liked or disliked about their classmates' work. Girl number thirteen was shy to speak in front of the others, however she managed to present her project, too. The pupils were praised by the teacher and to encourage them for next projects, they were promised that their work will be displayed on a board by school canteen. They were happy and excited about it because the lower secondary school pupils' work is usually displayed there.

This lesson was different from the previous lessons. The pupils did not work with their class book or workbook. They created something on their own and they all enjoyed it very much. The evaluation part was also beneficial, especially because the pupils first said something nice

and positive about every project. There were only few negative comments. Therefore, even the pupils who self-evaluated themselves as not successful experienced positive feedback.

8.3.4 Lesson number four

The last observation was done in June 2017. The pupils have almost finished their class book by that time and they made a big progress in their skills. However, there were already significant differences between some pupils. The differences were not only in knowledge of English but also in attitude to learn it.

Record sheet for observation

Date of observation: 12th June
Number of pupils: 12
Theme of the lesson: There is/are (Unit 11)

pupil's number	involvement in activities	attention during lesson	attitude to the teacher	attitude to learning	other comments
1	2	2	1	1	
2	A	A	A	A	
3	1	1	1	1	
4	1	2	1	1	
5	2	2	1	2	
6	1	1	1	2	
7	1	2	1	1	talking in the lesson
8	1	1	1	1	
9	1	2	1	1	
10	2	3	1	3	talking in the lesson
11	4	3	1	3	
12	1	1	1	2	
13	4	3	2	4	did not describe her bedroom

A = absent
1=very active/very good, 2=active/good, 3=neutral, 4=passive/bad, 5=very passive/very bad

Pupils learnt the phrase *"there is/are"* in previous lessons. This phrase was used again in this lesson to describe children's bedrooms. The first exercise was to read a text about three bedrooms and match them to the pictures and then answer questions about the rooms. Pupils took turns in reading and answering. Most of them raised their hand and wanted to read and speak. As usual, boy number eleven and girl number thirteen did not.

Next exercise was from the pupils' workbook where was a picture of a bedroom and five sentences describing it. Pupils' task was to draw the things mentioned in the sentences in the

picture. There were questions about the picture in the following exercise and pupils were supposed to answer *"Yes, there are"* and *"No, there aren't"*. Pupils worked individually and mostly quietly, however, there was some talking between boys number seven and ten and also between girls number four and thirteen. Totally, the pupils were a bit less concentrated then in previous lessons. The reasons might be that pupils know it is the end of the school year and they look forward to summer holiday. On top of it, the weather is usually hot and the climate in the classroom is more tiring than in winter months.

Pupils were asked to describe their own bedroom at the end of the lesson. Most pupils made two or three sentences using the learnt phrase correctly. Boy number ten made a few mistakes and boy number eleven had to be call out to speak, he did not raise his hand as a sign that he wants to speak. Girl number thirteen almost never speaks in front of the whole class and this was the case again.

8.3.5 Summary of the observations

There were done only four observations in just one group of thirteen pupils. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized for all young learners of English and are only suggestive. There were ten pupils in the observed group who started to learn English in the kinder-garden or in the first grade. There were not any significant differences between these pupils concerning attitude to the teacher and learning. There were only small differences in the involvement in the activities and in attention in the lessons. Generally, girls were more attentive than boys. There was only one exception and that was boy number ten who had problems to keep attention in the lesson and his attitude to learning was not good. However, his involvement in the activities and attitude to the teacher was similar to the other pupils.

There were three pupils who started to learn English in the third grade in this group. There were significant differences not only between these pupils but also between these pupils and the pupils who started to learn English earlier. Boy number eleven was usually passive and his involvement in the activities was very low. He had to be call out to speak most of the time, he did not actively and willingly participate in almost any activity. However, his attitude to the teacher and learning was not bad. Girl number twelve showed almost no differences from the pupils who started to learn English earlier. She was not very self-confident from the beginning, however, she caught up with the rest of the pupils within a month. On the contrary, girl number thirteen was shy and reluctant to speak in front of the class for the whole school year. Her involvement in the activities was low. The main reason was her bad knowledge of vocabulary

which caused her not to understand the tasks. This may indicate a bad attitude to learning. However, there may be other reasons such as parental support or intellectual dispositions. She did not improve and did not start to learn even after several interventions and help from the teacher. Nevertheless, her attitude to the teacher was always very good.

The results of this observation indicate that there might be differences between pupils who start to learn English earlier and pupils that start later in involvement in activities and in attitude to learning. The pupils who start earlier seem to be more involved and have a more positive attitude to English than the pupils who start learning it later.

Conclusion

This diploma thesis deals with the question of early start of learning a foreign language and conditions under which it can be successful. The findings from the theoretical part show that among the most important factors are continuity of learning, exposure to a foreign language and a proficient teacher. The significance of motivational strategies and enjoyable activities was pointed out as well.

The practical part consists of two questionnaire surveys among the pupils and the teachers of English and observation of a group of pupils of the third grade. Over a half of the pupils participating in the survey started to learn English in the kinder-garden and another 19% started in the first grade. This shows that there is a trend to start learning a foreign language at early age. Teachers are aware of this and of the need of continuality and most of them follow up the pupils' previous knowledge of English when they start the compulsory education of a foreign language in the third grade.

The results from the pupils' questionnaire suggest that the hypothesis, that children who start learning a foreign language at early age have got more positive attitude to it than those who start later, is correct. Besides that, the outcomes of the observation seem to support this hypothesis as well. The pupils who started learning earlier tended to involve in the activities more willingly and had better attitude to learning than pupils who started later. On top of it, majority of the teachers participating in the survey agreed that early education of English creates more positive attitude to it. The most often stated reason for liking to learn English was that the pupils enjoy it and like the games played in lessons of English. These statements confirmed the importance of enjoyable activities for young learners. This was also supported by the results from the teachers' questionnaire in which most of the teachers claimed that they play games at least once or twice a week in lessons of English and use other motivational strategies such as songs, films and projects. Even though, the pupils stated that they play games less often than the teachers, most of them enjoy these games. These findings were reinforced in one of the observed lessons in which the pupils worked on a project and involvement and attitude to learning was better than in other lessons in which the pupils worked with class book and workbook.

Another significant confirmation came from the answers about personality of the teacher. Majority of the questioned pupils like the teacher and described him/her as nice. The teachers should be proficient and qualified for teaching a target group of learners. The answers from the

teachers' questionnaire indicate that 32% of questioned teachers are qualified for teaching English and 83% attend extra schooling to widen their teaching skills.

Proficient teachers should be aware of specific needs of each age group and adjust their teaching style and methods according to them. Especially the group of young learners needs careful approach because it may affect their attitude to a foreign language and learning generally for a long time. The teachers of young learners should motivate the pupils and let each of them experience success. They should include games and enjoyable activities as often as possible and expose the pupils to real-life objects and situations. Teachers should as well find out about previous knowledge the learners may have and build upon them. However, this may be difficult in mix ability classes. Nevertheless, a proficient teacher should be able to manage that.

Even though the outcomes of this thesis show that the age plays an important role in attitude to learning a foreign language, there are other factors which influence it, too. The significance of a proficient teacher and enjoyable activities was confirmed in the practical part. However, as mentioned in theoretical part in chapter five, continuity and exposure to a foreign language are also very important. It would be interesting to compare groups of pupils with different number of lessons per week. Besides that, there are other aspect that may affect pupils' attitude to a foreign language such as their background, parental support, pears' influence or their intellectual and other predispositions for learning. Another research could focus on these aspects. On top of it, this thesis concentrated on young learners, it would be useful to see how the attitude changes with age and what influences older pupils.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for pupils

DOTAZNÍK AJ I.STUPEŇ

1. Jsi ☐ kluk ☐ holka

2. Do jaké třídy chodíš? _____

3. Od kdy se učíš angličtinu?

☐ od školky ☐ od 1. třídy ☐ od 2. třídy

☐ od 3. třídy ☐ od 4. třídy ☐ od 5. třídy

4. Kolik hodin týdne se ve škole učíš angličtinu? _____

5. Učíš se angličtinu rád/a?

☐ ano ☐ trochu ☐ ne

6. Proč ano? / Proč ne?

7. Jaká je paní učitelka / jaký pan učitel angličtiny?

8. Hráváte v hodinách angličtiny hry?

☐ každou hodinu ☐ 1-2x týdně ☐ nikdy

☐ 1-2x měsíčně ☐ 1-2x za pololetí

9. Baví tě tyto hry?

☐ ano ☐ ne ☐ někdy ano, někdy ne

10. Kdo ti pomáhá s učením angličtiny?

☐ nikdo ☐ rodiče ☐ kamarád ☐ někdo jiný - ………………

11. Používáš někdy angličtinu i mimo školu? Při hraní her, poslouchání hudby, dívání se na filmy a podobně?

☐ ne ☐ ano (napiš při jaké činnosti: ……………………………………..)

12. Myslíš si, že umíš anglicky dobře?

☐ ano ☐ ne ☐ nevím

13.Pokud bys mi chtěl/a ještě něco napsat k hodinám angličtiny, tady můžeš:

Děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku.

Questionnaire - English at the lower primary school

1. Are you ☐ boy ☐ girl

2. What class do you go to? _____

3. When did you start learning English?

☐ kinder-garden ☐ the first grade ☐ the second grade

☐ the third grade ☐ the fourth grade ☐ the fifth grade

4. How many lessons of English per week do you have at school?

5. Do you like learning English?

☐ yes ☐ a little bit ☐ no

6. Why yes? / Why no?

7. What is the teacher of English like?

8. How often do you play games in lessons of English?

☐ every lesson ☐ 1-2 a week ☐ never

☐ 1-2 a month ☐ 1-2 per term

9. Do you like these games?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ sometimes yes, sometimes no

10. Who helps you with learning English?

☐ nobody ☐ parents ☐ friend ☐ somebody else - ………………

11. Do you use English outside school? When playing games, listening to music, watching films etc.?

☐ no   ☐ yes (write when: …………………………………..)

12. Do you think you can speak English well?

☐ yes   ☐ no   ☐ I do not know

13. If you would like to, you can write something more about lessos of English here:

Thank you for filling up the questionnaire.

Appendix 2: Optional comments from the pupils' questionnaire

Some of the most interesting comments:

- I want English lessons to be more often.
- English is the best subject at school.
- I would like to play more games.
- Our teacher is the best in the whole word.
- English is difficult but I hope that I can learn it.
- I think that English is important because we can use it everywhere.
- I would like to learn more about the history of England.
- Lessons of English are very enjoyable and also interesting, we could not travel abroad without the knowledge of English.

The negative comments:

- I do not like to rewrite things from blackboard to exercise book.
- I do not like that we write test almost every lesson.
- I wish that there were no English lessons.
- I do not know why is English so boring.

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for teachers

DOTAZNÍK pro učitele angličtiny

Jsem studentka pedagogické fakulty Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci obor učitelství anglického jazyka. Ráda bych Vás požádala o pomoc při mém výzkumu k diplomové práci s názvem "Early Foreign Language Education". Velmi děkuji za Váš čas při vyplnění tohoto anonymního dotazníku.

1. Jste: ☐ muž ☐ žena

2. Vaše nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání:
a) VŠ v oboru učitelství angličtiny pro II.stupeň
b) VŠ v jiném pedagogickém oboru
c) VŠ v jiném nepedagogickém oboru
d) Jiné: _____

3. V jakých ročnících učíte angličtinu? (možno zatrhnout více odpovědí)
a) I. stupeň (1.-5. třída)
b) I. stupeň (3.-5. třída)
c) II. stupeň

4. Kolik let učíte angličtinu?
a) 1 -5 let
b) 6 - 10 let
c) 11 - 15 let
d) 16 a více let

5. Zúčastňujete se školení zaměřených na výuku angličtiny?
a) ano - pouze pro I. stupeň
b) ano - pouze pro II. stupeň
c) ano - pro oba stupně
d) ne

6. Ve které třídě se na Vaší škole začíná s výukou angličtiny?
a) v 1. třídě
b) ve 2. třídě
c) ve 3. třídě

7. Kolik hodin se děti učí angličtinu v prvním roce?
a) 1hod. týdně
b) 2hod. týdně
c) 3hod. týdně
d) 4 nebo více hod. týdně

8. Navazujete na možné předchozí znalosti angličtiny dětí, např. z MŠ?

a) ano

b) částečně

c) ne

Komentář: (jak)_____

9. Pozorujete na dětech, které se začaly učit angličtinu dříve, rozdíly ve znalostech oproti
ostatním dětem?

a) ano

b) ne

Jiná možnost / komentář: _____

10. Pozorujete na dětech, které se začaly učit angličtinu dříve, rozdíl v přístupu
k angličtině oproti ostatním dětem?

a) ano

b) ne

Jiná možnost / komentář:
_____

11. Jaký je Váš názor na výuku angličtiny od raného dětství (ve věku do 8 let)?

a) kladný

b) neutrální

c) záporný

d) jiný: _____

12. Myslíte si, že raná výuka angličtiny vytváří u dětí pozitivní vztah k tomuto jazyku?

a) určitě ano

b) spíše ano

c) spíše ne

d) určitě ne

13. Začleňujete do výuky angličtiny hry?

a) ano - každou hodinu

b) ano - 1-2x týdně

c) ano - 1-2x měsíčně

d) ano - 1-2x za pololetí

e) ne

14. Jak motivujete děti během výuky angličtiny?

Pokud byste k tématu raná výuka cizího jazyka ještě chtěli něco poznamenat, budu ráda za Váš názor:

Questionnaire for teachers of English

I am a student of the pedagogical faculty at University Palackého in Olomouc and I study teaching English. I would like to ask you for a help with my research for my diploma project called "Early foreign language education." Thank you for your time and effort in filling up this anonym questionnaire.

Bc. Renata Kovářová

1. Are you:　　　☐ man　☐ woman

2. You highest obtained
university degree is:
a) university degree in teaching English at upper primary school
b) university degree in other pedagogical science
c) university degree in non-pedagogical science
d) Other: _____

3. At what grades do you teach English? (it is possible to tick more answers)
a) lower primary school (1st-5th grade)
b) lower primary school (3rd-5th grade)
c) upper primary school

4. How many years do you teach English?
a) 1 -5 years
b) 6 - 10 years
c) 11 - 15 years
d) 16 years and more

5. Do you attend extra schooling focused on teaching English?
a) yes - only for the lower primary school
b) yes - only for the upper primary school
c) yes - for both levels of primary school
d) no

6. At what grade does your school start with English education?
a) at the first grade
b) at the second grade
c) at the third grade

7. How many lessons of English do the pupils have at their first year of English education?
a) 1 lesson a week
b) 2 lessons a week
c) 3 lessons a week
d) 4 or more lessons a week

8. Do you follow up the pupils' possible previous knowledge of English?

a) yes

b) parcially

c) no

Comment: (how)_____

9. Do you notice any differences in knowledge between the pupils who started to learn English earlier and the pupils who started later?

a) yes

b) no

Comment: _____

10. Do you notice any differences in the attitude to English between the pupils who started to learn English earlier and the pupils who started later?

a) yes

b) no

Comment: _____

11. What is your opinion on English education at an early age (up to eight years of age)?

a) positive

b) neutral

c) negative

d) other opinion: _____

12. Do you think that an early foreign language education creates a positive attitude to this language?

a) certainly yes

b) probably yes

c) probably no

d) certainly no

13. Do you include games in the lessons of English?

a) yes - every lesson

b) yes - 1-2 a week

c) yes - 1-2 a month

d) yes - 1-2 per term

e) no

14. How do you motivate pupils during the lessons?

If you would like to write smething more on the topic of an early foreign language education,
 I would be happy for your opinion

Appendix 4: Optional comments from the teachers' questionnaire

Positive comments:

- The earlier children start learning a foreign language the better. One lesson a week at the first and the second grade is not enough.
- It is useful.
- It should be continuous - from the first grade of primary school and not at the third.
- If children started to learn English from babies, it would be natural for them and Czech people would finally speak English.
- It has got a sense only if it is a part of the curriculum and supported by the school and parents and builds a positive attitude to the language. Not if it is only a "modern trend."
- Children should be exposed to English more, for example on TV, if the films and fairy tales were not dubbed, people would understand English more.

Negative comments:

- There are too many pupils in the classrooms.
- It annoys me that it is at the expense of Czech which is very important at the first and the second grade.

Appendix 5: Record sheet for observation

Record sheet for observation

Date of observation:
Number of pupils:
Theme of the lesson:

pupil's number	involvement in activities	attention during lesson	attitude to the teacher	attitude to learning	other comments
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					

A = absent

1=very active/very good, 2=active/good, 3=neutral, 4=passive/bad, 5=very passive/very bad

RÉSUMÉ

Diplomová práce se zabývá otázkou rané výuky cizího jazyka. V teoretické části jsou popsány charakteristiky žáků a učitelů cizího jazyka a motivace a motivační prvky. Praktická část rozebírá výsledky dotazníků žáků a učitelů a analyzuje pozorování provedená ve třetím ročníku základní školy. Výsledky podporují hypotézu, že žáci, kteří se začnou učit cizí jazyk v mateřské škole nebo v první třídě základní školy mají k tomuto jazyku pozitivnější přístup než žáci, kteří se jej začali učit až ve třetí třídě. Důležitost kvalifikovaného učitele a motivačních činností pro mladší žáky byla také potvrzena.

ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Renata Kovářová
Katedra:	Anglického jazyka PdF UP Olomouc
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Blanka Babická, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2017

Název práce:	Raná výuka cizího jazyka
Název v angličtině:	Early Foreign Language Learning
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce za zabývá tématem rané výuky cizích jazyků u mladších žáků. V teoretické části je uvedena charakteristika žáků, učitelů, typy a zdroje motivace a motivační prvky – hry, písničky. V praktické části jsou rozebrány výsledky dvou dotazníkových šetření a také pozorování hodin ve třetím ročníku základní školy.
Klíčová slova:	Mladší žáci, učitel, motivace, hry, raná výuka
Anotace v angličtině:	The diploma thesis deals with the topic of early foreign language education. The theoretical part describes the characteristics of the pupils, teachers, types and sources of motivation and motivational tools – games, songs. The practical part analyses two questionnaire surveys and observation in the third grade of a primary school.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Young learners, teacher, motivation, games, early education
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Appendix 1: Questionnaire for pupils Appendix 2: Optional comments from the pupils' questionnaire Appendix 3: Questionnaire for teachers Appendix 4: Optional comments from the teachers' questionnaire Appendix 5: Record sheet for observation
Rozsah práce:	94
Jazyk práce:	Angličtina