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**Master's Diploma Thesis**

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ROLE-PLAY AND OTHER GAME-LIKE ACTIVITIES

***Prohlášení***

Tímto prohlašuji, že jsem tuto práci vypracovala samostatně na základě uvedené literatury a pramenů.

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.....

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## List of abbreviations

ELT- English language teaching

OLE- Online learning environment

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## Abstract

Games and game-like activities belong to a natural part of a healthy human development. Children perform role-plays spontaneously and thus, in this project work their usage is investigated when being transferred into various environments, particularly the school language learning environment. Their approaches, benefits, drawbacks and suggested possible activity schedule are provided as well as notes on the age group covered in the Online practice. Samples of activities that were carried out during the practice in the Online English learning environment draw the form of role-play realization Online.

## INTRODUCTION

"...May our didactics begin/end in:

Searching and finding a method enabling teachers to teach less, although learners would learn more, schools would have less hurry, reluctance, vain work but more calmness, pleasure and stable result." (Komenský, 1930, p. 20)

It has been approximately eight years since I last sat in a classroom at my grammar school and I was treated rather as a child than an adult, compared to the university. I believe that during all those years that a pupil spends at school is his/her attitude towards a certain subject formed. Teachers and teaching methods they opt to apply play an important part in as well. Having been an average pupil with average results in history classes, I enjoyed the friendly way our teacher interacted with us pupils and the warm atmosphere in the classes.

In spite of her position and age, she accepted to joke with us even about herself and she played a very dear game to all of us. She named it "transformation of the self," which consisted in her taking role of somebody else, a character from history. There was no need for any preparation or long explanations of rules and we were always fascinated by interesting details we were provided with about various personalities though this game. Furthermore, she had a big sense of humour and thus, the element of fun was not missing even from this aspect. This experience was the reason why I wanted to explore the topic of games and role-play in more detail.

This diploma thesis deals with the topic of the role-play method and other game-like activities concerning role-taking particularly. The main aim is to present this teaching method with the emphasis on its practical usage and a reflection based on a quantitative research.

## THEORETICAL PART

The theoretical part of this diploma project contains information covering the topics of game, role-play. Role-plays are introduced in more detail since they are the key concepts of this work. Essential details considering the age group participating in the role-plays is described in the research section. The details include the development of eighth grade pupils in cognitive, psychical, physical, social aspects, all of them applied when the role-play practice. This information are followed by a chapter that deals with activities in general and suggests a suitable schedule for their application, role-play in particular.

## PRACTICAL PART

The aim of the practical part is to examine the method of role-play, its efficiency and usage introduced in the theoretical section of this diploma work. This is achieved through an evaluation of a questionnaire answered by teachers from all fourteen regions in the Czech republic and observation during implementing the method into practice in a real class with pupils at Czech lower-secondary school. The objective of the thesis is to draw a comparison between the Online and face-to-face application of the role-play method.

# 1 Game-like activities and the role-play

The importance of games and game-like activities in the lives of people is obvious. They take place naturally after a child is born. The child plays with his/her toes or hands, explores them and their usage and properties. After this stadium the child switches to exploring the objects in near proximity, may it be people or things. Sometimes toys are less attractive to the child than any item that can be found in the household.

## 1.1 Definition of game

The word “game” is apparently a frequentative from Middle English word "gamenen", meaning “to play, disport oneself“ (Weekley, 1967a, p. 619)

According to the Oxford learner's dictionaries it can be “an activity that you do to have fun, often one that has rules and that you can win or lose; the equipment for a game” (Oxford dictionary, ONLINE)

There can be a preset objective for games used in English language lessons considering certain linguistic areas for the learners to cover. However, it is advisable to let the learners employ their language skills and language system knowledge as ”tools” in order to succeed in a game and not as the objectives of the game themselves. (Richards&Rodgers, 2014, p. 138)

Children explore everything surrounding them. Whether the purpose of the items is to be played with or not. Playing in the first months after being born is of a different nature than the later one but all stages of childrens’ games have their impact on personality development. For instance, playing of a baby by imitating sounds of people, objects or animals enables the speech organs to be trained, helps to start articulation of specific sounds and later on to speaking itself.

This early creation of sounds to specific objects is referred to as presymbolic behaviour. A child cannot name an object (a cup or a plate) but is aware of their functions (to serve beverages or food) from observing his family behaviours. Until 12 months of age babies are able to recognize basic objects and connect them to their connotations.

The knowledge of items and their usage in a realistic manner enables children to pretend in a play subsequently. The symbolic play and games are at an advanced stage approximately at the age of three which means that the child is capable of object substitution and planned pretending. The child would search for a cube resembling a mug in order to give it to a doll toy and would be able to add more complex details as well. (Bornstein et col., 1993, p. 73)

This advanced stage of a symbolic play remains during all the life of an individual, however, usually slightly transformed into other activities, such as performing, role-playing etc.

Games can function as tools for physical, motoric, cognitive, educational, emotional, esthetic, moral, social, therapeutic, motivational and volitive development.

However, there is a slight boundary between a game and work in the school environment. The opinion or consideration of each individual child or pupil is the crucial factor to decide between this dilemma. (Monatová, 1972, p. 266)

Role-play activities are regarded as game-like activities since they occupy an important position in the natural part of a human development in the childrens' early and then lifelong games. The classroom activity of role-play should be coincident with the features of the games of "groups of children playing school, doctors and nurses, or Star Wars. Both are unselfconsciously experimenting with their knowledge of the real world and developing their ability to interact with other people." (Ladousse, 1991, p. 5)

In this context it is important to mention that role-playing includes role-taking as well, children often take roles of others and thus they naturally try to anticipate feelings of others in a rather direct manner. (Ments, 1999, p. 7)

There is another crucial reason that supports the usage of games in the classroom environment, which is "the lowered consequences of failure encourage risk taking, trying new things, and exploration. (GREIPL,S. et col., 2020, ONLINE)

Nevertheless, this ascertainment does not provide with any new information since in the literary piece of John Amos Comenius from the 17th century the term "schola ludus" is mentioned, translated as "school through play." A subject matter is included in it but dramatically performed. The concept of "the school through play" ought to be practiced by adjustment of the lesson to the pupils' needs and joy. During Comenius' lifetime it was a favourite activity of the pupils to perform plays in the Latin language, for this reason Comenius chose a performance that would serve as a model activity to the readers. Such an activity requires speech abilities and an experiment that would be led by the pupils.

It is more than obvious that the approach of Comenius and his followers in subsequent centuries would encourage the usage of the role-play method as well. In the following text various purposes for its application in the English language lessons are going to be listed.

## **1.2 Definition of role**

The term “role” originated in the word “rotulus” from Vulgar (low) Latin which meant “a roll of paper.” (Weekley, 1967b, p. 1246) This expression was later used for the meaning of role in drama since actors had their roles written on their “rolls of paper.” However, it was adopted to the English Language from French “*rôle*” in 17th century.

### 1.3 Forms and types of roles

There are two basic forms of a role that can be distinguished. The first type of a role can be considered as a "foreign model, as rules, norms, descriptions of behaviour, instructions, dramatic texts, expectation of others. It is something that is prescribed, offered or forced to us, it might be also something chosen by oneself, e.g. becoming a teacher. The important thing is that the meaning of the role is "prescribed."

The second category of a role is referred to as "the inner model of oneself." It differs between the inner model of a role that is learnt from observing external features of a role and inner model that has been created without any foreign model.

Then a role in action can be considered as an internal model seen in external practice, meaning that internal issues of a person (such as feelings) are performed by body actions. (Valenta, 1995, p.19-20)

### 1.4 Definition of role-play

The term role-play itself is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as “to pretend to be someone else, especially as part of learning a new skill.” (Cambridge University Press, ONLINE) The Oxford dictionary definition is only slightly different "to behave in the way somebody else would behave in a particular situation as a part of a learning activity." (Oxford dictionary, ONLINE)

According to these definitions the role-play means a certain shift in a role of an individual as well as simultaneous involvement in a learning activity. In connection to the English language teaching it is sometimes questioned whether the purpose of role-plays is only to practice or to learn a language, which is partly resolved by these definitions, however in the chapter "Role play as language learning and practice" it is drawn in more detail.

### 1.5 Role-play and similar terms

It is also important to note that there are three terms that would be all similar to each other: role play, simulation and dramatic performance. **Dramatic performances** are practised, learnt by heart, public, usually finished products. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 10) This description does not define **role-plays** since there is no audience since the students are supposed to perform the activities for themselves in the classroom, for internal usage.

However, they "perform" only in the figurative sense of the word, they rather act out and express. The procedure of the role-play is the important part of the whole, therefore there is usually no need for an ending, particularly if the role-play is task based and a certain information is required for the task achievement.

In some sources there are **real plays** suggested as variations to role plays. The difference is that real plays context setting is placed outside the classroom and the characters are pupils with their own identity. However, in this project work they both are linked to as "role plays." (Scrivener, 1994, p. 222)

**Simulations** is another term to be explained, they are usually longer than role plays, but they consist of them, they are very complex and must relate to reality. They are usually based on real facts or data that can be considered and the actors must try to predict how the real person would think or act in various situations. (Scrivener, 1994, p. 368)

Role-plays and simulations can be easily practiced through an online environment as well and many times the environment outside the classroom can offer a different experience to the learners, suitably adjusted context can be more believable.

## **1.6 Role play outside the English language teaching environment**

Apart from education and language learning, the role-play technique is frequently used for psychotherapeutic and socialising purposes. Problematic situations or behaviours are performed by the therapists and their patient is supposed to react to them. These role-play sessions sometimes take place in the school curriculum of different subjects than the language based ones and they tend to be a suitable kind of support not only for problematic children."Nor are the benefits of role-playing restricted to the child with a problem. The so-called normal child also enjoys and profits from the role-play experience, in terms of improved communication skills, creativity, increased social awareness, independent thinking, verbalization of opinions, development of values and appreciation of the art of drama." (Furness, 1976, p.19)

Similarly managers and leaders in companies train their employees by practising new situations or possible responses to them in the role-play. The effectiveness in the role-play technique is that the thinking process is done and shown, not only pronounced as in the "case studies" that would list possible actions that would be recommended to be followed by the employees. (Maier, Norman, 1975, p. 4)

## 2 Role-play in ELT

### 2.1 Role-play as a language learning and practice

There is a very slight boundary between language learning and language practice. It tends to be very difficult to decide where learning or practice commence or terminate.

However, considering the Bloom's taxonomy of objectives one should consider the learning outcomes to be achieved and role-play is an activity that has the potential to demonstrate knowledge of previously learnt subject matters since the objective of role play to practice is placed in the highest level of learning schema and the verb "to create" demonstrates this and all domains (cognitive, affective, psychomotor) can be easily involved using this method. (Armstrong, 2010, ONLINE)

As suggested, there are other forms of role plays apart from role-plays to practice (see Chapter 2.6 Role play types) that might introduce a new language structure or demonstrate it on examples. Role-play provides with a meaningful content to introduce new structures, words or grammar that enables an active phase of learning. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 9)

Opposing to the arguments that might consider role-plays only as learning practice, it is important to note a citation about pupils and the emphasis of an active involvement in their classroom: "More and more we see that the active involvement is what grabs them. That's when they learn something." (Sandholtz, 1997, p. 80)

### 2.2 Role-play and examinations

It is very important to note that role plays are not applied only during the teaching and learning activities but also when examining the knowledge of pupils. For instance, the international English (Cambridge), French (DELF), German (Goethe-Zertifikat) language exams consist of a part dedicated to role play. The crucial reason for the choice of the role play technique in these international exams is claimed to be the fact that there is only a short period of time needed that would enable the student to express himself in the target language. (Whelpton, 1987, p. 7) In the following text the other benefits and possible difficulties will be described in detail.

### 2.3 The Benefits of Role-play

There are benefits of role-play as well as possible difficulties when their practice. These difficulties are described further in the chapter "4.4 Possible difficulties." In the following text of this chapter only benefits of role-play are covered, sometimes with suggested difficulties though.



As mentioned above, role-play can be distinguished from a dramatic performance by its **spontaneity**. (Furness, 1976, p. 21) Nobody of the role-playing participants can predict what exact words or phrases are going to be pronounced by the another one. In the classroom environment there could be also gestures, mime and other non-verbal patterns included. This would apply even to Online learning environment provided that the participants turn their cameras on.

Role-play should be performed in a way that **a fun** should take place. As mentioned in the first chapter of this diploma project, the development of role-plays is commenced in the early childhood with the symbolic play. The children then role-play being doctors, nurses, dustmen etc. (Hawley, 1975, p. 10) Pupils usually tend to supply the role-plays with an element of humour and enjoy performing in front of their classmates, particularly at primary schools. The same happens with the regard to pupils of lower secondary schools. However, the crucial would be the choice of topics, which they would wish to pay their attention to. The role-play activities **to practice skills** would suit their interests as well since they provide with a real-life setting. For instance, the objective of one of those activities might be how to apply for a job. A specialist of some field could be invited to the lesson and act as a participant of a role-play so that the pupils might not only receive some information but also experience them using this method. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 6)

Another benefit of using the RP technique is the possibility of learners to practice language under **a mask, being an alter ego**. In case there are shy pupils present in the common classroom procedures such as homework checking, reading aloud etc., the role-play identity shift or hidden self-identity sometimes lead to surprising outcomes. The shy pupils often tend to be very inovative, creative and vivid in the place of another character, which can also be created upon their own fantasy. However, there is a warning that should be taken into consideration in case the teacher chooses and distributes the roles of the pupils himself. He should never assign a role of a shy character to a pupil of the same attribute. It might be very unpleasant to them and frustrating. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 7)

Apart from considering character matters the learners also have to cope with **realistic situations**, which can be selected based on pupils' interests. Therefore the element of motivation is involved and the pupils are usually very keen on **interaction** with their classmates (Ments, 1999, p. 13). This interaction is not limited only to the pupils since the teacher can become one of the participants as well.

The context of the role-play activities makes an important difference between them and most of other communicative activities. The opinions or problem solving are not only

verbalized but their verbalization is also **performed**, a setting is provided, which was proven to function as the most suitable way to enhance the mental and cognitive involvement.

The role-plays also enable pupils to make **alternative choices**, which is correlative to non-judgmental atmosphere in the classroom. The pupils should not only be able to express themselves but also to listen to others and respect their opinions or anything they opt for during the activity (character properties, behaviours of the character etc.). The lightened and calm atmosphere would let the pupils feel there is a real **freedom of expression** and therefore no tension would be present while the activity is carried out.

As mentioned above receptive skills are required of the pupils as well. In order to be a good listener, one has to consider what the other one meant or why he behaved the way he did. The must to participate in the role-play by any means compels the pupils to **emphasize** as well, not only their language system is provoked and used but also the emotions are involved and expressed. It is important to note that role-plays which perform opinions of others might lead to **viewpoint changes** of the pupils as far as their identity development is still in progress (Maier&Norman, 1975, p. 221).The matter of pupils' development is further described in the chapter 3.1 Specifics of eighth grade learners.

## **2.4 Role-play and English teaching methods and approaches**

The role-play method is primarily based on the communicative and humanistic approaches. According to the communicative approach the purpose of the ELT is to be able to communicate, interact, negotiate meaning and resolve various problems. In the humanistic approach the pupil and his uniqueness is on the front burner, therefore role-play is suitable method since it enables to express oneself in various manners and to a large extent independently and spontaneously.

However, there are other approaches as the natural approach that includes role-play as a suitable method for language acquisition. The language acquisition tends to be a crucial point of this approach and the process of it is divided into three main stages. There the role-play method is considered to be of the first rank. It is also associated with total psychical response, communicative and direct method approaches, which means that the methods used in the Natural approach are their combination. The role-play method was chosen for this approach as the learners' level outputs may differ a lot and the pupils can decide to speak in the target language whenever they feel they acquired it enough. (Richards, 2001, p. 131) Nevertheless, this is not the case of standard English classes.

Role-plays just as other communicative techniques do not have to be suitable for all learners and their cultural environment. The teacher should always consider his options, preferences, abilities and habits of the students since there can be a refusal and misunderstanding to explicitness especially considering personal topics. This can be avoided by choosing suitable themes and well-explained technique. Since role-play does not require showing a real self-identity, it enables its universal application. (Harmer, 1991, p. 94)

The teacher talking time tends to be rather limited in the activity phases, thus the role-play technique is sometimes described as "low input- high output." The fluency usually predominates over accuracy in the role-play activities and generally pupils are required to accomplish a task such as asking somebody for help or ordering food in a restaurant. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 9) However, in the following text the extensive usage of role-plays is presented.

## **2.5 Role play approaches**

There are two basic approaches for role-playing in the classroom concerning the role-play structure, according to these categories role-play activities can be either structured or unstructured. Sometimes they are referred to as method-centred and developmental. (Ments, 1999, p. 56)

A structured approach would have preset circumstances and roles of characters, suitable mostly in practice role-plays where there is a specific objective, usually resolving a conflict situation. However, the students still can use enough of their fantasy in dealing on a compromise or modification of the situation. This type of role-play is compared to a "case study," where the decisions and their language realization would be considered and discussed. This approach is didactic-oriented and the role of teacher is very important here as he provides information on the given context, an example situation and the guidelines that should be followed by the learners in the introduction phase. A flowchart that simplifies the procedure and enables visualisation is very suitable to be used for the structured role-play activities, as well as a character sheet which would enable listing the attributes of the role-play participants' characters.

The unstructured approach provides with more freedom to the learners in terms of flexibility of the characters, the settings etc. The learners themselves might be the characters of the role-play or they can act as somebody else. Their task is to come up with their own situation to a specific context. As there is no objective prescribed, the end-point of the activity depends on the learners' decision. Therefore setting a time limit for this type of

practice would be advisable. The usage of flowcharts would be irrelevant for unstructured role-plays, however using character sheet or role cards might be meaningful provided that a participant wants to create a new identity of his own and adhere to it within the activity.

There are other two approaches in terms of language learning. The students can either use the language that they have already known or they can use some new grammatical, vocabulary items, specific language register, etc. Specification of the selected items can be done through a list of the enumerated items or more generally, for instance the task might be using only the past simple tense. In a similar way students might be given a list with items or a grammatical structure that they would not be allowed to use.

These slight modifications might be sometimes very demanding. Nevertheless, they would bring an evidence that the students understand the subject matter into the depth as they are able to do the role-play with their applications.

## 2.6 Role play types

There are various types of role-plays that can be applied in the classroom. In a concept of Ladousse, G.P. there is a distinction of roles that can be adopted in a role-play and thus they can be considered as role-play types as well. They are as follows:

**Real-life roles:** The pupils use their preoccupations about a role from a real-life, they might take roles of patients, doctors etc.

**Situational roles:** The pupils are supposed to be themselves and to take a role specific for a certain situation or context, no special preparation is needed before this role-taking. This type frequently includes such situations as complaining, asking for directions etc.

**Indirect real-life roles:** The roles that pupils know from the real-life usually indirectly but sufficiently enough to be able to act like them. It might be a role of a journalist, weather forecaster, detective etc.

**Fantasy roles:** These roles are fictitious, not based on real life. There can be almost any role taken in this type of roles such as an animal, people with special functions, names and characters. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 13)

An another distinction of role-plays is introduced as the concept of Morry van Ments, the role-play types are summarized by the verbs: describe, demonstrate, practise, reflect, sensitize, create/express. (Ments, 1999, p. 46) They are described in the following text.

### 2.6.1 Role-play to describe

This type of role-play enables the participants to act a situation as they perceive it, be it a historical event or a situation when a daughter asks their parents for permission to stay out late. There is a close association between this type of role play and dramatic performance. However, the objective of role-playing is to communicate and to take an attitude to a topic. Many times there should be factual errors corrected in the introduction part and assuring that the students understand the activity. There should be little emotional involvement in this type or role-play. (Ments, 1999, p. 45)

### 2.6.2 Role-play to demonstrate

Role-play including a demonstration tends to be very frequent in the language classes despite the unawareness of this category, the teacher sets a meaning of a phrase using it in a realistic scene or context. It is any demonstration that can be copied by a student and is performed, by psychologists called as a role-model. (Ments, 1999, p. 47) Again this category of role-play demands little emotionality.

### 2.6.3 Role-play to practise

Category of role-play to practise enables students to carry out actions representative of certain behaviours of people, usually based on occupations. The difference between this type of role-play and other two mentioned above is that it is desirable to act the role-play to practise again after a post-play discussion and feedback of the teacher and the classmates. However, it necessarily does not have to be the same student who would do the role-play again.

The activities of this role-play type can be modified variously, the characters in them might be teachers, dustmen, shop assistants and might be asked to meet certain requirements such as being old, racist, tired, confused. Then there might be other characters to interact with them. Also specific situations might be suggested, especially those problem-solving ones.

Some authors create role-play practise materials for the international language examinations as mentioned above. They are usually based on places and frequent situations taking place in them (shopping, in the restaurant, at the hotel, in the street, at home), and generally there is a vocabulary list included as well. (Whelpton, 1987, p. 19)

Level of emotionality of the “role-play to practice” activities depends on the settings and student’s identification with the role. (Ments, 1999, p. 48-50)

Feedback is pronounced after the role-play action, the aim of the role-play should be evaluated just like the potential key requirements achievement.

#### 2.6.4 Role-play to reflect

The aim of the category of role-play to reflect is to consider and think about each action and the suitability and for using specific terms or problem solving stance. The participants together with the teacher or tutor continuously reflect on the action of a role-player in terms of means of communication or behaviour. This method would help students to be more self-reflective in order to consider their decisions in more dimensions and to act better either in role-play or the reality. (Ments, 1999, p. 48)

Role-play can be also viewed as one of discovery techniques since problem solving is implemented. (Harmer, 1987, p. 29)

#### 2.6.5 Role-play to sensitize

The method of the role play to sensitize is applied to situations where we would like to develop empathy, consideration of other people's feelings. However, it is advised not to direct further questions too personally as this method is used for therapeutic purposes as well and it can very likely uncover some possible psychological trauma from the past.

The role-play can be filled with additional questions of other participants that would uncover reasons for happenings and feelings connected to them. Sometimes this method is used as a part of a discussion following another role-play scene. (Ments, 1999, p. 49)

#### 2.6.6 Role-play to create/express

This category “is a special group of techniques used to encourage students to develop their creative self-expression through the medium of drama.” (Ments, 1999, p. 55) Therefore it is desirable to realize that the role-plays are not meant only to express oneself verbally, but also non-verbally. There is no need to express emotions in the means of words, sometimes silence is enough apart from gestures and mimics. The ability to explain the silence belongs rather to a field of psychology. Nevertheless, like in the real-life situations it is necessary to decode it somehow and cope with it. (Ments, 1999, p. 49)

Since there are many types of role-plays, the teacher has to decide about the objectives that are supposed to be carried out beforehand, and then select one of them.

### 3 Eight graders at lower-secondary school

All learners of English language or any another field should be viewed on an individual basis regardless their age group that brings many specifics as well. Some of these individual measurements might be based on an aptitude and the multiple intelligence theory. There are learners who show less or more talent in languages, they usually excel either in an area of the language system or a language skill, sometimes both simultaneously. However, more frequently happens that a learner can communicate about various topics in a understandable manner while the grammar might be at lower level, this does not affect the comprehension of the output though.

Considering the multiple intelligence theory, the learners usually possess more than one intelligence since seven categories of intelligences were proven to exist. They are as follows: „Musical/rhythmic, verbal/linguistic, visual/spatial, bodily/kinaesthetic, logical/mathematical, intrapersonal and interpersonal.“ (Harmer, 1991, p. 46) This only emphasizes the fact that all human beings have their specific learning needs in the means of including their senses (sight, hearing, touch), logical features, interaction or autonomy. Thus the teacher should try to include activities or elements that would be suitable for a range of intelligences.

However, there is also a distinction of learners based on age. There are three basic age groups in the ELT methodologies: young children, adolescents, adult learners. In the following text the age group corresponding to the pupils of eighth grade will be discussed in connection with the ELT.

#### 3.1 Specifics of eight grade learners

Eight graders are pupils who attend a lower-secondary school, usually aged from thirteen to fourteen years, sometimes one year less or more. Therefore, they would fit the criterium of adolescents from the categories of human lifespan since adolescents are defined as individuals aged from ten to nineteen. (Green, 2002, p. 326)

In the following text a brief description is provided with, the specifics of this age group in the classroom settings are discussed as well as the supplementary skills they are supposed to develop in accordance with the Framework educational program of the Czech republic.

The age group that the pupils of eighth grade could be linked to (apart from adolescents) might be also defined as "pubescence," commencing approximately at the age of eleven and terminating at the age of sixteen. However, there might be differences in this range of ages depending on the genetics, environment and other factors of the individuals.

(Britannica, 2019, ONLINE) Pubescence is described as a period of rapid growth, when a child transforms into an adult, which is linked to the physical maturity as well, meaning the ability of reproduction. The hormonal systems of the pupils develop and they undergo a transformation development either to women or men.

It is very important to note that "...adolescence provides opportunities for fresh starts, for new directions that are not predictable from the events of childhood. There are so many people whose early years were full of trauma and pathological symptoms—one thinks of examples like Thomas Edison, Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, Antonio Gramsci— yet who forget in adolescence a sturdy enough self to overcome their handicaps and lead full, productive lives." (Csikszentmihalyi&Larson, 1984, p. 4)

This suggests that the early childhood has a strong impact on the future life of the person but is not inevitable as far as "a normal, happy child" can transform into the opposite and the adolescence plays an important role in possible crucial changes. The school and teacher might be providers of possible aid or guidance.

There are specifics linked to the learning process that usually occur in their behaviour and adolescents are differentiated by them from the young children as pupils. The young children usually respect the teacher and are very pleased if they do well in his eyes, on the other hand adolescents rather wish to be **admired by their peers** than by the teacher. Being accepted by their classmates tends to be very crucial for them, therefore they might be disruptive only for the sake of attracting the attention of others to them. (Ingersoll, 1989, p. 42) For this reason the pupils should be given enough space to express themselves in the lessons, this should be well-organised though.

**A search for identity** would be another distinctive feature of the adolescents from the young learners. The values of the life are explored as well as all norms and regulations are reflected and examined, thus this age group tends to be very critical towards them. This fact should be considered by the teacher. Therefore, understanding and acceptance of all possible opinions should be implied rather than moralising or cleaving to an approach or rule. (Oster, 1988, p. 16) The teacher should be a good manager and resource for the activities chosen in the process of the identity development and setting a suitable learning environment.

In the intellectual sphere an adolescent "develops new skills and knowledge especially linked to the **world of work**." This would imply that role-plays to practice new skills or speaking in various work fields are desirable. In order to engage the pupils more in the activity, a supplementary element might be also involved. A representative participant from



the particular work field might visit the classroom and his comments or demonstration may serve not only as a language source but also information provision.

The adolescent period of life may be characterized by very common **consciousness disorders** as well, generally based on confronting the goals structured by values and instincts. Instincts are those that are seen as more important by the adolescents due to their connection to the body (the need for dominance, social territory etc.) (Csikszentmihalyi&Larson, 1984, p. 19) Thus adolescents usually find themselves in conflict with their goals and the socially prescribed ones (attending school, doing homework etc.). There are four basic forms of the disorders: bad mood, tiredness, loss of motivation, inability to effectively use attention.

### **3.2 Motivation in the Classroom**

It is said that the younger pupils are usually active when role-play activities and are not happy to be only passive recipients, which might be true considering the adolescents as well, however, there are many factors that may influence their behaviour and one of them is motivation. The teacher is expected to maintain it in the course of the lessons. As mentioned above, even those pupils who were motivated before can lose their motivation. It might be either caused by passivity or negative feelings. The adolescents also tend to daydream usually as a consequence of being forced to do something preventing them from achievement of their own goals. For this reason the task completion might include lots of simple mistakes linked to consciousness disorders (Csikszentmihalyi&Larson, 1984, p. 21).

There are always pupils of all age groups that would be motivated to learning or classroom cooperation as well as those who lack any evidence of motivation in their actions. In this context it is important to differentiate between the two basic categories of motivation, which is intrinsic and extrinsic.

A pupil that cooperates for the sake of own satisfaction (interests towards the topic or the whole subject) and joy of progression would be described as intrinsically motivated, whereas the pupil who would be prompted by the teacher to work or would make efforts to learn on the grounds of receiving respectable school grades, would be defined as extrinsically motivated.

The teacher should intervene in case there is no evidence of pupils being motivated in any of the ways described above. Not only extrinsic motivation can be developed with the teacher's help of choosing alternative didactic strategies (different system of evaluation, of

classroom management and teaching techniques), but the intrinsic one can be stimulated as well by the **teacher**. Thus the role of teacher includes the role of a motivator.

Teacher who creates a respectful environment **supporting the self-esteem** of each individual could be valued as supportive to motivation. The attitude to the pupils should be friendly and showing acceptance, appreciating and noticing any progression. (Ingersoll, 1989, p.36)

The adolescents value if the teacher behaves to them as to adults, with **respect** towards them and suggesting equality. This is why pupils tend to be unmotivated to respond in lessons once they were humiliated in front of their peers and not only them, but all pupils who realize the present threat that it might happen. The atmosphere can be relieved by teacher's being one of the participants, sharing his own insights and by bringing a element of humour into the classroom. (Herod, 1999, p. 362)

There is also a connection between motivation and choice of topics to be covered in the lesson, the following chapter "Topics in the classroom" should illustrate that.

### **3.3 Topics in the classroom**

As mentioned above, topics concerning occupations would be the most appealing to adolescents, and therefore they would be the most suitable motivational tool. The adolescents would also be motivated in activities that would give them enough space for reflection. However, there is not a success ensured only by providing suitable and interesting topics, the pupils are keen on them as much as they are well introduced and clear. Additionally, the interest of the learners increases as soon as they are **aware of the objectives** of the assigned activities.

Suitable topics to be assigned to the adolescents should be selected also based on desirable outcomes. The adolescents should deal with day-to-day activities and daily situations: "mastering interactions with parents, achieving harmony with friends, learning to handle the pressure of school, and developing means to transcend everyday conflicts." (Csikszentmihalyi&Larson, 1984, p. 5) This all could be easily trained in the role-play settings during the English language lesson.

Nevertheless, not only the teacher should be the one who would make decisions about each lesson or choice of topics. Learners value if the lessons are based on mutual agreement between them and the teacher and they can participate in the whole learning process actively. Either they can suggest a topic on their own or they can be provided with a list of topics to be covered and they might choose the order they wish to accomplish them or select one of them

for the following sessions. It also signifies whether the relationship of the teacher and pupils is rather friendly or not.

### **3.4 National curricula of Czech lower secondary schools and the role play**

The following citation might draw the role-play potential extensive usage in the curricular context: "Our complex society confronts young people with many choices and shifting values. In addition to the conventional areas of the curriculum, schooling must provide students with experiences in values clarification and problem solving and, especially, the opportunity for moral development.

Originally, we saw role-playing to be the most useful in social studies and guidance. Now, as a glance at the educational index reveals, role playing is used in many other curriculum areas: in language arts, science and ecology courses, vocational education, urban studies, futurological studies, as well as history, interpersonal relations, and citizenship education." (SHAFTTEL, 1982, p. 14)

Thus, if the role-play was introduced to pupils in one subject properly, they might understand its rules, benefits and adapt to it.

The Framework Educational Programme includes seven competencies that should be developed at the pupils during the lessons of all subjects and the pupils should approach them by the ninth grade, which is close to the selected age group of this diploma project, and therefore they are listed below.

The competencies are as follows:

"Learning competency, problem-solving competency, communication competency, social and personal competency, civic competency, entrepreneurial competency and digital competency was added at the beginning of the year 2021 as a response to the necessity of the distance studies due to the coronavirus pandemic. (NUV, 2021, p. 10) The tendency is to develop at least one of the competencies in of the each lessons.

The role play technique can be used inside and outside the English classroom. It is very flexible and therefore all the competencies listed above could be easily and effectively developed by means of it.

#### **Learning competency (NUV, 2021, p. 10)**

Role play used in the English Classroom should let the pupils understand the interconnection between the subjects and the world surrounding them. When the pupils are asked to act a role play, they have to organize their previous knowledge and the datas they

might need in order to create a meaningful piece. They have to know where or who they might receive their information from.

**Problem-solving competency** (NUV, 2021, p. 11)

Problem-solving tasks occupy the most important position in all role play activities. Role play allows the participants to discuss a problem, difficult situation or to show possible solutions. Here it is obvious that there might be as many solutions shown as many groups there are, and furthermore, there could be even more possible resolutions suggested.

**Communication competency** (NUV, 2021, p. 11)

The role play technique enables the pupils to examine their speaking skills. They train to express their opinions and ideas in some meaningful units. They are also taught to listen to the utterances others perform and reply to their questions or wondering whenever necessary. The aim of this competency is to interact with each other with the usage of existing and trustworthy sources of information.

All role play activities develop the communicative competence, mostly in each of them the pupil has to reflect his/her own ideas or stances and the others should react to them either orally, in written form or other ways of non-verbal communicative means (mime, gestures etc.). In all the activities pupils should try to interact with their classmates effectively and politely, they should regard a text or a speaker as a source of information that needs to be considered critically so that conclusions can be drawn. For this purpose the information gap tasks would be the most suitable.

**Social and personal competency**

“On the basis of recognition or accepting a new role during an activity, the pupil positively reflects on the quality of the cooperative work.” (NUV, 2021, p. 12)

Role-playing demands pair or group work, the pupils have to manage their time to deal on information or anything that they were assigned to. The pupils should be led to cooperation and respect to each other during their work.

Role playing might train these competences very effectively especially at academic debates where one half of class would defend one stance and the second half of the class the another. They would have to accept the rules of the communication, suitable language register etc.

**Civil competency** (NUV, 2021, p. 12)

Developing the civil competency is one of the crucial ones in the role-play activities. The pupils are often placed in front of a situation that they have to express their opinions about in a role-play form or to find a solution as well. This can develop empathy, helping and understanding others and a possible search for help. There are many topics to cover as

suggested in the framework program: facing psychical and physical violence, law and societal norms, awareness of rights and duties, respecting others and their opinions.

### **Work competency (page 13 RVP 2021)**

The pupils should be able to use their knowledge, materials, tools and equipment effectively. In the context of languages it should be the knowledge of the English language that might be used as a tool for communication in the labour market.

### **Digital competency**

The digital competency was added to other framework competencies in 2021 due to long-lasting coronavirus crisis and the need to employ technology that would enable distance studies in the OLE to the pupils.

Employing the role-play method in group activities that would be all practiced simultaneously during Online lessons requires widening knowledge of the pupils in the area of information technology. They should be able to use applications, programs, as well as share data, upload and download them. They also ought to be able to apply new means of task achievement with the use of the digital technologies. (NUV, 2021, p. 13)

### **Language and language communication**

In this section of the framework description there is an emphasis on improvement of communication skills. Apart from obligatory subjects concerning language education there is an option for a supplementary subject "Dramatic education" to be added in the school curriculum that is attached in the framework program "in order to develop verbal and non-verbal communication." This can be practised in the regular English lessons through role-play activities that might uncover the necessary language skills and language systems needed in order to comprehend and apply the language in ordinary life situations and to understand the differences in the ways of lives of other people and their cultures. (NUV, 2021, p. 16)

Students themselves can draw real-life situations based on an idea, or a context during the role-play activity. Then, their perception of reality would be visualised, pre-ready for a reflection on a certain matter either during the role-play or in the discussion section (depending on the role-play approach chosen).

However, all teaching practices of the foreign language education should lead to the common objectives which are prescribed for the lower secondary schools as required outputs. These outputs include productive (speaking, writing), receptive (listening, reading) language skills that demand "doing" and language systems (phonology, grammar, lexis and vocabulary, function) that require "knowing." (Scrivener, 1994, p. 24)

### **Listening with comprehension**

Apart from understanding a text that can be also a part of role-play or simulation activity, the requirements are as follows:

"The pupil is able to comprehend to a content of a simple, explicitly performed speech or conversation considering the topics that are learnt." (NUV, 2021, p. 27)

### **Speaking**

"The pupil asks about basic information and reacts adequately in common formal and informal situations. He is able to speak about his family, friends, school, free time and others topics being acquired. He tells a simple story or event, he describes people, places and things from everyday life." (NUV, 2021, p. 27)

### **Reading with comprehension**

"The pupil is able to find required information in simple everyday authentic materials, understands short and simple texts." (NUV, 2021, p. 27)

### **Writing**

"The pupil fills in basic information about himself in an application form, can write simple texts considering himself, his family, school, free time and other topics being acquired ." (NUV, 2021, p.27 )

The basic details concerning adolescent age groups such as their search for identity, peer recognition, concentration problems, conflicts were illustrated together of other specifics of any learners. Competencies and language skills were presented in order to be developed in the English lessons as well. In the following chapter, the schedule of role-play activities is about to be covered with features that belong to practice.

## 4 Role-play in the English classroom

This chapter concerns the methodology of the role-play activities. The possible difficulties and obstacles using the technique and assessment are discussed as well.

### 4.1 An Activity schedule

There should be always plenty of matters to be considered before the teacher selects a suitable activity and its inclusion to the lesson and adjustment to learning needs of the pupils. The following criteria should be taken into consideration before making a choice of a suitable kind of a role-play activity to be carried out by the learners and these are included in the preparation.

#### 4.1.1 Preparation before the lesson

It is suggested that the teacher makes his acquaintance with the class yet before the very first lesson and before meeting the pupils. He might review their records, ask the previous teachers and also talk to the parents. (COWLES, 1992, p. 12)

However, in this chapter there will be discussed common English teaching lesson, thus the teacher should be aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses from his own practice.

The teacher should consider the following areas when selecting an activity or a material included in it: "level of the pupils' knowledge, time necessary for completion of the activity, the aim to be reached, language area/skill to be used, developed or learnt, organization of the classroom. The pre-arranged plan enables flexibility during the activity. (Harmer, 1998, p. 5) It also avoids omitting and errors. Apart of these areas, the teacher ought to contemplate the assesment and feedback in the course of the activity or as a follow-up to it.

The preparation before the lesson includes everything that must be arranged before the classroom meeting as a whole, for instance printing out materials that would be used during the selected activities etc.

In the role-play context the teacher might prepare a short video, extracts, role cards that would draw the settings. A simple role card might contain only a name of a role such as a doctor, more complex cards could provide with more detailed information on a character or a guidance to actions such as complaints, asking for directions etc. (Scrivener, 1994, p. 220) Role cards should be concise and free of complex grammar structures, the teacher should also consider the best way of their distribution in the lesson.

Another tool of an aid to a successful role-play are character identity sheets, which can be filled in by the pupils themselves in order to adhere to the character they decide to take a role of. The character identity sheet might include: "name, profession, age, height, weight, hair colour, eyes, distinguishing marks, main personality features." (Ladousse, 1991, p. 14)

However, as mentioned above in the Chapter "Role-play Approaches," not all role-plays have to be structured or concerning „practice.“

### **Level**

The language abilities of the first foreign language of pupils attending eight grade at lower-secondary schools should range between the levels A1 to A2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which would correspond to the elementary and pre-intermediate/lower intermediate levels. (Harmer, 1998, p.12)

However, it is always important to acknowledge that language abilities of each pupil can differ and some pupils might be reaching the B1 level in case of being talented or even above. Thus, there should be variations and versions suitable for all of them, which is dependant on the teacher's awareness. The differences in pupils' levels of language abilities can be used in seating and grouping settings of the activity (see the Organization and Classroom interaction Chapters)

Generally, teaching beginners is characterized by an evident success or failure of pupils' output since there is a variety of topics and language system areas that they are supposed to be covered and examining their comprehension tends to be simple. (Harmer, 1998, p.13)

### **Time**

The activity should be prepared in accordance with the time possibilities of the lesson. The role-play activity might be carried out during the whole lesson or only in a part of it. It is recommended that the first role-play activities practiced in the classroom are rather short, then the effort of the pupils and attention paid to the task would be higher. A long activity does not imply an effective one as well.

For older pupils of primary schools the role-play is advised to last from 20 to 30 minutes in order to be efficient (Chesler, 1966, p. 19).

### **Aim**

The objectives of the activity should be set concretely and should be intelligible to both teacher and then pupils. Apart from developing areas of language systems and skills, the preference of accuracy or fluency in the role-play as a speaking activity should be also stated and obvious. The development of competencies should not be forgotten while setting the



objectives as far as they also should be included (see the Chapter "National curricula of Czech lower secondary schools and the role play").

### **Language**

The teacher should decide whether the pupils should use the language they know or which language skills and areas of the language system he would like the pupils to practice or to learn. The activity could also concern language registers.

In role-play activities there can be all skills practiced as well as speaking since a writing, listening, reading might be included in the warm-up or briefing part of the activity and the pupils could only follow the pattern of acknowledged piece of information.

As for language systems, it is advised to leave a free path for pupils to speak when speaking activities such as role-play. However, there can be short list of vocabulary, phrases that must be used in the role-play, similar can be required when applying grammar, for instance pupils might be allowed to use only the past tense.

Though for situational role-plays it is recommended to learn expressions related to the areas needed. "Whatever the situation in which you find yourself, you will be required to perform one or more of the following:

- 1 asking for information
- 2 giving an explanation
- 3 asking for something
- 4 paying for something
- 5 thanking somebody
- 6 apologising to somebody
- 7 complaining about something
- 8 describing something or someone
- 9 choosing something" (Whelpton, 1987, p. 8)

For this sake it is advised to teach/practice terms that would facilitate pupils' formulation of their ideas.

### **Organization**

Sometimes, the whole classroom environment is included and the emphasis is laid on the visual aspects such as charts, furniture, chairs and desks distribution in it. (Bender, 2003, p. 27) Depending on the number of pupils there should be certain arrangements in the classroom in order to increase the effectivity of the learning process.

In the preparatory phase taking place before the lesson the teacher should consider arrangements such as grouping students or seating. The recommended seating order for the

role-play activities would be circle, separate tables, sometimes providing it was an activity with the whole classroom the orderly rows or the form of horseshoe would be suitable. (Harmer, 1998, p. 18)

The separate tables seating might be appropriate in case of a need for discreet arrangements before the role-play activity that might show negative or positive stances towards a topic of each of the groups as a role-play with elements of an argumentative debate.

The group or pair work tend to be the most common during the role-plays pupils' performance since student speaking time rises while activities of this type in general and the pupils are expected to become more active and independent. The group/pair activity does not necessarily have to meet the requirements though. It is based on many other factors than seating or organisation, and they can act as predictors whether a certain classroom organisation would function or not. These factors are described in the Chapter 3 in detail.

There is still a significant difference between pair and group work in the means of discipline. Pair work might provide with more calm and less chaotic atmosphere as well as division of speaking time of both pupils approximately into two halves. The teacher can even monitor the situation better and notice the procedures the pupils take while the task being accomplished. This might even help the teacher to manage the time settings better in case that there was no time limit previously set. (Ladousse, 1991, p.12)

The pupils can be seated in the ordinary orderly rows in the briefing part of the activity and later change their seating. This is dependant on the procedures that would be selected and the number of pupils in the classroom. However, generally it is the number of fifteen pupils at schools in the Czech republic.

The whole class organisation does not necessarily have to mean that the speaking time of the participants in the role-play activity would be unequal. Then the seating arrangement or the activity management itself plays an important role. For instance, there is a suggestion of one chair to be placed in the middle of a circle, all participants of the class (fifteen pupils) would share it one by one to manifest themselves, their opinions or take the role assigned to the person sitting on the chair, this is referred to as "an open chair format." (Hawley, 1975, p. 38) This has a strong effect for the sake of its central position that would catch everybody's attention and a visual emphasis of the current speaker/character.

The advantage of the whole class organisation is that the teacher can monitor the performance of the pupils more effectively as far as a limited number of participants would speak at the same time, thus the feedback providing might be much easier. On the other hand,

the fact of being watched by the teacher and all the classmates might be stressful for some pupils.

This classroom organisation when role-play activities might be useful for brainstorming ideas to problem solving or possible scenarios of situations/events. (Whelpton, 1987, p. 7)

No matter which classroom organisation would be chosen for the role-play activity the teacher should keep in mind that during any speaking activity the pupils prefer eye contact, being in a reasonably close proximity to the person they are speaking to and hearing him/her properly. (Scrivener, 1994, p. 222)

The number of pupils in each lesson might change since someone might be absent, thus the activity should be prepared for different number of students and various grouping settings. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 32)

There are many methods of creating groups or pairs and selection of pupils as their participants. They can be based on friendship, levels of ability or participation, chance, changing groups. (Harmer, 1991, p. 120-122) The teacher is usually well aware of the relationships in the classroom, if it is not the case then he can use a sociodiagram to explore the preferences of each pupils illustrating who they are happy to be surrounded by or work with. The pupils can be also asked to select their preferred classmate to work with, however, there might be always some students ignored.

In case there are pupils with higher language abilities than the other, they can be placed in each group or pair. Nevertheless, they can become too dominant and other participants might not have an opportunity to speak. For this reason it is desirable that various levels of abilities would be represented by a number of pupils in the classroom and they could be grouped together. This would be suitable in the participation approach since they are more likely to participate in a similar distribution.

As stated above, groups could be changed within one activity, which would enable flexible interaction with more or all classmates.

#### 4.1.2 Preparation in the lesson

The introductory part takes place in the preparatory phase of an activity. The teacher draws a topic or a context of it. The most effective is a brief but clear lead-in. A material such as role cards or character sheet might be handed out to the pupils.

The distribution of role cards might be performed in three basic forms. First of them might be a random card distribution meaning that neither teacher or pupils would be able to

decide about their roles. According to the second form, role cards would be assigned to the pupils by the teacher himself which might be based on his knowledge of pupils characters and thus might be targeted at development of specific features. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 14) The last form of role card distribution or role choice would be established upon pupils' agreement. This might be rather time consuming and often roles might be assigned unproductively since a dominant character might be selected for a pupil whose linguistic possibilities would be much lower than of his peers who might be assigned to perform less dominant characters. (Ments, 1999, p. 52)

Grouping of the pupils is considered at this stage as well since the teacher has to make further arrangements and set up the activity.

#### 4.1.3 Warm-up: briefing

The teacher should give instructions, organise the grouping and make sure that the instructions concerning the situation or the roles (role-cards) were understood by all pupils of the classroom. (Chesler, 1966, p. 32) The role-cards might be accompanied with the character sheets that should be filled in their accordance so as to arouse imagination particularly before the first activities. In case the mother tongue of the pupils is identical, then one of the pupils might be asked to summarize the rules to all classmates. This method might help the teacher to reflect his own instruction and adjust it to the pupils needs in the next time as well.

A strict time limit should be set in order to let the pupils know how to manage their role-play performance, whether it is supposed to be a brief or a highly-developed utterance. The pupils might be also asked to complete a task before the key activity takes place, this might be a discussion, brainstorming expressions, reading extracts, watching videos, photographs etc.

Warm-up phase should help to stimulate ideas, motivate the pupils and introduce the aims of the following activity. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 57)

#### 4.1.4 Procedure

In the procedure of running a role-play activity it is recommended that the teacher uses a simple and specific word for a command to commence such as: "begin!" for opening the role-play in order to avoid any confusion. If he decided that the pupils' should finish or they ran out of their time limit, he should say "cut!" to stop the role-play. (Hawley, 1975, p. 31) There should be always some time left for the debriefing part of the activity.

The teacher should monitor the groups and be aware of their progress. In case a group finished before the time limit, he should have another follow-up activity ready for assignment.

#### 4.1.5 Follow-up: debriefing

Debriefing is emphasized to be one of the crucial parts of the role-play activity and should not be omitted. It is as important as the role-play itself, there are many teachers who skip this action though (in most cases for the sake of time possibilities), thus the activity schedule should also include the expected duration of debriefing part. A reflection (usually individual) or a collective discussion could be carried out in order to provide with a meaningful feedback on the activity as a whole or topics, situations or linguistic items used.

It is emphasized to make sure no factual errors were made and if they were, it is necessary to correct them. (Ments, 1999, p. 17)

**Variations:** There can be a number of variations depending on the desired output. For instance, the choice of teacher role itself makes a big difference during the role-play activity. The teacher might be one of the participants, bringing his ideas or prompts from inside the group in a friendly manner or stay as an authority in more specific teacher roles.

#### 1.1.1 Roles of the teacher

The roles of the teacher may vary within the role-play activities as far as they might be practised in various forms. However, the teacher talking time in the introduction phase of an activity is usually maximized and his role would be usually the one of a **motivator, instructor, organizer**. In order to prepare and help the pupils to carry out an efficient activity, the teacher has to be a good **manager** in its course and before it as well.

During the activity, he himself might adopt a role of **participant**, which might help to lighten the classroom environment from pressure. Other roles would be those more characteristic for teachers such as **enabler** whose lessons are not only subject matter-centred, consisting of various methods, though people-based as well. Then, as a **prompter** he might help to direct the pupils to an idea or direction that they could take during an activity.

(Harmer, 1991, 58-63)

## 4.2 Teacher and student talking time

It is estimated that the teacher talking time occupies up to 95 % of common teacher-centred language lessons. Thus activities such as RP offer transformation of the time proportions between students and teachers. (Hawley, 1975, p. 7)

In all language lessons it is desirable if the students' talking time is maximalized and the teacher's talking time minimalized. The reason for this is evident, the pupils are those who need to practise their language skills and there is only limited time of forty-five minutes per lesson.

As described in the chapter "An Activity schedule," there are four main phases concerning the activity management. The teacher talking time would be raised in some and decreased in others depending on the functions of each phase and the roles that the teacher and learners adopt. (Harmer, 1998, p. 4)

### **4.3 Assessment and error correction**

"To grow in a culture such as ours, where individuation is a requirement of selfhood, one must alternate between integration with, and differentiation from, social systems. One must learn to give oneself a feedback, as well as to use feedback from others."  
(Csikszentmihalyi&Larson, 1984, p. 216)

The pupils themselves might wonder whether a certain phrase, term or grammar pattern are correct and that is the most favourable result of a role-play activity. They would themselves participate in the learning process and be managers of their own knowledge-gaps and improvements. That would be a path to a formative assessment.

The teacher should emphasize that any utterance that the learners perform is valuable and welcome, especially in the context in formative assessment. There should be no right or wrong answers to any issue concerning the role-play, only the linguistic aspect might be discussed. However, it is advised not to attach a great value to the error correction during the activity. If some mistakes were made, then the teacher can use them for another activity in the next lesson or in the same session in a very careful and friendly manner. For instance, the teacher could make blackboard notes of mistakes that he heard in the previous lesson while monitoring the role-play group or pair work. (Harmer, 1987, p.39)

A feedback might be concerning appropriacy of the pupils' utterances as well, reflecting the language. (Harmer, 1991, p.104)

### **4.4 Possible difficulties**

The role-play is described as a teaching method that is natural to the learners and brings joy and enthusiasm. However, the teacher should avoid using roles that might evoke some kind of emotional harm or concern private life of the participants. One should realize that shift to a different role identity could be sometimes demanding for some pupils and that should be counted with. Other possible difficulties are as follows:

#### 4.4.1 Lack of time

Lack of time in the lesson and closing the role-play activity before the pupils finish can also cause its inefficacy. Striving for quicker progression in completion of the assigned objectives might cause a complete failure in meeting them. The tension might impact on the whole classroom atmosphere and pupils negatively.

#### 4.4.2 Noise and chaos

Sometimes in the classroom environment the pupils can get noisy when carrying out an activity. "Noise is only a problem when the teacher nextdoor complains." (Ladousse, 1991, p. 32) However, there should be also a distinction between noise and chaos since chaos might distract the pupils from a successful objective approaching.

#### 4.4.3 Not participating students

There is a theory that there are always students who do not pay attention in the classroom or do not cooperate, which implies that the teacher should not worry in case of two pairs of the whole classroom do not participate on the assigned activity or task. (Ladousse, 1991, p. 32) Thus he/she should take care of those pupils who wish to work on the assigned task and to participate and ignore those who behave disruptively unless it affects others.

#### 4.4.4 Speaking mother tongue

In case the learners speak the same mother tongue and learn English as their second language, they should be asked to use only English while group or pair activities. Their mother tongue could be used when the introductory part of the activity in order to summarize rules and instructions to the peers.

Sometimes mother tongue is used by the pupils when the task is too difficult to be carried out and thus topics, situations have to be selected based on the pupils' linguistic and emotional levels. Providing with a list of vocabulary or phrases might be helpful in order to

avoid this just like beginning with easy information-gap filling role-plays. (Harmer, 1991, 132)

#### 4.4.5 Shyness of pupils

There are always pupils shy to speak or to express themselves. They should not be forced to speak but offered a safe space to encourage them in. Some pupils tend to be very shy while speaking activities. However, paradoxically while role-plays they might become rather open and talkative, which should be taken advantage of and offer other topics or characters that could be valuable in further development. As previously mentioned, a shy child should never be assigned a role of a shy character. Apart from shyness there might be a problem concerning emotional content of the role-plays. (Hawley, 1975, p. 8)

### 4.5 Role-play in the OLE

Role-plays can be performed in OLE as well as in the ordinary classroom. Nevertheless, there are slight differences that would be listed briefly in the following text.

New situations and problems occurred even with the era of new technologies used in classrooms after the year 2000. There were several attempts of teachers trying to create technology-rich classrooms since then and that brought new methodologies to be followed in case of the need to utilize computers in the classroom. Soon after managing the basic skills on the computers, teachers realized how useful the technologies are in order to enable or facilitate "...grading, record keeping, individualizing instruction, and developing new materials." (Sandholtz, 1997, p. 56)

Nevertheless, the awareness of pupils' misbehaviour in a computer environment rose as well, beginning with the excuses of computer malfunction ending in facilitated cheating methods.

There is a process that each teacher has to follow when making a new attempt for inclusion of computers in a classroom, it consists of three stages : "entry, adoption, adaption". (Sandholtz, 1997, p. 53)

In the entry stage there is no anticipation of possible problems, they occur and there is a need for a solution to be found, thus in the adoption stage the teacher expects the possible problems and solutions to them. Then in the adaption phase he works with the technology effectively, can predict misfunctions or difficulties in the computer usage, often prepares alternatives. This schema might be transferred to the OLE as well since both technologies and



Online education bring certain difficulties in practice that need to be tested and acknowledged.

Firstly, It is the choice of a program, platform or application that would enable the role-plays in the Online environment. The preferred programs are usually those enabling the usage of Learning Management System or "LMS" as well, which synchronizes most of teaching elements into one classroom environment. This means that learning materials, interaction possibilities, tools for testing and assesment are involved and these elements are usually customizable by the teachers. (Priscina, 2020) An example of a platform of this type can be MS Teams that will be described in detail in the following text and in the practical part of this diploma project.

The important is to decide whether role-plays are supposed to be carried out in a written form or orally and whether they should be included in a part of an Online English lesson or they should form an additional unit to the learning process (as a part of homework etc.).

There might be some alternations in the classroom management between the common English learning classroom and the classroom in the OLE.

The teacher should always have more possibilities prepared in the same way as in face-to-face teaching. However, for Online teaching there should be alternatives concerning technology and equipment. The pupils should be told what to do provided their camera or microphone do not function properly, for instance they should be asked to cooperate in a chat.

### **Preparation:**

The teacher should prepare all materials for sharing in the lesson or providing it before the scheduled Online meeting. The properties of the program used should be considered, for instance whether there are proper sharing possibilities. Providing there are not, it is advisable to provide the pupils with different options to access the media, for instance a link to a cloud storage such as Google Disc where the file is saved.

### **Warm-up: briefing**

In this phase there should be paid a special attention to the instructions as soon as it tends to be more difficult to correct the wrong task comprehension in the Online environment than meeting face to face. The function of breakout rooms in MS Teams has not enabled watching all the participants in the same time so far, and therefore it might be very demanding to have all the pupils' performances under control and notice possible troubles that can be often detected only from gestures or silence.

**Procedure:**

The teacher can monitor groups or pair work depending on the selected program, application or platform where the role-play activity takes place. Some of them enable recording or switching to each group/pair, thus the teacher can assure himself that the instructions of the assigned activity were comprehended in practice, monitor pupils' task accomplishment and prompt instantly as well. In MS Teams this can be achieved in the breakout rooms, the teacher can switch from one group to the other ones, he can record the performances of each of them and they can be used for the debriefing phase of the activity.

**Follow-up: debriefing**

The debriefing part of the activity could take place either in the groups/pairs or the whole classroom. Online education sometimes offer more privacy in the course of the activity, thus the pupils grouped together are aware only about their own performance including ideas, problem solving etc. Debriefing in the whole class setting then enables peer sharing and might bring many surprising findings.

**4.6 Possible difficulties**

Technical problems such as background noise or a non-functioning microphone might occur, which should be kept in mind. Thus the teacher is always supposed to arrange an alternative for a task completing. In case a microphone of a pupil does not work, then it can be substituted for a chatting in a course of a pair or group activity. This solution might even evoke more real life settings.

As far as group or pair activity is comprised of many pupils, with class of 15 pupils in total, there would be approximately seven pairs/groups to visit in the breakout rooms, the response time of the teacher can be then elongated. It tends to be more time demanding to switch between groups, the visual support and degree of spontaneity plays an important role here as well.

Further details on the role-play practice in the OLE are provided with in the Practical section of this project work where there are samples of activities practiced in OLE and a survey based on contemporary situation of role-play application by teachers of English language.

## PRACTICAL PART

The practical part of this diploma project is supposed to help to answer the following hypothetical questions:

- 1) To which extent are role-plays efficient in the ELT?
- 2) Is there a difference in the “face-to-face” and OLE lessons in a connection to the practice of the role-play?
- 3) How do teachers and learners perceive role-plays?

The answers to these questions will be based on my own observations during the teaching practice (described in the activity schedules of the Chapter 5 "Role-play activities in practice") as well as a quantitative questionnaire, which is about to be handed out to lower-secondary teachers of English in the Czech republic.

The practical part of this diploma project is therefore divided into two chapters. In the first chapter, ten sample role-play activities practiced during English language lessons in Online environment are described. All essential information such as an activity schedule, requirements of sources and technology are included as well as remarks and possible variations that might be carried out. Any material for sharing or handing out can be found in the attachments.

All the activity plans were practised with pupils of eight grade of the Primary school of Saint Voršila in Olomouc. Since it is customary to divide the whole class in the language lessons into two groups in the Czech republic, the division at this school is not exceptional and is identique. Thus, in the English lessons of my teaching practice there was a number of twelve pupils and their English teacher was Mrs Šárka Chlupová who also provided me with plenty of useful findings and ideas, in particular for the work in the Online Environment. The Online lessons took place in MS Teams program.

It is important to mention that my teaching practice did not take place at this school for the first time. I was present for an inspection and teaching practice here in November 2019, which means the lessons took place in a face-to-face attendance. This fact enables a comparison between these two contraries of language teaching- the distant studies and face-to-face lessons.

Being very skeptical about the distant studies efficiency, after the inspection of Online lessons of Mrs Šárka Chlupová a definite conclusion to my question whether distance studies could be of the same value as the "face-to-face" education“ was brought. It was evident that all the elements of the lesson as I knew them from the face-to-face teaching practice were included (from warm-up activities such as conversation, homework correction, listening

activities to examinations), therefore I was glad to confirm that these two forms of English language teaching and learning are comparable.

However, there was only one element that was found missing in the Online lessons and that previously took place in the English conversation classes that this time were included in the common English language lessons and were represented by five to ten minutes of conversation at the beginning of them. It was the group work that disappeared from the lesson plan of the teacher. After making an inquiry, I was told that there is a lack of time to explore the possibilities of teaching in the Online environment further, even though one has heard of a group work in a specific program, it still needs to be explored before including it as the means of performing an activity.

Thus the Chapter "Role-play activities in practise" of this diploma work does not only list the activities practised and description but also draws possible alternatives of the MS Teams usage in their course, which opens the large topic of tools in the OLE.

The second chapter draws the results of the quantitative research examining the efficiency of the role-play method usage in the English classroom. It also compares the application of role-play in the face-to-face education and the OLE. It mentions possible reasons for any of the approached results and together with the observation of the pupils during my teaching practice and their attitudes to role-play, it provides with answers to the hypotheses set in the introduction of the practical part of this diploma project.

## 5 Role-play activities in practice

There are ten activities from the English language practice lessons selected to be described in this chapter. As far as all the below mentioned activities were practiced with the pupils of eighth grade, the language level output of theirs was set to "elementary," sometimes overlapping to the next level.

All the following activities took place in the OLE using the Microsoft Teams application. Thus, necessarily a description concerning the teaching process from this perspective is included as well.

### 5.1 Role-play: What movie are we going to watch together?

**Time:** The period of 25 minutes is set to accomplish the objectives of the activity.

**Aim:** The pupils deal on a name of a movie to watch together.

**Language:**

Language system: Vocabulary and grammar structures concerning refusal, suggestion, agreement and movie description are practiced as well as the informal language register.

Language skills: reading, listening and speaking are practiced

**Organization:** The ideal arrangement for this activity are groups of three pupils, however pair work is also possible as soon as "Student 3" does not necessarily have to be included in the role-play activity and the two other pupils can cope with the task objectives on their own.

**Preparation:**

**- Before the lesson**

A handout/pdf file "What movie are we going to watch together?" should be ready for sharing (see the Appendix 1). The breakout rooms that the pupils are supposed to be divided into while the group/pair activity do not enable the option of collective sharing for the teacher. Thus, they can either view the activity in the whole class window, open their document in shared files in the classroom group or one of the pupils can share it in the breakout room call/chat window. The teacher might provide with an external link that could function as a second possibility of the source storage, for instance on the Google Disc.

A selected one-minute footage of each one of four film trailers represented on the role-play handout is supposed to be prepared, for instance on the Youtube internet platform. A proper preparation is crucial at this phase since it might cause delay in the lesson. However, this material is not necessary for performing the activity, but desirable to motivate.

**- In the lesson:**

The teacher is supposed to check the attendance of the pupils in order to make a suitable grouping organization since the breakout rooms cannot be preset before the scheduled meeting in the MS Teams application. Breakout rooms provide with either automatic or manual function to create groups. This grouping can be edited at anytime, pupils can be added or shifted from one group to another time whenever the teacher wishes.

**Warm-up (7 minutes):**

Since the role-play activity is structured, pupils are assigned roles that have to fulfill the requirements stated on the handout that they are provided with. Their comprehension of the instructions should be checked, the teacher could also create a simple list of phrases suitable for making suggestion, refusal and agreement. This list could be accessible to all in the Whiteboard application on the Teams.

**Procedure (10 minutes):**

The duration of carrying out the activity should be based on the task achievement, ten minutes might be set as the maximum time limit though

**Follow-up (5 minutes):**

Each group is supposed to summarize their role-play outcomes, which means that three information will be provided with: the name of the film, time and place for watching it.

**Remark on the practice:** The pupils were strongly motivated by the movie trailers that were played in share screen mode in MS Teams. However, this activity was assigned to be performed in the fourth lesson of the pupils on that day and this caused concentration difficulties and longer time was needed in order to explain the instructions and assure they were comprehended. This is what always should be expected though.

In the course of the procedure, the teacher discovers plenty of information by a simple observation of the grouped pupils. After switching on the function of recording some of pupils started to notice its icon. And thus, after a few moments of silence one of pupils expressed his consternation: "They are recording us and then they are going to see us! They are going to watch what we are saying and doing, have you understood that?" These exclamations only affirm the fact that pupils themselves have to learn about technology, programs and try to use them so that they familiarize with them and are selfconfident while using them. This shows that digital competency can be developed within the English classes in very extensive means.

## **5.2 Role-play: I am a word**

**Time:** 22 minutes

**Aim:** Pupils define selected vocabulary.

They interact with their classmates to discover details about each other.

**Language:**

Language system: Vocabulary is developed, phonological features as well

Language skills: speaking

**Organization:** groups of three pupils

**Preparation:**

**- Before the lesson**

List of vocabulary from Project 4, lesson 4, section A is saved so that it could be shared (see the Appendix 2)

**- In the lesson:**

The teacher prepares the list of vocabulary in an electronic form to share it Online when the activity is set to take place

**Warm-up** (7 minutes):

The teacher and pupils read the words from the vocabulary list together so that the correct pronunciation is retained and the pupils feel secure in pronouncing the words. (2 minutes)

After this short introducing cooperation, the pupils are instructed about the roles that they are supposed to take in the following part of the activity. Each student chooses a word from the list of the assigned words that becomes his/her name and his/her character changes based on its specifics. It is dependent on the fantasy of each participant. They are supposed to express themselves, their emotions or attitudes towards a specific topic of their choice. However, the name must not be mentioned directly by his carrier, only the one who would guess it, is allowed to pronounce it. The teacher provides with a demonstration of his own chosen word that functions as his name and role at the same time, for instance the word “angry” and he begins with saying: I always fight with everyone. How about you?

And another participant should reply using his own word specifics. His name might be “Happiness” so he might say: “Oh, I don’t, I am very pleased if I make anybody pleased. Do you like other people?” Then the next one proceeds until one guesses the name of the other one in the play. (5 minutes)

**Procedure** (10 minutes): The pupils perform the role-plays in breakout rooms, afterwards they are returned to the main meeting.

**Follow-up** (5 minutes): The groups of pupils are asked to reveal what names/words they chose to be and whether it took long for the other members of the group to discover the role of the participant.

**Other possible variations:** The follow-up part of the activity could be longer and the word forms could be discussed in the means of word categories as well. There can be a quick overview by raising hands who was a noun, adjective and who was a verb and whether they could create a sentence of their chosen names or not.

**Remark:** The pupils understood that the activity is supposed to bring some amusement and should be carried out in a similar spirit as the example that was performed by myself as the teacher. This activity was performed in the breakout rooms and thus the introduction part was crucial as soon as there was no possibility left for the teacher to react immediately to some questions or problems that would occur later on.

The pupils can leave the breakout rooms either when the teacher closes them or when he/she presets that the pupils can return to the main meeting. However, it is not recommended since it could make a more chaotic situation if the pupils might leave their breakout room anytime they decide to the main meeting and the teacher might be discussing some issue with a group in some of the other breakout rooms.

The pupils should be led to be responsible in their learning process and try to improvise any utterance even if they are not sure about the instructions. They should know the activity is set for them to train and develop their language skills.

### **5.3 Role-play: So do I**

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Aim:** Pupils interact and express an agreement or disagreement (using an inversion).

**Language:**

Language system: Grammar structure of inversion is practiced. Phonological certainty is to be built by repetition of some of the statements.

Language skills: Speaking, reading, listening

**Organization:** The whole class, pair work

This activity is carried out in the whole class setting, afterwards selected pairs interact with each other as assigned in the document to be shared during the activity.

**Preparation:**

**- Before the lesson**

The Word document consisting of statements with gaps left out for replies and attached names of the pupils should be prepared at this stage.

**- In the lesson:**



The teacher prepares the technology and shares the Word document with the pupils in the MS Teams meeting window.

**Warm-up** (3 minutes):

A short demonstration to introduce the outcomes of the activity is provided with.

For instance, Mary would say “I do not like cooking” and John has to react and express an agreement or disagreement with this statement. At this stage, the pupils are asked to try to express the agreement (Neither do I) and disagreement (Oh, I do) in this example.

**Procedure** (5 minutes):

Each pupil reads the extract of the text where his/her name appears and he/she completes a statement according to a personal opinion, preference or taste. Instantly, a classmate whose name is assigned as well at the same statement expresses an agreement or disagreement to this. This contextual usage of role-play is then the type of role-play to demonstrate and it enables the pupils to understand the real-life utilization of this language element.

**Follow-up** (2 minutes):

In the debriefing phase the usage of the inversion for the agreement and disagreement is summarized. The pupils can be questioned whether their perception of this grammatical rule has been modified or not. Another inquiry is based on a comparison between English and Czech language in expressing agreement and disagreement, a Czech equivalent to “So do I” and “Neither do I” statement is required from the pupils taking into account that sometimes it is helpful to make this kind of reflection.

**Remark on the practice:**

The pupils' change of roles took very little time since name of each pupil was assigned to an utterance, the distribution of the names in a way of list helped to accelerate the speed of role-changing. Even though one pupil was absent in the class, it was easy and fast to assign the role to another one. Furthermore, this role distribution brought understanding of the inversion application since there were many illustrative situations that were put to practice in this way.

#### **5.4 Role-play activity schedule: Pupils are the teachers**

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Aim:** The pupils are able to correct mistakes of the teacher.

The pupils interact and agree on a feedback.

**Language:**

Language system: Grammar concerning gerund and infinitive verb forms is practiced, spelling from the area of phonology as well.

Language skills: reading, listening, speaking is developed.

**Organization:** The whole class, group work

**Preparation:**

**- Before the lesson:**

A Microsoft PowerPoint presentation "Our Short Trip Days" is prepared (see a sample in the Appendix 3). The presentation consists of fourteen slides including the front page, then on each slide of the presentation there is a photo reflecting the life of the teacher and one single sentence accompanying it. Each statement includes a verb that requires either gerund or infinitive verb form, sometimes both options are possible. Each slide contains a name of at least three pupils of the classroom who are supposed to be speaking at the current slide.

**- In the lesson:** The PowerPoint presentation should be open and ready for sharing in the classroom meeting window in MS Teams

**Warm-up** (5 minutes):

Two pupils of the classroom are asked to summarize the usage of the gerund or the infinitive verb forms that follow certain verbs.

Then the teacher should introduce the aims of the activity and give proper instructions. He should emphasize that he himself is one of the participants and he is a pupil who needs to take counsel with expert teachers of English language (the real pupils).

**Procedure** (12 minutes):

As soon as the teacher commences to share the presentation, the role-play begins. He initiates the play as soon as he expresses his doubts about linguistic correctness of his statements. He is answered with a consensus of all the three pupils (teacher experts) whose names are present on slides, a new slide is presented after the teacher (in a role of a pupil) receives a satisfying answer.

**Follow-up** (3 minutes):

The pupils are provided with a short feedback after resolving the linguistic content of each slide since the teacher never leaves his statement without being corrected. The aspect of the pupil-teacher interaction can be also commented on in the feedback section.

**Other possible variations:** The pupils might be divided into groups in the breakout rooms and carry out this activity without the participation of the teacher.

**Remark:** This activity seemed to be very successful when practiced, the classroom atmosphere transformed into relaxed, calm, humorous after the previous activity, which was a homework correction. The fact that the roles between the teacher and the pupils were interchanged, emphasized the equality of both participants in the teaching and learning

processes. Pupils might feel motivated as the of teacher was assigned to them and they were given a trust to react and give feedback.

It is also advisable to remark to the pupils that their knowledge on the gerund and infinitive verb forms should be the same as the knowledge of teacher, since a list of specific verbs was introduced to them.

### **5.5 Role-play: In a Restaurant**

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Aim:** Pupils are able to order a meal in a restaurant.

**Language:**

Language system: Vocabulary is developed (phrases for meal ordering and names of meal courses and dishes). Language register is practiced as well.

Language skills: reading, speaking

**Organization:** Whole class (pairs and groups are also suitable, however this is the type of role-play to practice and its aim is to learn a new skill or a suitable behavior in a specific situation or settings)

**Preparation:**

- **Before the lesson:**

A menu in pdf file is prepared in order to be shared Online in the lesson.

- **In the lesson:**

The teacher opens a blank page in the Word document for a short warm-up before the activity, then the menu that should be prepared in order to introduce the activity and commence it.

**Warm-up** (7 minutes):

The teacher discusses possible greetings, phrases for meal ordering with the pupils, afterwards the vocabulary considering the menu is brainstormed and all ideas and suggestions are recorded in the Word document that is shared in the MS Teams application so that everyone can access it.

After this introduction phase the instructions for the activity proceeding are given. The pupils are the customers and the teacher is the waiter/waitress who will assist them to order their meal. This means that always one or two pupils are selected to carry out the performance in front of their classmates.

**Procedure** (15 minutes):

During an activity of this type the teacher can direct the role-play to certain key points of his choice. For instance, providing the pupils do not choose any beverages from the list, he can put a query about it or he can recommend a drink himself. Both of these options enable different reactions of the pupils.

Each role-play should take approximately 3 minutes. In the classroom where are 12 pupils, there could be 3 pairs and 2 individuals asked to perform, which means that only 4 pupils would not participate.

**Follow-up** (5 minutes):

The pupils who have not participated in the role-play performance are asked to give a feedback, they can comment of fluency, accuracy and task achievement. They can be also asked to suggest possible improvements in the performance of the pupils and the teacher as well. They could mention what should be included during a meal ordering as well. (5 minutes)

**Other possible variations:** The activity could be carried out in the breakout rooms in pairs or groups of 3.

There could be role-cards utilized in this activity including specific features of the participants such as “impatient/impolite/likeable/helpful waiter and a vegetarian/vegan/helpless/choosy/generous/mean/customer.” These features would bring a new dimension to the role-play. For instance, there could be a helpful waiter and two customers coming together, one of them mean and the second generous. This choice of roles would very likely lead to a conflict that would have to be resolved.

**Remark on the practice:**

There were no difficulties when introducing the activity and in the task achievement. The pupils understood immediately the objective of the activity and it was apparent that they liked the settings, the practicality and usefulness of the activity based on real life.

They brought many suggestions by role-playing itself and then in the follow-up phase as well. There could be included discounts, special offers as well as proceeding to a bill for a payment as far as nowadays due to the coronavirus pandemic all restaurants function as fast food delivery. These suggestions brought by the pupils only affirm the previously mentioned information that the pupils attempted to reflect on the context based on their own lives and transfer it into reality.

## **5.6 Role-play: Patient and doctor experts**

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Aim:** Pupils are able to give advice to a person with health problems.

**Language:**

Language system: Vocabulary is developed, grammar structures with the verb “should/ought to” and formal language register as well.

Language skills: speaking, listening

**Organization:** the whole class and pairs

**Preparation:**

**- Before the lesson**

A list of health problems is prepared in order to be expeditious when reaching for another role. (See the Appendix 4)

**- In the lesson:**

The attendance of the pupils should be checked in order to schedule the whole activity in connection with their number. In the MS Teams meeting it is enough to open the icon “See the participants” or to download the attendance sheet

**Warm-up** (3 minutes):

The instructions for the activity procedure are given, the pupils are doctor experts, each one is addressed by his/her name before being questioned by the patient (teacher). There should be a question put: “What does a doctor do after hearing a healthy problem occurs and he is told about it?” The pupils are supposed to reply something as “he should try to treat the patient or at least give advice.” The teacher afterwards emphasizes that all the conversation would take place in the OLE and they should try to adjust to it.

**Procedure** (10 minutes):

The teacher takes the role of a patient who has always a different health problem, he addresses each of the pupils and makes a query about possible handling of his situation. The same procedure is repeated with each of the pupils.

**Follow-up** (2 minutes):

The feedback is given at the end of the whole activity since it would be very time consuming providing it was done after each performance. The pupils again help to consider accuracy and fluency of their peers.

**Other possible variations:** Each of the pupils would become a patient as well as a doctor, a proper arrangement would enable an effective set of role-plays in the health care context that would lead to practice of all roles by the learners themselves.

In this case it would be suitable to prepare the procedure in the means of role-taking order.

One of the most comprehensible and time saving ways how to group pupils for such an

activity is to assign a number to each one of them. A chart would be shared and provided with in order to let the pupils see the sequence of the numbers. There would be two rows ordered numerically, the first one in ascending and the second one in descending order. However, if the number of the pupils was odd then the teacher should take the role of the number paired identically.

**Remark on the practice:** The pupils sometimes needed a slight prompting when carrying out the activity. Sometimes there was a need for a specific expression, if necessary, they were advised, however, in some cases they were only encouraged to use their own words in order to communicate the meaning themselves. The attempts they were making lightened the atmosphere, which indicates that the first role-plays performed were less relaxed, the tension was eased with the number of activities performed.

### **5.7 Role-play activity schedule: Emergency call**

**Time:** 18 minutes

**Aim:** Pupils are able to make a call for a help. They are able to interact and communicate in order to deal on further procedures.

**Language:**

Language system: Vocabulary connected to emergency situations such as floods, fire, robbery, murder etc. is applied. Grammar structures “There is somebody/something + ing form, I can see/hear/... somebody/something + ing form and the language registers are practiced as well.

Language skills: listening, speaking

**Organization:** pair work

**Preparation:**

**- Before the lesson**

A list of emergency situations is prepared (see the Appendix 5)

A video sample or audio recording providing with an illustrative situation- ideal is the material where all three constituents of emergency service (the police, ambulance, the fire brigade) are included- the length of it should be approximately 4 minutes

**- In the lesson:**

The video or audio is prepared to be played, afterwards the list of the emergency situations is ready to be shared. If possible, the video should include the grammatical structures described above (somebody/something + ing form)

**Warm-up** (8 minutes):

The video/audio is played for the sake of the motivation and raising interest of the pupils. Afterwards they are given instructions in order to be able to carry out the following activity and they are divided into groups according to randomly assigned numbers. Afterwards, those numbers are used to distribute the emergency situations as well.

Each pupil is supposed to be provided with a situation and in the course of the activity he/she transforms into the role of one of the emergency workers (the police, ambulance, fire brigade) based on the situation that was assigned to his partner. The two pupils can make a choice to role-play only one of the situations that was assigned to them, faster pupils should carry out both of them. A strict time limit of 8 minutes is set for the procedure part. The teacher should provide with a short example of this kind of role-play with a pupil so that everybody understands well.

**Procedure** (8 minutes):

The pupils perform the role-plays in the breakout rooms of MS Teams where they are recorded since there would be only a short debriefing to share the success of task achievement.

**Follow-up** (2 minutes):

There is a short feedback considering the task achievement and the level of difficulty of this activity is discussed shortly as well. Other suggestions recommended see "Other possible variations"

**Other possible variations:** In the following lesson, there should be a further work with the recorded outputs, each group would be assigned one recorded file of another group and their task would be to comment on in another recorded session.

Then each of the groups would have a feedback from their classmates that could be watched outside the lesson by the pupils. However, it needs to be emphasized at this type of activity that the evaluation concerns only this individual output, nor the pupils as personalities or their long-term abilities in the English language. There should be rather an appreciation of any element leading to task achievement and words of encouragement should be also included.

**Remark on the practice:** The pupils enjoyed the video material brought into the classroom and understood the instructions very fast thanks to that. A slight problem appeared only when grouping the students since the number of the pupils was odd. Then, one group of three pupils was constructed and worked on the assigned task together. There was one whose role was of the emergency units and two pupils who were describing the necessity of the fire brigade to come. This grouping arrangement was found at the end very successful and useful.

## 5.8 Role play: Who are we?

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Aim:** Pupils are able to guess the roles of their classmates who perform a role-play.

**Language:**

Language system: general vocabulary is practiced and examined, grammar structures as well as the language register.

Language skills: speaking, listening

**Organization:** pairs in front of the whole class

**Preparation**

- **Before the lesson:** Five role cards are prepared carrying the names of two roles each (see the Appendix 6). These two roles illustrate the relation between each other, the practice of one of the roles is dependent on the second one and the other way round. These cards could be prepared in a Word document and in the lesson only copied and sent to selected pupils who would be the participants. The role of each participant is highlighted properly either in bold or different color etc.

- **In the lesson:** a pair of pupils is selected randomly and a role is sent to them in a chat

**Warm-up** (2 minutes):

The instructions are explained, the teacher and pupils perform a trial version of a role-play and they guess the roles of the participants together. It is important to emphasize to the pupils that the performance should be a specific one of those roles so that the guesses are facilitated. Each role play should take approximately 1 minute only.

**Procedure** (5 minutes):

Two pupils are assigned roles at the same time and others listen to them and their role-play performance. If anyone knows the answer about their roles, he/she raises hand with the help of the raised hands icon in MS teams and can send a guess to the chat.

**Follow-up** (3 minutes):

The teacher asks the pupils whether the performed role-plays illustrated a specific practice of each of the roles or not and whether more specific utterances could be suggested

**Other possible variations:** The role-plays could take place in the breakout rooms if there is no need for the element of guessing or providing the performances were recorded, the pupils might be asked to guess the roles after playing each of the role-plays performed by their classmates. In this case two roles more would be needed to be prepared in the preparatory phase before the lesson.



**Remark on the practice:** This activity is short and it can serve as a warm-up activity before an activity following it, but the time limit must be adhered to.

The distribution of role cards and role assignment missed a suggestion concerning which participant of the two roles should commence the role-play, since these indecisive behaviours of the pupils caused exceeding of the time limit by approximately 5 minutes.

### **5.9 Role play: Past and Present medias**

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Aim:** Pupils are able to explain changes that have appeared in connection to the media in past decades.

#### **Language**

**Language system:** Vocabulary connected to the media and new technology is involved, grammar for expressing advice is practiced (should/ought to) and conditional sentences as well.

**Language skills:** writing, speaking

**Organization:** Whole class

#### **Preparation**

- **Before the lesson:** List of pupils' names in numerical order.

- **In the lesson:** Only the list of pupils' names and technology is prepared (computer, microphone, camera...)

**Warm-up** (2 minutes):

The pupils are told to imagine they live in a time when there was no internet, social networks, no computers and no mobile phones. Then, as to introduce the activity they are told that the teacher participant is a person coming from old ages (19th century) and it is hard to get orientated in this amount of life changes and there are plenty of questions that are left unanswered so far and he/she would like to comprehend everything.

**Procedure** (6 minutes):

The teacher poses questions concerning the media and tries to draw a contrast between past and present. The important thing is that they are not prepared but are spontaneous and connected to one another as well as the replies of the pupils to them. There are 12 pupils in the classroom but they reply as if there was one, thanks to the numerical order of their names.

The questions might be as follows: 1) I always used to send letters in the 19th century, but I heard you do something else. Please, what is it? 2) Then, if I want to send anything I am

supposed to own a computer/mobile, is that right? 3) How can I send letters if I want to? 4) I heard I can send photos as well and the addressee might receive them instantly. Is it possible? 5) What do I have to do so that I can send them? The activity can be completed after all pupils express themselves or after the time limit finishes.

**Follow-up** (2 minutes):

The teacher can ask the pupils if there is somebody who prefers old ages to this time. If some errors are made, they are corrected in the course of the activity.

**Remark on the practice:** The list of pupils in numerical order can facilitate the advancing of the activity. However, if it is prepared before the lesson, sometimes a pupil can be absent, which can be solved simply by skipping to another name. The list of pupils can be created in the lesson from the MS Teams List of participants as well and shared or edited so that the order of the names is random, this should be done particularly in case of choosing this type of role-taking.

### **5.10 Role-play: Complaints at helpdesks**

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Aim:** Pupils are able to complain constructively and find a solution to a problem together.

**Language:**

Language system: Vocabulary is developed (phrases and vocabulary for lodging a complaint and solution finding)

Language skills: writing, speaking

**Organization:** Pair/group work in the breakout rooms

**Preparation:**

- **Before the lesson:** none

- **In the lesson:** Only the technology is prepared (computer, microphone, camera...)

**Warm-up** (3 minutes):

The pupils are asked a question whether they have ever complained about a product or a service. Approximately 2 pupils share their experience and afterwards the following activity is introduced. Roles are taken as follows: one pupil of the pair is going to be a complaining customer about a product or a service and the second will be an employee at the help desk in an Online chat. Thus, the pupils are divided into breakout rooms randomly and are given time limit of 5 minutes.

**Procedure** (5 minutes):

The teacher comes into all breakout rooms and records their output. He checks whether the pupils understood by reading their outputs instantly.

**Follow-up** (3 minutes):

The pupils are asked about two items of their chat, which is the product or service that concerned the complaint and the solution.

**Other possible variations:** There could be a longer time period for the warm-up and follow-up phases of the activity so that the speaking could be trained more in this activity. The follow-up discussion could be followed in the next lesson with the work of pupils whose task would be to check a chosen conversation and make comments on accuracy, appropriacy and task achievement

**Remark on the practice:** The pupils did not need long explaining and the activity was understood. It might be caused by the fact that many of role-plays had been practiced so far. Only one pair was less active in chatting than others due to disruptive behaviors, which is common as stated in the last chapter of the theoretical part of this diploma project.

Pupils were surprised when introducing the activity that it would be performed in the form of a chat, this of course facilitated the communication of some of them and the opposite.

All the schedules described above consist of activities that were practiced in OLE, and with materials provided in the Appendices they are ready to for application by any English teacher who only follows the instructions as stated.

## 6 The role-play technique at Czech lower-secondary schools survey

### 6.1 The aim of the survey

This survey should help to reply to the questions set in the introduction to the practical part of this diploma project. Thus, it should draw the employment and efficiency of the role-play method usage at Czech lower-secondary schools. The teachers' awareness of the method is examined as well since there could be a connection between the teacher's knowledge about it and the possible choice of role-play activity practice. The survey also should draw any potential differences between face-to-face and distance learning in the connection with role-play usage.

### 6.2 Data collection

A questionnaire designed in the Google Forms was distributed via e-mail to lower-secondary teachers and school offices in all fourteen regions of the Czech republic. The school selection for the sake of this survey was random, however a number of three to five schools was chosen in each of the 76 districts that the regions are comprised of.

Since this questionnaire was targetted to the teachers of English language at lower secondary schools, 193 teachers were addressed directly with a request for its completing. Finding a direct e-mail contact of teachers or their exact teaching specialization was not always succesful, therefore a number of 187 school office workers were contacted and asked to forward the questionnaire to the specific employees. Providing that every lower-secondary school has two teachers of English at minimim, then 374 potential respondents might be contacted this way. However, it should be anticipated that some questionnaires would not be forwarded at all and thus a rather high number of schools was selected.

### 6.3 Analysis of data collection

#### 6.3.1 Respondents

A total number of 244 teachers of English language at lower secondary schools in the Czech republic completed and submitted the questionnaire finally. Considering the regions, the largest number of respondents was from the Olomouc region (38 respondents), then the South Moravian (27 respondents) and South and Central Bohemian regions (each with 24 respondents).

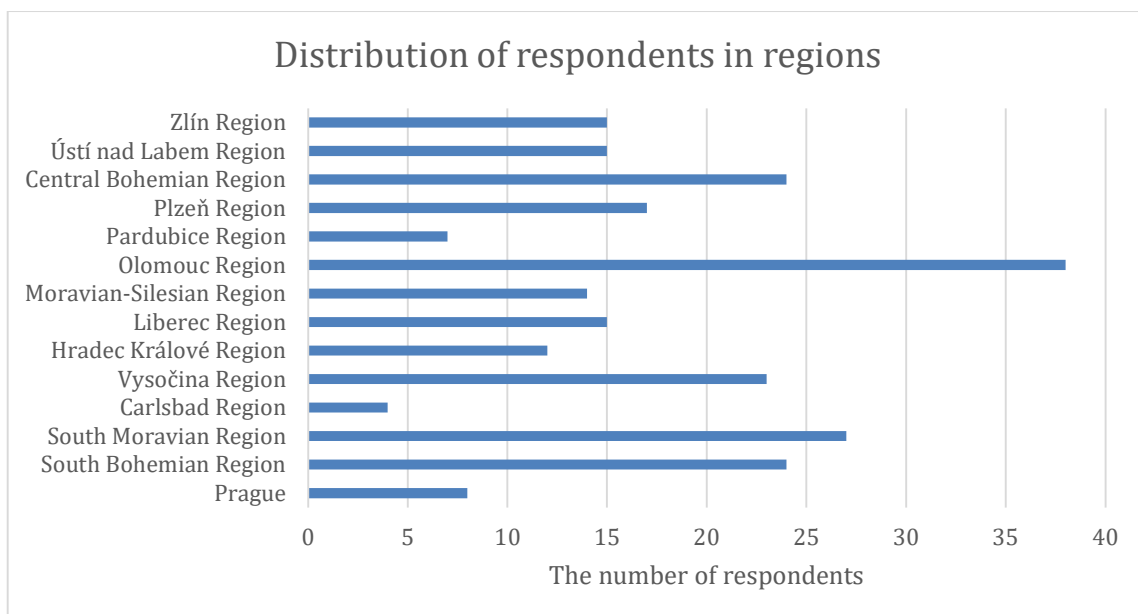


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents in regions

The count of 244 respondents is comprised of 214 women and 28 men, two teachers did not indicate their sex.

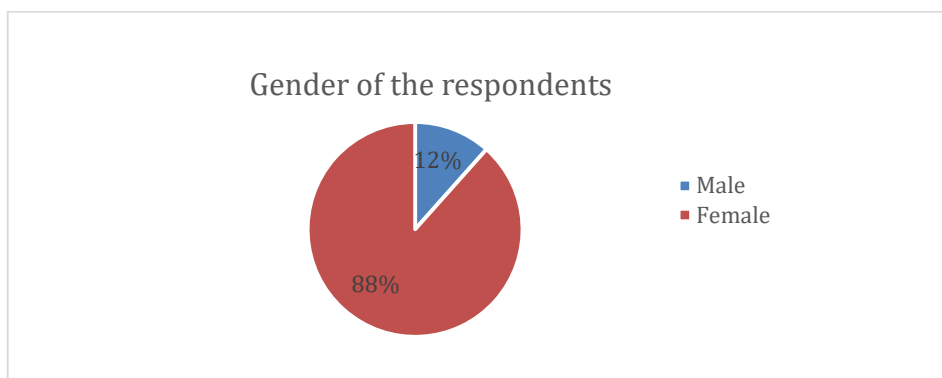


Figure 2: Gender of the respondents

The age group of the respondents was also included in the questionnaire. There were five age groups specified beginning with the age of eighteen years and ending in age of sixty-one and upper. Four teachers did not indicate any age group. The highest number of respondents represented the age group "41-50 years" with 102 respondents in total, comprising 42% of the whole. This age group is followed by the age group "31-40" years with its 61 respondents meaning 25%. Age groups could help to analyse the respondent groups further and draw an explanation to the results of other questions of the survey. For instance, older age group might have more difficulties in OLE and using technology, and thus the difference between age groups and the practise of role-plays in the Online enviroment might show larger proportion in specific age groups.

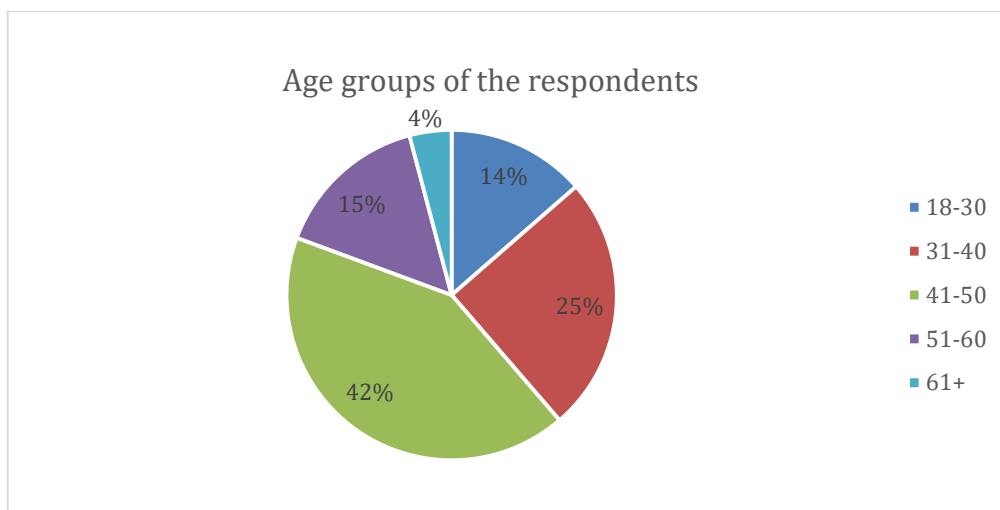


Figure 3: Age groups of the respondents

However, the data considering age groups do not involve the length of teaching experience of the respondents since they could work as teachers for only a period of time than would be expected, for instance women due to maternity leave. Therefore, another data collected was the length of the teachers's practice, in other words "for how long they have taught in a school environment".

Very surprisingly, the periods of teaching practice were rather balanced, only the respondents who have taught English in a school environment from "10-20 years" dominated with the number of 80 respondents and 32,2% of distribution. The representation of the respondents in the other three groups ranged between 21,7% to 23,4% of the whole.

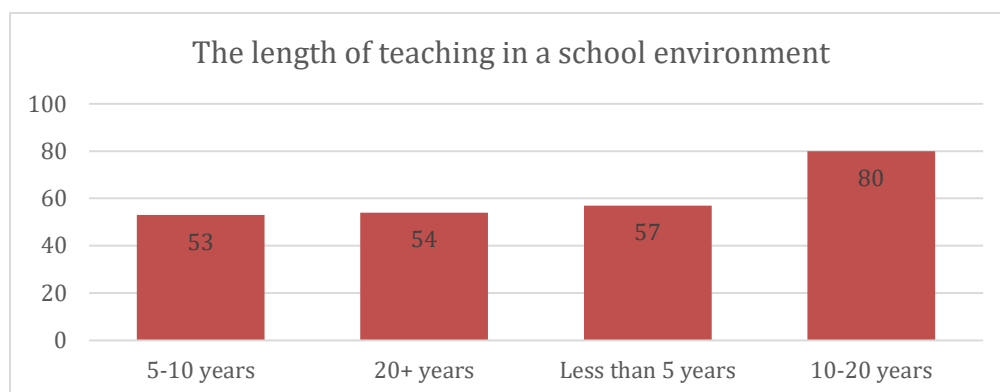


Figure 4: The length of teaching in a school environment

A question about language specifics was included in the questionnaire in order to specify the respondent group in more detail considering the school facility where they teach. This data would enable to draw on differences between a common elementary school, a school with extensive language teaching syllabus (eg.bilingual schools), possibly other formats and the application of role-play based on these specifics. Thus this data collected and evaluated can

draw whether the role-play method is more frequently used at common elementary schools or the schools with extensive language teaching.

As shown in the chart below, the schools with no language specifics predominate with the number of 193 and 79%. However, there is 46 teachers teaching at schools with extensive language teaching, which is 19% of the whole and 4 teachers teach at common schools using alternative teaching means so that they offer the pupils more individual attitude, grouping based on the abilities of the learners or a native English speaker is involved in the teaching process etc.

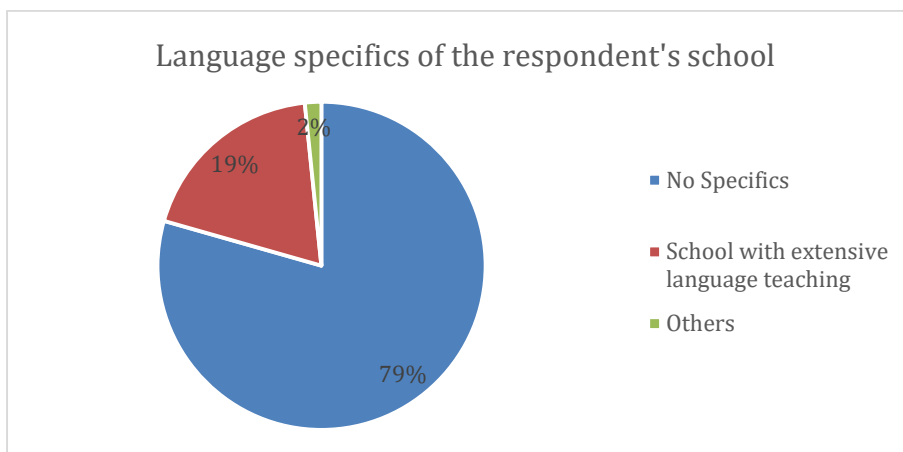


Figure 5: Language specifics of the school of the respondent

The teachers were questioned whether they have ever taught English language outside the school environment. A number of 162 teachers claimed that they have ever taught outside school environment, comprising 67% of the whole count. This number was compared to the data in the following text, considering the practice of role-play in the classroom.

Interestingly, 149 teachers out of these 162 respondents who have taught in another than school environment, have practiced role-play in a classroom environment, which is 91,9% of the count. This result might be caused by the fact that a teacher who has ever taught in another place than school might be more flexible and inovative since he/she teaches various age groups with different learning needs.

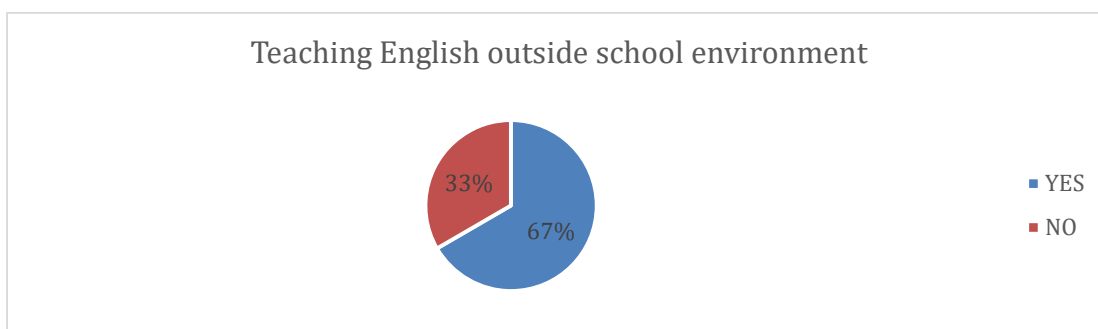


Figure 6: Teaching English outside school environment

#### 6.4 Use of textbooks/workbooks in classes

Not surprisingly all respondents claimed that they use a textbook or a set of them in their lessons. This question was followed by another one supplementing it with inquiry about the titles of the textbooks/workbooks used.

A vast majority of respondents selected the option of Project textbook written by Tom Hutchinson that is used in their classroom. There were 151 respondents who chose only Project and other 55 respondents selected this title and another one simultaneously. Other titles suggested or supplemented were represented in a minimal count as shown in the figure below.

The Project textbooks do contain plenty of activities based on role-plays as the autor himself claims and as was investigated during the teaching practice as well. For instance, in the fourth edition of Project 3 on page 13 there is a task as follows: "A) Work with a partner. One person is a customer and the other is an assistant. Make dialogues for these situations." At this point a numbered list of possible items to buy is provided with and the task is accompanied by a section B that states further instructions: "Role-play one of your dialogues in front of the class."

The utilization of the "role-play" term explicitly suggests that users of the textbook should be familiar with it as well as be aware of the way how to practice it and ought to apply it in their lessons.

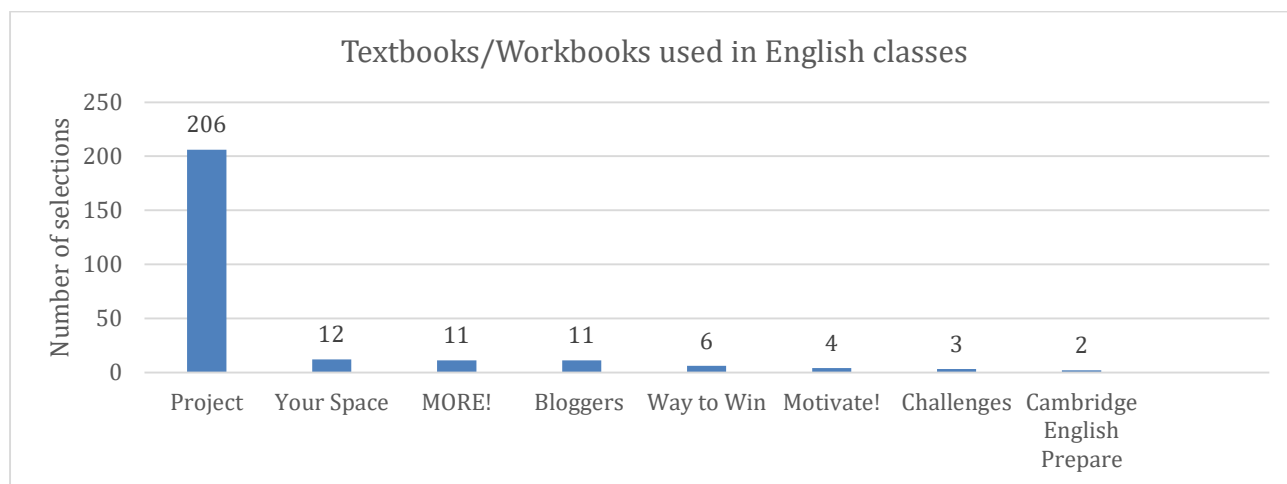


Figure 7: Textbooks/Workbooks used in English classes

The following questions of the questionnaire offer further analysis of the data in detail, and thus there is the record of 206 respondents using the Project textbooks, out of which 6 respondents have never heard of role-play method and 17 respondents have not practised role-play in the classroom environment. Then, not surprisingly during distance studies 90 respondents have not practised role-play.



This summary shows that six teachers who works with Project textbooks did not learn anything about the teaching methodology and applied methods that are included in the material and 17 teachers have not applied role-play in the classroom which means all activities that were role-plays were skipped or the teachers did not know they were role-plays and they applied them.

### 6.5 Communicative activities applied when teaching English

The question concerning the usage of communicative activities was placed in the questionnaire with only three suggestions to be selected (games, discussions, debates) in order to investigate whether the teachers would have the need to specify any activity connected to the role-plays further since all the suggested terms might be carried out using role-play. Apart from highly represented activities that were suggested, a number of 18 respondents mentioned role-play activities themselves, 8 respondents indicated scenes, 26 teachers stated dialogues, which implies that 52 teachers specified an activity equal or close to the role-play definition.

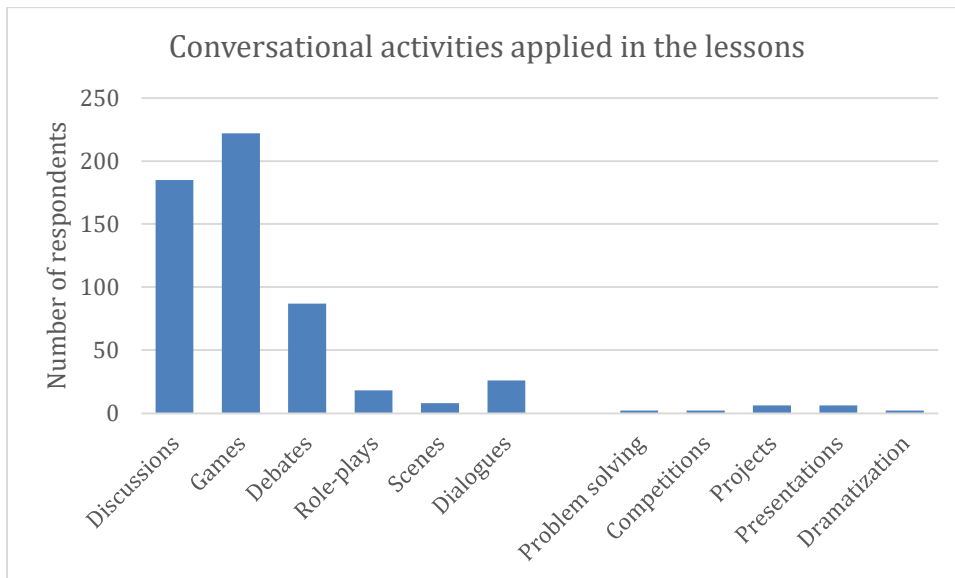


Figure 8: Conversational activities applied in the lessons

### 6.6 Cognizance of the role-play method

A vast majority of respondents (233 teachers) replied that they had ever heard of role-play method. There were only 9 respondents who admitted that they had not heard of it.

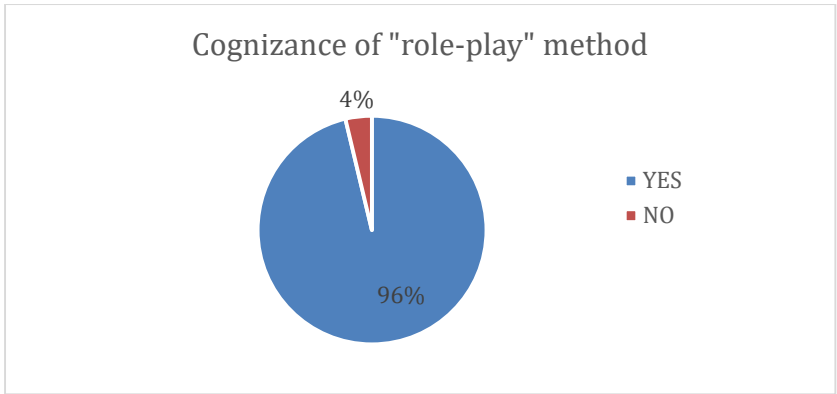


Figure 9: Cognizance of role-play method

**6.7 Application of the role-play method**

There were 211 teacher respondents who claimed to have practiced role-play method face-to-face in their classroom, which represents 88% of the whole. A number of 29 respondents have never applied the method in face-to-face lessons, which stands for 12%. The results of face-to-face practice were put to contrast with the role-play application in the Online environment. There were 91 respondents who claimed that they had practiced the role-plays in face-to-face lessons and who apply them during distant studies as well, meaning that the number of applications by teachers was decreased by 67% in the Online environment.

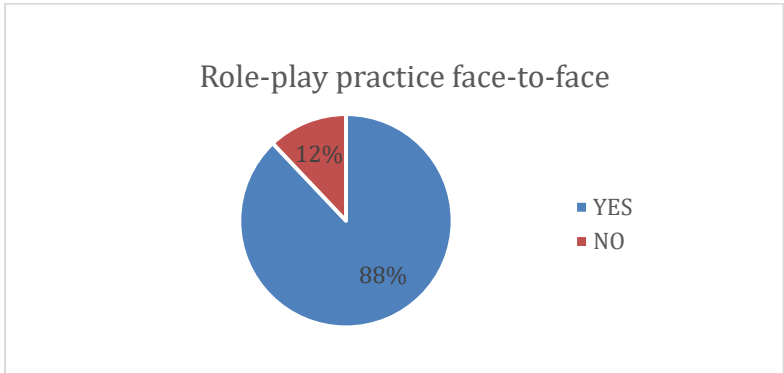


Figure 10: Role-play face-to-face practice

Comparing the face-to-face and Online teaching applicance of role-play above, it needs to be pointed that only one respondent had not applied the role-play method in face-to-face lessons, but applies them in Online environment in the program Zoom. However, this case is an exception and the most appropriate results are those contrasted to face-to-face teaching since all respondents were allowed to reply to this question, even those who claimed they have not heard of role-play method etc. For this reason, the chart values below (61 respondents do not practice role-plays during distance studies and 39% does) are slightly distorted.

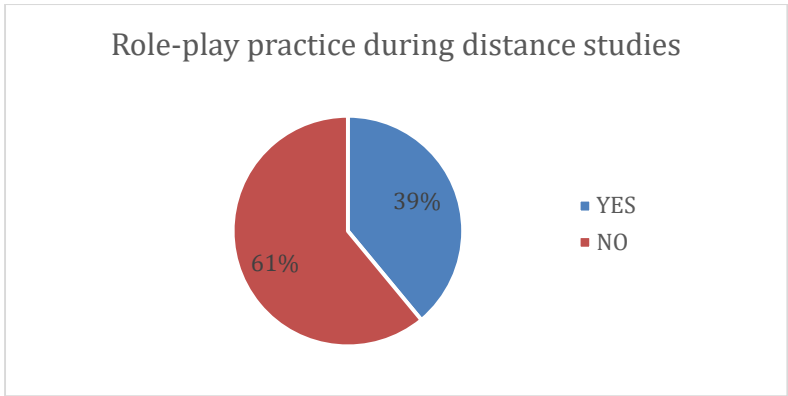


Figure 11: Role-play practice during distance studies

A question to explore which programs/platforms/applications are used the most was inquired in addition to investigating about the practice of role-plays in distant studies. A vast majority of teacher respondents uses MS Teams application for role play-practice in Online environment, comprising 57% of the total count. Afterwards Google Meet and ZOOM are selected, both comprising 37% of the whole. They are followed by four users of a rather unknown Gather, program providing with a space for virtual reality, participants of a call can select their actions in 2D map, they can sit at desks together, walk in a virtual park etc. (Gather, Gather.town) Thus, Gather seems to be an ideal environment for activities such as role-play, where spontaneous actions can take place as well. Skype and Webex are then used each one by one respondent only.

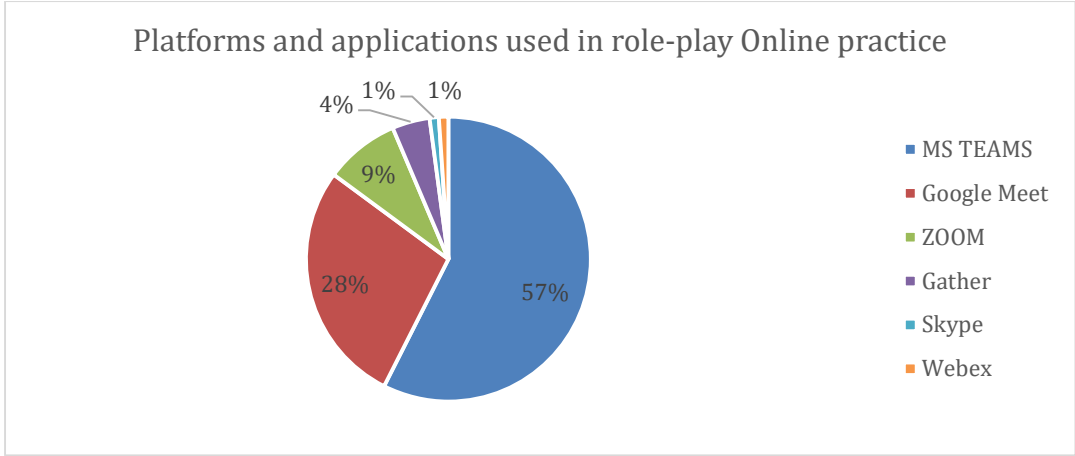


Figure 12: Platforms and applications used in role-play Online practice

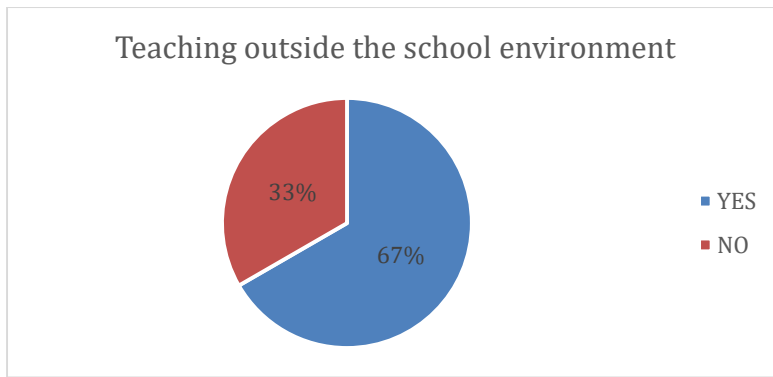


Figure 13: Teaching outside the school environment

### 6.8 Respondents' perception of role-plays

The questions of this section (presented as statements requiring YES-NO replies) were designed in order to analyse the way the respondents perceive role-plays and how they are familiarized with them in both theoretical and practical aspects.

First of these statements explored the conscience of the respondents about the role-plays as parts of international language exams. Surprisingly, 122 respondents agreed that role-plays appear in international exams and 121 respondents did not. This resulted in balanced proportion of respondents' thoughts, divided into two halves. However, as mentioned in the theoretical part of this diploma project, it needs to be emphasized that international language exams comprise of a part dedicated to role-play, and therefore all 50% (121 respondents) were wrong when disagreeing with the statement.

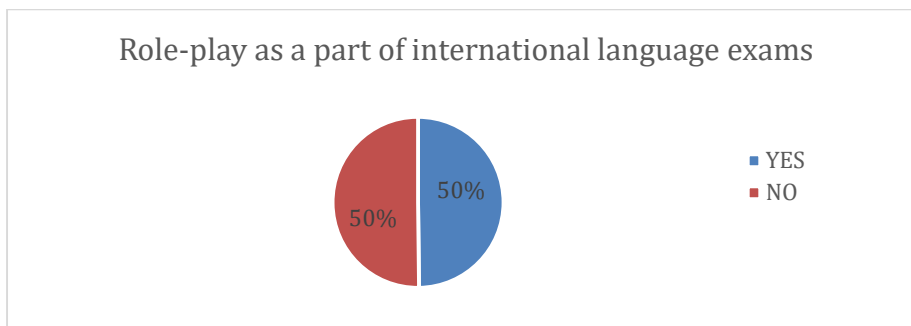


Figure 14: Role-play as a part of international language exams

Other two statements tried to examine respondents' correct definition of the term "role-play." First of them suggested that "a role play is a performed drama learnt by heart" and the second statement defined the role-play as "a situational scene of pupils." As stated in the theoretical part of this diploma project, role-play should be performed spontaneously, and therefore can be defined as a situational scene of pupils. Since there were no responses conditioned, 50 respondents defined role-play as both options simultaneously and only one respondent defined the role-play as a performed drama learnt by heart, all of these

respondents comprise 21 % of the whole. A number of 193 respondents (79% ) then disagree with the statement „role play is a drama learnt by heart and performed by pupils."

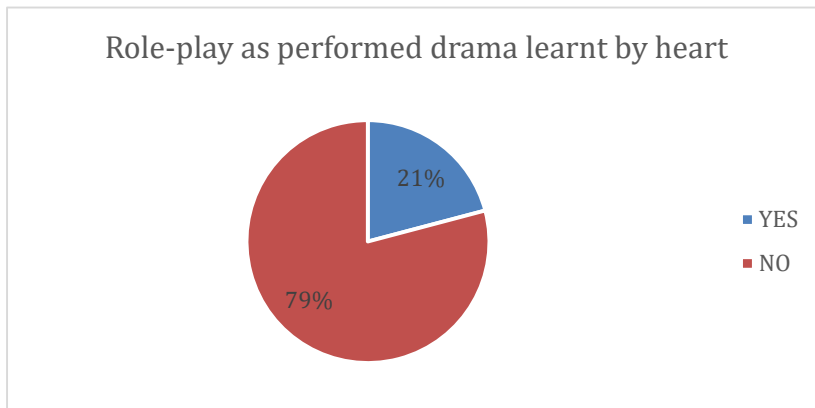


Figure 15: Is the role-play a performed drama learnt by heart?

Considering the statement "Role-play is a situational scene of pupils," 99% of respondents agreed with its correctness and only 3 teacher respondents disagreed out of the total number of 244 respondents, which shows that even those teachers who have never heard of role-play method were able to define it, probably based on the meanings of the hyphenated compounds "role" and "play," supposing that play is spontaneous.

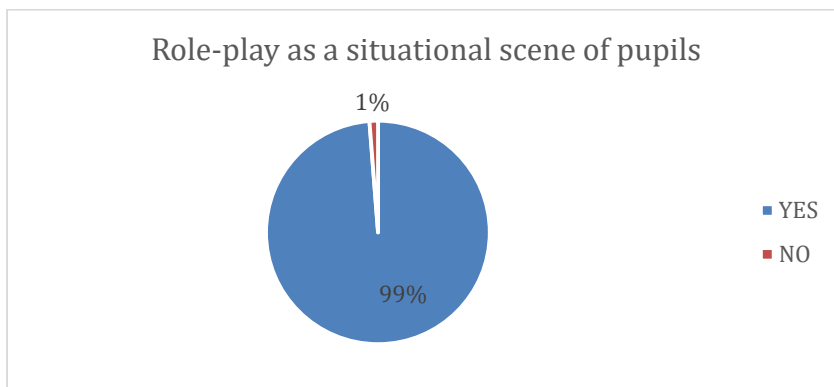


Figure 16: Is a role-play a situational scene of pupils?

In order to explore the perceived possibilities of role-play method usage, a statement "Role-play cannot be applied to develop writing" was included in the questionnaire. A number of 168 respondents (comprising 69% of the whole count) disagreed with this statement, which means that they believed role-play could help to develop writing. This data shows how teachers can be flexible and inventive in a way of application of selected methods since the role-play might be primarily viewed as suitable for development of speaking skills. However, still 31%, a number of 75 respondents, agreed with the statement and thus would not use role-

play method for writing skills development.

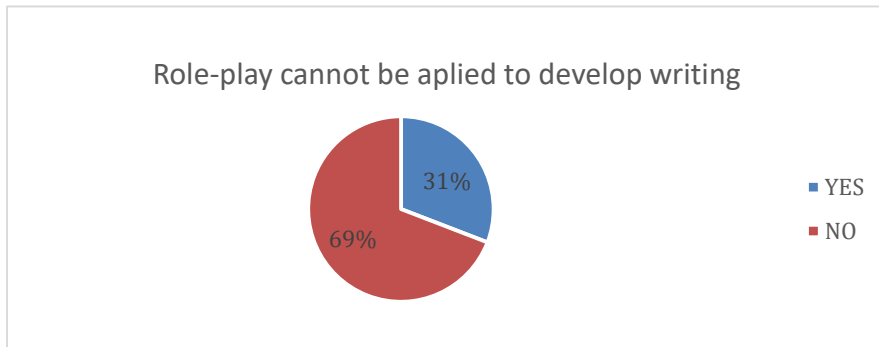


Figure 17: "Role-play cannot be applied to develop writing"

However, when the respondents had to decide whether the role-play is suitable for demonstration of a grammatical usage, a vast majority (a number of 231 respondents and 95% of the questioned teachers) agreed that it is possible through role-play, whereas only 12 respondents disagreed.

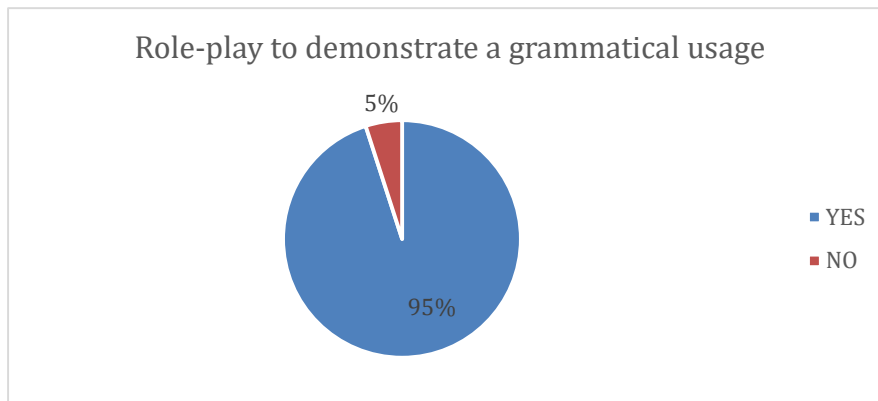


Figure 18: Role-play to demonstrate a grammatical usage

The statement that "role-play is a form of a game" was claimed by 237 respondents (97% of the whole) to be true. Only a number of 7 teachers (3% of the whole) selected the wrong alternative. Interestingly, all respondents who confirmed that they had not ever heard of role-play or practiced it in the classroom face-to-face replied correctly considering the role-play and game.

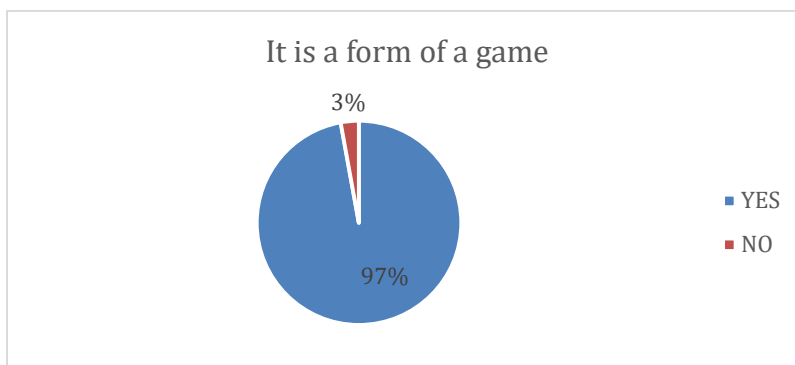


Figure 19: Role-play as a form of a game

## 6.9 Common English language classes

A section exploring the common English language classes of the respondents was included. For this purpose there were statements considering the procedure phase involved and the teachers were supposed to agree by selecting either "rather YES" or "YES" or disagree by selecting "NO" or "rather NO" options.

The first statement of this section "the pupils speak more than the teacher in the lessons" is agreed to in any form by 136 respondents and disagreed by 108 questioned teachers.

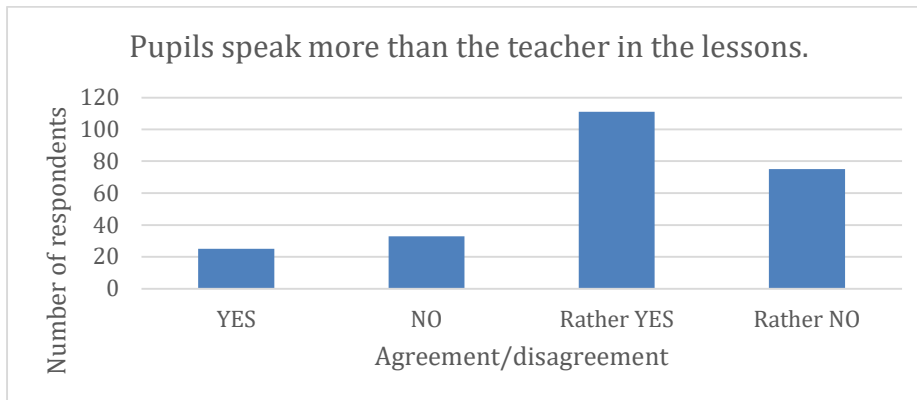


Figure 20: Statement: Pupils speak more than the teacher in the lessons.

The another inquiry concerned a presence of a time period dedicated to conversational activities in the course of common English language classes. A vast majority of respondents (228 teachers in total, comprising 93%) claimed that conversational activities are commonly included in their English language classes.

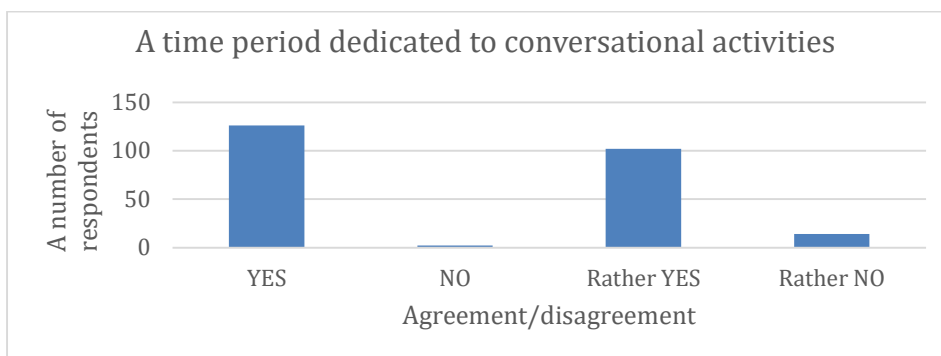


Figure 21: Statement: A time period dedicated to conversational activities present

In order to specify the responses to the previous statement, a presence of a time period dedicated to a group work was included in the questionnaire as well. The chart shown below illustrates a slight decrease in inclusion of group works in the common English language classes. On the whole 191 teachers include group work in their classes, which comprises 78% of the total count.

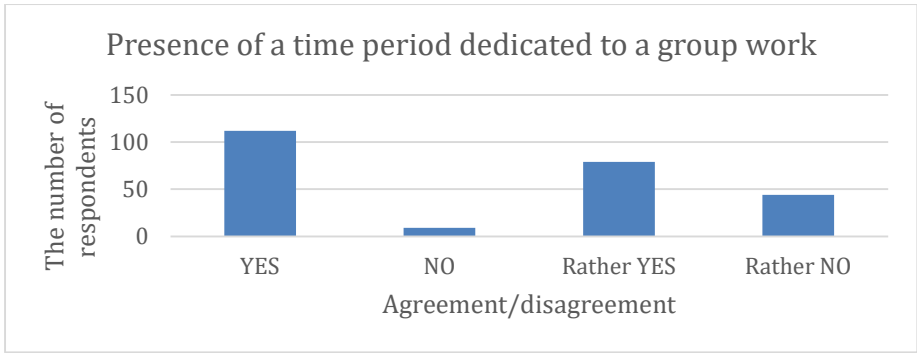


Figure 22: A time period dedicated to group work is present

Since there is usually a general complaint made about a lack of time to go through a subject matter that leads in less various teaching methods or activities included in the lessons, this element was also put to inquiry. However, a count of 85 respondents claimed that there is rather a lack of time to go through a subject matter, which is only 35% of the total.

Furthermore, another matter explored in the questionnaire connected to time possibilities during the lessons was a lack of time to use various teaching methods. The respondents had to agree or disagree with a statement concerning this issue. Again, only 98 respondents stated that they sense a lack of time to apply various teaching methods during the classes, the rest (146 respondents) did not find this statement true in connection to their lessons.

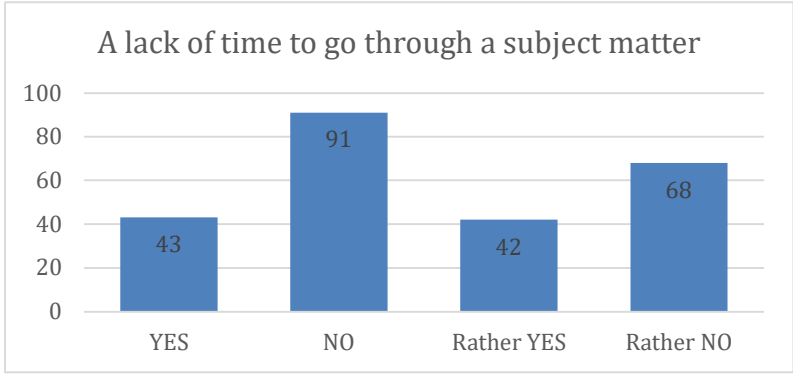


Figure 23: Statement: A lack of time to go through a subject matter



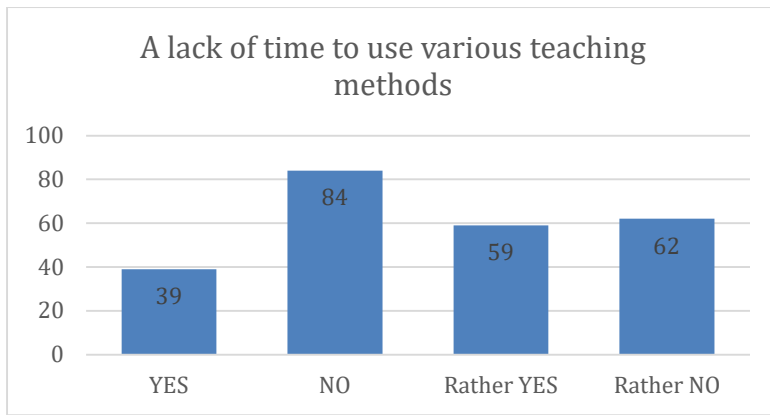


Figure 24: Statement: A lack of time to use various teaching methods

Since there was a change from face-to-face teaching to Online teaching it is desirable to find out to whether the speaking times of the teacher and pupils have changed and the proportions used to be different before. A number of 188 respondents reveal that the proportion of teacher and pupils' speaking time has changed in Online environment and only 56 teachers denies this statement.

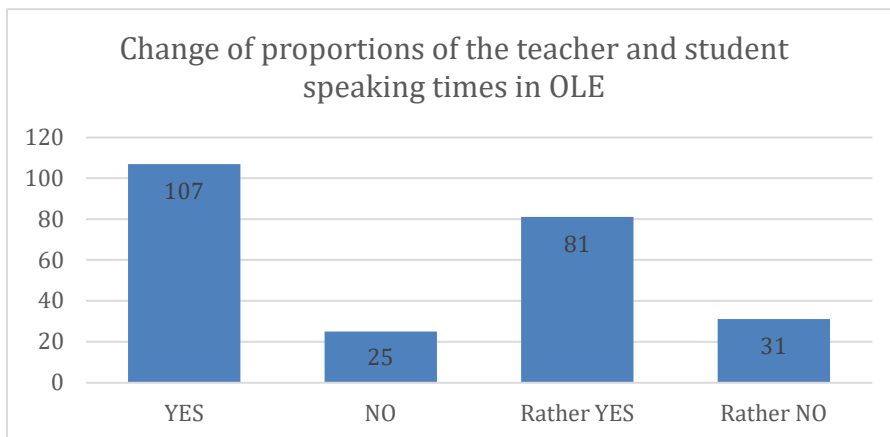


Figure 25: Statement: Change of proportions of the speaking times in OLE

Another data collected are linked to evaluation. The teachers were asked whether they correct mistakes immediately after their being made when communicative activities. As suggested in the Chapter 4, mistakes should be not corrected at the time of the utterance but recorded in any way and later resolved. Unlike errors that should be dealt with instantly. Still, a number of 11 respondents deal with mistakes promptly, 47 respondents agree to it as well. However, 186 respondents try not to interfere immediately if a mistake is made.

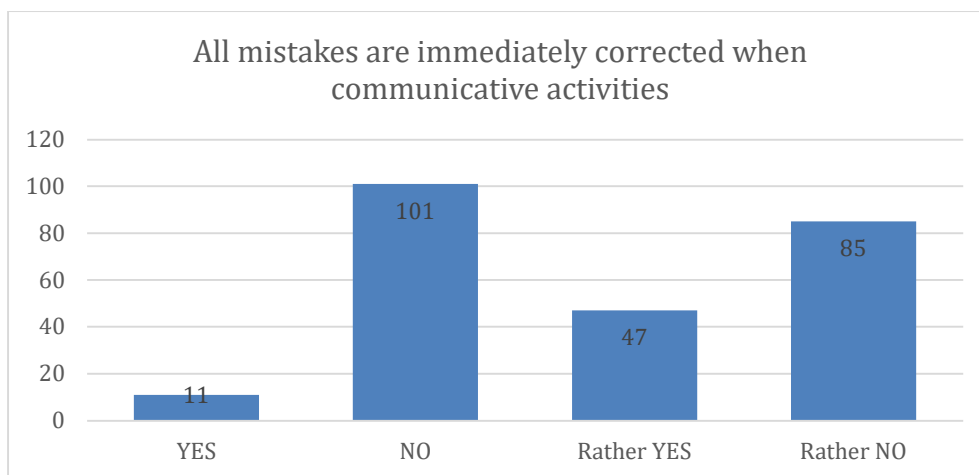


Figure 26: Instant mistake correction

Difficulties when carrying out communicative activities are suggested and supplemented by the respondents as well. One of the major problems seems to be insufficient vocabulary and using mother tongue by the pupils. Only 48 teachers claimed that it is the disruptive behaviour of the pupils that causes problems during communicative activities. Shyness, passivity, a lack of interest as well as anxiety and fear of making a mistake were all mentioned among other reasons of possible difficulties. Many respondents suggested that the pupils tend to have problems in communication and expressing their opinions in general, not only at the English language classes and therefore a few respondents stated that the pupils need prompting, sometimes even suggestions of alternatives or an example. Other difficulties were mentioned as follows: long time for explaining the situation and rules, syntactic deficiencies, slow reactions of pupils, poor and incomprehensible pronunciation.

Furthermore, issues concerning technical aspect of communicative activities practice in Online environment were drawn. Apart from microphone, camera or acoustic non-functionality and poor internet connection, there appeared problems when using the MS Teams application such as incompatibility of its older and newer versions, which might lead to troubles of some pupils accessing the breakout rooms. In connection to division pupils into breakout rooms one of teacher respondents mentioned that "since pupils are split into breakout rooms they have feeling that nobody can see them and therefore do not have to work." However, this can be avoided by recording each of the groups as described in the 4.5 Chapter "Role-play in the OLE."

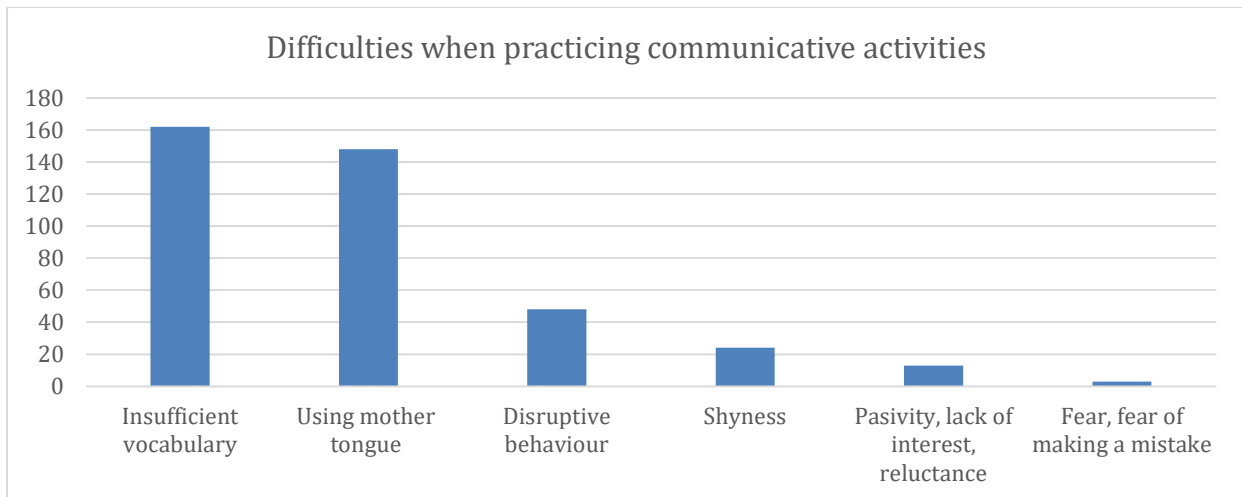


Figure 27: Difficulties when practicing communicative activities with the pupils

### 6.10 Interpretation and summary of results

A number of 244 respondents submitted their answers of the questionnaire, which is a quite high number enhancing the response value of the survey. Female respondents then comprised a majority of 88% of the whole count. Considering the age groups, the most represented was the group between "41-50 years" of age, in total 42% of the respondents. The four range divisions of teaching practice in years tend to be represented in equal proportions, however, the respondents with teaching practice lasting between 10-20 years comprise a proportion over the average with 33% of the total.

A vast majority of respondents (96%) has heard of the role-play method, 87% of respondents has practiced it during face-to-face classes and 39% practices role-play method in the OLE.

The following Figure 28 demonstrates a comparison of the role-play practise in OLE and face-to-face lessons and it is contrasted to the age groups as well. It implies that approximately half of all respondents of all group ages that used to practice role-play when face-to-face classes stopped applying them in OLE, which makes a big difference. However, still the try to retain this activity is evident.

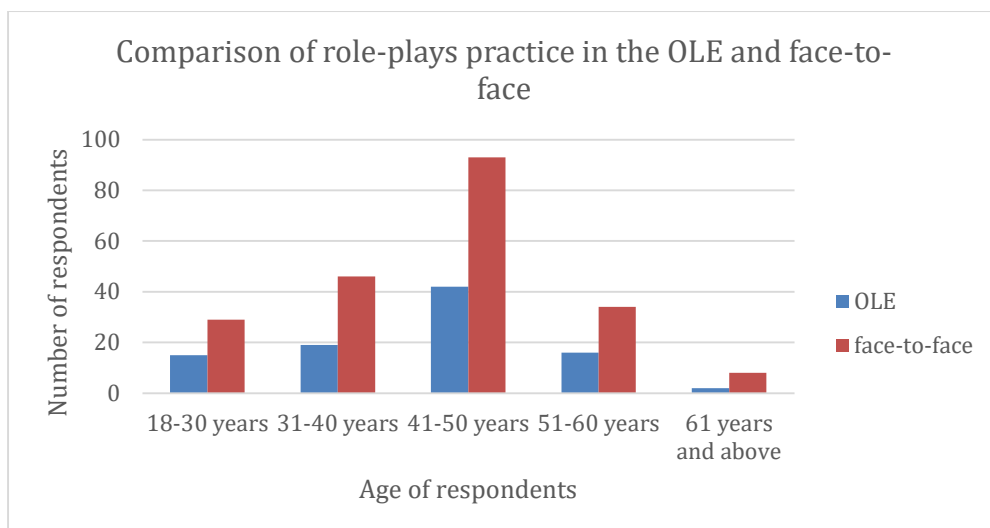


Figure 28: Comparison of role-plays practice in the OLE and face-to-face

Those respondents who practice role-play activities in the OLE use predominantly the MS Teams application, which is followed by ZOOM and Google Meet users. A high potential for role-play practice has the Gather platform for the sake of the virtual reality space and easy management, only 6 respondents claimed to have used it so far though.

A count comprising of 91,9% respondents who have taught outside School environment also practice role-plays in the face-to-face classes.

Interestingly, 6 respondents claimed to have never heard of role-play method and other 17 has never practiced it in the face-to-face classes of the 206 respondents, who claimed to use Project textbooks in classes.

Other questions investigated the perception of the role-play method by the respondents. A proportion of 50% respondents stated correctly that role-plays do not appear in the international language exams. Then, 79% of the questioned teachers selected the option that role-play is not a piece of performed drama learnt by heart. A vast majority of respondents (99%) agreed that role-play might be defined as a situational scene of pupils. 69% of respondents then expressed that role-play has the potential to develop writing skills, 95% agreed that role-plays have the potential to demonstrate the usage of grammar. And finally, the statement that role-play is a form of game was declared by 97% of the respondents on whole.

The section based on common English language classes reveals findings as follows: A vast majority of the teachers' speaking time is lower than the one of pupils, however, with the Online education the proportions have been slightly changed. Most of the teachers also claimed that there is always a period of time dedicated to conversational activities, lower time

was claimed to be dedicated to group work though. A number of 58 teachers corrects mistakes instantly when communicative activities.

One of the main obstacles when practicing role-play activities was then described as insufficient vocabulary and using mother tongue of the pupils.

There were many findings that were noted identically during the teaching praxis, such as the pupils' not caring about carrying out the activity providing that the recording in the breakout rooms was off (see the Chapter 5.1 What movie are we going to watch together?), these details tend to be very important in the OLE though and without them it might lead to a lack of efficient group activities. We would be then only observers of a chaotic environment. Also, as noted in the theoretical part, all mistakes should not be corrected instantly in communicative activities (see Chapter 4.3 Assessment and error correction), this might lead then to decrease of the pupils' self-confidence since the adolescents usually the most value peer recognition that might be affected (see Chapter 3.1 Specifics of eight grade learners).

## Conclusion

Firstly, theoretical apparatus containing definitions of the key terms necessary to proceed to the practical part of this project work was introduced. Therefore, the topics of game, role-play types, approaches, age group of eight grade pupils present at following teaching practice and activity schedule together with a slight introduction to OLE methodology are all covered. In the practical part there were stated questions to be investigated in the course of the teaching practice of role-play activities in the OLE by an observation method. Furthermore, the investigation process was completed with quantitative survey that involved data collection and their subsequent evaluation.

And thus, with the usage the selected methods and outcomes, the questions stated in the introductory part of the practical section of this diploma project are to be answered.

1) To which extent are role-plays efficient in the ELT?

Role-plays were claimed to have been practiced by 87% of the total count of respondents, which is a vast majority and thus, it is expected they brought enough efficacy in the lessons to be carried out. Furthermore, role-plays were also mentioned by the respondents themselves as their examples of communicative activities that they perform in the ELT classes. A proportion of 39% of the total count of respondents then applies the role-play method in the OLE, which might still suggest the effort to provide with the identical scope of methods that were found useful in face-to-face classes.

2) Is there a difference in the “face-to-face” and OLE lessons in a connection to the practice of the role-play?

The teaching practice in OLE with the pupils of the primary school in Olomouc revealed that pupils themselves usually were not self-confident in using a program or its tools. It is necessary to emphasize that both, the teacher and the pupils learn using new tools that tend to be additional in ELT, therefore these weaknesses should be suggested to the IT teacher to take care of.

Speaking of a role-play practice in MS Teams and its breakout rooms, the pupils became accustomed to them after a few role-play activities in the OLE. Since the pupils knew that their utterances were recorded, they tended to behave similarly to face-to-face lessons. And thus, the outcomes of the OLE role-play practice are based on the abilities and digital skills of the teachers as well.

3) How do teachers and learners perceive role-plays?

Most of teachers view role-plays as situational scenes of pupils, which corresponds to the definition in the Chapter 1.5 “Role-play and similar terms” of this diploma project.

Considering the potential of role-play activities, the results of the survey show that over 69% of respondents believe that role-play method has the potential to develop writing skills, and 95% claims that role-play might be practiced in order to demonstrate the usage of grammar.

However, only 50% realizes that role-plays constitute a section in international language examinations. This implies that teachers do not use all possible tools when setting a role-play since (as stated in the Chapter 3.2 Motivation in the classroom) motivation plays an important part in teaching, adolescent learners in particular.

Learners view role-plays in a way that is assigned by the teacher, also the topics of role-plays are the crucial factor which would either make the pupils passive or active in the course of the activity as was observed during the online teaching practice as well.

The topic of role-play could be of course explored from the point of view of learners in more detail, for instance they could be questioned whether they need some form of support in order to carry out role-play activities in more pleasant and efficient way.

However, this diploma project was aimed at provision of teaching practice plans in the OLE as well which are prepared together with attached materials in the section of appendices for further use by other teachers of English language.

Hopefully, they will provide with helpful suggestions for OLE practice of activities for at least some of teachers.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: What movie are we going to watch together?

Appendix 2: Vocabulary of the Project 4

Appendix 3: Our trip days, sample of PPT presentation used in role-play

Appendix 4: List of health problems

Appendix 5: List of emergency situations

Appendix 6: Role cards

Appendix 7: Czech version of questionnaire

Appendix 8: English version of the questionnaire

# Appendix 1

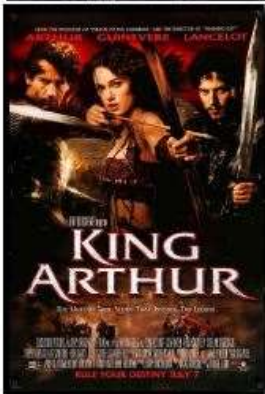


**Role play: What movie are we going to watch together?**  
 THE TASK IS TO DEAL ON WATCHING A MOVIE TOGETHER  
 And to be creative...

S1: Chooses a movie about the king Arthur:  
 a) king arthur LEGEND OF THE SWORD (2017)  
 b) KING ARTHUR (2004)

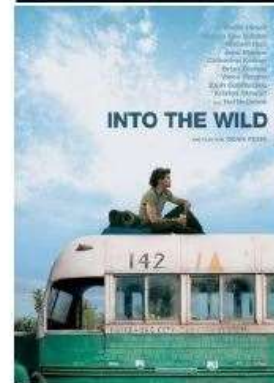
S2: Chooses a movie from the others:  
 MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS (2017)  
 INTO THE WILD (2007)

S3: Chooses any movie that he/she likes and was not chosen by S1 and S2  
 (either about the king Arthur or murder and travelling)

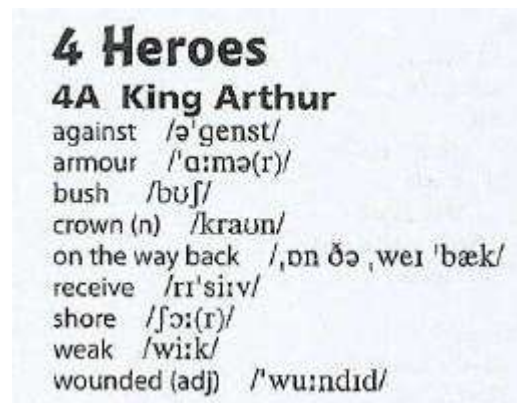


**THE ROLE PLAY SCHEME**

- S1: suggests watching a movie: ...
- S2: refuses (why?) → suggests his/her one: ...
- S3: both ok for him/her, but suggests his/her one...
- S1: asks S2 more details about the movie...
- S2: talks about the topic/genre/opinions on the movie
- S3: wants to deal → asks S1 and S2 for it
- S1 and S2 deal: Name of the movie: ...
- S1, S2, S3: TIME: ..., PLACE: ...



## Appendix 2

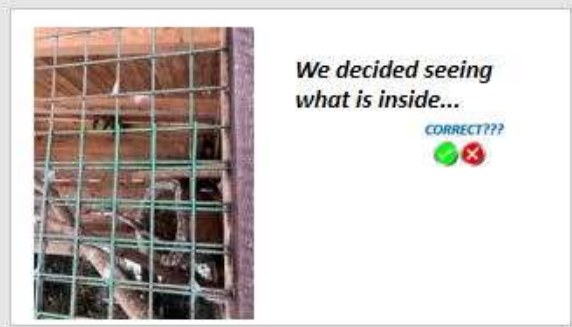


(Hutchinson, 2014, p.76)

### Appendix 3



3



4



5



6

#### **Appendix 4**

1. Headache
2. Feel sleepy all the time
3. Get stung by a bee
4. Irritated eyes
5. Sore throat
6. A strong influenza
7. Back pain
8. Runny nose
9. Stomach ache
10. Swollen ankle
11. A fever
12. Sunburn



## **Appendix 5**

1. Fire at neighbours
2. Injured woman in street
3. Abandoned animal
4. A cat stuck in a chimney
5. A hand stuck in a pot
6. A person ready to jump from a bridge
7. Somebody fell in a river
8. Somebody broke into a shop
9. Somebody screaming at night
10. A lost child
11. A large amount of money found
12. A fight in a street

## **Appendix 6**

1. A son/daughter and father
2. A shop assistant and customer
3. A doctor and patient
4. A sportsman/sportswoman and trainer
5. A policeman and driver

## Appendix 7

### *Dotazník*

#### *Výuka anglického jazyka na druhém stupni ZŠ*

Tento dotazník je anonymní. Skládá se ze 12 otázek.

Pokud byste ovšem měl/a zájem o zpracovaná data, popřípadě o doplnění více komentářů týkajících se Vaší učitelské praxe, byla bych moc vděčná za zanechání e-mailového kontaktu či komentáře v poslední části dotazníku, přičemž se tímto zavazují, že kontakt nebude poskytnut třetím stranám.

- 1) Jste žena/muž?
- 2) Prosím o upřesnění Vaší věkové kategorie
  - 18-30
  - 31-40
  - 41-50
  - 51-60
  - 61 a výše
- 3) Kolik let učíte anglický jazyk ve školském prostředí? (Přibližně)
  - Méně než 5 let
  - 5-10 let
  - 10-20 let
  - 20 let a více
- 4) Učil/Učila jste anglický jazyk i mimo školní prostředí? ANO/NE  
Popřípadě při jaké příležitosti? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Používáte učebnice/pracovní sešity ve výuce? ANO/NE  
Pokud ANO, jaké?
  - Project
  - Way to win
  - Challenges
  - Impact
  - MORE!
  - Cambridge English Prepare!
  - Jiné: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Jaké komunikační aktivity uplatňujete ve výuce AJ?
  - A) Diskuze
  - B) Hry
  - C) Debatování
  - D) Jiné...
- 7) Slyšeli jste o metodě „hraní rolí“ (role-play)? ANO/NE
- 8) Praktikovali jste někdy při prezenční výuce metodu „hraní rolí“ (role-play) se svými žáky? ANO/NE
- 9) Praktikujete při distanční výuce metodu „hraní rolí“ (role-play) se svými žáky? ANO/NE

## POKUD ANO

Jaký program/aplikaci/platformu využíváte pro metodu „hraní rolí“ v ONLINE prostředí?

- MS Teams
- Zoom
- Google Meet

Jiné: \_\_\_\_\_

10) Co podle Vás platí o metodě „hraní rolí“ (role-play): Vyberte ANO-NE

- A) Bývá součástí mezinárodních jazykových zkoušek (DELF, Cambridge...)
- B) Jedná se o předvedení naučené divadelní hry žáky.
- C) Jedná se o situační scénky žáků.
- D) Nelze ji aplikovat pro rozvoj psaní.
- E) Je formou hry.
- F) Může sloužit k názornému předvedení využití gramatiky.

11) O Vašich běžných hodinách anglického jazyka (odpovědi formou: určitě ano/spíše ano/ano/spíše ne/ne/vůbec ne)

- A) ...mluví v nich více žáci než učitel.
- B) ...obecně v nich bývá čas vyhrazený na konverzační aktivity.
- C) ...obecně v nich bývá čas vyhrazený na práci ve skupinách
- D) ...je v nich nedostatek času na probrání učiva
- E) ...je v nich nedostatek času na využití různých výukových metod.
- F) ...s online výukou se změnil poměr mého projevu a projevů žáků
- G) ... při komunikačních aktivitách všechny chyby žáků okamžitě opravuji

Případné komentáře:

12) Jaké obtíže míváte nejčastěji s Vašimi žáky při komunikačních aktivitách? Zatrhněte.

- A) nedostatečná slovní zásoba žáků
- B) rušivé chování
- C) používání mateřského jazyka místo anglického
- D) jiné: \_\_\_\_\_

13) Místo pro Váš případný komentář nebo e-mailovou adresu pro zaslání vyhodnocených dat.

Komentář:

E-mail:

Mockrát Vám děkuji za vyplnění dotazníku a Váš drahocenný čas.

## Appendix 8

### *Questionnaire*

#### *English language teaching at lower-secondary schools*

This questionnaire is anonymous, however if you were interested in processed data or adding more comments concerning your teaching practice I would be very grateful for leaving your e-mail contact or comment in the last section of the questionnaire, while hereby I undertake that the contact would not be forwarded to any another subject.

1) Please specify your gender:

I am a male/female.

2) Please specify your age group

- 18-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61 and above

3) How long have you taught English language in a school environment? (approximately)

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- 20 years and more

4) Have you taught English language outside the school environment? YES/NO  
As the case may be at which occasion? \_\_\_\_\_

5) Do you use books/textbooks when teaching English? YES/NO

If YES, which?

- Project
- Way to win
- Challenges
- Impact
- MORE!
- Cambridge English Prepare!
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

6) What communicative activities do you apply when teaching English?

- A) Discussions
- B) Games
- C) Debating
- D) Others

7) Have you heard of the role-play method? YES/NO

8) Have you ever applied role-play method with the pupils during face-to-face classes?

9) Do you apply the role-play method when distant studies with the pupils?

IF YES

Then which program/aplication/platform do you use for the role-play method in Online environment?

- MS Teams
- Zoom
- Google Meet

Others: \_\_\_\_\_

10) What is true about the role-play method in your opinion? Select YES-NO for each of the statements.

- G) It usually is a part of international language exams. (DELF, Cambridge...)
- H) It is a performance of a play learnt by heart by the pupils.
- I) It is a situational scene of the pupils.
- J) It cannot be applied for writing development.
- K) It is a sort of a game.
- L) It can serve to demonstrative presentation of grammar usage.

11) In your common English lessons (try to answer either rather yes, yes, rather no, no)

- H) ...the pupils speak more than the teacher.
- I) ...usually there is a period of time dedicated to conversational activities.
- J) ...usually there is a period of time dedicated to a group work.
- K) ...there is a lack of time to go through the subject matter.
- L) ...there is a lack of time to apply various teaching methods.
- M) ...with Online lessons the time proportion of my speaking and the students' changed.
- N) ... when communicative activities I always correct all mistakes of the pupils immediately.

12) What difficulties do you usually have with your pupils when communicative activities?

- A) Insufficient vocabulary
- B) Disruptive behaviour
- C) Using mother tongue and not the English language
- D) Others: \_\_\_\_\_

13) Your possible comments or your e-mail address for sending the processed

Comments:

E-mail:

Thank you very much for filling in the questionnaire and for your precious time.

## Resumé

Závěrečná práce je zaměřena na hry, především na hraní rolí. Nastiňuje jejich důležitost, způsoby využití v reálném životě a ve výuce anglického jazyka, a to jak v prezenční tak i distanční formě. Z výzkumného šetření vyplývá, že ačkoliv je hraní rolí poměrně častou aktivitou uplatňovanou ve výuce anglického jazyka v prezenční formě výuky, nemusí tomu tak být v té distanční a při aplikaci v obou z uvedených forem výuky přináší své specifické klady a zápory.

Tato práce se tedy snaží přiblížit současnou situaci pro aplikaci metody hraní rolí v Online prostředí, popisuje jednotlivé aktivity na základě výstupů při pedagogické praxi a navrhuje možné úpravy také i na základě analýzy výzkumného šetření.

## ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Hana Přecechtělová
Katedra:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby	2021

Název práce:	Hraní rolí a jiné didaktické hry ve výuce anglického jazyka
Název v angličtině:	Role-play and other game-like activities
Anotace práce:	V této diplomové práci se zabývám hrami obecně, především pak hraním rolí, aktivitou komunikačního charakteru. Nastínuji jejich klady, zápory a možné využití ve výuce anglického jazyka v rámci 8. ročníku ZŠ, jak v prezenčním, tak i v On-line prostředí. Práce je dále doplněna dotazníkem, který podává bližší informace o již zmíněných tématech.
Klíčová slova	Hry, výuka, hraní rolí, 8. ročník ZŠ, 2. stupeň ZŠ, aktivity, dovednosti, systém jazyka, Online prostředí, skupinová práce, práce ve dvojicích, MS Teams, dospívající
Anotace v angličtině:	In this diploma project the topic of games is dealt with, role-plays in particular, an activity of a communicative character. Their benefits, drawbacks and possible usage in ELT classes of 8th grade in a face-to-face lessons as well as the Online environment are detailed.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Games, education, role-play, 8th grade of lower secondary school, lower secondary school, activities, competencies, language system, Online learning environment, group work, pair work, MS Teams, adolescents
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Appendix 1: What movie are we going to watch together? Appendix 2: Vocabulary of the Project 4 Appendix 3: Our trip days, sample of PPT presentation used in role-play Appendix 4: List of health problems Appendix 5: List of emergency situations Appendix 6: Role cards Appendix 7: Czech version of questionnaire Appendix 8: English version of questionnaire
Rozsah práce:	112 523 znaků
Jazyk práce:	anglický